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RS/AN ANALYSIS BRANCH											
FROM : Amconsulate, PORTO ALEGRE				DATE: March 14, 1972							
SUBJECT : Dispute for Control of Rio Grande do Sul ARENA Directorate Results in Uneasy Compromise											
REF :											
Since before he took office, Rio Grande do Sul's Governor Euclides Triches has been encountering a problem common to most of his colleagues in Brazil, that of legitimizing his leadership of the state ARENA organization. In addition to lacking a popular mandate, Triches had also been out of contact with state politics for some ten years. Unlike most of the other governors, Triches did not have any voice in deciding who would be the new president of the RGS ARENA, this decision being made directly by President Medici, who appointed João Dentice, a veteran Gaúcho politician. The President has often been described in his home state as a sentimental man, especially in regard to old friends. This seems to be the case with Dentice, who served as chief of the civil household under the previous governor, Walter Peracchi Barcellos. Dentice, when disappointed in his own attempt to be appointed governor, then turned down the President's consolation offer to give him a lifetime position as a justice on the <u>Tribunal de Contas da União</u> and asked only to be made president of the Rio Grande do Sul ARENA. Although he has still not assumed the presidency and will not until the state convention, Dentice has been travelling extensively throughout the state, taking care to build an identity separate from that of the Governor. Forming a rather overt alliance with him to challenge the Governor's position in the party are two other long-time politicians, Peracchi Barcellos, now a director of the Bank of Brazil, and Senator Tarso Dutra. Together, these men represent the old political class of the state - the "natural leaders of Rio Grande											
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do Sul", as ARENA President Filinto Muller described them - in contrast to Triches, a person "artificially" imposed as head of the political structure. In early February, Governor Triches reiterated his claim to be head of ARENA, based upon the natural understanding that this would be the governor's role in every state, and further maintained that two-thirds of the ARENA state directorate should be named by him. This spurred the anti-Triches group into greater action as they added to their ranks the disgruntled Vice Governor, Edmar Fetter (see Pôrto Alegre's A-3) and suggested that the thirty-man directorate (excluding the President) should be divided four ways between the nominees of Dentice, Peracchi Barcellos, Dutra and Triches.

By this time, the federal government was becoming embarrassed by the Triches-Fetter quarrel, as well as by the question of who would control ARENA. It was clear that Rio Grande was, as Dentice and his allies maintained, a case different from the other states. Seemingly, a compromise was suggested which resulted in an even split giving the Governor half of the members.

In late February the members of the future directorate were announced. The results have provided political observers in RGS with their latest game, wondering who actually got a majority on the directorate. Estimates for Triches' supporters have ranged from as few as nine to as many as fifteen. It is clear, however, that Triches did not achieve a clear victory on this matter. One interesting theory is that the real winner in all this is Secretary of Interior and Justice Otavio Germano, who has remained discreetly in the background while the battles were occurring. Germano, another veteran state politician, has become used to playing the role of mediator in gaucho politics in the last four years. Formerly President of both the Legislative Assembly and ARENA (Dentice will succeed him in the latter), he reached those positions as a compromise between the Peracchi and Tarsista factions of ARENA. In his present job, the most political of the cabinet, he has established more contact throughout the state than anyone else in the current government and has also been Dentice's companion on trips throughout the state. Many feel that, because of the seemingly overlapping loyalties of a large number of the delegates, it was he who worked out the final compromise by recruiting people acceptable to both sides. Since he, along with a large number of others, has gubernatorial ambitions, this may help establish him as a candidate in the event of an open election in 1974.

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COMMENT:

In itself, the composition of the directorate of the party is not very important. However, this was clearly a test of Governor Euclides Triches' political strength after almost a year in office, really the first such test he has had. The result shows that in spite of the nature of a majority of the new state governments (technocratic), the old political class has, at least in some instances, a substantial amount of influence. Although President Medici has always assured Governor Triches of his full support, the former's long friendship with both Dentice and Peracchi Barcellos seems to have won out in this case by letting them to a great extent fight it out among themselves.


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