

Personal Politics

Ballots in Brazil Will Measure The Allure of Leftist Nationalism

RIO DE JANEIRO.

From nationalist, Yankee-baiting Leonel Brizola, governor of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, to conservative firebrand Carlos Lacerda, governor of the state of Guanabara (including Rio de Janeiro), Brazilian politicians are agreed on only one thing these days: A good part of the nation's future rests on the outcome of congressional elections next Sunday.

At a glance, this is an anomaly. The makeup of the new congress is expected to closely resemble the old, which for three months has stubbornly resisted President Joao Goulart's bid for increased presidential powers. And although the entire chamber of deputies and two-thirds of the senate are up for re-election, only a few of those races have piqued any interest outside Brazil.

Similarly, while 10 of the country's 22 states will elect new governors, not many of these contests are considered crucial. Thousands of local elections in the massive nation, which is bigger than the continental United States, are of even less apparent importance.

Yet Sunday's voting, in which 90 per cent of the 15,400,000 registered voters are expected to cast ballots (the country includes 70,000,000 people all told, but many are illiterate and aren't allowed to vote), still is considered a potent test of trends and political personalities vital to the United States and the rest of the hemisphere.

It's the Country's Choice

Why? The answer is simple: In the view of many longtime observers, the elections will indicate whether the country wants to reverse a recent trend toward leftist nationalism, or whether the trend will become more pronounced.

Many individual campaigns are being fought on this issue alone. Others, even more simply, are battles between "Communists and anti-Communists." Some very real problems in Brazil—the country's rapidly disintegrating financial condition, its shortage of food, its rampant inflation, and the government's inability to get anything done—have been minor issues, if anything, in the overall campaign.

Until very recently, the nationalist left looked like a sure winner. But now the feeling is growing, especially in the cities, that the hard-hitting campaign waged by Mr. Brizola, spearhead of this element, may have gone a little too far. Many leftist candidates, this view holds, may suffer for it.

Among them may be Mr. Brizola himself, running for a deputy's seat in Guanabara. He is certain to win, but may not get the whopping vote he expects. And if Mr. Brizola can't go to congress with a heavy popular mandate, he'll have trouble pushing his anti-American policies.

The Confusing Nature

The reason lies in the confused nature of Brazilian politics. Mr. Brizola is President Goulart's brother-in-law, and Mr. Goulart uses the Rio Grande politician as a sort of sounding board of voter sentiment. If Mr. Brizola is even partly repudiated by voters in Rio Grande, the president is far too smart to give him any real backing in Congress.

In this case, as in many others, Mr. Goulart is sending Mr. Brizola into test waters—and if Mr. Brizola doesn't float, the president will have learned his lesson the easy way. As one veteran Rio journalist explains: "Goulart uses Brizola as his log roller, his general irritant. When he's not sure which way the wind is blowing, he says, 'Leonel, go out and raise a little hell,' and Brizola goes out and raises it."

The campaign is intensified by a massive animosity between Mr. Brizola and Governor Lacerda. Governor Lacerda has not only opposed Mr. Brizola at every turn, he's also campaigned personally and on television against leftist candidates in states other than his own.

Star on the Rise

Governor Lacerda's star is on the rise—and since he got into office by a hair's breadth in 1960, he'd greatly benefit from a setback not only to Mr. Brizola, but to the entire nationalist left.

Another man with an eye on the future is former president Janio Quadros, one of three candidates for the governorship of Sao Paulo, Brazil's most populous state. Mr. Quadros resigned a year ago after seven months as president, claiming he was unable to install needed reforms in the face of harassment.

His gubernatorial campaign has been gaining steam—though in its early stages, observers felt he never again could be elected to office in view of his quixotic withdrawal from the presidency. All three of Brazil's major parties were united against him. Yet last week he was running neck-and-neck with the other two candidates for Sao Paulo's governorship, and apparently retains his tremendous popularity with the masses.

Mr. Quadros is moving so rapidly, in fact, that there's talk of a last-ditch deal between his other two opponents—with one of them withdrawing and throwing his strength to the remaining anti-Quadros aspirant. The underlying concern is obvious: With Quadros installed as Sao Paulo governor, he'll be a strong favorite to win back the presidency at a later date. Says incumbent Gov. Carlos Alberto Carvalho Pinto, who is not running for re-election: "The preservation of democracy in Brazil" depends on Sunday's Sao Paulo returns.

Viewed With Suspicion

Mr. Quadros is viewed with suspicion in some quarters because of his intention, while president, to steer Brazil onto a "neutral" course less dependent on the United States. Further, Governor Pinto also has designs on the presidency; and a defeat for Mr. Quadros and the victory of Governor Pinto's candidate, Jose Bonifacio Nogueira, would put the governor in good position for an election bid in 1965. Thus Mr. Pinto is campaigning hard against the ex-president, in a battle which resembles that between Mr. Brizola and Governor Lacerda.

Another significant contest is being

waged in the northeast state of Pernambuco, Brazil's poorest area, which long has seemed the potential site of a Communist-led peasant revolution. Pernambuco is the stomping ground of Francisco Juliao, leader of the much-publicized Peasant Leagues, who is running for the chamber of deputies by exhorting his followers "to be revolutionaries like Christ and Castro."

Followers Are Illiterate

But even considering his considerable popularity among the masses, Mr. Juliao isn't viewed as a sure winner. Most of his followers are illiterate peasants, who can't vote.

Another Pernambuco race is of even more importance. It pits the Communist-backed mayor of Recife, Miguel Arraes, against conservative planter Joao Cleofas with the governorship at stake. It's a straight nationalism vs. communism and pro-American vs. anti-American struggle, and politicians from other areas have poured money and effort into the campaign.

President Goulart and his Labor Party are backing the Communists, while Governor Lacerda and the other two parties are behind Mr. Cleofas. Mayor Arraes, supremely confident a few weeks ago, is now calling for help.

In Rio Grande do Sul, where Mr. Brizola is ineligible to succeed himself as governor, his hand-picked candidate is finding it increasingly hard to run on Mr. Brizola's anti-United States record. At the moment his opponent is slightly favored.

Behind all the talk, half-confident predictions, and generally placid atmosphere of the elections lies the specter of Argentina, where unexpected Peronist victories earlier this year led to a military revolt. Brazil's army isn't as truculent as Argentina's, but an election sweep by the nationalist left could set off ugly repercussions.

A Clean-up Is Forecast

In the plush Jockey Club in Rio de Janeiro, one high-ranking general said flatly, "If the elections go to the left, we are going to clean up here." This is the kind of thing that makes people nervous. The general is no wild-eyed zealot, but represents an element that has become increasingly alarmed at the tide of left-nationalism rising ever since President Quadros' resignation.

The man most concerned with Sunday's election, perhaps, is President Goulart. On Jan. 6, 1963, Brazil will conduct a plebiscite on whether to give him back a number of powers assumed by congress when he succeeded Mr. Quadros. He feels sure of winning that election vote, and so he's looking for a mandate in this week's balloting. That mandate—and the way Mr. Goulart interprets it—will go far toward determining the future of this massive, semi-dormant nation.

—HUNTER S. THOMPSON

She Means: 'Do as I Say, And Not Do as I Do'

Mary Margaret Revell, a 25-year-old Detroit blond, thinks Americans aren't physically fit, but she's having trouble proving her point.

She set out earlier this year to make swimming history and show what fitness can do. Last January, she tried a 25-mile swim in Lake Meade in Nevada, but gave up when the cold water paralyzed muscles in her neck and face. Last April, she was trying a 28-mile swim around Miami Beach when she was stricken by an appendicitis attack.

Last week, Miss Revell called it quits after 4 hours, 33, minutes in her attempt to swim the English channel both ways. Said an observer: "The sea was perfectly calm but Mary was frozen stiff."

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