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CORINA RODRIGUEZ:  
IMPRESSIONS OF ISTHMIAN  
POLITICS\*

*Dwight L. Bolinger*

PICTURE A banquet table, laid with gleaming silver and generous glasses of wine, about it seated a double row of formally clad politicians—the Minister of War, of *Hacienda*, of Education, of *Salubridad Pública*—, the cabinet of the inoffensive little man at the head of the table, who looks ill at ease over his mustache parted parallel with his hair, Alfredo Gonzáles Flores, Don Alfredo, President of the Republic, nicknamed “Chinilla” in disdain or affection depending on whether one is friend or foe, because of the checkered suit that he affected except when the occasion demanded *etiqueta*. It is Heredia, Costa Rica, home of Don Alfredo, at nine of a January evening in 1917.

In an adjoining room two girls are going through the motions of studying, pausing now and then to pick up snatches of conversation from the stag affair on the other side of the closed door. One of them is Marta, younger sister of the President, and justly proud of the *homenaje* rendered to her brother; the other is a youthful teacher, barely out of school herself, of black eyes, quick mannerisms, piquant and pretty but altogether determined young face. Decidedly the leader of the two, decidedly one who knows her own mind.

“Corina,” Marta whispers, putting a finger to her lips. The two girls listen. The general hum in the next room has subsided, and one

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\*Author's Note: Feminism in Costa Rica has produced in recent years three remarkable figures: Angela Acuña Chacón, who has served as a sort of cultural ambassador of her country in the United States; Carmen Lyra, author of the well-known *Cuentos de mi tía Panchita* and head of the communist party; and Corina Rodríguez de Odin, the subject of this account.

voice rings out. They recognize Don Federico Tinoco, Minister of War.

"*Brindemos!*" the Minister is saying. "A toast to Don Alfredo! These orchids that we offer you, *querido* Alfredo, are a token of the love and affection of all your colleagues, whose only wish is to serve you well. We drink to the eternal prosperity of our beloved chief, and to the everlasting loyalty that we bear him."

There is a moment's silence, followed by the clink of glasses. Marta softly claps her hands, and the girls return to their work.

The scene changes. It is San José, six miles distant, at three A. M., six hours later. There is a movement near the dimly lighted *cuartel*, soldiers issuing from their barracks, marching with quick tread to predetermined vital spots—the Post Office, the Congreso, the two railway stations at opposite ends of town. Here and there rises a shout, occasionally a gun barks, now and then is heard a scuffle of half-hearted resistance as some policeman not in the plot tries to bar the way, only to be subdued by the military or by some of his fellows. What few officials are about give the countersign or are hustled off to jail, others waken to find themselves under guard at their homes. The fantastic dictatorship of Don Federico Tinoco, erstwhile Minister of War and toastmaster at the presidential banquet, is under way—first and only dictatorship in that small republic which has always formed an oasis among countries long inured to dictatorships. With barely sufficient warning to escape, the man who a few hours before had been President is hammering for sanctuary at the doors of the American Legation.

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Such was the baptism of treachery that initiated an impressionable girl into the political ways of her time. Always Costa Rica had been at peace since the freebooting Walker and his gang had been thrown out three quarters of a century before. Long a refuge for the oppressed of all the tight little despotisms in Central America, the Caribbean, and northern South America, it seemed now itself about to follow the familiar pattern—*golpe de estado*, political subjection, plunderbund.

The following months only confirmed this fear. The aged father and mother of González Flores were thrown into prison. Other political dissidents were jailed, ambushed, or hounded out of the country. Prisoners were strapped to floors and given fifty lashes for no greater crime than verbally disagreeing with the Tinocos—Joaquín, the real power,

who had been installed as Minister of War, and his brother Federico, who assumed the "presidency." Petty acts of vindictiveness were a daily occurrence. At the prisons, relatives who brought food for those behind bars were politely received and the food taken for delivery, but afterwards eaten by the jailers. The rabble of soldiery raided at will any store owned by an anti-Tinoquista, confiscating anything in sight, including eau de Cologne to wash their feet. It lacked but little of the persecutions in Venezuela, Guatemala, and San Salvador, where political victims about to be sacrificed had been forced to dig their own graves, and seemed inevitably headed in the same direction.

Costa Rica, in normal times an oligarchy which has moved farther toward democracy than almost any other Latin-American republic, whose ruling class are wealthy only by contrast with the desperately poor commonalty, and where no one ambitious figure has ever (with this one exception) been permitted to aspire too high, was enjoying the luxury of gangster rule. Like so many other political gangsters, these two owed their success to the resentment that many *hacendados* felt at González Flores's audacity in touching them, for he had dared to impose an ad valorem tax on real estate! No direct taxation had been essayed before, and reaction struck one month after the law had taken effect; the Tinocos repealed it immediately. But as with other best families who delegate their power to a bravo, even when, as was true of the Tinocos, he is one of their number, some of the persecution that they had loosed began to be directed against themselves. The slow democratization of a Latin country had proceeded too fast, and was swallowed up as it was to be in Spain nineteen years later, enveloping the instigators as well as their victims.

But oppression could not be so swift, nor so flagrantly open, in a country that had a long tradition of civil liberties behind it. The official break was too sudden; it was not a gradual assumption of power, in which the public becomes dulled to the loss of its liberties as they are taken away one by one, and imperceptibly comes to accept the fact of despotism, but a cleavage that outraged the sensibilities of many. So persecution was generally behind doors, and a few courageous and outspoken citizens were able, by taking advantage of the many loopholes which a too-hastily imposed regime had failed to plug, or simply by their standing in the community, to set themselves up as centers of disaffection. Such a nucleus of passive resistance was the Normal School at Heredia, home of the deposed González Flores.

The Tinocos would doubtless have welcomed an open rebellion, for it would have identified their foes and justified, in their eyes, acts of outright repression. At the Normal School it was a restrained hatred which, on one occasion when a rebellious teacher was to be publicly reprobated by being forced to march down the streets and past the school with his hands tied behind his back, caused the Normalists to pay him tribute by closing their building as tight as a drum and keeping absolute silence—a tribute the magnitude of which can be appreciated only by one who has been in the thick of a public-school session in Costa Rica, which is anything but silent. Or which on another occasion when police appeared demanding to be shown the chemistry laboratory, acting on the idiotic report that infernal machines were being manufactured there, let them prove their own folly by carrying off a few bottles of harmless salts. Passive or not, however, the attitude provoked reprisals. When the Tinoquistas had debauched the treasury to the point where monthly salaries of government employees could not be met, and temporizing with trouble had instituted the absurd system of *tercerillas* whereby checks for only two-thirds of the wage were issued, with debentures for the remainder, and even the checks could not be cashed but had to be sold at a loss to speculators—when other teachers were thus receiving less than half their pay, the Normal School was for a time cut off entirely. Students made ineffectual protest by resigning their government scholarships.

Here Corina taught, in an environment suited to her libertarian inclinations. The violent gyration of the political weathervane, from a quarter that had seemed in her young enthusiasm to be almost all good to one which was almost all bad, deepened in her character a latent trait which never afterward left her—an uncompromising, black-and-white sense of right and wrong. Never one to spare feelings in her forthrightness, no less unsparing with herself than with others, she now abhorred any thought or deed that smacked of convenience, concession, or opportunism. Impatient with the chicanery that she saw about her, she was irresistibly driven to fight back at it, and before long found herself addressing groups wherever they could be assembled—in homes, halls, parks, or on street-corners, haranguing passers-by and berating that typically Latin phenomenon, the hero-crazy mob that admires a man because he cuts a figure, that admired the Tinoco brothers because they had proved themselves big enough to overthrow a president.

The incident that really launched her into the fight occurred at the Normal School.

Rogelio Fernández Güell, a young visionary and poet, had stirred up a rebellion in the provinces, and soldiers were dispatched to take him prisoner. Their route lay through Heredia, where they would arrive about nightfall. Lacking better quarters for the night, or perhaps wishing by the gesture to humiliate the disloyal staff of the Normal School, Joaquín Tinoco decided to billet his troops in their building. He accordingly telephoned.

Corina answered. Tinoco asked to speak with Joaquín García Monge, the Director (now editor of the weekly *Repertorio Americano*, foremost literary publication of Central America).

"Don Joaquín is meeting a class. He cannot be interrupted," she replied.

"He must be interrupted. This message is from the Ministry of War."

"Nevertheless, he cannot be interrupted."

Tinoco checked his anger sufficiently to give the message.

"Then tell him that troops are on their way to Heredia in pursuit of Fernández Güell, and are to be quartered in your building overnight. The Director must make the necessary provisions."

After a moment's deliberation Corina replied, "The message will not be delivered."

"Do you know to whom you are speaking?" Tinoco demanded.

"Yes, I am speaking to Joaquín Tinoco, the Minister of War, and you are speaking to Corina Rodríguez, who is a teacher and not subject to the orders of the Minister of War but to those of the Minister of Education. Your message will not be delivered." Whereupon she hung up the receiver.

A little dismayed by her action, Corina went to García Monge. The Director listened to her explanation and agreed that she had done exactly as she should. In no time at all the account was shared by everyone in the building, and students began gleefully supplying themselves with clubs, mounds of stones, and other improvised weapons with which to welcome the soldiers on their arrival. No one was loath to do his bit toward paying off the score with the most hated department of Tinoquismo, the one headed by Joaquín Tinoco himself.

Nevertheless, García Monte urged restraint, and the soldiers were allowed to enter the main corridor without molestation on the part of

the students, who waited tensely. Two or three of them drew their swords and began snipping pictures down from the walls.

Then came one of those climaxes that are so typically Latin, so unlike the studied ferocity of Germanic despotisms. García Monte mounted the stairway and delivered himself of a speech, appealing to the honor and patriotism of those men, to many of whom a thing as lofty as a secondary school was an object of superstitious awe. In that speech he surpassed himself, and at the end a goodly proportion of the invaders were moist about the eyes. They abandoned the edifice, marched back to San José, refused to go near the Normal School again, and had to be ordered out afresh in pursuit of Fernández Güell. Joaquín Tinoco must have given himself pause over the security of a kingdom that rested on the bayonets of such sentimentalists.

As for Corina, she was present at the speech, and viewed her little triumph with a good deal of inward satisfaction. But from then on she was marked for the slaughter.

Her first taste of official displeasure came with the sequel. One marvels that it was not more sudden and direct, that the whole staff and student body of the school were not immediately clapped in irons; to understand why they were not, one must know the three pillars of democracy in Costa Rica, two of which, the succession of the presidency and immunity to political arrest, the Tinocos had violated, but the third of which they were afraid to transgress—the peculiar sanctity of the schools. It was among the students and teachers, particularly the women teachers, that the ferment had its start which eventually proved the duumvirs' undoing. This is the more surprising in that nothing legally prevented the removal of any government employee, for then as now the tiny nation had no civil service, and practically all public school teachers are employees of the national government. What the Tinocos did illegally to everyone else, the Church excepted, they hesitated to do legally to the schools. Two facts perhaps account for this. One, that the schools inherited by tradition some of the immunity that has always gone with the organization that mothered all schools in Latin America, the Catholic Church. The other, that the schools, again like the Church but like no other group in the country, presented a solid front with some community of feeling; other cohesive organizations were (and are still) practically non-existent—even political parties have resisted the general aversion to integration,—so that the Tinocos were able to dispose of them singly; the schools and the Church, how-

ever, were able to stand on their own legs. The power of the schools is no new phenomenon in Latin America, and some of it is doubtless due to this fact.<sup>1</sup>

Neither tradition nor solidarity protected administrative officers, however, to any great extent. The Director of the Normal School was accordingly deprived of his job, and the staff which to salt the oppressors' wounds had refused to stop teaching although they had worked for six months without pay, promptly resigned in a body. Their students also walked out, so that when the new director arrived he found only empty classrooms and desks which contained nothing but the resignations of his teachers.

Meanwhile Corina with her colleagues and their students were off with armloads of flowers to bid farewell to García Monge, the old director. As the train drew out the flowers were rained on his car, and the group joined in singing their school hymn. This was too much for the policemen posted at the station, and they ordered the singing stopped. Most of the group grumblingly obeyed, and some began to drift away; but Corina was not to be silenced so easily. She turned to Claros and Morán Loarca, foreign students.

"You are not *Ticos*," she said, "and if they arrest you it will cause an incident. Keep on singing and I will sing with you."

But the officers, not schooled in the niceties of international usage, acted on the spot, and Corina and her companions spent the night in jail. They were released the next day, with apologies.

This, with other episodes, indeed her whole way of viewing life, did not endear Corina to her family. Her mother, a woman of strong character who like Galdós's Doña Perfecta turned her energies to charity, devotion, and other good works deemed suitable for her sex, looked askance at Corina's liberalism; her father, a genuine liberal though with conventional sentiments regarding women's place in society, was shocked by this young dynamo who had inherited her mother's vitality but converted it to other channels. That she scandalized her family is not surprising, for the phenomenon of Corina Rodríguez is unique: there is no female suffrage in Costa Rica; girls have only begun to emerge from the cocoon of immemorial shelter

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<sup>1</sup> A flagrant exception to the consideration generally shown was the burning alive of García Flamenco, a teacher in Guanacaste who made the mistake of writing *libertad* on the blackboard and discussing it with his pupils. But García Flamenco was a foreigner, a Salvadoreño.



and segregation where men's affairs are concerned; coeducational schools still divide the sexes, and girl students are not allowed to talk unchaperoned to boys in school or out, though many contrive to evade the rule; the strolling on the square at night is shunted into one revolving ellipse of boys and another of girls. The activism of her mother, infected perhaps by a germ from those militant suffragettes then on the march in the United States, and allowed to grow by that relaxation of individual guidance in large families which bring accidental forces into play and produces offspring frequently not true to type, doubtless accounts for Corina's character; but it did not cushion her impact on a conservative family in a conservative country. They called her quixotic, and accused her of flying in the face of Providence.

For thus "interfering with God's plan," as her parents put it, she was unable to count on their support—much as she needed it, for her position was steadily more precarious. Many of the staff of the Normal School were completely without resources, after six months of unpaid teaching; one of their number, Don Omar Dengo, pooled his remaining cash with that of several of his colleagues, and engaged to feed them in his house as long as the money held out. Corina was a member of this cooperative of necessity. Day by day the fare was scantier, and in desperation she decided that she must leave the country—get to the United States and somehow weather the storm until the Tinocos had blown over. Thither the ex-president, González Flores, had gone some time before, and was at the moment successfully persuading Wilson and Lansing not to recognize the Tinoco regime. But Corina could not count on González's resources. What she did manage to get was a scholarship at Northwestern University.

There remained the problem of obtaining a passport from a hostile administration. For this it was necessary to apply directly to the Ministry of War. So close was the watch that Joaquín Tinoco kept on the movements of his subjects that a safe-conduct was required in order to travel from one town to the next, although it might be only seven or eight miles distant.

The passport at first looked easy. Joaquín had a ready affability and courtliness with women, and seemed all eagerness to grant her request. If this surprised her she doubtless put it down to a measure of good sense on his part in taking the surest way of getting rid of a nuisance; a man who makes himself obnoxious can be dealt with, but a lady must be handled with more finesse.

"There is only one formality," he said. "You will need a certificate of health. Go to Dr. Vidal<sup>2</sup> and he will look you over."

She made an appointment, and the physician found nothing seriously wrong.

"The only thing," he said, "is a slight irritation of the eyes. Those American inspectors are particular about trachoma, and might suspect the symptoms. Treat it for two or three days and I'm sure it will clear up." He wrote out a prescription. "Apply these drops twice a day, night and morning."

Corina returned to her room at the Dengo household in San José that night a little before eleven, after a two-hour movie, and prepared for bed, not forgetting the eye-treatment.

She got no farther than the first eye. The pain was so excruciating that she screamed and her cries wakened Don Manuel Dengo, who rushed into her room. He took one look at the flaming eyeball, which the girl was trying vainly to slake with cold water, and bundled her off to an eye-specialist.

It was Dr. Arrea, a Spaniard, and no Tinoquista.

"Who did this to you?" he demanded, as soon as he had applied first aid.

"Dr. Vidal," she replied, holding a wad of cotton against the lacerated organ.

"This was done intentionally. I shall face him with it."

Despite the lateness of the hour he summoned his coach. Arrea was famous in San José for his dignified rounds, made daily in a brougham.

When they drew up before Vidal's house he alighted, snatched the coachman's whip from its socket, strode to the door, and knocked imperiously. Tall, aquiline, bearded, and wrathful, he might have been the embodiment of Don Quixote, couching his whip instead of a lance.

Vidal came to the door and stepped out, peering in the darkness to identify his caller.

"This," said Arrea, lifting his whip, "is what one does to a wretch—" one lash across the other's face—"and a scoundrel"—and crossed the first lash with a second.

At Vidal's shrieking protests, answered by windows curiously opened up and down the street, Arrea drew himself up to full height and

<sup>2</sup> This worthy, a Tinoco-appointed examiner, is still living, and is perforce shown the courtesy of a pseudonym.

replied, "This is to protect a woman whom you attempted to abuse. Men such as you convince me that morality is dead in Costa Rica."

Vidal burst into profuse explanations, as onlookers began to gather. No harm had been meant, he said. It was all a ghastly mistake. The Spaniard listened to his mouthing for a moment, and then without another word returned to his coach and drove off.

Corina had no more trouble with her passport. Within a few days she was on her way to the United States and five of the most enjoyable years of her life, during which there was engrained a love of her temporary home that made her the most intensely pro-American champion in Central America. Always one to take her loyalties singly and vehemently, she never wearied of drawing comparisons between the chivalry of the American male and the lack of it among her compatriots, the lot of women in the two countries, and any other parallel, more than often invidious, that came to mind.

But the first year was hard. Arrived in New York, she could not get together the forty dollars' train fare to Chicago. Like other refugees before her, she took any work that offered for a day-to-day existence—translations for *La Prensa*, embroidery, tinting photos, modeling—at which she has a respectable talent—and finally, after spending her last quarter for a visit to the Metropolitan Museum, she landed a teaching job at Mount St. Mary's College; wiping off her rouge, and adopting a most un-Corina-like demureness, she kept this place until she had enough to pay her way to Northwestern.

The news reached her, while she was still in New York, that the Tinocos had fallen. It was not a military triumph, but a personal accident. Joaquín had successfully beaten off one rebellion from the south, in which the insurgents were murdered in their sleep after offering to surrender, and driven back a mixed force of Nicaraguans and Costa Ricans who were attempting to make an incursion from the north. But he fell struck by an assassin's bullet on the streets of San José, crack shot, handsome, lady-killer Joaquín—and to this day the identity of his killer is an official mystery. Brother Federico was afraid to stand alone, and hustled fifty-two of his friends and family into a special train, with a nest egg of four million dollars, to spend the rest of his days in France. Crowds ripped out the instruments of torture and bore them through the streets, heaping them up into a huge bonfire; political prisoners streamed out of the jails; and, curious legal twist, all of the enactments of the Tinocos were annulled, as if for the

*Ticos* that chapter were to be simply a hiatus in their history: the legal successor to González Flores was made president, the declaration of war against Germany, with which the Tinocos had hoped to appease Wilson, was automatically voided, and the country joined in a collective effort to forget the nightmare of those thirty months. Even the Tinoquistas who remained shared in the general forgiveness.

But for Corina the experience was a lesson never to be forgotten. She stayed in Evanston until she had her degree, then came back, attached herself to the candidate who to her seemed to hold the greatest promise for democracy in Costa Rica, Don Ricardo Jiménez, and fought for him with exemplary fury. It was a recurring task, for the Constitution does not allow consecutive terms to any president, so that after a lapse out of office she had his campaigning to do all over again. Yet in no small degree because of her efforts, Don Ricardo has been reelected twice. He has the reputation of being the only president in recent years who left office poorer than when he entered it.

The interim, however, has always been one of hardship for his redoubtable partisan. In Costa Rica men stand in line for a twelve-dollar-a-month political job—such is the general poverty and such the snatching at patronage; Corina, fighter in the political arena by preference, needed her appointive jobs as teacher to earn a livelihood. Furthermore, though her unconventional activities were readily pardoned when Don Ricardo was in office, the opposition was less generous. The most serious break came during the administration of León Cortés about six years ago, on the occasion of a visit to Costa Rica by Somoza, the “president” of Nicaragua.

Now Somoza has mellowed somewhat with the years, but during the early days of his career he was no lily-white politician. A demonstration in his honor by the schoolchildren of Costa Rica—the academic parade is a palmary tribute in Central America—seemed to Corina’s rigorous notions of ethics a piece of downright immorality. She accordingly determined to prevent it, notwithstanding the fact that to do so made her liable to a three-months imprisonment. Costa Rica has a peculiar libel law, dubbed *la ley del condado* (the padlock law), which makes it a criminal offense to publish anything against the chief executive of a friendly state, and the writer, not the publisher—as, for instance, in a newspaper—is held responsible.

Corina breached this law in her first step, which was to publish a barrage of signed letters in the papers, lampooning Somoza and attack-

ing the plans of a freedom-loving people to pay homage to a dictator. "Letters to the Editor" receive little attention in our papers of the North; in Costa Rica they receive a front-page spread (if the writer or the victim is a person of sufficient prominence), frequently adorned with the contributor's picture, even sometimes to the exclusion of the latest news from the European battlefield. Consequently the assault was something more than an escape of steam.

She then procured a picture of Somoza embracing General Sandino (whom we remember as "it" in the catch-the-rebel game of Hoover's marines) on the occasion of the signing of a pact between them, by which Sandino bound himself to keep the peace. Beneath this picture she set a legend reminding the public of the murder of Sandino by Somoza's guard almost immediately after the peace was concluded. The picture and its story were run off to the number of eight thousand; most of which were scattered, some by plane, through San José and the neighboring towns; during the night Corina, aided by some of her students at the Escuela República de Chile, placarded the walls of San José with the remaining copies.

The last sally was a handbill, of which an equal number of copies were struck, broadcast the night before Somoza's scheduled visit. It bears the heading "To the Teachers and Parents of Costa Rica," and its declamatory lines are a perfect example of Corina's speechmaking. The first paragraph reads:

A virile people must not stoop to any public demonstration aimed at the enslavement of a kindred people. Our ancestors defended Nicaragua in 1856. Today we are called upon to defend that country again. A people such as that of Costa Rica must always pay service to indefeasible moral principles. A tribute to Somoza does not accord with such principles—it is a tribute rendered to crime.

And the last:

Let Somoza be feted by those devoid of ideals, and let all free hearts draw to one side, to cleanse by their scrupulous attitude the pools of blood and shame shed step by step from the pretorian boots of the oppressor of Nicaragua.

Her campaign brought the desired results. Children, teachers, and individuals of importance boycotted the reception, and when Somoza arrived he had to content himself with a bare official reception. Corina fell victim to the Padlock Law, which she had openly violated, only to the extent of losing her job. Other administrators have seldom made the mistake of the Tinocos, that of creating martyrs out of political dissenters; nuisance penalties are inflicted generously—suspension of

licenses, reduction of pay, withholding of favors, etc.—but outright imprisonment is practically never resorted to.

Such penalties have been the lot of Corina in recent years, for since 1936 until very recently she has been outside the fence, politically. Don Ricardo, her patron and the liberal whose indomitable champion she was is now an old man; and though, perennial candidate that he is, he ran again for president in 1939, his hopes for conferring the mantle, by his resignation, upon a younger warrior were dashed by the murder of Ricardo Moreno Cañas, probably the most beloved figure that Costa Rica has produced in this generation. With the enfeeblement of Don Ricardo and the death of his hoped-for successor, no middle-of-the-roader, it seemed, was left to oppose the conservatives, but only a small, though lusty and restive, communist party. General fear of this minority was partly responsible for the victory, in 1940, of the conservative Calderón Guardia—a government to be commended for not having gone farther to the right than it did.

So Corina spent the years following Don Ricardo's last administration in a kind of volcanic retirement. Still young, for all her nearly fifty years, she has taken university classes, married for the third time, tutored all hours of the day and a good part of the night (she sleeps but four to six hours), taught overflow classes of English for the government, until her voice gave out, and finally opened a dressmaking shop to recuperate. Corina in the trough of the wave was anything but a pathetic figure. True, most of the politicians dismissed her with a masculine wave of the hand; she was politically out, she was a woman. It looked as if she had elected her last candidate.

But at twelve noon on December 8, 1941, Costa Rica declared war on Japan. Given the not-inconsiderable pro-Italian and pro-German elements in the country, this drew the political issues clearly. The next election would be fought along the lines of liberalism of the popular front variety versus conservatism with its tinge of totalitarianism.

For Corina the choice was a foregone conclusion. She dusted off her campaign armor and plunged into the fray with all her old-time vigor. For the first time the Church and the communist party worked together, and Corina fought in their ranks. Fortunately for them, and for the cause of inter-American solidarity in general, their candidate, Teodoro Picado (presiding officer of the Congress that had authorized the declaration of war), was elected. In 1944 Picado took office, and

Corina was rewarded with the post of Chief of the Inter-American Office of Education, which she still occupies.

Her present job is a happy ending. It ought to be, though it probably will not be, a permanent one as well. For the trying years are ahead. The end of her career may well be like its beginning. Her first combat was with the wave of reaction that followed the war-time idealistic administration of González Flores. At the end of another war there may be another reaction. But if there is, the day will come when Corina Rodríguez will make the politicians shake in their boots as she has shaken them before. For Corina is like springtime in Costa Rica, eternal and irrepressible.