

## Everyone asks the president

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## Abstract

This article addresses the communication between the Brazilian president João Goulart (1961-1964) and the people who sent him correspondence, from former presidents to anonymous. Did everyone ask the head of the nation? What did they ask for? What responses did they receive? The material examined here was kept for decades by Wamba Guimarães, a cabinet aide to the President of the Republic deposed by the 1964 coup.

### Keywords

Brazil; João Goulart government; Political communication.

## The keeper

The presidency of João Goulart (1961-1964) was a social and political period of great turmoil and ideological polarization. Elected vice president of the Republic, Jango, as he was called by all, was raised to the leadership of the Nation with the sudden resignation of Jânio Quadros less than seven months after the inauguration of the elected one, on August 25, 1961. Despite having the constitutional right to assume the vacancy left by the title holder, Goulart faced a coup attempt coordinated by military ministers, who vetoed him on suspicion of being a communist and representing a danger of destabilization to the country. João Goulart was traveling with politicians and businessmen to China at the time of Jânio's withdrawal. This seemingly insignificant aspect was taken as an aggravating issue. The inauguration of Jango, on September 7, 1961, was guaranteed by the resistance commanded by his brother-in-law Leonel Brizola, the governor of Rio Grande do Sul. Brizola set up what would be known as *Rede da Legalidade*<sup>1</sup>, a chain of radio stations (with Guaíba, from Porto Alegre, as the headquarters of this network), installed in the cellars of the Piratini Palace, the base of the Rio Grande do Sul's governments. Democracy won with the support of the press and stimulated a great popular mobilization.

Admitted to power, João Goulart assembled his government by paying close attention to the indications given to him for all positions of the public administration office. For the position of cabinet adviser he called an old acquaintance of his hometown, São Borja: the Uruguayan Wamba Guimarães, who had a long trajectory in public service. To get an idea of his server career, here are some examples: on August 9, 1954, Wamba was designated by Getúlio Vargas to "temporarily exercise the class E position in the Bookkeeper career of the Ministry of Finance's permanent staff". This information is written in one of the papers (917 items) kept by Wamba himself until his death in 2003 at the city of Arujá, localized in the state of São Paulo. Virtually all other documents carefully protected by him throughout his life in two suitcases are correspondence sent to the President João Goulart or minutes of letters and speeches to be made by Jango, in addition to confidential bulletins, reports, tickets, greeting cards from heads of state, telegrams and scattered notes.

Wamba's job was to handle Jango's correspondence. It was up to him to organize the flow: entry, registration, forwarding for reading and dispatch of the president and sending the answers. Before coming to this role, in 15 years of activities, Wamba Guimarães only raised his career as a meticulous advisor. On October 29, 1946, the federal intervener in Rio Grande do Sul appointed him to the probationary internship in the position of the State Treasury's administrative officer, "as it was approved in a competition". On March 20, 1947, he was transferred to the State Court of Auditors (TCE, in the acronym in Portuguese) still as an administrative officer. Bachelor of Economic Sciences, in 1949 Wamba was promoted to the cadres of the TCE. In 1950, he was authorized by the president of the ECA to sign "commitment certificates", with the expression "by the director". Bureaucracy was his ground, his specialty, his attempt to be socially lifted.

On May 18, 1951, classified as an accountant and economist, Wamba Guimarães was appointed by the acting president of the ECA, the prestigious intellectual Moysés Vellinho, to join a committee of inquiry "established to determine the responsibility of the Police Delegate, Bacharel Rodolfo Pierri, when he was title holder of the General Traffic Directorate. On 24 August 1951, having been given up by the State Court of Auditors, he was appointed to the position of Accounting Advisor to the Directorate of the Autonomous Department of Road Roads (DAER). On 27 October 1952, he became an administrative advisor of the DNER board. An arrow that rose due to true dedication.

When pushed out of power, João Goulart asked Guimarães to protect the correspondence of which the aide was methodically engaged. The Cabinet Officer took over the mission as a guard dog and got into clandestinity with his treasure. He took care of it until the last day of his life. His grandson, Ricardo

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<sup>1</sup> Network of Legality, in free translation.

Guimarães, decided to sell the material to set up a nursery room to meet the needs of his grandmother, Wamba's wife<sup>2</sup>. As an efficient bureaucrat and a faithful guardian, Wamba Guimarães witnessed Jango's government from behind the scenes. He saw the collapse coming. In the documents he kept, one can find the route of an announced downfall.

In the established narrative game, each move uncovers a possibility. It can be very instructive to cross views and look at these interpretative reflections. American historian Thomas Skidmore (1975) would see the end, in 1964, as a beginning: the break with a world view capable of opening new horizons:

The overthrow of João Goulart proved that the usual constitutional processes had failed in Brazil. It was not the first time that the Army had intervened to terminate the clash between politicians. The obvious precedent was 1954, but 1964 was profoundly different for several reasons. For the first time the Army was united under an ideological position against populism. This position was first expressed in February 1954 when the 'memo of the colonels' had been a veiled request for Goulart's dismissal of the Labor Bureau. This antipopulism became, however, the subsequent ultimatum of the generals that led to Vargas' suicide (Skidmore, 1975, p. 367).

In an ironic reading, through which the academic analysis can resort to heterodox devices as a way to provoke the unveiling of information, it would fit a colloquial comment: that's what we get when the national story is told by the foreign winner! The Brazilian Jorge Ferreira (2011), historian and biographer of Jango, saw part of this hidden side:

The US Secretary of Justice, Robert Kennedy, was already known in Brazil for his insulting statements against Goulart and Brizola. In addition to qualifying the former as the head of a disastrous government, he accused both of enriching themselves in the exercise of power. John Kennedy, several times, began to refer in a very negative way to Brazil, emphasizing the uncontrolled inflation, the economic-financial debacle, the poverty in the Northeast of the country, the danger of 'totalitarian solutions', among other derogatory comments (Ferreira, 2011, p. 318).

If analysts diverge from varied interpretational matrices, it remains to see the rubble of history. What does the contents of Wamba Guimarães' suitcases tell us about this past that still requires enlightenment? What the correspondence with Jango communicates about the President, about his government, who writes to him, the country, the historical context, international relations, the press, the functioning of power, social expectations, the interpretations about the period and the coming coup?.

## The correspondence

Wamba's suitcases have become an important archive. This correspondence has gained status as historical documents. The years have converted routine letters into doors to understanding the past. How did João Goulart communicate with his correspondents? What, in fact, does guard and reveal *the treasure* of Wamba Guimarães? The keeper, when he was still only a caring adviser, saw the dictatorship being designed and built. Then, already in anonymity, he witnessed the hardening of the regime, its abuses, terror, torture, the suffering of Jango in exile. Finally, the death of the deposed president, the agony of the system, amnesty for all as a way to protect the military and torturers from necessary trials and convictions.

The letters, reports, memos, cards and telegrams from Wamba's suitcases make the time speak. What does it reveal? Requests, complaints and responses suggest the tendency of the president to meet much of the requests. Why? Perhaps it was the interest to maintain the loyalty of his supporters and to

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<sup>2</sup> The material was acquired by the Federation Unimed-RS, with my intermediation, thanks to the interest for cultural matters of its president, the doctor and writer Nilson May. It was handed to me for research firsthand. I prepared a research project for CNPQ as a PQ 1B grant holder. The first published result was the book *A Memória e o Guardião: em comunicação com o presidente da República: relação, influência, reciprocidade e conspiração no governo João Goulart*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2020.

broaden the range of his approval as a way to strengthen the mechanisms necessary for governance in a time of stress, instability and uncertainty. Squeezed between right and left, the moderate Jango seemed to seek a difficult, unlikely or certainly impossible balance point to govern.

If the supporters have easy access to the President of the Republic, there isn't, as the ordinances show, a party or social class blockade. Demands more or less strong come from all social and ideological horizons. There is no limit or gender: why so many ask so much of the President of the Republic? What do they ask for? How do they ask for it? How much do they ask? Why do they ask? Who asks? Who asks more? If the response is late, the request resurfaces as accountability, threat, insistence, criticism or lamentation. With a thick blue pen, João Goulart makes notes on the papers he receives addressed to his most direct advisors. That is how the system works.

The 917 items in the archive reveal a sort of presidential nightmare: the head of the nation seems surrounded by a pack of suckers willing to do anything to satisfy themselves. Everyone asks tirelessly, using the lowest arguments or any argument at all. What counts most is the determination and conviction that the answers will be given. Who asks? The list is long, diversified and surprising: a former president of the Republic, high-ranking military, deputies, senators, governors, sergeants, generals, allies, opponents, former and future coup plotters, mayors, men, women, old, young, anonymous, acquaintances, religious, a cardinal, a bishop, a priest, students, artists, musicians, people from all places, from all regions, from all quadrants, anytime, all the time.

The photos from Wamba's collection show the president engaged with the population. Red-handed pictures of João Goulart in ministerial meetings, amid crowds, smiling, hugging people, acting as a politician, building public relations and strengthening ties with his supporters. Do these attitudes reveal what the elites call populism even if the population simply sees them as the exercise of power? Brazil from 1961 to 1964 shook because of the Cold War and caught fire because of its internal, unavoidable and fatal controversies.

João Belchior Marques Goulart, born in São Borja (Rio Grande do Sul). He became "Getúlio Vargas' political heir", according to the expression enshrined by journalism, reached the presidency of the Republic after two consecutive elections for the nation's vice-presidency; the first with Juscelino Kubitschek and the second - as was possible at the time - as opposed to Jânio Quadros. The elections for president and vice-president were separate. The result could be upsetting: two strangers or opponents sharing power. Jânio and Jango had little in common. The vice-president certainly expected nothing from the president, who unexpectedly handed over his envied position.

Installed in the presidential chair, João Goulart quickly understood that he lacked solid bases to negotiate with the National Congress. He was an intelligent, intuitive man who knew how to surround himself with qualified advisors. He would have to be creative, flexible, patient, caring, vigilant, able to listen to everyone and not have an ideological bias. Listening was his specialty. He would have to make this gift a political weapon. Listening alone, however, would not be sufficient. Everyone expected answers, concessions, excuses, caresses, indications, doors being opened. Why did so many people ask anyway? The most likely hypothesis has to do with the Brazilian situation of a country with an illiterate majority of citizens and a political tradition centered on the patrimonialism, *cartorialismo*<sup>3</sup>, *coronelismo*<sup>4</sup> and on the patronage system, categories that will not be analyzed here to avoid redundancy<sup>5</sup>. It was through giving

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<sup>3</sup> State based on public services controlled by personal or group interests.

<sup>4</sup> *Coronelismo* was the system of machine politics in Brazil under the Old Republic (1889-1930). Known also as the "rule of the coronels", the term referred to the classic boss system under which the control of patronage was centralized in the hands of a locally dominant oligarch known as a "coronel", particularly under Brazil's Old Republic, who would dispense favors in return for loyalty.

<sup>5</sup> See works such as Leal (2012) and Faoro (1977), both cited in the bibliographical references of this article.

that the power was kept.

The list of requests shows a country overwhelmed by its own backwardness and reveals a nation concentrated on a devastating centralism. Everything depends on the presidential pen: authorization to obtain loans from Banco do Brasil or from Caixa Econômica Federal, funds for the purchase of a home ownership, jobs of all kinds, sponsorship nominations, transfer of civil servants, positions, airline tickets, military promotions, interference of every order, recommendations and the opening of doors and windows for the future. An anthropological constant emerges: everything depends upon relationships, networks of contact, influences that result in loyalty pacts, bonds and acts of reciprocity.

Particular documents specify electoral agreements based on sharing future office positions. Black and white, as it was said without the slightest embarrassment. Almost nothing was illegal, everything was negotiated and much was assumed: sometimes discreetly, other times without fear of publicity. It could be put on paper who would have which positions and who would have distributed them in each place according to the articulations made. Documents are like clues to the understanding of a time period. Only a resurrected positivist could still believe in the absolute truth of these exhumed texts. The quality of the material preserved by Wamba Guimarães can be found in the homogeneity of the residues, which allow us to reconstitute a highly visited environment. One enters into the materiality of what is known by indirect means or by successive hazy approximations.

What characters stand out from this very near and simultaneous distant past? There are a lot of them: the opportunistic politician, the war-weary military man, the student with the finger on his head, the cunningly courteous governor, the former president waiting for a new reunion with power, the child of a leading political personality diagnosing the problems of the present and foreseeing without margin of error the outcomes of the future, the minister looking for resources, the citizen who asks for a horse, the general who wants money to pay off the purchase of his dream home, the famous journalist allied with the president who wonders about the next steps to be taken, the newspaper director who makes nominations for high positions, the informants of the coup attempts not yet forgotten and the coups still in preparation, faithful advisors who elaborate speeches and drafts of projects capable of shaking the dominant conservatism.

If there are requests, there are beggars. If there is someone who grants something, there are reasons for such. Nothing happens by chance. We are talking about a gear, a working device, a moving machine, a mode of management of the public thing passed from government to government. What facts can be unearthed from this storehouse of unexciting stories? A plan to bomb the National Congress, bulletins on secret (or not-so-secret) meetings, reports from people unsatisfied with the government, nebulous articulations to save the country from the communist spectrum surrounding the regime with the President of the Republic's connivance and the effective participation of some of his collaborators, mundane demands that needed to be informed to the most important man in the country. Stories written through many hands: the hands of those who ask, the hands of those who grant, the hands of those who mediate, the hands of those who exercise the power.

Jango listened and answered. He desperately sought to be heard in order to rule properly or because of his conciliatory personality. Even so, he would not have the power of the media at his side. Historian Jorge Ferreira (2011) sought to present with weighting the situation that would lead to the fall of the president:

With the exception of the newspapers' owners who clearly assumed their disapproval of Jango, like O Estado de S. Paulo and Tribuna da Imprensa, the press generally supported him, as long as he kept away from the left. It was the case of Jornal do Brasil, O Globo and O Jornal that, as of October 1963, united to form the so-called Network of Democracy. The newspapers of the three organizations have since unified their criticism of the government (Ferreira, 2011, p. 413).

In practice, Jango gave more than he had received. The conciliation policy has not worked. The radicalization strategy would work even less. His government suffered from an announced downfall or a deadlock that grew with time and polarization. The man of the listening had to govern a country that did not dialogue. The elites seemed satisfied with the abyss from which they fed themselves:

The Brazil that João Goulart received to govern was a country overwhelmed by social inequality. Only 3.350 million Brazilians owned some land. Only 2.2%, a measly 73,737 owners, dominated 58% of the territorial surface. The picture was devastating: 'out of a population of around 78 million, there were 40% of illiterates between the ages of 15 and 69, 6 million people (8.5%) enrolled in the primary education network, poor 900,000 citizens (1.2%) in high school and shameful 93,000 students (0.13%) in higher education, only two thousand graduate students' (Silva, 2013, p. 60).

In the face of this terrible picture, all concessions were insufficient and all the radicalization was excessive. Goulart wrote his epitaph believing in some kind of salvation..

## The requests

If everyone asks, how were those requests? What was the demand's rhetoric? It is necessary to examine some requests to give an image of the whole. On April 21, 1963, Tancredo Neves - who had been Prime Minister in the parliamentarianism of the time, a system of government adopted to allow the inauguration of Jango in 1961 - wrote by hand to the president.

My dear President, through the hands of the Caillard, I bring to your knowledge a letter sent to you by our dearest friend Bolivar de Freitas, who has just been relieved of his post in Beirut, somewhat in a "Galician style". I beg your permission to consider that Bolívar's act of dismissal may create some problems for you in the short and long term. a) He is the brother of Minister Gonçalves de Oliveira, who has been a guaranteed vote in the government's interest problems at the Supreme Court; b) Bolívar is the person of the most absolute intimacy of JK; c) the deputies of the Minas Gerais' PR who gave you the most firm and decisive support will be directly affected by the act, since Bolívar is one of its party leaders in Minas; d) the act's repercussion in the public opinion of Minas Gerais, where Bolívar enjoys deep esteem and the highest appreciation by all, will be the most unfavorable to the government. This is the case that I must consider for your decision. I am expressing the sincerest wishes for the success of your trip to Chile, which will be another beautiful page in your noble career as a statesman. I am here for everything, your ever-present Tancredo Neves.

In the case mentioned above, the claim assumed airs of defense of the president's interests. More than ask, Tancredo Neves was advising Jango. The outcome should be only one: to keep in office the one hit by an inappropriate decision. On November 4, 1963, Juscelino Kubitschek addressed the President of the Republic in a satisfied tone: "I thank the eminent friend for the authorization given to the request of Delamare de Abreu for a loan granted by Caixa Econômica de São Paulo to acquire his own home". Delamare de Abreu, with the name of Ranchinho, would be successful in the country duo with Alvarenga. JK practiced the most traditional clientelistic patronage. It was no longer advice, but an explicit exercise of influence. On February 22, 1962, JK went straight to the point with affective arguments:

My dear Jango, Carlos Neto Teixeira, a friend of mine and yours, is running for Lloyd's agent in Santos. I have natural constraints to annoy you with requests, for I know how much people torment the president of the Republic. I am, however, forced to make an exception. Carlos is an excellent companion, extremely dedicated to the cause that we defended in 1955 and then in 1960, and has all the titles for the position. I would be most grateful if my illustrious companion could work for you.

Magalhães Pinto, governor of Minas Gerais, conspired and dispatched with the same resourcefulness. On September 9, 1963, he sent a message to Jango's personal secretary asking him to

thank the President of the Republic for the loan authorization from Caixa Econômica Federal de Minas Gerais, worth 4 million cruzeiros, granted to Edgar Ferreira Duca. On the same date, another message thanked the loan release of 8 million cruzeiros to Ari Fernandes da Rocha. His requests seemed to be orders to execute for convenience.

In a handwritten letter dated March 12, 1964, on the eve of the storm that happened in the election rally at the Central do Brasil, someone known as General Solon asks for the presidential authorization to obtain a loan from Caixa Econômica Federal. The introduction is a agreement on the dominant power dynamics in which public affairs, personal relations and political action overlap:

Dear chief Dr. João Goulart, to whom I am strongly bound by ties of indestructible friendship, affective feelings of family and also by the arduous nationalist struggles that we undertake together and that have accelerated the historical process of our Homeland. With a strong and affectionate embrace, my cordial greeting, trust and unrestricted solidarity to you. I would like to deserve from my illustrious and worthy leader and friend Jango a special and particular fineness, that is, to authorize the Superior Council of the Caixa Econômica Federal through the Caixa Econômica Federal of Rio de Janeiro a loan in the amount of Cr\$ 10.000.000,00 (ten million cruzeiros) for the acquisition of a home ownership and also the dispensing of the grace period related to this loan.

Mauro Borges, governor of Goiás, had been lobbying. In June 1962, he complained: "I would ask you to recommend to Minister Moreira Sales to provide us with another five hundred million of the amount you promised us". He then suggested: "If you do not have any commitment, I would like to ask you, with great diligence, to designate General Américo Braga for the vacancy in the Superior Military Court". Jango's advisor kept the flow going: "The governor of Espírito Santo, Mr. Francisco Lacerda de Aguiar, requests that you examine the possibility of appointing his son, Mr. Dr. Paulo Vianna de Aguiar, for the administrator position of the Caparaó National Park". Jango sent the request to the Ministry of Agriculture.

No function or activity was an obstacle to the exercise of the requests. On November 24, 1961, President João Goulart signed a typed reply to the "eminent friend Dom Jaime Câmara", Cardinal Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro:

I received, with all due appreciation, your letter of November 19, recommending the name of Dr. Paulo Monteiro Mendes for a relevant position in the direction of the National Steel Company. In response, I am pleased to inform you that I have already addressed the matter to Admiral Lucio Meira, Managing Director of that company. I wish to send you, on this occasion, the testimony of my particular esteem and consideration.

On December 17, 1962, Bishop Carlos Motta, Cardinal Archbishop of São Paulo, knees before the president (if this expression is not disrespectful to use): "I come once again to appeal to Your Excellency's never denied generosity; and now, on behalf of my relative and friend, Mr. Geraldo Mauro Gomes, I wish that Your Excellency appoints him for the job of which you will speak personally". It couldn't lack one excuse for this: "I am committed to him because he is a very trustworthy person and also because he is a father who fights for his family, even though he and his family are deprived of material resources".

In letterhead of the House of Representatives, Francisco Leite Neto, PSD parliamentary, warns Jango with an alleged excuse:

The governor of Sergipe, Seixas Dória, reminds the President of his request to appoint the agronomist Aloisio Aciole Leite to the head position of the Agricultural Development Secretary of Sergipe.

On February 21, 1962, Jango received a list of names - along with the business card of Roberto



Marinho, owner of the newspaper *O Globo* - with suggestions for the presidency of the National Petroleum Council: "Sylvio Froes da Fonseca, director of the Institute of Technology; Antônio Viana de Souza, legal consultant of the *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional*; Adam de Freitas, lawyer at the Bank of Brazil and the *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional*".

The press depended on the government to buy imported paper. In the Wamba's Guimarães' archive there are dozens of securities relations and guarantees for the purchase of paper by the major journalistic companies. The radiography of the incestuous relationship between press and government appears in the statement of loans guaranteed by the State.

Bloch Editores S.A. – Rio Normal Operations Amount..... Cr\$ 99.600.000,00  
Species: Discount of Duplicates. Press Paper: Amount..... Cr\$ 100.000.000,00  
Guarantee: loan agreement, on behalf of the Federal Government, for the period that runs from April/62 to March/63, with promise of real guarantee, not yet implemented, reinforced by the bail of the company directors, in normal situation. Amount..... Cr\$ 50.000.000,00

They were loans from the Bank of Brazil, guaranteed by the federal government, with promises of real guarantee not yet realized. An explicit codependency that can be fully criticised. The situation is repeated from "A" to "Z", from Artes Gráficas Gomes de Souza, localized in Rio de Janeiro, with a loan of Cr\$ 70.100.000,00, to Casa Editora Vecchi, debtor of Cr\$ 40.000.000,00, "on account of the Federal Government, which promised a real warranty". The list of debtors guaranteed by the government with a real promise of assurance not yet realized is long: Boa Leitura Publishing House; Gazeta de Pinheiros, from São Paulo; Antena Newspaper Company; Revista do Rádio Publishing House LTDA.; Livreros Publishers S.A.; Selbach & Company, from Porto Alegre; Nascimento Júnior & Company, from Santos; Martins Bookstore Publishing House, from São Paulo; Jornal do Esporte, from Rio de Janeiro; Nacional Publishing House; Castelar Journalistic Company; Fon Fon & Seleta Publishing House Company; O Estado do Pará Publishing House; LEP Publishing House; Impressora de Jornais e Revistas Publishing House LTDA.; Ary Mills, from União da Vitória (PR); Ao Livro Técnico S.A.; Tenório Cavalcanti - Democratic Struggle; Commercial Society and Graphic Representations, from Curitiba; Jornal do Brasil S.A. (Cr\$ 100.000.000,00); O Estado de S. Paulo (Cr\$ 70.000.000,00); O Povo, from Fortaleza; PN Journalistic Company, from Rio de Janeiro; Diário Popular, from São Paulo; Comércio e Indústria Journalistic Company; Revista dos Tribunais Graphic Company S.A.; Correio do SUL Graphic Company, from Bagé (RS) (Cr\$ 750.000,00); Folha da Manhã, from São Paulo (Cr\$ 100.000.000,00); O Livro Vermelho dos Telefones; Shopping News do Brasil Publishing House; Abril Publishing House LTDA.; Conquista Publishing Company LTDA.; Editora das Américas; Brasil América Publishing House; Edibrás; Brasiliense Publishing House; Gazeta Mercantil; O Pensamento Publishing House; Eficê Publishers; Ersol; Paraná Esportivo; Edigraf, J.C. Barros, from Porto Alegre; J. Câmara.

In the Wamba Guimarães' suitcases there were also interesting papers from before the arrival of João Goulart to the presidency of the Republic. On March 12, 1955, from Belo Horizonte, Juscelino Kubitschek wrote to Jango, then president of the Brazilian Labour Party (PTB)<sup>6</sup>, to formalize what had been talked by them in prior meetings:

According to the verbal understandings we have maintained, claiming for the [sic] support of the Brazilian Labour Party to my application for the position of the Presidency of the Republic, I assume before you and the PTB the following commitments:

1º – The candidate for the Vice Presidency of the Republic, on the slate I lead, will be indicated by the Brazilian Labour Party.

<sup>6</sup> Brazilian Labour Party is translated to Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro in portuguese.

2º – If I am elected President of the Republic, the Ministry of Labor with the local councils linked to its activity, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and the Bank of Brazil's Agricultural Secretary will belong to the Brazilian Labour Party.

3º – The Brazilian Labour Party will participate in nominations to federal public office, in the proportion of 1/3 (one third).

4º – The State of Rio Grande do Sul politics will be held through the Brazilian Labor Party and local dissent of the PSD that will be added to the PTB for the purpose of the electoral campaign and support to the future Federal Government in the same state.

5º – The same condition of the previous item will prevail in relation to the States of Pernambuco and Santa Catarina politics.

6º – The financial resources for the election campaign of the Brazilian Labour Party for the next presidential succession will be provided by the central governing bodies of my campaign to the Presidency of the Republic.

On 6 July 1955, J.K. wrote to Jango on the same subject:

Confirming our personal pact, I hereby declare to my dear friend that I fully agree with the understandings established between you and Mr. Mário Palmério regarding the following: 1 - All federal nominations in the Triângulo Mineiro will always be made in agreement with Mr. Palmério. 2 - All grants and aid of any kind made possible by the initiative of the Federal Government to cultural, educational and assistance entities operating in the region of the Triângulo Mineiro will always be provided in agreement with Mr. Mário Palmério.

The deputy mentioned above is the same that would shine in the literature with *Vila dos Confins* and *Chapadão do Bugre*, two excellent novels. We can see through these letter exchanges a sampling of the functioning of the public machine at the time and the role of the President of the Republic as a broker of the various social extracts' interests. João Goulart was active in the search for governance. People who asked wanted to be seen. Asking was almost an order, especially when the request was from some politician.

## Final Remarks

The correspondence received by President João Goulart, signed by him in dispatches written by hand, shows, at first, the importance of the networked relations that have dominated that era through political favors and the lack of a deeper rationalization of the mechanisms behind the power exercise. The desired governability depended on constant attempts to expand the range of alliances. Responding to requests from allies was an obvious way to maintain the loyalty of the troops. Meeting opponents' demands could be a way of trying to lure them into a more cordial relationship and, who knows, get punctual support in controversial issues. Goulart used this direct communication to correspondents of all kinds, from anonymous citizens to former Presidents of the Republic, as an instrument of approximation, bonding and courtesy. It was necessary to catalog, answer, satisfy if possible, captivate, explain, but never ignore.

The material dutifully guarded by his cabinet advisor, the faithful Wamba Guimarães, functions as a door to the backstage of a government underscored by crises, convulsions and abruptly interrupted by a media-civil-military coup. More than anything, it is clear how much João Goulart believed in direct communication with his interlocutors: he would listen, read, answer, build bridges and try to solve a

problem. If he was, as they say, a man of listening, he was also a man of answers..

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