

# The ‘Subversive’ Press from the Interior: Politics and Journalism in the Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro (1951-1964)

## The ‘Subversive’ Press from the Interior: Politics and Journalism in the Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro (1951-1964)

Caio Vinicius de Carvalho Ferreira\*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4660-9124>

### Abstract

The *Folha de Ituiutaba* newspaper, characterized as a press from the interior, was a periodical produced between 1942 and 1964, which circulated in the Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro. Focused on reporting on the region where it was produced, due to its political stances, the newspaper was constantly monitored by the political police during the 1950s and part of the 1960s. Eventually, with the civil-military coup of 1964, under the accusation of being a “subversive” and “communist” publication, the newspaper was closed. This article aims to reflect on the political role of the newspaper, seeking to understand its political actions and the reasons why it was constantly monitored and, ultimately, closed. To achieve this aim, we use the newspaper itself as a source, alongside other documents, such as files from the political police, analyzing and cross-referencing these documents.

**Keywords:** Press from the interior, civil-military coup, Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro, *Folha de Ituiutaba*.

### Resumo

O jornal *Folha de Ituiutaba*, caracterizado como uma imprensa do interior, foi um periódico produzido entre 1942 e 1964 que circulava no Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro. Voltado a noticiar sobre a região em que era produzido, devido às suas posições políticas, o jornal foi constantemente vigiado pela polícia política durante os anos 1950 e parte dos anos 1960, até que, com o golpe civil-militar de 1964, sob acusação de ser um impresso “subversivo” e “comunista”, o jornal foi fechado. Este artigo tem como objetivo refletir sobre o papel político do impresso, buscando compreender as ações políticas do jornal e os motivos pelos quais foi constantemente vigiado e, por fim, fechado. Para isso, usamos

\*PhD in History, Federal University of Uberlândia. E-mail: caiovdecferreira@gmail.com



como fontes o próprio jornal, bem como outros documentos, como os arquivos da polícia política, analisando e cruzando esses documentos.

**Palavras-chave:** Imprensa do interior, golpe civil-militar, Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro, Folha de Ituiutaba.

## Introduction

*Folha de Ituiutaba* was a printed newspaper dedicated to the production of news focusing on the small region where it circulated. Produced in Ituiutaba, in the state of Minas Gerais, it circulated mainly within the microregion of Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro<sup>1</sup>. It was produced and circulated from 1942 to 1964, and up to the moment of its closure, it was the periodical with the longest duration in the region it dedicated its writings to. During the 1950s and 1960s, *Folha de Ituiutaba* and those responsible for it were frequently surveilled and denounced by the political police of that state. With the 1964 civil-military coup, its activities were suspended, resulting in the closure of the periodical and the imprisonment of its owner and editor-in-chief, charged of being a “subversive” means of communication.

In republican Brazil (1889–), mainly during the two dictatorships of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many newspapers faced censorship, prosecution and closure by the state<sup>2</sup>, mainly those more closely aligned with social movements and the critique to governments, whose activities were interrupted. From “its very beginnings, the press established itself as a political force. Governments and the powerful have always used and feared it; therefore, they flatter, monitor, control, and punish newspapers”<sup>3</sup>.

Although many newspapers were closed with the 1964 coup, *Folha de Ituiutaba* is a singular case – not necessarily unique. Most of the newspapers closed in that context were periodicals of an activist orientation or those clearly linked to political parties or social movements. *Folha de Ituiutaba* was a typical newspaper from the interior, mainly concerned with the dissemination of regional news, without an activist action or overt links with a political party. Even if some of its journalists belonged to political parties and the

<sup>1</sup> Ituiutaba is a municipality in the interior of Minas Gerais, located in the west of that state, and is the main town in the microregion of Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro. According to IBGE data, Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro had 143,348 inhabitants in 2010, distributed in five municipalities, as follows: Ituiutaba, Cachoeira Dourada, Ipiáçu, Capinópolis, Santa Vitória and Gurinhatã. IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. *Censo Demográfico de 2010*, Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Here, we refer to the *Estado Novo* (1937 - 1945), and the Military Dictatorship periods (1964 - 1985).

<sup>3</sup> CAPELATO, Maria Helena Rolim. *Imprensa e História do Brasil*. São Paulo: Contexto/EDUSP, 1988, p.13.

publication kept relationships with workers’ social movements, such bonds did not define its main purpose.

This study sought to understand how a newspaper from the interior, namely, *Folha de Ituiutaba*, attracted the attention of state repression, being surveilled and persecuted throughout its trajectory, and eventually closed. The investigation is based on the political and social context the newspaper was inserted at the time and the examination of its editorial practices and the discourses disseminated, to identify the reasons why it was categorized as a “subversive vehicle” of information by the authorities of that time. To achieve such aim, we analyzed the newspaper’s actions between 1951 and 1964, based on its publications and the impact they had on the sociopolitical context of those times.

Newspapers result from power. They are produced by groups who express their political, social and cultural representations of the world, contextualized in the reality they exist<sup>4</sup>. In a way, printed publications are symbolic ways of fighting for power, by means of which hegemony is pursued<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, they become spokespersons for groups, memories, ideals and political movements. They are not free from tensions, and many times play a fundamental role defending the interests of such group, thus, fulfilling the role of surveillance as well as complicity and political action.

This study was based on the analysis of newspaper sources complemented by the political police documents such as the records of the Political and Social Order Department of Minas Gerais (DOPS-MG, Brazilian acronym for Departamento de Ordem Política e Social de Minas Gerais), in addition to other materials related to the newspaper and its journalists, which enabled a detailed analysis of the newspaper’s practices and the impact of its actions on the 1951 - 1964 political and social context. The methodology used promoted not only the inquiry of such documents, but we also crossed sources seeking different information and paradoxes.

We believe that from the 1950s onwards, due to transformations in the regional economy and the action of local workers around their political claims, the articles in *Folha de Ituiutaba* started to represent the workers’ movement fights and demands. Although not appearing as a self-declared activist

<sup>4</sup> CHARTIER, Roger. O mundo como Representação. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *À Beira da Falésia: A História entre Certezas e Inquietude*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, 2002, pp. 61-80.

<sup>5</sup> BOURDIEU, Pierre. Sobre o poder simbólico. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *O Poder Simbólico*. Trad. Fernando Tomaz, Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Bertrand Brasil, 2003, pp. 9-15.

newspaper or one linked to any political party, its journalistic performance expressed the tensions and aspirations of that social context. The newspaper represented workers' struggles by opposing landowners' and entrepreneurs' policies, at both local and national levels. Due to these stances, the newspaper faced the discontent of local police and political elites, which gathered mainly industry owners and large farmers. Those elites sought ways of silencing the newspaper, and several attempts at ransacking the newspaper were made, all thwarted due to the illegality of the actions and the political power the newspaper held.

However, with the 1964 coup, those elites were strengthened by the new political context inaugurated by the civil-military coup and took advantage of it, in alliance with military authorities, they managed to close the newspaper and interrupt the flow of ideas and critique disseminated by that publication. In turn, military authorities saw in that alliance a fertile soil to consolidate the political and social control of that region, eliminating opposers and reinforcing authoritarianism in the regional context.

In such context, the role of elites as active agents in this process must be understood. Political elites correspond to minority groups inside societies that exercise the power of governing or ruling. They are different regarding organizational aspects, of institutional character, which allow them to remain in power, very often legitimated by means of institutional norms, traditions or social beliefs. Such elites are not static, since they are subject to circulation processes in which external or subordinated groups might ascend. They have some control on central decisions of society – not only administrative, but also those related to political priorities, projects, norms and governments – so that real power remains concentrated in the hands of a ruling minority<sup>6</sup>. With this conception as a starting point, we understand that in that context, when local elites allied with the military authorities in the new scenery, they resumed their position of dominance and eliminated dissident voices, including *Folha de Ituiutaba*.

## A Press from the Interior

Throughout its history, *Folha de Ituiutaba* adopted the slogan “dedicated to the interests of the region” alongside its masthead. This essentially summarized the newspaper's intended purpose throughout its trajectory:

<sup>6</sup> GRYNSZPAN, Mário. A teoria das elites e sua genealogia consagrada. *BIB: Revista Brasileira de Informação Bibliográfica em Ciências Sociais*, São Paulo, v. 41, 1996, pp. 35-83.

to inform, report, and offer its opinion focused on the Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro region. It circulated twice a week, but during some periods it was released weekly. In its final years, it reached a circulation of 3,000 copies per edition. Another inconsistency in *Folha de Ituiutaba* was the number of pages in its editions, generally alternating between 4 and 6 pages. The newspaper was printed in black ink. The size format was close to what we know today as a standard paperback, with pages measuring approximately 53.5 x 36 cm, characterized by elongated vertical pages, and generally folded horizontally in the middle<sup>7</sup>. The model follows a modular layout, which mixes vertical and horizontal distribution of articles and advertisements.

*Folha de Ituiutaba* followed the pattern of a regional newspaper, which, among the main characteristics of this type of publication, focused more on writing and reporting for its regional area, basically aimed at a market close to where it was produced<sup>8</sup>. It targeted readers in the cities where it circulated, mainly those located in the Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro region and its surroundings, emphasizing news from the cities of Ituiutaba, Capinópolis, Santa Vitória, Cachoeira Dourada, Prata, Monte Alegre de Minas, Gurinhatã, Ipiaçu, Campina Verde, and Canápolis, among others. Many of these cities had been districts belonging to the municipality of Ituiutaba up to the 1960s.

Throughout its history, *Folha de Ituiutaba* established itself as a regional journalistic powerhouse. It had a business-like structure, equipped with the most powerful linotype machine in the region during the 1960s, a significant journalistic staff divided into specific roles, and was full of editorials, social columns, sports columns, sensationalist articles, opinion pieces, and more, in addition to ample space for advertising and publicity. Furthermore, *Folha de Ituiutaba* was a destroyer of other publications of the time: throughout the years we studied it (1951-1964), no other competing regional newspaper survived as long as it did.

As stated by Ribeiro, the constructed idea that a graphic, editorial, linguistic, and business modernization of Brazilian newspapers occurred in the 1950s (mainly in the Rio de Janeiro press) ascribed the journalistic medium the status of an official space of information, granting it an institutional place as the announcer the “truths” of events as a factual record par excellence, establishing the printed press as an authoritative voice in relation to the

<sup>7</sup> DAMASCENO, Patrícia L. Design de Jornais: projeto gráfico, diagramação e seus elementos. *Biblioteca Online de Ciências da Comunicação (BOCC)*, v. 1, p. 1-40, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> ASSIS, Francisco de. Imprensa do Interior: conceitos a entender, contextos a desvendar; In: ASSIS, Francisco de (Org.) *Imprensa do interior: conceitos e contextos*. Chapecó: Argos, 2013, pp.13-19.

constitution of reality. At that moment, the journalistic discourse became synonym to production of authority, through the affirmation of fidelity to events, which gave it a certain symbolic power. Journalists implemented a discourse of neutral and objective interpreters of the social world, which was confirmed by the modernization of the press and the idealization of the profession in relation to the social role they claimed to have. This resulted in autonomy to the journalistic field in relation to the literary field. This modernization, self-affirmed by the journalists, was nothing more than the sedimentation of a series of implementations that had already been taking place since the beginning of the 20th century. Therefore, the transformation of the news into an aura of neutrality and objectivity at that time was a power strategy<sup>9</sup>.

*Folha de Ituiutaba* also published contents about international, national and state subjects. The production of such content was supported by material from newspapers of wide circulation (mainly *Última Hora* newspaper from Rio de Janeiro), radio, telegraph, and the recently arrived television. Generally, the information was transcribed and adapted to the local context. In this process, journalists expressed their political opinions regarding the events; even those transcribed verbatim constitute notes in which the newspaper agreed with or was aligned with the political viewpoint of the media outlet that originally published them.

In its journalistic practice, *Folha de Ituiutaba* gathered different forms of journalism aiming to cater for a regional demand. Thus, the periodical addressed a variety of themes throughout its trajectory, targeting a specific market, focusing on the region where it was produced and distributed, with its cultural and social peculiarities. With such focus, *Folha de Ituiutaba* developed its own communication strategies, privileging the dissemination of news events that interested directly its community, aiming to guarantee the local market.

## A “subversive” newspaper

*Folha de Ituiutaba* and its journalists had several problems related to their writing and the journalistic group action. The first register found about it, filed at the Political and Social Order Department of the state of Minas Gerais

---

<sup>9</sup> RIBEIRO, Ana Paula Goulart. Imprensa e História no Rio de Janeiro dos anos 50. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Cultura (Doctorate Thesis) – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ)/ ECO, 2000.

(DOPS-MG), refers to 24<sup>th</sup> July 1953, when the report states that the newspaper editor-in-chief, along with other workers’ leaders “secretly” supported a local movement which resulted in a general strike of workers from several segments, but mainly, those working in rice processing. According to that document, the demonstration aimed at a pay rise:

From late June onwards, there were rumors of a general strike of workers of all categories and rice processing machine operators, dry-cleaning workers and shop assistants, who demanded increased salaries, which has been requested by almost all workers here.<sup>10</sup>

From the late 1940s to the early 1970s, the microregion of Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro underwent significant social, political, and economic changes. A strong investment in rice cultivation began on large rural properties, making the region a national center for grain production. The urban industrial area was also transformed with the installation of warehouses to process the grains<sup>11</sup>.

In 1954, the 3<sup>rd</sup> March issue of the newspaper was registered with the DOPS-MG (Political and Social Order Department of Minas Gerais). The reason was that it had reproduced, from several other newspapers, a propaganda publication of the “Program Project of the Communist Party of Brazil,” a party that had been operating clandestinely since 1947, in a note titled “Free Section – The PCB presents its program”<sup>12</sup>. The owner of *Folha de Ituiutaba*, and the editor-in-chief were taken to the police station for questioning, where they informed that the piece of news was paid by a third party to be published in the newspaper. The journalistic company was sued based on the Press Law<sup>13</sup>, but the process was concluded and filed in the same year<sup>14</sup>.

Later, in 1957, in another record at DOPS, the editor-in-chief was accused of using the newspaper to spread propaganda “in support of the

<sup>10</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, Rolo 068, Pasta 4684-im. 5, 1953.

<sup>11</sup> MATEUS, Renato. *A dinâmica da agricultura no cerrado: do apogeu do arroz à modernização do campo na região de Ituiutaba/MG (1946-1974)*. Monograph (Undergraduate course) - Curso de História, Faculdade de Ciências Integradas do Pontal, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, Ituiutaba, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, Rolo 068, Pasta 4684-im. 3-4; 7, 1954.

<sup>13</sup> The press law referred to is Law Nº 2,083 of 1953, which “regulates Freedom of Press”. The process was based on chapter II, “OF ABUSE AND PENALTIES”, in articles 8th and 9th regarding “war propaganda and violent processes subverting political and social order, or propaganda that aims to fuel racial and class prejudices” LAW Nº 2.083, OF 12th NOVEMBER 1953.

<sup>14</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.657, ano XIII, Ituiutaba (MG), 10<sup>th</sup> April 1954.

Muscovite creed" and that the newspaper was "used for the practice of subversive activities"<sup>15</sup>.

Two years later, once more, the editor-in-chief was accused of advertising the workers' general strike, including several categories of workers in the regions, with "intriguing and sabotaging" purposes. He was charged with supporting communist movements and agreeing with the *Povo newspaper*, which according to the record, was said to be linked to the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB). The report also stated that the journalist had been "openly defending extremist ideologies as a worker of that cause", and also that "the newspaper is clearly supportive of the Moscow creed"<sup>16</sup>.

Eventually, with the civil-military coup, the last DOPS document about *Folha de Ituiutaba* was produced in April 1964, which was included in a Military Police Investigation (IPM, Brazilian acronym for Inquérito Policial Militar), which resulted in the closure of the newspaper. As a result, the newspaper's activities were interrupted, it was shut down, prohibited from circulating, and its collection of previous editions was confiscated. A military junta from the neighboring municipality of Uberlândia, with the support of local civilians, including several members of the local offices of the National Democratic Union (UDN, Brazilian acronym for União Democrática Nacional) and some from the Social Democratic Party (PSD, Brazilian acronym for Partido Social Democrático), carried out the closure of the newspaper and arrested the owner and the editor-in-chief. After the arrest, those responsible for the newspaper were forcibly taken to the DOPS (Political and Social Order Department) in Belo Horizonte, where they were held in private detention for a period, giving testimony. The accusation was of "attempting against the political and social order, through the preaching of extremist ideas and practices"<sup>17</sup>.

In the political police documents, *Folha de Ituiutaba* was seen as a complex subversive cooperative, in which various "subversive" and "communist" individuals used its pages to spread this ideology

## Institutional Politics

During its existence, *Folha de Ituiutaba* both supported and criticized the several political projects exposed by public agents in the region, or

<sup>15</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, Rolo 068, Pasta 4684-im. 6, 1957.

<sup>16</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, Rolo 046, Pasta 3809-im. 163-164, 1959.

<sup>17</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, rolo 049, pastas 3882-im.11, 1964.

those elected to represent it, and also acted by legitimating or justifying certain positions. At the same time, the periodical relationship with social movements, clubs, unions and associations was essential in the constitution of regional policies.

The political relationships that give characteristics to spaces where regional newspapers circulate present variables that need to be considered, such as electoral behavior, the political tradition of those who write there, relationships with local and regional political leaders, as well as actions/reactions to state and national events. Newspapers are a means of communication; therefore, they are products of the expressions of groups that have come together, fostered by their interests and their cultural, political, and social pressures.

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) was a political party with a conservative orientation (despite including more progressive wings) and linked to the middle class and dominant economic groups (not as reactionary as those of the National Democratic Union - UDN). The party avoided taking rigid doctrinal positions, and, in the same way as the PTB, it was also linked, in its roots, to Getulio Vargas's ideas, due to its formation, which included several intervenors appointed by Getúlio Vargas during the Estado Novo. With a pragmatic character, the party was more linked to the rural and interior interests of Brazil, which makes a lot of sense in the Pontal do Triângulo region, given the rural production and the local politicians affiliated with the party, most of whom were rural landowners. While politically linked to a faction of the PSD, *Folha de Ituiutaba* journalists also had tendencies towards progressive wings, turning, in the 1960s, to labor ideas more closely associated with the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB, Brazilian acronym to Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro). The basic rule within the PSD (Social Democratic Party) was conciliation, negotiation, and moderation, as it was a party where traditional leaders, attentive to the rural base and large landholdings, coexisted with emerging reformists focused on the urban electorate. This former group was known as the “foxes”, while the latter was called “young wing”<sup>18</sup>.

Despite the journalists' support and affiliation to PSD, the newspaper affinity with workers' politics increased gradually, until the 1960s, when *Folha de Ituiutaba* got closer to the measures taken by PTB in the region. At the time, they supported many of their political projects, which defended

---

<sup>18</sup> HIPPOLITO, Lucia. *De Raposas e Reformistas: O PSD e a experiência democrática brasileira (1945-64)*. 2<sup>o</sup> ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2012.

Ituiutaba's workers. PTB came from a movement of achievements in the institutional policies in the microregion since the 1950s, leaving a party with few candidates and limited representativeness, to another party, which in 1962, managed to elect most of the representatives in Ituiutaba's municipal council<sup>19</sup>, the mayor and deputy mayor.

During that period, the newspaper supported measures that favored local workers. Among the proposals, the one from the PTB (Brazilian Labor Party) caucus stood out, which decreed the implementation of the "English Week," which referred to reducing and reorganizing the workday in local commerce and industry. The model proposed 44 hours of work per week, distributed into 8 hours a day, from Monday to Friday, and 4 hours on Saturdays, with part of Saturday and Sunday free (in addition to holidays) for the workers to rest. Throughout 1963, the newspaper started to publish short notes that were highlighted in its first page, with larger headlines as in a campaign, repeating sentences like "English week is arriving!"<sup>20</sup> and "Ituiutaba wants the English week!"<sup>21</sup>. The proposal was approved by the councilmen, and the newspaper celebrated it with the headline: "City Council approved the institution of the 'English Week!', the note affirmed that "the new decision of closing commercial and industrial facilities at 12:00h on Saturdays was welcomed by the workers"<sup>22</sup>.

Another proposal of the PTB government, supported by the municipal council and widely discussed by the local press, was the creation of a new tax rule for the municipality. According to a DOPS record about the mayor, the project provided for the application of taxes proportional to the taxpayer's property and earnings, which represented an attempt to make the collection more progressive and socially fair. The document read:

In fact, even being a large landowner, he was always in favor of reforms, going against many of his farmer colleagues. As a mayor, when the municipal council met to approve the New Tax Rule, increasing taxes on large landowners [...].<sup>23</sup>

<sup>19</sup> In 1962, PTB elected 6 representatives in the city council of Ituiutaba, while UDN elected 5, and PSD elected 3. Finally, PSP elected only one representative. FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1236, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 02<sup>nd</sup> February 1963.

<sup>20</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1237, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 06<sup>th</sup> February 1963.

<sup>21</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1242, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 23<sup>rd</sup> February 1963.

<sup>22</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1245, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 13<sup>th</sup> March 1963.

<sup>23</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO - Fundo DOPS/MG, rolo 008, pasta 0078-im.188-189, 1964.

In 1963, *Folha de Ituiutaba* published the article “Labor Law (minimum wage, etc.) for workers in this municipality”, an interview with the newly elected mayor (PTB party), in which he presented his government proposals, emphasizing measures favoring workers and confirming his support to the approval of the new tax rule. For giving space to these agendas, *Folha de Ituiutaba* was aligned to the workers’ discourse which was strengthened in the local scenario and acted as the spokesperson for regional policies that supported workers’ interests<sup>24</sup>.

Such alignment becomes more evident in the editorial entitled “Few decide for most”, in which the writer summoned the population to support the mayor’s project and trust his political actions. The text defended:

NOBODY who has some responsibility for the fate of our community can refrain from taking part in the normal and peaceful handling of the discussion about the municipality Tax Rule Project (...).

LET’S all, regardless of the political party supported, help the mayor in his effort to promote tax justice in Ituiutaba (...).<sup>25</sup>

Therefore, *Folha de Ituiutaba* played an active role in the legitimization of the government project, by promoting a narrative of order, civism and modernization, in tune with worker’s ideals.

As a consequence of the changes in the region, resulting from the appearance of new political subjects claiming their rights – such as the large number of rice workers, many of them coming from Northeastern Brazil – new political actors also appeared, followed by problems and questioning about privileges. In such context, PTB started to grow, conquering new electors and defending those fights.

PSD, even with its contradictions, was roughly formed by two wings that started a conflict in the last few years of the party. The Young Wing of PSD was one of the founders of the Nationalist Parliamentary Front (FPN, Brazilian acronym for Frente Parlamentar Nacionalista), which created internal conflicts in the party, due to other wings allied to the rural oligarchy (the “foxes”), mainly in disputes around João Goulart’s Basic Reforms. With the 1964 coup, the party divided into supporters and non-supporters, and most “foxes” supported Goulart’s removal from Office<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.2036, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 02nd February 1963.

<sup>25</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1279, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 04th September 1963.

<sup>26</sup> HIPPOLITO, Lucia. *De Raposas e Reformistas: O PSD e a experiência democrática brasileira (1945-64)*. 2<sup>a</sup> ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2012.

Therefore, we can affirm that although writers and columnists of *Folha de Ituiutaba* produced a discourse of journalistic impartiality, they were politically aligned to the so-called “Young wing” of the PSD alongside other supporters. They defended workers’ policies in their pages and opposed conservative and elitist political policies in the microregion (exposed in the proposals by UDN and other PSD members linked to the privileges of large rural landowners). They also supported the fights that alleged to defend local workers’ achievements.

Despite the labor movement, as a political project, having been born in Getulio Vargas’s government, during the Fourth Republic (1945-1964), it gained depth as a view of nation, development and society. Based on a national-popular movement, it sought economic nationalism (sovereignty and resources control by the state), developmentalism (by means of industrialization and modernization), and social reformism (based on the application of rights and popular participation).<sup>27</sup>

The same civil-military action that led to the closure of *Folha de Ituiutaba* in 1964, also resulted in the removal of political agents linked to PTB and their functions in the municipality of Ituiutaba<sup>28</sup>. They were replaced with other managers, most linked to the local UDN office, thus revealing the post-coup political reconfiguration.

## Social movements, groups and associations

The relationship between *Folha de Ituiutaba*, local workers and social movements was observed in several publications. In the newspaper’s final years, this connection became more evident. As part of the political scheme, not only did the newspaper demonstrate and support policies and actions, but it often acted in their organization, by reporting, informing, and bringing, in its pages, notes on the rights and struggles of groups of workers. On the one hand, the publications were favorable to workers and social movements. On the other hand, they also characterized a political relationship strategy, in which the newspaper presented itself as a coordinator and unifier, making alliances with these movements, while the workers aimed to obtain labor improvements with this pact.

<sup>27</sup>DELGADO, Lucília de Almeida Neves. Trabalhismo, nacionalismo e desenvolvimentismo: um projeto para o Brasil. In: FERREIRA, Jorge (org.). *O populismo e sua história: debate e crítica*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira. 2001, pp. 167-293.

<sup>28</sup>ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO – Fundo DOPS, rolo 018, pasta 0269 - im.310; 365, 1964.

From the late 1940s onwards, *Folha de Ituiutaba* published several notes addressing union and workers' issues in the region, charging employers. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the periodical published several articles on the issue of setting a minimum wage for workers in the municipality, demonstrations in favor of the minimum salary and its increase. In 1959, the newspaper published an article entitled “Local Workers are discontent with the minimum wage set in the municipality”, where the dissatisfaction of workers from Ituiutaba with the local minimum wage was discussed, mainly when compared to neighboring cities, the text reported:

The discontent was caused by the levels in Uberaba and Uberlândia. [...] Concordia held an assembly last night with the Ituiutaba Workers' Association to discuss the new salary guidelines decreed for this municipality and the measures needed for the new memorandum that will be sent to the Mayor and the President of the Republic.<sup>29</sup>

In the early 1960s, *Folha de Ituiutaba* focused on reporting the strike by municipal workers demanding an increase in the minimum wage. In April 1961, it emphasized and supported the claims of workers, describing it as fair and deserving the “general support”. When covering the demonstrations of 1<sup>st</sup> May, the periodical emphasized the legitimate character of the demonstrations and stated that:

Workers have the right to fight for a wage that allows them to meet their basic needs for food, clothing, and housing. The movement is peaceful and just; it is not a campaign to antagonize the administration, but rather a legitimate demand that deserves support.<sup>30</sup>

In 1962, the newspaper continued to cover the strikes and mobilizations for the minimum wage adjustment, reaffirming its support for the workers' cause in the face of the rising cost of living. In reporting the end of the strikes, it highlighted the exemplary character of the strikers: “The municipal workers' strike movement was peaceful and orderly, demonstrating an awareness of the cause they were fighting for by triggering the strike”<sup>31</sup>.

---

<sup>29</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.928, ano XVIII, Ituiutaba (MG), 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1959.

<sup>30</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1096, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 19<sup>th</sup> April 1961.

<sup>31</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1195, ano XXI, Ituiutaba (MG), 1<sup>st</sup> August 1962.

*Folha de Ituiutaba* also featured calls and announcements for workers' meetings and gatherings, acting in the organization of these events. The periodical served as an informative source about actions and measures taken by these associations. Such notices were published as a way to bring workers together and keep them informed of discussions, especially after meetings and deliberations, as well as reporting on the events of those meetings along with announcements of upcoming ones. By taking this approach, the newspaper became an informative vehicle for workers, perhaps with the intention of gaining their political support within the political arena. *Folha de Ituiutaba* presented itself as a disseminator of these groups and movements, publishing messages and reports from various associations in its pages and supporting actions in favor of labor causes.

In 1958, a Workers' column was included in the newspaper, a section that periodically published content on the workers' rights and achievements. In the early 1960s, the Union column was created, with the same content. In the written part of *Folha de Ituiutaba*, there are several explanations given to workers, informing and updating them regarding issues related to the newly passed laws. The column also published messages with guidelines in favor of the workers' union, affirmation and mobilization for the fight.

It seems relevant to consider that the microregion of Pontal do Triângulo Mineiro went through several changes from the late 1940s onwards, and the newspaper publications not only reported those changes and the appearance of new actors in the political arena and in the fight for their rights, but, it also became an agent supporting those who affirmed to represent the new groups. The newspaper sought to send their message to the readers and expose their projects and proposals.

Such modifications in the social environment of the region first occurred due to the large-scale production of rice and the growth of this activity as the main economic product of the microregion, thus favoring migration between the 1950s and 1970s. The economy of Pontal Triângulo Mineiro was inserted in the national food production, Ituiutaba and its neighboring cities experienced strong economic growth, linked to the increased urban and rural population, due to the arrival of workers coming from other regions, to the urbanization promoted and the increase in rice production, which was linked to the processing of the product within the urban area.

The region became a large supplier, exporting their product to the interior of states and the capitals of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas

Gerais. Public and economic policies incentivizing production such as the adoption of minimum prices, loans, credit and inputs, provided by financial institutions (mainly Banco do Brasil) and the incentive to the agricultural production, influenced this process in the microregion. In the first decades of the second half of the 20th century, rice became the main product of the region, where economic elites that owned the regional means of production started to call the municipality of Ituiutaba the “capital of rice”. In that period, the production of food in the region went through a modernizing process, based on deforestation and large rural properties, causing conflicts between landowners, rural workers and small farmers. In fact, there were profits and benefits resulting from this productive system; however, it was not enjoyed by many, since the capital was concentrated in the hands of few individuals<sup>32</sup>.

Producing rice was expensive, demanded special care for the crop, and a large number of workers to fertilize and correct the soil, sow, harvest and handle the product in storage centers and the processing industry, which were located within the city. Since there was not an effective number of workers in the region to cater for the demands, strong migration of workers coming from Northern Minas Gerais was observed (mainly from the region of Vale do Jequitinhonha), and in higher numbers from Northern and Northeastern Brazil<sup>33</sup>.

The newspaper also played a fundamental role in the creation of the Rural Worker’s Union of Ituiutaba. From 1963 onwards, *Folha de Ituiutaba* started to publish in its pages summons and notices about preparatory meetings, indicating the place, day and time of meetings. In a note published with the title “Invitation to Workers”, the periodical called a general meeting to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1963 at the City Council of Ituiutaba to discuss several topics such as “minimum wage, family allowance, and retirement, among others”. That meeting joined workers and small farmers, who days later started the Rural Workers’ Union<sup>34</sup>.

In 1964, in its first annual issue, the newspaper highlighted the official foundation of the Rural Workers’ Union of Ituiutaba, which occurred in the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> January in that year, also at the City Council. According

<sup>32</sup> GIAVARA, Eduardo. A dinâmica da produção do arroz em Ituiutaba (Minas Gerais, 1950-1970). *Patrimônio e Memória* (UNESP), Assis -SP, v. 15, p. 182-199, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> SILVA, Dalva Maria de Oliveira. Memória: Lembrança e Esquecimento. Trabalhadores nordestinos no Pontal do triângulo mineiro nas décadas de 1950 e 60. Programa de Pós Graduação em História (Master’s Dissertation) PUC - Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 1997.

<sup>34</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1300, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 07<sup>th</sup> September 1963.

to the publication, around 500 field workers attended the event. The news also recorded the union second meeting, which had already occurred on 26<sup>th</sup> January, with around 800 men. The coverage emphasized the individuals' participation by the enthusiasm and dimension of that movement, classifying the number of attendees as a "surprising figure" where the work "was developed in an atmosphere of great enthusiasm", thus evidencing the effort and union of workers around their claims<sup>35</sup>.

The Rural Workers' Union of Ituiutaba was closed few months after its foundation, In the same civil-military action that removed PTB politicians from public power and shut down the newspaper. Union leaders were also arrested alongside journalists and were called "communist" and members of "the red creed"<sup>36</sup>. Therefore, together with the newspaper and political agents in favor of the labor movement, they also destroyed the newly created group of workers' representatives.

## **Labor Movement and Nationalism**

Throughout its trajectory, the newspaper supported measures of labor and nationalist policies. The government of Getulio Vargas was marked by these two ideologies: the former was based on the fight for workers' rights and social justice; while the latter was based on the idea of self-sufficiency and political independence in relation to the foreign dominance – so that they were complementary in the Brazilian progressist political ideal of the time.

In the 1950s, a great conflict started in Brazil around the national economic development model. Part of civil society believed that the solution was a "nationalist" stance, which defended the absence of influence of foreign capital in the country, where the economic development was guided by the state and the capital of national companies. However, groups opposing Vargas's government, mainly those linked to UDN, defended the influence of foreign capital within our economy, since they saw it as the fuel for development<sup>37</sup>.

Regarding Getúlio Vargas, *Folha de Ituiutaba* showed two distinct stances throughout the period analyzed. Firstly, while Vargas was the president of the country (1951-1954), the newspaper was suspicious of the politician from Rio Grande do Sul. It questioned his authoritarian profile and his closeness

<sup>35</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1304, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 01<sup>st</sup> February 1964.

<sup>36</sup> ARQUIVO PÚBLICO MINEIRO – Fundo DOPS, rolo 018, pasta 0269 - im.310; 365.

<sup>37</sup> SKIDMORE, Thomas Elliot. Brasil: de Getúlio a Castello (1930-64). Trad. Berilo Vargas, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010.

to foreign power such as the United States. In the editorial “Warning Cry!” of 1954, the newspaper referred to the *Estado Novo*, as the “Vargas’s dictatorship”, thus inviting local politicians to fight in favor of democracy against regimes like that of the former dictator:

(...) appeal to the men with the greatest responsibility in the political landscape of this land, at this decisive moment for the municipality with the approach of the third election since Vargas’s dictatorship. A new city and already important in the Triângulo Mineiro region, Ituiutaba has grown rapidly, not only in population density but also commercially and politically.<sup>38</sup>

However, when the president died and after his death, the newspaper posture changed significantly. The publication starts to describe him as a politician that had benefited workers and the Brazilian nation, associating his image to nationalism and labor movement that the parties in favor of Getúlio defended, mainly, PSD and PTB. In the 1955 presidential elections, the newspaper headline read: “Juscelino and Jango: candidates from the National Popular Labor Movement”, linking those candidates directly with the social reforms initiated by Vargas:

The National Popular Labor Movement, an organization with a branch in this municipality, bringing together union leaders, various class-based entities, including public employees, and the strongest contingent of the working class throughout the country, around demands ranging from the defense of democracy to the most advocated basic reforms for the progress and economic emancipation of Brazil, especially those initiated by President Getúlio Vargas, held its major National Convention in São Paulo on the 6th and 7th of this month.<sup>39</sup>

Getúlio Vargas was one of the most important Brazilian political leaders. In 1929, he led a movement contrary to the elections and ended up victorious, which gave him the provisional government of the country in 1930. He was constitutionally elected, indirectly, president of the country four years later. In 1937, he closed the national congress and implemented a dictatorship that was known as *Estado Novo*, developing an agenda of construction of a state with nationalist and interventionist character, and becoming extremely popular. Even so, in 1945, he was removed from office. In 1950, he was elected

<sup>38</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.685, ano XIII, Ituiutaba (MG), 05<sup>th</sup> July 1954.

<sup>39</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.727, ano XIV, Ituiutaba (MG), 13<sup>th</sup> August 1955.

directly by voters and became president of the republic in the PTB party in 1951. His government experienced strong opposition from UDN. Due to political unrest and the possibility of an impeachment, he took his own life in 1954, leaving a testament letter which caused popular commotion. Even after his death, he was very important in the next elections, mainly in the victory of Juscelino Kubitschek, due to the alliance between the parties PSD and PTB. He also left political heirs who stood out in the political scenario in future years. The memory of Vargas and his government has been in constant dispute since his death, and the 1964 coup is considered the fall of Getúlio's and his political heirs' ideals – and they started to be chased by the newly installed dictatorship<sup>40</sup>.

By reinforcing Vargas's role, the newspaper expressed his ideas in the group of Vargas's heirs, who alleged to fight for labor policies. Such position of representation of reality adopted by *Folha de Ituiutaba* after Getúlio Vargas's death, occurred because the newspaper, which had been suspicious of the labor leader before, supported his heirs in the following years. Juscelino Kubitschek, João Goulart and Leonel Brizola were among them, but they also supported labor defendants and nationalists of the region, who also claimed the politician's inheritance. The newspaper represented the image of the dead leader, as a way to confirm the positions of his political heirs. By acting in this way, the publication turned its group into legitimate heirs of the nationalist policies implemented during Getúlio Vargas's government in the democratic period, but, at the same time, wanted to distance itself from the Estado Novo dictatorship.

The relationship between *Folha de Ituiutaba* and Juscelino Kubitschek had a different trajectory from that kept with Vargas. This time, there was no oscillation in the newspaper positioning: it was loyal to the leader from Minas Gerais all the time. Juscelino (also known as JK, his initials) was considered by the newspaper one of the main heirs of Vargas regarding the nationalist and modernizing project (even if JK as in PSD, a different party from that of Vargas, PTB).

The newspaper support to JK's policies was observed in several publications which described his progressist view in the region by means of infrastructure works such as the creation of roads and energy generation, – these proposals became the main flags of the nationalist politician for the development of the interior of the country, used while running for presidency.

<sup>40</sup> FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes. *Getúlio Vargas: uma memória em disputa*. Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, 2006..

JK’s project, known as national-developmental, was based on incentive to the economic progress of the country by means of industrialization and structural works, promoting domestic development in the country and national integration<sup>41</sup>.

One example of this support can be found in the issue of 11<sup>th</sup> August 1956, with the note “Substantial sum allocated to the Cachoeira Dourada power plant”, which informed that:

President Juscelino Kubitschek authorized the National Bank for Economic Development to grant a loan of Cr\$ 113,112,000.00, destined to the work of the Cachoeira Dourada Power Plant, as well as for the National Treasury’s guarantee of foreign financing, in the amount of 1,427,000 dollars, for the same building.<sup>42</sup>

In the following year, *Folha de Ituiutaba* announced the start of the first phase of the power plant construction, highlighting the presence of the president of Brazil and other authorities:

With the presence of the Head of State and prominent figures in the country’s political and administrative life, the first stage of the Cachoeira Dourada Hydroelectric Power Plant was inaugurated this morning, with its transmission line already connected to Goiânia, from where it will continue to Brasília. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by the President of the Republic, Mr. Juscelino Kubitschek, who flipped the switch, putting the turbines into operation (...)

Mr. Juscelino Kubitschek also presided over the inauguration of several improvements in Goiânia, including the State Agricultural Penitentiary, the Tuberculosis Hospital, and the headquarters building of the Goiás Electric Power Company.<sup>43</sup>

Such coverage reveals the newspaper’s enthusiasm for the national developmental project by JK expressed by the incentive to industrialization, modernization and territorial integration in Brazil. *Folha de Ituiutaba* remained a supporter of JK throughout his political trajectory, from the period he was governor of the state of Minas Gerais, during the successful presidential

<sup>41</sup> MOREIRA, Vânia Maria Losada. Nacionalismo e desenvolvimento auto-sustentado. *Revista Dimensões* (UFES), Vitrória - ES, v. 5, nº 5, p. 112-118, 1997.

<sup>42</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.779, ano XV, Ituiutaba (MG), 17<sup>th</sup> August 1956.

<sup>43</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.779, ano XV, Ituiutaba (MG), 17<sup>th</sup> August 1956.

campaign with João Goulart as deputy president, and his office as President of the Republic (1956-1960) and even after the end of this term.

In the early 1950s, while Juscelino Kubitschek was a federal deputy, he visited the region, and on that occasion also visited the *Folha de Ituiutaba*'s facilities. The periodical praised the visit, highlighting the affinity of the politician from Minas Gerais with the progressist spirit of the city and the newspaper:

And on the occasion of such an honorable visit, the “Folha de Ituiutaba,” which shares with this hardworking population the same ideals of progress and love for their homeland, also adopts the affectionate expressions of sympathy that the distinguished visitor receives from the people of Ituiutaba<sup>44</sup>.

At the end of his presidential office, the newspaper reaffirmed its closeness with JK, publishing a “Message from the President of the Republic to the direction of *Folha*: The director of this newspaper received yesterday the following message from Mr. Juscelino Kubitschek, President of the Republic”. The note reproduced the whole message sent by JK, in the last month he occupied the position of President of the Republic, which had been written at the new political capital of the country: Brasília. The letter was addressed to the owner of the newspaper and the politician from Minas Gerais reaffirmed his “recognition of the patriotic work, support in the battles fought to bring the cause of national development to its full success”, also thanking the newspaper and its staff for the teamwork and partnership<sup>45</sup>.

Regarding the government of João Goulart (1961-1964), the newspaper aligned to it favorably. João Goulart, also known as Jango, was one of the first political names within the Brazilian progressist left wing during the Fourth Republic (1945-1964). The politician in the PTB party had occupied several political positions but earned national recognition when he was appointed Minister of Labor in 1953, during Getúlio Vargas's democratic government. His action, in a little over six months in the ministry, was sufficient to guarantee a legion of enemies from the anti-Getúlio right wing. He was even dismissed from that position due to the pressure of military sectors in 1954. Although he was expelled from Vargas, Jango became one of the favorite heirs of the former dictator, and one of the three copies of his testament letter was addressed to Goulart, who was empowered by the event and received more votes than

<sup>44</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.932, ano XVIII, Ituiutaba (MG), 24<sup>th</sup> January 1959.

<sup>45</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1076, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 11<sup>th</sup> January 1961.

JK when running for deputy president in 1955, and was re-elected deputy president in 1960.

When Jânio Quadros resigned in 1961, the deputy João Goulart, who was travelling through China, was prevented from taking office by the military agents, and Brazil was governed by a military board formed by Janio Quadros's ministers from late August to early September. There were rumors that if Jango returned to Brazil, he would be arrested. This started a political crisis and both army and civil society were divided regarding the fate of the country. Two sources of resistance appeared defending Jango's return, one was among the military group, led by Marshal Lott, and another, in Rio Grande do Sul, led by the governor Leonel Brizola. The congress found a conciliatory solution, namely, immediately adopt a parliamentary system via amendment of the Constitution. Jango accepted it for fearing greater conflicts, and took over the presidency with the powers granted on 7<sup>th</sup> January 1961, but the crisis did not end there. The country experienced increasing inflation and an alarming external debt. To govern, Jango depended on a solid basis in the congress: he attempted a party-based reconciliation to govern, but for 16 months, Goulart governed defensively, trying to free himself from the parliamentary system, and then turned to implementing his proposed social reforms – embodied in the Basic Reforms project. During the political crisis, in 1964, the military, supported by segments of civil society (the mainstream press, the business community, the middle class, among others), orchestrated a coup d'état, overthrowing Goulart and establishing a dictatorship<sup>46</sup>.

Throughout this period, *Folha de Ituiutaba* was in favor of the Goulart government. During the 1961 presidential crisis, among the writings, there is one titled “Our position is against the coup!”. In that editorial, the publication took a direct stance on the moment:

Our position, like that of every worthy Brazilian, is against the coup that, in our view, has begun to be perpetrated against the institutions. And it could not be otherwise, for we believe that only the dishonest and the irredeemably insane would accept or applaud the establishment of a dictatorship in the country. As men of the newspaper, quite different from the journalists who suckle at the teats of trusts or certain embassies, we cannot even remotely reconcile a state of exception with the exercise of the journalistic function<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> NAPOLITANO, Marcos. 1964: *História do Regime Militar Brasileiro*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2014.

<sup>47</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1121, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 11th January 1961

*Folha de Ituiutaba* was also active in the plebiscite that led to the end of the parliamentary government and the return of presidentialism in favor of Jango in 1963. Between the late 1962 and early 1963, the newspaper presented in its pages, several highlighted writings in its issues such as “It's high time we said NO!”<sup>48</sup>. Covering almost the whole page, the political propaganda against the parliamentary system also had images. In the first issue, there was a man with a hat who was frowning, his face was wrinkled, he had few teeth in this mouth and carried a hoe, representing a rural worker. The second and third issues showed in the propaganda a White woman with short hair, an angry face, pointing her finger to the reader. It represented the middle class urban woman. The last illustration showed a crowd, symbolizing the union of several social classes, in a demonstration, holding posters in favor of the return of presidentialism, all those illustrations were drawings.

But among all the agendas of Goulart's government, one stood out in the newspaper: the Basic Reforms. Those reforms aimed at various economic, political, and social changes. They included: agrarian, urban, banking, tax, university, exchange rate, and administrative reforms, as well as the regulation of profit remittances from multinational corporations. The proposal was that all of these would be implemented gradually and moderately. Such reforms aimed at stimulating the development of national industry, along with the restructuring of agricultural production, integrating the growing urban and rural population into the domestic market. They sought to reduce social inequality through a better distribution of wealth, eliminating obstacles to the Brazilian economic development<sup>49</sup>.

In editorial, *Folha de Ituiutaba* clarified its positive opinion about those reforms with a text entitled “How to make an omelet without breaking the egg”. The title refers to the congressmen's proposal to develop the reform without amending the Constitution, something that the newspaper considered impossible, at the same time, the editorial puts pressure on Jango's government, by inquiring whether he would really be interested in promoting the reform. The beginning of the text reads:

On this matter of basic reforms – especially agrarian reform – we have a clear position. We advocate for them and support the Union Government's campaign for their implementation,

<sup>48</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1124, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 11 de dez. de 1962; N.1125, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 15 de dez. de 1962; N.1126, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 19 de dez. de 1962; N.1129, ano XIX, Ituiutaba (MG), 05 de jan. de 1963.

<sup>49</sup> NAPOLITANO, Marcos. 1964: *História do Regime Militar Brasileiro*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2014.

although, it must be said, we also have our doubts as to whether Mr. João Goulart truly wishes to carry them out. Until further notice, however, we will assume that he intends to do so<sup>50</sup>.

Among the Basic Reforms, one in particular was of great interest and received a lot of attention in the newspaper, the agrarian reform. At that time, large pieces of unoccupied land started to be identified by most of the Brazilian population as the great origin of field problems, and consequently problems for the country. Since the 1940s, and increasing gradually until becoming critical in the 1960s, the idea of changing the Brazilian rural area and end the monopoly of land ownership appeared in society. Rural workers became great actors in the Brazilian public political debate related to the fight for the ownership of rural properties, and several organizations appeared claiming land such as rural workers' associations and unions and peasant leagues. João Goulart's government became a phase of acceleration of the fight for land, since intellectuals and politicians developed a perception towards the pressure groups, about the need for equating the agrarian issue as a fundamental agenda in economic and social development in Brazil<sup>51</sup>.

The periodical from Ituiutaba had defended the agrarian reform before Goulart became president, reporting in several publications, in the 1950s, workers' claims coming from different points of the region around the theme. In 1957, the newspaper published an article about the “The implementation of the Agrarian Reform”, where the author stated that:

Among the problems deliberately procrastinated by our leaders, the agrarian reform ranks first. All public figures in Brazil, across various spheres of power, recognize the urgent need for its implementation, as a means to extinguish the semi-feudal system of production in which the majority of Brazilians languish; to expand the domestic market; to raise the general standard of living; and finally, to open the floodgates through which Brazil's overflowing desire for progress can flow freely<sup>52</sup>.

One of the characteristics of João Goulart's government was to keep in perspective a national political agenda toward democratization of ownership

<sup>50</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.1268, ano XXII, Ituiutaba (MG), 20th July 1963.

<sup>51</sup> GRYNSZPAN, Mario. O período Jango e a questão agrária: luta política e afirmação de novos atores. In: FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes (Org.). In: João Goulart: entre a memória e a história. 1ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2006, p. 57-77.

<sup>52</sup> FOLHA DE ITUIUTABA, N.855, ano XVI, Ituiutaba (MG), 25th December 1957.

and citizenship, the same reason that bothered some national elites who enjoyed such privileges. The newspaper agreed, in several ways, with Jango's government, as follows: supporting his inauguration, ending parliamentarism, the Triennial Plan, Basic Reforms and the Agrarian Reform, by disseminating it throughout the region, but within a clear system of expropriation only of large properties – the latifundia, and essentially unproductive land. This included being in favor of constitutional amendments to make it possible. After 1<sup>st</sup> April, alongside Goulart and his government, the newspaper was one of the many who fell together with all reformist policies that had been envisaged.

Another aspect that stands out in the writings in *Folha de Ituiutaba* is the defense of nationalism. Those conceptions pervade the editorial line of the newspaper and become the axis around which its political, economic and societal interpretations were built up – even if the periodical sought to demonstrate certain neutrality. Nationalism as a State ideology was consolidated in Brazil throughout the whole period analyzed, anchored in policies conceived during the Getulio Vargas' second term (1951-1954), in the developmentalism of Juscelino Kubitschek's government (1956-1961), and the social reformism focusing on Basic Reforms proposed by João Goulart (1962-1964), as a constant construction within that period. For nationalists, “defending self-sustained development meant, firstly, to criticize the agrarian-exporting economic model and, by extension, the social class linked to it: the landowning oligarchy”<sup>53</sup>.

The newspaper discourse conveyed a conception of nationalism associated with the idea of liberation from domestic and foreign domination. *Folha de Ituiutaba* criticized economic dependence, and at the same time condemned power concentrated on landowners, thus defending the empowerment of rural workers. By adopting this perspective, the periodical was aligned to regional and national groups who defended autonomous development and social justice as the base for the country's progress.

## Final Considerations

*Folha de Ituiutaba* represented in its pages the political ideas of a progressist regional elite based on social change ideals. This was one of the reasons why the newspaper was closed, since those were fights that claimed

<sup>53</sup> MOREIRA, Vânia Maria Losada. Nacionalismos e reforma agrária nos anos 50. Rev. Brasileira de História [online], vol.18, n.35, 1998, p. 333.

a social democratization plan, which faced an opposing project that aimed at the maintenance of privileges of another group of political elites.

The fervor of the opponents of *Folha de Ituiutaba* alleged that the newspaper disseminated “subversive” ideas and for this reason should be stopped. It was labelled as “communist” and “subversive” – accusations that acted more as an instrument of political delegitimization than the real description of the editorial orientation. The closure of the newspaper was not motivated exactly by those allegations, but rather by the fact that it was considered a disseminator of worldviews. After over a decade of denunciations and surveillance, the 1964 coup was the opportunity of the political elites who disagreed with the newspaper’s views, to stop its production and circulation. It was essential to block the other group’s main source of support for driving ideas and actions.

Opponents tried repeatedly to shut down *Folha de Ituiutaba*, by means of surveillance and denunciation to the political police but were not successful up to 1964. With the change in the political system, resulting from the coup, local elites that opposed *Folha de Ituiutaba*, aligned with the newly promoted groups, saw in the Institutional Act Decree a fertile ground to suppress any form of opposition to the new regime. However, they could not do it by themselves. Therefore, a military junta, coming from another region, was summoned to remove the labor leaders from public power, arrest the region’s union leaders (dismantling the unions), and shut down the newspaper, the main disseminator of ideas linked to those groups. Even if this was an arrangement of regional policies specific to Ponta do Triângulo, when the military performed such actions and alliances, they guaranteed the control of those parts of Brazil. For this reason, we can affirm that dictatorship, even in its early stages, developed a highly sophisticated apparatus for regional control.

*Folha de Ituiutaba* had an editorial and journalistic project of defense of a progressist agenda, which included fights that it affirmed were in favor of workers, supporting their strikes for better salaries for civil servants and rural workers, and in favor of laws such as the English Week (with a more dignified workday for retail workers), a new municipal tax system according to the property size, in favor of labor laws, with minimum wage and vacations, and the Basic Reforms, that is, education reform, tax reform, remittance of profits and especially the agrarian reform.

## References

ASSIS, Francisco de (Org.). *Imprensa do interior: conceitos e contextos*. Chapecó: Argos, 2013.

BOURDIEU, Pierre. *O Poder Simbólico*. Translation: Fernando Tomaz, Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Bertrand Brasil, 2003.

CAPELATO, Maria Helena Rolim. *Imprensa e História do Brasil*. São Paulo: Contexto/EDUSP, 1988.

CHARTIER, Roger. O mundo como Representação. In: \_\_\_\_\_. *À Beira da Falésia: A História entre Certezas e Inquietude*. Porto Alegre: Editora da UFRGS, 2002, p. 61-80.

DAMASCENO, Patrícia L. Design de Jornais: projeto gráfico, diagramação e seus elementos. *Biblioteca Online de Ciências da Comunicação (BOCC)*, v. 1, p. 1-40, 2013.

DELGADO, Lucília de Almeida Neves. Trabalhismo, nacionalismo e desenvolvimentismo: um projeto para o Brasil. In: FERREIRA, Jorge (org.). *O populismo e sua história: debate e crítica*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2001, p. 167-293.

FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes. *Getúlio Vargas: uma memória em disputa*. Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, 2006.

GIAVARA, Eduardo. A dinâmica da produção do arroz em Ituiutaba (Minas Gerais, 1950-1970). *Patrimônio e Memória* (UNESP), Assis -SP, v. 15, p. 182-199, 2019.

GRYNSZPAN, Mário. A teoria das elites e sua genealogia consagrada. *BIB: Revista Brasileira de Informação Bibliográfica em Ciências Sociais*, São Paulo, v. 41, p. 35-83, 1996

GRYNSZPAN, Mario. O período Jango e a questão agrária: luta política e afirmação de novos atores. In: FERREIRA, Marieta de Moraes (Org.). In: *João Goulart: entre a memória e a história*. 1ed. Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2006, p. 57-77

HIPPOLITO, Lucia. *De Raposas e Reformistas: O PSD e a experiência democrática brasileira (1945-64)*. 2º ed. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2012.

HOBSBAWM, Eric. *A era dos extremos: o breve século XX (1914-1991)*. Translation: Marcos Santarrita, 2ª ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995.

IBGE – Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística. *Censo Demográfico de 2010*, Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2010

MATEUS, Renato. *A dinâmica da agricultura no cerrado: do apogeu do arroz à modernização do campo na região de Ituiutaba/MG (1946-1974)*. Monograph (Graduation) - Curso de História, Faculdade de Ciências Integradas do Pontal, Universidade Federal de Uberlândia, Ituiutaba, 2013.

MOREIRA, Vânia Maria Losada. Nacionalismo e desenvolvimento auto-sustentado. *Revista Dimensões* (UFES), Vitória - ES, v. 5, nº.5, p. 112-118, 1997.

MOREIRA, Vânia Maria Losada. Nacionalismos e reforma agrária nos anos 50. *Rev. Brasileira de História* [online], vol.18, n.35, p.329-360, 1998.

NAPOLITANO, Marcos. 1964: *História do Regime Militar Brasileiro*. 1. ed. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2014.

RIBEIRO, Ana Paula Goulart. *Imprensa e História no Rio de Janeiro dos anos 50*. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Comunicação e Cultura (Doctorate thesis) – Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ/ECO), 2000.

SILVA, Dalva Maria de Oliveira. *Memória: Lembrança e Esquecimento*. Trabalhadores nordestinos no Pontal do triângulo mineiro nas décadas de 1950 e 60. Programa de Pós-Graduação em História (Master's dissertation) PUC - Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, 1997.

SKIDMORE, Thomas Elliot. *Brasil: de Getúlio a Castello (1930-64)*. Translation: Berilo Vargas, São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2010.

Article received for publication on 05/03/2025 and approved on 30/06/2025.