

### **Central American Federation (1825-1838)**

The Central American Federation formed in 1825, including five of the seven republics of Central America--Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Salvador. After gaining independence from Spain in 1821, these countries were briefly annexed to Mexico. In 1825, the nations became a loose federal state and appointed Manuel José Arce as the first president. He was succeeded by the liberal leader Francisco Morazán in 1830. Political and personal rivalries between liberals and conservatives, poor communication, and fearing that one state would have more control than others, led to the end of the Federation in 1838. The Congress of the Federation was dissolved and Morazán's military forces were defeated by Rafael Carrera, the conservative Guatemalan leader. In 1842, Morazán made an attempt to reestablish the Federation from a new location in Costa Rica. Politicians in Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador continued to fight for unification. At the Central American conference of 1922–23, the U.S. recommended that the Central American countries form a Union. However, this idea was not favorably received, partly because of earlier U.S. policies in Panama and Nicaragua with which many Central American politicians disagreed. Nevertheless, geography, history, and practicality are factors that repeatedly encouraged unionization. No official nation ever became of these small individual Central American countries. In 1951, the Organization of Central American States was formed to help solve their common problems and in 1960 the five nations established the Central American Common Market, to address their similar economic needs.

Sources: T. L. Karnes, *The Failure of Union: Central America, 1824–1960* (1961);  
N. Maritano, *A Latin American Economic Community* (1970).