The **National Renewal Alliance** ([Portuguese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language): *Aliança Renovadora Nacional*, ARENA) was a [conservative](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative) [political party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_party) that existed in [Brazil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil) between 1966 and 1979. It was the official party of the [military that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1985](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_military_government).

Up to 1965, there were three main parties in Brazil: the left-wing populist [Brazilian Labour Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Labour_Party_%28historical%29) (PTB), the centrist [Social Democratic Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_%28Brazil%2C_1945-65%29) (PSD) and the conservative [National Democratic Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Democratic_Union_%28Brazil%29) (UDN). In 1964, the government of President [João Goulart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jo%C3%A3o_Goulart%22%20%5Co%20%22Jo%C3%A3o%20Goulart) was overthrown by a military [coup d'etat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1964_Brazilian_coup_d%27%C3%A9tat), but in contrast to other [Latin American](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_America)dictatorships, the Brazilian military-controlled government did not abolish Congress. Instead, in 1965, the government banned all existing political parties and created a two-party system. ARENA, the pro-government party, was formed by politicians from the bulk of the UDN, the right wing of the PSD, and the bulk of the [integralist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Integralism%22%20%5Co%20%22Brazilian%20Integralism) [Party of Popular Representation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Party_of_Popular_Representation). The left wing of the PSD and most of the PTB formed the [Brazilian Democratic Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazilian_Democratic_Movement) (MDB), the opposition.

ARENA had no real ideology other than support for the military, who used it mostly to rubber-stamp its agenda. In the elections of 1966 and 1970, ARENA won a vast majority of seats. Most agree that, at first, the MDB did not have any chance to pass or block any legislation. It also rubber-stamped the military leadership's choice of president. Under the military's constitution, the president was nominally elected by an absolute majority of both chambers meeting in joint session. In practice, ARENA's majority was so massive that its candidate could not possibly be defeated. During most of the early part of the military regime, Brazil was, for all intents and purposes, a one-party state.

However, ARENA was not completely subservient. For example, in the late 1968 President [Artur da Costa e Silva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artur_da_Costa_e_Silva%22%20%5Co%20%22Artur%20da%20Costa%20e%20Silva) demanded that Congress prosecute a deputy for suggesting that women should refuse to dance with military cadets. Congress turned the demand down, prompting Costa e Silva to issue the heavy-handed [Fifth Institutional Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AI-5), which allowed him to close Congress and rule by decree. Almost as soon as he signed AI-5 into law, Costa e Silva used its provisions to close Congress for almost two years, thus placing Brazil under a tight dictatorship.

In the legislative elections of 1974, MDB took many more seats than expected. It actually won a majority in the Senate, and came up just short of a majority in the Chamber of Deputies. The government reacted by passing legislation restricting the power of the opposition, and even succeeded in annulling the mandates of some Congressmen of the MDB.

In 1979, in a manoeuvre to divide the opposition, the government ended the bipartisan party system, and the ARENA was dissolved when the new political parties law became effective on 20 December 1979.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Renewal_Alliance#cite_note-1) In January 1980 members of the defunct ARENA founded the [Democratic Social Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Social_Party) (PDS) as a continuation of ARENA