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## Populism during the Estado Novo

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## POPULISM DURING THE ESTADO NOVO POPULISMO DURANTE O ESTADO NOVO

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### RESUMO

Embora as eleições tenham sido suprimidas durante o Estado Novo, alguns políticos ganharam experiência valiosa com técnicas que mais tarde se chamariam de populismo. Este artigo descreve a criação deste estilo pelo prefeito Pedro Ernesto e as carreiras de outros seis líderes chamados de populistas. Conclui-se que o regime Vargas realmente ajudou a ascensão do populismo.

*Palavras-chaves: populismo; Estado Novo; Pedro Ernesto Batista.*

### ABSTRACT

Although elections had been suppressed during the Estado Novo, some politicians gained valuable experience with techniques that were later called populism. This article describes the creation of this style by Rio's prefeito Pedro Ernesto and the careers of six other leaders who were also called populists. It concludes that the regime Vargas actually helped the later rise of populism.

*Keywords: populism; Estado Novo; Pedro Ernesto Batista.*

### RESUMEN

Aunque se suprimieron elecciones durante el Estado Novo, algunos políticos ganaron experiencia valiosa en las técnicas que después se conocieron como populismo. Este artículo trata de la creación de este estilo por el alcalde de Rio, Pedro Ernesto y de las carreras de seis otros líderes. Termina aseverando que el régimen de Vargas estimuló el ascenso del populismo.

*Palabras claves: populismo; Estado Novo; Pedro Ernesto Batista.*

The Estado Novo has traditionally been seen as a dark period, a time of autocracy and intellectual hibernation. Getúlio Vargas put his stamp on the regime, shutting down the open politics that had prevailed after the 1933-34 constitutional convention. The army became the backbone of government, police at several levels spied on citizens, censorship and propaganda were imposed, and appointed interventors in every state but Minas carried out Vargas's wishes. This was not a fertile ground for germinating the seeds of populism, which would only sprout and flourish after World War II. Vargas himself eschewed activities that could be construed as populist, even though some of his initiatives played into his later images and successful election in 1950 (Conniff, 2012, p. 48-70).

Not by accident, Brazil's first populist, Pedro Ernesto Batista, who had pioneered this new style of campaigning and coalition-building during his 1931-36 term as *prefeito* of Rio de Janeiro, found himself under attack by the rising forces of the army and police in 1936, presaging the rightist turn Vargas took toward the Estado Novo. Vargas acquiesced to the police arresting, trying, and convicting Pedro Ernesto of conspiring with communist leaders in their 1935 *intentona*, a violation of the National Security Law. Pedro Ernesto appealed and won acquittal the following year, and upon release he was greeted by cheering crowds of supporters in the streets. His apparent resurrection helped to trigger Vargas' and the generals' decision to execute the Estado Novo coup. I called this antagonism between populism and autocracy during the Estado Novo a *danse macabre* in my study of Pedro Ernesto (Conniff, 2006).

Some future populist leaders picked up ideas during the Estado Novo and began to experiment with the new style. This article presents some of their experiences from a period not generally thought to be welcoming for populism. It draws on research I conducted for a comparative biography of nine major figures in the post-World War II era.

## **PEDRO ERNESTO BATISTA**

A handsome man of warmth, charm, and charisma, Pedro Ernesto had founded a successful surgical clinic in Rio in the 1920s, then joined the 1930 revolution and played a role in military affairs during Vargas's first two years in power. He presided over the influential Club 3 de Outubro and served as its liaison with Vargas, and he also became the president's family physician. In 1931, in an attempt to restore democratic government, Vargas appointed Pedro Ernesto as *interventor* in Rio, partly to prevent uprisings in the capital. The new mayor formed a party and became *prefeito* in 1933, campaigning on the theme of granting Rio, then a federal district, self-government. In 1934 he won again in Rio's first direct mayoral election and carried out a wide-ranging program devoted to building schools and hospitals. By 1935 he had become one of several up-and-coming figures considered for the presidential election scheduled for 1938. I argue that he was Brazil's first genuine populist.

Pedro Ernesto attempted to bridge the growing gap between the left and right in the mid-1930s, and he inadvertently angered top police, judicial, and army officials by clandestine contacts with communists, including Luís Carlos Prestes. Months after the *intentona*, when

these contacts came to light, authorities removed Pedro Ernesto and jailed him. After fifteen months of deliberations, the National Security Tribunal, hearing accusations against Pedro Ernesto and others implicated in the revolt, reached a guilty verdict in May 1937. It sentenced him to three years and four months in prison. He immediately appealed to the Supreme Military Tribunal, and four months later he was absolved of the charges. Rio politics seemed to play a part, because by then the two presidential candidates for the January 1938 election assiduously courted the former mayor, to gain some of his aura as a popular urban leader, to win over his campaign workers, and to attract the voters he had mobilized. The whole city awaited the freedom of their martyred leader in mid-September.

The day of Pedro Ernesto's release from the hospital where he had been held turned into a veritable Carnival, as businesses and government offices shut down to let their employees pour into the streets. Huge crowds formed a human torrent that pushed his car through the city to the main plaza, where he gave a prepared speech. In it he denied ever being a communist and denounced the current municipal administration as illegitimate. Physically weakened, he left in order to recuperate at home, without revealing which of the two presidential candidates he would support.

Two weeks later Pedro Ernesto made his announcement, backing the former governor of São Paulo, Armando Sales de Oliveira. Of the two, only he had a decent chance of winning and of preventing a *coup de état* that everyone suspected Vargas of plotting. Yet Pedro Ernesto's endorsement inadvertently triggered the coup that ended democracy and gave the nation the Estado Novo dictatorship. In brief, the possibility that popular forces in Rio and elsewhere might mobilize for an election aroused the fears of army leaders, especially Eurico Dutra and Pedro Aurélio de Góis Monteiro, that leftists might gain the upper hand in the new government. They stepped up plans to shut down Congress, suspend civil rights indefinitely, and cancel the election.

Even before the coup, Pedro Ernesto was charged again, this time for corruption, and was arrested trying to escape to São Paulo. He spent four more months in jail and expended most of the family's resources defending himself. During nearly three years in jail he had to sell his share in the *casa de saúde* and practice medicine elsewhere to cover legal expenses. He never returned to politics. His only public statement was to encourage Brazil to stand with the European allies against the Axis in World War II.

In 1942 Pedro Ernesto traveled to New York, where he was diagnosed with untreatable prostate cancer. When he returned to Rio he made one last pronouncement, in favor of Brazil joining the United States in World War II. He died in August, shortly before Brazil entered the war.

Enormous crowds turned out for Pedro Ernesto's funeral, dwarfing those of his release in 1937. His cortege was the longest ever recorded. *Favelados* and samba school dancers joined limousines and town cars inching toward the cemetery, carrying flowers and other offerings. *Time Magazine* called him the most beloved man in Brazil. A special Carnival verse was composed in his honor. For months afterward religious services were held for him (Conniff, 2006, chapter 9).

The politician who inherited Pedro Ernesto's popularity was, ironically, Getúlio Vargas, who did not even attend the funeral. Yet that same year he began preparing for a return to democracy when the war ended, and his strategies drew unmistakably on the former mayor's achievements. Vargas's delivery of labor benefits, services to the poor, and developmental nationalism earned him the popular image of "father of the poor". His increased use of modern media and public relations mirrored the Carioca populist experiment of the mid-1930s (Conniff, 2006, chapter 10).

## ADEMAR DE BARROS

Paulista Ademar de Barros was 36 when he received an invitation from Vargas to step in as *interventor* of São Paulo at the outset of the Estado Novo. He ended up serving four years before being removed for political reasons, yet during those years he perfected what would become a quintessential style of populism, which some called *Ademarismo*. Observers were surprised by his appointment because when he was in the state legislature in the mid-1930s and had roundly criticized Vargas and the sitting governor, in the name of the discredited Partido Paulista Republicano. Besides, he was virtually unknown outside the Paulista capital.

As Vargas went about replacing all but one governor with *interventores*, leading figures in São Paulo had appealed to him to appoint someone from their state, to avoid the humiliation of an outside agent controlling them, as had happened after their civil war defeat in 1932. Vargas requested a list of ten potential nominees from them, and to everyone's surprise he chose the last name on the list, that of Ademar de Barros. He did so precisely because Ademar's lack of local prominence would make him more dependent on the president's good-will (Sampaio, 1982, p. 41-42; Mayer, 2001).<sup>1</sup>

Ademar threw himself into the job of governing the state as if he had won a legitimate mandate instead of a grudging selection by the dictator Vargas. He immediately began building an administration that could serve as an election vehicle, independent of Rio de Janeiro and the traditional PRP leaders. He fired all mayors in the state and replaced them with young people who would be dependent on him, just as he was on Vargas. He undertook ambitious projects, building roads, schools, asylums, and hospitals, while publicizing his achievements through well-nourished media campaigns. He instituted regular evening radio broadcasts imitative of Franklin Roosevelt's fireside chats, and he purchased numerous radio stations to form a statewide network. He also published magazines and commissioned documentary films boasting of his work on behalf of the state. He financed these activities partly with family money and increasingly with kickbacks from state construction contracts.

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1 Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdac/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/ademar-pereira-de-barros>>. Vargas had earlier used the same strategy in selecting the *interventor* of Minas Gerais, another powerful state.

His wife Leonor, whom he had wed in 1927, became active leading women's charitable organizations.<sup>2</sup>

The well-known architect Francisco Prestes Maia became mayor of São Paulo, and with Ademar's backing he modernized the city and encouraged redevelopment. Major highways and bridges facilitated urban traffic, and channelizing the Tietê River opened new land for expansion. The city was on its way to surpassing Rio de Janeiro in population, as it already had in manufacturing.

Ademar took special interest in the cities and towns of the interior, looking ahead to future elections. He took personal part in and credit for hundreds of projects inaugurated in the interior, usually traveling in his own airplane to attend them. He cultivated the image of an energetic, progressive manager who cared about the well-being of the poor. His radio style resembled the interior *caboclo* manner of speech, with rural syntax and simple vocabulary that was familiar and reassuring to listeners. In fact, this became his principal source of charisma.

Ademar stimulated the state's economic growth with a development board he himself presided over. He brought together leaders of the manufacturing, commercial, financial, and trade associations to advise him, and he lobbied federal authorities to expand business opportunities in his state. Partly due to the Depression and increasingly to world demand generated by World War II, Paulista industry grew robustly. Ademar construed this as the Paulista *productive classes governing their own enterprise development*. He became the *quintessential Paulista booster*.

The sheer scope and ambition of Ademar's administration awakened suspicions about the governor's intentions and probity. Construction contracts usually produced kickbacks for him. Important politicians who found themselves isolated from influence complained to Vargas that Ademar was creating his own state-within-a-state. Ademar overreacted to events commemorating the founding of a reformist party in the 1920s and jailed some of its leaders. He also took over the prestigious newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, on the grounds that its owners were involved in a conspiracy against him. A book came out with details of Ademar's crimes and misdeeds, but Vargas did not authorize any judicial action against him. Still, the list of the governor's transgressions and enemies grew to the point that Vargas decided to remove him in 1941 (Sampaio, 1982, p. 43-47; Mayer, 2001).<sup>3</sup>

Ademar returned to private practice and his businesses until the end of the war, and then he resurrected his political career, emphasizing his image as an efficient and dynamic administrator who had the interests of both the poor and the rich at heart. He also called together the people who had worked with him and benefitted during his previous term.

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2 The Arquivo Ademar de Barros (AAB), consulted in São Paulo in 1987, focused on the governor but also separately contained papers of Leonor Mendes de Barros, including a biography.

3 His archive contained hundreds of telegrams congratulating him, perhaps used to fend off his firing but also providing contacts for his eventual return to politics. Vargas's archive contains spy reports from this period: cf. GV 40.11.04 (conf.), "Depoimento do Sr. Carlos MacCracken", FGV/CPDOC.

Although at first he joined the opposition UDN, he was not comfortable there and instead created his own party which, after several mergers and acquisitions, became his flagship Social Progressive Party (PSP). In 1945 two of his lieutenants won election to the federal constitutional convention and subsequent congress.<sup>4</sup>

## **JUSCELINO KUBITSCHKE**

Born in Diamantina, MG, in 1902, Juscelino was a year younger than Ademar, but unlike the Paulista, he grew up dirt poor and scrambled to establish himself in medicine and later in politics. He first taste of life in Rio came when he served in the 1933-34 constitutional convention there. In 1933 Juscelino joined the dominant state party of Minas and was appointed secretary. He won election to the 1933-34 constituent assembly, upon which he resigned his state position and moved to Rio. His mentor and friend from the 1932 São Paulo war, Benedito Valadares, meanwhile, won election governor of Minas. During his two years in Rio Juscelino returned frequently to Diamantina, where he became a political chief, asserting influence over local elections for mayor and councilmen and arranging for state construction projects.

In 1937, in the months leading up to the Estado Novo coup, Juscelino began considering a run for the 1938 gubernatorial election. As it turned out, however, he did not switch sides in time to become part of the new regime, to which he was philosophically opposed, and he withdrew from politics. He remained friends with Valadares, however, who had switched sides and kept his position as governor.

For the next two and a half years Juscelino resumed his private medical practice and his post as medic in the state police, winning a promotion to lieutenant colonel. He also continued to oversee political life in his native Diamantina (Alexander, 1991, p. 46-51; Pantoja, 2001).<sup>5</sup>

Governor Valadares appointed Juscelino mayor of the capital, Belo Horizonte, in 1940, a position that would encourage him to build a political following and develop his administrative skills. Throughout these years he continued to oversee the surgery unit in the police hospital and maintained his services at a charity clinic, usually operating in the mornings. His mayoralty emphasized construction, innovation, and infrastructure. His signature project was a new park, Pampulha, with architecturally advanced buildings designed by Oscar Niemeyer, which became a tourist site. But he also modernized the water and sewage systems, which had not been updated since the city was founded in 1895. He laid out garden suburbs and paved major streets connecting the city to interstate highways.

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4 See the long study by Frederico Thiessen, "Sugestões para a campanha eleitoral pro A.B.". *Correspondência Geral* 1948, AAB.

5 Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/juscelino-kubitschek-de-oliveira>>.

He also created the school of architecture and fine arts, which was later merged into the Federal University of Minas Gerais. It was an impressive and energetic administration.

Juscelino honed his political skills during these years, forming over a thousand neighborhood improvement committees as part of his planning process. He believed that his physical presence reassured citizens and gave them confidence in his work. He relished face-to-face contact with residents and became a one-man propaganda machine on his own behalf. When elections were finally scheduled for December 1945, for president and a constitutional convention, which would later be converted into congress, Valadares and Juscelino immediately filed papers to create a branch of Vargas's Social Democratic Party (PSD) in Minas. They began to mobilize public opinion for elections, using the neighborhood committees Juscelino had set up as mayor. In June they endorsed the nomination of General Eurico Dutra, minister of war, for president (Alexander, 1991, p. 52-71; Simões, 2000, p. 47-88).<sup>6</sup>

Juscelino, chosen as secretary of the state PSD, traveled throughout the state meeting local leaders and providing instructions for the coming elections. He was far more personable and out-going than the taciturn Valadares or the patriarch, Israel Pinheiro, or even the typical Mineiro politician. He also stood for election to Congress in December (Pinheiro Neto, 1977, p. 29-30).

With PTB help the PSD elected Dutra, and Juscelino received the second-highest number of votes for deputy in the state. He quickly lobbied the new president to appoint one of his men as the new mayor of Belo Horizonte. So after a slow start in the Estado Novo, Juscelino landed on his feet as mayor of Belo Horizonte and never looked back.

## **CARLOS LACERDA**

The only true carioca among the populists I studied, Lacerda grew up in a very political family that lived in the capital and on his grandfather's coffee plantation in the Paraíba Valley. A brilliant and ambitious young man, he followed the family profession by enrolling in law school in 1932, but he soon became enamored of leftist politics and took a leadership role in the youth wing of the communist party, which was illegal at the time.

As a young adult, Carlos displayed remarkable attributes for a Brazilian male. He was smart without being intellectual, very outspoken in his leftist politics, daring and confrontational in espousing his views, and increasingly skilled as a writer and speaker. He was comfortable living on the fringes of society, especially while exiled on the family farm. He also took interest in the city's samba music, appreciating its value and authenticity but decrying its commercialization as entertainment for the rich (McCann, 2004, p. 62).

Before the Estado Novo coup in late 1937 Carlos traveled incognito to Bahia to campaign for the only viable anti-Vargas candidate, José Américo de Almeida, and while there he

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<sup>6</sup> Kubitschek interview with Riedinger, Nov. 4 1975, AJK papers, Museu da República.



learned about the deep poverty in the Northeast and began chronicling the plight of the region's people. He also worked hard in the campaign before being arrested and jailed. Later he was released and allowed to join his father working on the family farm. During these years he met his future wife Letícia (Dulles, 1991, v. I, p. 46-50).

After the onset of the Estado Novo dictatorship, Carlos began writing journalistic articles to make money, and he inadvertently ran afoul of the PCB in 1939. The newly-founded Department of Information and Propaganda (DIP) commissioned a study of the communist movement in Brazil, and Carlos wrote a long piece as a free-lancer, trying to withhold information that might be harmful to party leaders. He intended to make it an honest account that would not damage anyone with names or secret revelations. He was taken aback when the article was criticized sharply by his former associates, who expelled and barred him from party activities. He had not been a formal member, but he had been a long-time sympathizer, so this marked a very serious break in his ideological trajectory (Dulles, 1991, v. I, p. 51-56; Lacerda, 1978).<sup>7</sup>

Carlos's separation from the PCB and his marriage marked another turning point in his life, the beginning of a long drift toward the political right and Catholicism. To make ends meet he began taking on more writing work from the DIP, mostly translating material supplied by the U. S. Coordinator for Inter-American Affairs. From 1940 until the end of World War II, the U. S. government worked closely with Brazil to promote better understanding and cooperation between the two allies. They also disseminated anti-Japanese and anti-Nazi materials. By 1943 Carlos also wrote regularly for the *Diários Associados* newspaper chain, then went over to write for two other major dailies. He tried unsuccessfully to enlist in the army (Dulles, 1991, v. I, p. 57-65).<sup>8</sup>

## **MIGUEL ARRAIS**

Born in the small town of Araripe, Ceará, in 1916, Miguel Arrais grew up in a rural middle class family. His father was a local merchant and his mother belonged to a clan with long-standing political clout there and in larger cities. His parents were related and shared the family name Alencar. Miguel was the oldest of seven children and the only boy (Barros, 1965, p. 11).<sup>9</sup>

After his high school graduation in 1932, Arrais moved to Rio de Janeiro, sponsored by a maternal uncle, to find work and enter the university. The following year he enrolled in law school, coincidentally in the same class as Getúlio Vargas's daughter Alzira. But without a job

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<sup>7</sup> Lacerda (1978), ch. 2 and a reprint of his article for the DIP on p. 413-441.

<sup>8</sup> On the U. S.-Brazil goodwill program, see Tota (2009). I found no indication why he was turned down for service. Keller (2001). Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/carlos-frederico-werneck-de-lacerda>>.

<sup>9</sup> Socorro Ferraz Barbosa, interviewed by the author May 4, 1987; The Alencar surname enjoyed long prominence in Northeastern politics, culture, and society.

in an economic depression, he decided to return to Recife, where he got a position in the Instituto de Açúcar e do Alcool (IAA), an agency Vargas had established to protect growers and refiners. He also began studies at the law school there. He was involved only marginally in student politics due to his need to work. He graduated in 1937, along with others who would become prominent, among them Mauro Mota, João Agripino, Abelardo Jurema, and Mario Bipes.<sup>10</sup>

Arrais' son recalled that his father had a natural inclination toward engineering and intended to pursue that career. But when he learned how much mathematics it would take, he opted for the traditional law degree. Still, in later years Arrais showed a strong affinity for engineering projects and technical problem solving.<sup>11</sup>

In 1940 Arrais worked on a major project for the IAA, developing a legal code for the sugar industry, which became law in 1941. As a result of this, he was promoted to a position overseeing all northeastern sugar matters. In 1943 his maternal uncle wrote a letter of introduction to the governor of Pernambuco, asking that Arrais be given a permanent position in the IAA in Recife, where he soon was relocated.<sup>12</sup> In this new role he wrote a proposal for a tax reform that brought him to the attention of a rising star in Pernambucan politics, Alexandre José Barbosa Lima Sobrinho. The latter, appointed director of the IAA offices in Rio, called Arrais to organize the agency files. Arrais visited the foreign affairs ministry, and used the filing system of Itamaraty as a model to overhaul the IAA records. Up to this point, Arrais had followed a standard career for a young bureaucrat, evincing little interest in politics.

## JÂNIO QUADROS

Jânio Quadros was born in the interior of the country, in Campo Grande, Mato Grosso, in 1917. His father, Gabriel Quadros, was originally from the state of Paraná, and his mother was the daughter of an Argentine rancher. In 1918 the family moved to Curitiba, where his father, a physician and pharmacist, found a job in the public health service. Gabriel became active in the state republican party, ran for office in Curitiba, and served in the state legislature. He opposed the Vargas revolution in 1930, however, and lost his job (Castro, 1959, p. 33-34; Mayer; Xavier, 2001).

In 1930 Gabriel moved north to São Paulo and found jobs in interior town clinics, after which he brought the family to live with him.

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<sup>10</sup> Miguel Arrais, interviewed by the author, May 8, 1987; Maximiano Accioli Campos, interviewed by the author, May 7, 1987. His law studies were comparable to an undergraduate course in the United States. The classmates cited became prominent politicians or men of letters, and two recorded oral histories used in this study. Pantoja; Lemos (2001). Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/miguel-Arrais-de-alencar>>.

<sup>11</sup> José Almino de Alencar, interviewed by the author, July 22, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> José Arrais de Alencar to federal interventor Agamemnon Magalhães, June 13, 1943, FGV/CPDOC.

In 1933 they settled permanently in the capital. Jânio started his high school studies in Lorena and later finished in the São Paulo Archdiocesan High School. His sister died at this time, and his mother raised him as an only child. Upon graduation in 1935 Jânio began teaching in elementary schools and also enrolled in the São Paulo law school. He participated in student politics and was elected the secretary of his club. After graduating in law in 1939, he set up a small practice in downtown São Paulo and taught in two traditional high schools. He also fell in love with and married Eloá do Vale in 1942, and their only daughter, Dirce Maria "Tutu," was born in 1944 (Castro, 1959, p. 35-36; Mayer; Xavier, 2001).<sup>13</sup>

## **JOÃO GOULART**

"Jango" Goulart, as he came to be known, grew up on a cattle ranch in Rio Grande do Sul, near the Vargas family ranch. Born in 1919, he was too young to participate actively in Estado Novo politics. Still, being raised by a prosperous and influential family, he seemed destined for a political career from an early age.

Upon graduation from high school, in 1934 he moved back to Porto Alegre to attend a college prep program in order to qualify for law school. In 1935 he began his law studies, earning a degree in 1939 that he would never actually use in court. Although he did not participate much in student politics, just before graduating he helped found the National Union of Students. He returned to São Borja frequently to help with the family businesses. During this period he became a close friend of Getúlio's son Manuel Antônio "Maneco" Vargas.<sup>14</sup>

Jango's father developed cancer in the early 1940s, so as eldest son Jango took responsibility for the ranches and processing plants. He was 24 years old when his father died in 1943, whereupon he inherited 14 thousand hectares of ranchland and 30 thousand head of cattle. During these years he was able to restore the enterprises to profitability, making the Goulart one of the richest families in the region.

## **LEONEL BRIZOLA**

One of the poorest youths in my study to go on to prominence, Leonel Brizola escaped rural isolation in Rio Grande do Sul by moving to Porto Alegre and pursuing school and work. Very smart and ambitious, he used his personal charm to gain experience during the 1930s. Leonel again looked for work and managed to find a landscaping job with the city. For a while he lived in a plant nursery. "I wanted to be isolated," doing penance for earlier excesses.

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<sup>13</sup> Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/janio-da-silva-quadros>>.

<sup>14</sup> Ferreira (2001). Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/joao-belchior-marques-goulart>>. José Gomes Talarico excerpt in Jurema (1979, p. 163-182). On his early life, see also Gomes; Ferreira (2007, p. 15-19).

While working there he completed his regular high school studies at night, managing also to rise to parks director. He underwent physical training in these years: swimming, sailing a little boat, and playing tennis. Despite his modest salary, he sent money home to his mother (Bandeira, 1979).<sup>15</sup>

He studied for university admission, and he passed the exam for the school of engineering at the federal university. He placed 11th out of 450 applicants: "I lived that drama." But his studies were interrupted by military service in World War II, and he began training to be a reserve artillery officer. He remembered, "I wasn't made for that." Instead he was drawn to aviation, an adventurous calling, and hoped to fly in Italy. He qualified as a pilot and learned acrobatics, but the war ended before he could go to Europe.

Leonel had made good friends during his schooling and was drawn to the re-democratization movements of 1944 and 1945, his first serious interest in politics. His motives were also personal: the new mayor of Porto Alegre wanted to fire him from his parks job in order to appoint a crony. Leonel resisted and was instead given a transfer to the department of rural education. For a time he worked with an agronomist, but eventually he went back to his university studies in 1945 and graduated in 1949 with a degree in engineering.

## ANALYSIS

The seven men studied here shed light on the Estado Novo and the opportunities and obstacles that stood in their way to mount their political careers and eventually populist ones. Most of them grew up in the rural areas of their birth and only later moved to state capitals and eventually settled in Rio de Janeiro, so the repressive apparatus of the Estado Novo weighed gently on them. Two of them, Ademar and Juscelino, won appointments through state politics that later enabled them to launch national careers after 1945. Lacerda, burned by ties to Prestes in the mid-1930s, went into hiding, surfaced briefly to write for the DIP, and then became a full-throated critic of Vargas. In fact, that opposition helped his populist career after 1945. Three, Jânio, Jango, and Leonel, were too young and geographically distant from Rio de Janeiro to have been influenced much by the Estado Novo. After 1945, however, Vargas came to play important parts in their rise to prominence. The national parties he founded in 1945, the PTB and PSD, and the UDN that arose against him, became critical in these men's future careers. For his part, Arrais, a late bloomer in politics, nonetheless gained a foothold in one of the agencies Vargas founded, the IAA and he acquired a mentor/sponsor, in the rising star Alexandre José Barbosa Lima Sobrinho.

Pedro Ernesto, who passed from the scene early, continued to influence the ways the public's role in government was thought for many years and also his successors. For example,

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<sup>15</sup> I also took notes on a very long interview Moniz Bandeira taped with Brizola, when he was given asylum in New York in 1977. This account, recorded on 16 audio cassettes, will be cited as "New York Interview." Keller et alii (2001). Disponível em: <<http://www.fgv.br/cpdoc/acervo/dicionarios/verbete-biografico/leonel-de-moura-brizola>>.

the educational centers he created inspired the later Cieps pioneered by Leonel Brizola when he became governor of Rio de Janeiro state.

In a larger sense, Vargas' Estado Novo reshaped the Brazilian state in ways that facilitated these men's future destinies. He had centralized the government so that when they rose to power they commanded a far more coherent national administration. Juscelino and Jango especially took advantage of the new regime. Expansion of the press, the return of Congress, and action by cultural organizations, citizens' groups, and civil society in general helped pave the way to what some call the "república populista." In it, the public gained a stronger voice and more participation in government affairs, and many enlisted in the parties of one or another populist. Media penetrated all sectors of society, enabling leaders to reach them directly and forcefully. Transportation improvements during the Estado Novo allowed politicians to reach remote locations and conduct modern campaigns, as Vargas himself did in 1950.

In conclusion, although the Estado Novo suppressed competitive politics and postponed the emergence of populism, it laid some important underpinnings of what would become their rebirth in 1945 and a flourishing time for the next generation.

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