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t HE “GETULIAN WORKS” THROUGH THE CIVIL SERVICE MAGAZIN

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ABSTRACT

The *Public Service Journal* (JSP) - or the Civil Service Magazine, as it was also known - was the official print communication medium between the *Estado Novo* – or New State – government (1937-1945) and the civil service. It represented an important means of recording and propagandizing *Getulian Works*, or, in other words, the achievements of the Getúlio Vargas government, which in this case refers to federal public buildings. By assessing the period between 1937 and 1945, we have been able to reconstruct the mosaic of official architectural production over that period and understand the system created to coordinate it, which employed scientific principles of work rationalization applied to the public service.

By means of the material gathered, especially documents on the works and exhibits, we have gained an understanding of the official architectural mindset, discourse and concerns in relation to erecting modern public buildings destined to house the various federal services and bodies.

KEYWORDS

Journal of Public Service, “Getulian Works”, public building, modern, modern North American style.

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LA “OBRA GETULIANA” ATRAVÉS
DE LA *REVISTA DO SERVIÇO*
PÚBLICO

RESUMEN

La *Revista do Serviço Público* (RSP) fue el vehículo oficial de comunicación impresa entre el gobierno del Estado Nuevo (1937-1945) y los funcionarios públicos, constituyendo un importante registro y propaganda de la “Obra Getuliana”, traducida aquí por los edificios públicos federales. El análisis de ese periódico, entre 1937 y 1945, nos ha permitido recomponer el mosaico de la producción arquitectónica oficial en el período, así como el “sistema” creado para coordinarla, imbuido de los principios científicos de racionalización del trabajo, aplicados a la administración pública. De las informaciones recopiladas, especialmente la documentación sobre las obras y los certámenes expositivos, fue posible recuperar el pensamiento, el discurso y las preocupaciones arquitectónicas oficiales relativas a la concreción de edificios públicos modernos para los diferentes órganos y servicios federales.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Revista do Serviço Público. “Obra Getuliana”. Edificios públicos. Estilo moderno norteamericano.

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A *Revista do Serviço Público* (RSP) foi o veículo oficial de comunicação impressa entre o governo estadonovista (1937-1945) e o funcionalismo público, constituindo importante registro e propaganda da “Obra Getuliana”, traduzida aqui pelos edifícios públicos federais. A análise desse periódico entre 1937 e 1945 permitiu-nos recompor o mosaico da produção arquitetônica oficial no período, bem como o “sistema” criado para coordená-la, imbuido dos princípios científicos de racionalização do trabalho, aplicados à administração pública. Pelo material levantado, especialmente a documentação sobre as obras e os certames expositivos, foi possível recuperar o pensamento, o discurso e as preocupações arquitetônicas oficiais, relativos à concreção de edifícios públicos modernos para os diferentes órgãos e serviços federais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Revista do Serviço Público. “Obra Getuliana”. Edifícios públicos. Estilo moderno norteamericano.

INTRODUCTION

After the assessment of the “Getulian Works” chapter of the Public Service Journal (JSP) between the years of 1937 and 1945, it seemed timely for us to consider the effort represented by the works focusing on architecture and politics in the first Vargas government (1930/45)¹. By focusing on the JSP, we wanted to emphasize its value as an institutional source of research for historiographical works regarding the official architecture of the Vargas period, minding the fact that little has been unearthed on such works.²

In due time, the assessment of the aforementioned magazine has enabled us to partially reconstruct the mosaic of the official architectural production in that period, as well as the “system of works” created after 1937 to coordinate such production based on the scientific principles of rationalization of labor applied to public administration. By means of the data assessed, mainly with regards to the documentation on federal public buildings, it has also been possible to recover the mindset, discourse and the official architectural concerns, particularly those related to “modernity” in the “state architecture”.

It is important to clarify that the term “Getulian Works” is related to the body of work formed by the buildings designed to house the headquarters of the ministries and other bodies and services which reported to such ministries.³ Therefore, we have focused on the architecture designed by the State, whose projects fell mostly under the responsibility of technical secretariats in the Division of Engineering and Works of the civil and military ministries,⁴ or those which resulted from competitions and project outsourcing.

By assessing articles published by the JSP which focused on federal public buildings constructed in the former Capital City from mid 1930s onwards, we have attempted to identify data on some of these buildings, such as the D. Pedro II railway Station (1936/40), the Ministry of War (1938/41), the Fish Processing Plant (1936/41), the National Press (1937/41) and the Rio de Janeiro Customs Building (1939/41). Contrary to pioneering public buildings in the modern period of the Brazilian architecture, in a certain way, such buildings ended up being overlooked by architectural historiography. However, they are a symbol of other standards of modernity in the “Getulian Works” and really stand out from buildings of a more “Corbusian” origin.

THE CIVIL SERVICE MAGAZINE (1937-)

Initially published by the Federal Council of the Public Civil Service (CFSCP) – a public administration coordinating body – the JSP later became the responsibility of the Civil Service Administrative Department (DASP), created in July 1938 with a mandate to replace the former CFSCP. As explained in the editorial of the inaugural issue launched back in November 1937, the goal of the magazine was to:

[...] provide Brazilian civil service employees at federal, state and municipal instances with the means to maintain a cultural and intellectual level befitting professional standards required in their areas of expertise; [...] keep the civil service abreast of the latest developments in the workings of the Council [...], and collaborate with the works encouraged by the new spirit, which has been brought about by the October Revolution.⁵

As an instrument of instruction for the civil service regarding the status of the new-state regime, JSP was well-known for its editorial, which covered subjects linked to the structuring of the State under a political, administrative, economic and legal point of view. The list of topics of interest also entailed the “official architecture”, which became an important piece in the national-development project for a “New Brazil” under the Vargas administration by communicating social and economic progress in a concrete and symbolic manner.

Journalistic in nature, JSP’s articles on the buildings under Getúlio’s administration endeavored to explore the exemplary side of the official architecture for private and future initiatives and, on top of that, appraise the state sponsorship centered in the figure of Getúlio Vargas. They also introduced the official architectural concerns behind the completion of such buildings, mainly those related to modernity, so as to emphasize the discourse on the character of the official architecture.

The speech in favor of the “good architecture”, that of the modern movement, established the guidelines of the modernity book on architecture and granted buildings such as the headquarters of the Ministry of Health and Education (MES) with a mandate to outline the proper direction for Brazilian architecture. However, the discourse regarding other modern styles, such as the “modern American style”, superseded stylistic whims in order to label as modern those works that readily solved issues such as “usefulness”, “convenience”, “comfort” and “purpose”. In turn, the keynote in this speech was the one disseminated in articles dealing with buildings of the “Getúlian Works”, such as the ones listed below, except for those regarding the MES headquarters.

Prominent buildings, such as the headquarters or the ministries and bodies that reported to such offices, were reported on individually in articles portraying neatly-presented information with a very detailed technical profile and project specifications. The other share of buildings was covered collectively in articles about government programs on health and education and in articles about the four official exhibitions organized between 1938 and 1944 in commemoration of the Government’s initiatives. The exhibitions included: the Exhibition on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (1938), the New-State Exhibition (1938), the Ministry of War Exhibition (1941) and the Public Buildings Exhibition (1944).

A first stock-taking of the “Getúlian Works”, which maintained the article of the *Chão* magazine (1978) and the works by Lauro Cavalcanti (1995; 2006) and Hugo Segawa (2006) as reference, disclosed the coexistence of “antagonistic architecture”.⁶ Based on information introduced by Carlos Martins (1987), these certainly persisted due to the standpoint of the State after 1930, turning them into a “privileged space for the clash among the various cultural projects”, as it was the “active element in the generation of a cultural field” and a “decisive ruler”.⁷

As perceived in the assessment of JSP articles related to the norms of the official architecture, in a certain way, the diversity in style was stimulated by architectural guidelines which promoted buildings in compliance with material resources and technical knowledge locally available, as well as language which was compatible with its purpose. Besides that, the final approval for the projects on public buildings had been a prerogative of the President of the Republic and

DASP since 1939. Thus, we understand that the architectural character of the “Getulian Works” was being exercised both by its designers (engineers and architects) and mandatories (authorities) in respect to the architectural culture and taste, as well as for the systematization it was submitted to.

THE BUILDINGS OF THE “GETULIAN WORKS” IN THE JSP

After visiting the United States of America in 1939 with a delegation headed by Minister Oswaldo Aranha, the then head of DASP, Luiz Simões Lopes, wrote his opinions about the civil service of that country in the JSP, taking the opportunity to comment on the new premises built in the Brazilian Capital City.

The United States had exercised control of civil services through a supreme and independent entity for over 50 years, which we started doing just three years ago. If we are able to achieve this now, it is because the Government is truly engaged in eradicating the causes and effects of an ineffective civil service in order to place it at a level befitting the needs dictated by the progressive spike on administrative work.

*[...] However, we are going down the same path. **As time goes by, the small and anti-hygienic buildings are being phased out by means of constructing larger and more modern ones which cater for the needs of the civil service.** We have already got such premises in the Ministries of Labor, Transport and Defense (Navy) and we will soon achieve that for buildings still under construction and in future projects for the ministries of Education, Economy, War, etc., as well as in those that currently house or will house several subordinate buildings, such as the National Press, the Central do Brasil, the Fish Processing Plant and many other buildings under the Ministry of Agriculture.⁸*

Among the buildings individually covered in JSP articles were the headquarters of the Ministries of Labor (1936/38), Education and Health (1936/44), Economy (1938/43) and War (1938/41). On the other hand, the headquarters of the Ministry of Justice (not yet built) was briefly described in an article by Adalberto Mário Ribeiro during the Public Buildings Exhibition. Among the buildings of the bodies under the aforementioned Ministries (built in the former Capital City) were the Fish Processing Plant (1936/41), Customs (1939/41), the National Press (1937/40) and the National Institute of Technology (established in 1933). Buildings under the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MVOP) included the D. Pedro II Station (1936/40) and the Fábrica Nacional de Motores (1940/42) with its industrial pole.

Some buildings for the prevention and awareness of leprosy, dispensaries, boarding institutions and hospitals for the treatment of tuberculosis have been mentioned by the authors of articles regarding government programs concerning the fight against leprosy and tuberculosis through the National Services for Leprosy (SNL) and Tuberculosis (SNT), both under the Ministry of Education and Health (MES). In general, buildings under such programs were located in rural areas or the outskirts of larger cities, designed in the neo-colonial or Art Deco styles – or in less-than-clear ones – and were granted stylistic freedom. Nevertheless, they tried to be compatible with the idea of “regional constructions” described in the architectural guidelines.

Also under the responsibility of the MES, technical and professional training in the country was the topic of an article which listed high schools and the new technical schools built in all states by the Government, whereas another isolated article covered the National Technical School in Rio de Janeiro, inaugurated in 1942. With regards to higher education, Brazil's Cidade Universitaria (CUB) had been covered in several articles which focused on the evolution of the project design and the then current construction phases. The National Philosophy College, which was part of the aforementioned university and was located in four rented floors in an Art-Déco building at Avenida Beira-Mar, was covered in such magazine.⁹

In the education area, but under the sponsorship of the National Center for Agronomic Education and Research (CNEPA) with the Ministry of Agriculture, the National School of Agronomy was the subject of extensive coverage on the magazine. With regards to the architecture of the Ministry, the neo-colonial style was considered adequate to the "rural" character of their premises and was employed in the aforementioned school, the airport and the Iguazu National Park hotel, among others, as well as the headquarters of the Itatiaia National Park.

Architect, designer of the last two aforementioned buildings and a respected person in such Ministry, Angelo Murgel introduced his recently-designed project for the headquarters of a public institute of agricultural research in the *Arquitetura e Urbanismo* magazine (1939 September-October issue). In his article entitled *Rural Architecture*, the famous architect justified the "rural" character of his work as the most adequate to its purpose and anti-urban condition given the technical and materials resources available locally. Thus, he did not hesitate in emphasizing the role of the Government in the establishment of the "*Brazilian rural architectural standards, based on our men, their needs and [...] possibilities*" by means of "*their technical bodies, [...] free from personal preferences on style by those temporarily in power and "under the light of modern principles"*¹⁰

In particular, one is able to know a little bit more about the architectonic production of the various Civil Ministries by reading articles by Adalberto Mário Ribeiro on the Public Buildings Exhibition. Among such works (including built and not-built projects), we have listed some sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, such as the headquarters of such body (selected through a competition won by architect Antônio Dias Carneiro) and that of the National Archives. We have also listed some of the prison buildings, such as the former Ilha Grande agricultural penal colony, and that of the welfare institution, namely the 15 de Novembro Professional Training Institute. Within the Ministry of Labor, we have listed the residential complex of terraced and two-story houses built in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Recife and Maceio by the body of Retirement and Pensions Funds (CAPs).

THE "GOOD ARCHITECTURE"

In the 1939 article about the new headquarters of the MES, attention is drawn to the quality of the text, which, seemingly written or guided by one of the architects in the project team, sought to legitimize this genuine urban

exponent and the architecture of the modern movement. It was even said that the very history of architecture made us realize that during the thriving period of the official works, they were in charge of the “*initiative and the role of pioneering artistic guidance*” and, in the decadent years, while assuming a “*back-burner position*”, the role of following the trend instead of leading it.¹¹

In a scenario of “*renewal of national activities and intense remodeling work*” it would be necessary to “*seek for safely securing the way forward, establishing the standard for future initiatives in line with the conclusions by the International Modern Architecture Summits.*” In this case, the path for the architecture of the modern movement would be defined by the MES with the construction of its new headquarters. Nevertheless, that Ministry would add “*yet another purpose which depended on the nature of their own services,*” which was “*to pursue to guide our architecture down broad and well-defined paths.*”¹²

More than ever, due to the ideology of the New State regime, the public gesture of completion of official works was proclaimed an honor to their leader and an example of the paths for Brazilian architecture. The exaltation of the figure of the sponsoring statesman, however insightful, went beyond imagination in Capanema's acknowledgment speech to Vargas during the inauguration of the MES headquarters on October 3rd 1945. The Minister claimed it to be “*very rare [...] for a head of State, besides his role as guardian of the arts [...], to turn himself into a **driver of renewal and rebelliousness** in a field where the omnipresent academic spirit exercised its strongest power at all times.*”¹³

Apparently, the MES took over the mission it had been entrusted with - that of providing a north to the Brazilian architecture - introducing the scale models of the Colégio Industrial de Belo Horizonte, by Niemeyer, and the Hospital das Clínicas de Porto Alegre, by Jorge Moreira, during the Public Buildings Exhibition (1944).

When it came to the Brazilian Civil Aviation, the hydroplanes station (1937/38) by Attilio Correa Lima and the Santos Dumont Airport (1937/44) by Marcelo and Milton Roberto were both covered in a JSP article. With regards to the station, the article highlighted the “*independent structure*”, which served as a *comfortable* host for the opening ceremony, and the novelty represented by the *horizontal facade* achieved by the roof of the building”, *which received the same level of attention* as the remaining features.¹⁴

The architects, who happened to be brothers, witnessed the coverage on the Brazilian Press Association headquarters (ABI, 1936/40), built “*thanks to large funding*” granted by Getúlio Vargas in exchange for the “*cooperation*” of the press in his “*national resurgence program.*” The article, followed by the external viewing of the building and its two-story blueprint, indicated the many “*conceptual advances*”, such as “*the wide slabs without apparent beams*” and concrete wall bracing, considered innovative for “*our construction techniques.*”

*Taking advantage of its proportions, the repetition of elements and the light and shadow effect, the clever architects were able to create an invaluable new architectural element which has become one of the features of the National Architecture. Additionally, natural light is significantly useful to the lighting of the building, taking advantage of direct light that seeps through the interval between the plates as well as reflected light.*¹⁵

OTHER STANDARDS OF MODERNITY IN THE “GETULIAN WORKS”

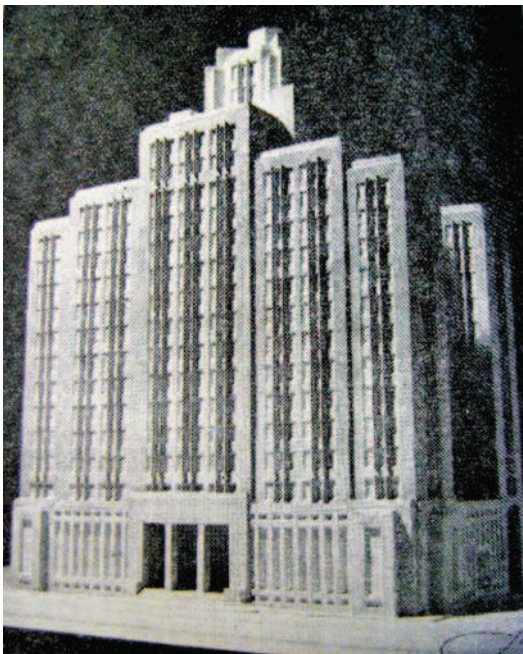
The influence of the North American public administration over the new-state regime had already become clear, and it had also occurred, at the architectural level, to the height of buildings. Along with this typology was the desire to achieve the “North American modern style”, as it was initially called in the USA with a variation of “style” which was brought about in the 1925 Paris Exhibition – later renamed as Art Déco – and which, from there, spread out to the South American continent. In “*carioca lands*”, it was labeled “*pseudo-modernism*”, which, according to Lucio Costa, found its true patrons there, referring to architect Alessandro Baldassini.¹⁶ Architect Mário Santos Maia, a staff with the Ministry of Labor who designed the headquarters of the MoL and many office buildings in Rio de Janeiro, adhered to this stylistic trend as well.

The architecture of the “Getulian Works” buildings was not immune to the American or Argentinian influence, as introduced on an JSP article about the backup project designed for the headquarters of the Ministry of Labor (Pic. 1) as a replacement to that by Wladimir Alves de Souza and Eneas Silva (winners of the 1936 competition).

[...] big public and semi-public buildings in North America and Argentina served as examples for national modern public buildings. We recognize the excellent advantages of such technique to the neo-classic style applied to the type of building referred to as a ‘skyscraper’, with foundations in natural granite from our quarries.¹⁷

Picture 1: Model of the secondary project (not built) of the Ministry of Economy headquarters, by Aristides Figueiredo, in partnership with architects Rafael Galvao e Stelio de Morais.
Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Jul. 1938, p. 126

Certainly, the modernity in the North American foundation, particularly expressed by the Art Deco style, is more noticeably felt in the design of most of the federal public buildings. In addition to the headquarters of the Ministry of



Picture 2: to the left, headquarters of the Ministry of Labor (1936/38) - designed by Mario Santos Maia - and, to the right, still under construction, the definitive headquarters of the Ministry of Finance (1938-43), by architect Luis Eduardo Frias de Moura.
Source: CPDOC-FGV- Center for Research and Documentation on the Contemporary History of Brazil. Gustavo Capanema Archive- GC Foto721_66

Labor¹⁸ (Pic. 2), other examples of such style can be found in the Ministry of War (pic. 3) the D. Pedro II station (pic. 4), the Rio de Janeiro Customs (pic. 5) and the National Press (pic. 6).

The JSP described as modern all of the buildings whose projects fully met the requirements of “usefulness”, “convenience”, “comfort” and “purpose”. On the other hand, new uses and programs defining urban projects elaborated with a view to the varying nature of public services obliged their authors – whether they were architects or engineers - to undergo a review of their project practice and architectural culture. As reported in the JSP article with regards to the new headquarters of the Ministry of Labor, located at the modern premises of the Esplanada do Castelo, such requirements were becoming a prominent element “over any other claims which could influence the design of projects, even when it came to concerns about beauty and the aesthetic sense.”¹⁹

Even though the elements that compounded the classic matrix had survived in these projects, they adopted innovative constructive solutions, such as reinforced-concrete-free structures and wider spans contemplated in the new internal area arrangement. Other innovations, such as waterproof flat slabs at the top of buildings, were hardly ever used, hence the prevailing presence of the old and traditional ceramic tiled roof enclosed by brickwork parapets. Residues of old-fashioned or “avant-garde” elements were commonly mixed to modern languages employed in projects for such buildings.

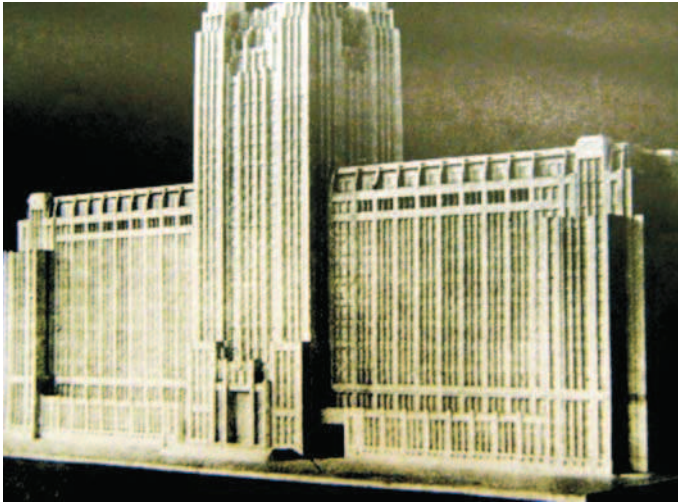
THE MINISTRY OF WAR

In the first year of its construction, back in 1938, the new headquarters of the Ministry of War (pic. 3) was covered on a JSP article entitled “The New Building of the Headquarters of the Army”. Externally viewed through photos of the initial project model and, internally, by the ground floor plan, the building was presented as the result of the concerns of the “military authorities” when erecting a “modern building”.

*[...], more than any other description, this one conveys strict compliance by their authors with the laws of beauty and the rules of aesthetics followed in the North American style, without a doubt the most appropriate style for big constructions of monumental character since it introduces the majesty indispensable to a public building.*²⁰

So, the “modernity” in question would come as much as a result of the “building technique, structured in the sense of aligning the concerns of aesthetic order to the administrative interest”, as well as the “influence of the so-called **North American modern style**”. The “composition” of a building would be “**monumental** without repudiating the artistic sense – as per what happens in the **utilitarian** style called ‘soviet’, which some intended to employ as a revolutionary artistic concept”.²¹

After studies elaborated by other professionals had been refused, the project of choice was the one by “paulista” Christiano Stocklerer das Neves. Designer of the Vila dos Sargentos (1937) in the “carioca” suburb of Deodoro, General Manoel Rabello – Army Engineering Director – once again called upon the architect to design the project of the new headquarters of the Ministry



Picture 3: front-wing view of the model for the headquarters of the Ministry of War (by Cristiano Stockler das Neves). Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Nov. 1938, p. 109

Picture 4: view of D. Pedro II Station under construction, overlooking the old Campo Station, demolished in 1940 after the completion of the works. Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Jul. -Aug. 1939, p. 70.



(approved by Vargas and Eurico Gaspar Dutra, the then Minister of War. Cristiano, a staunch opponent of the modern architecture movement, claimed that “*all architectural designs should translate and indicate their purpose*”.²²

The land required for the construction of the new headquarters would be that occupied by the old Headquarters of the Campo Barracks in the vicinity of Campo de Santana (currently, Praça da República), including an additional twenty meters for the front setback. The New Army Headquarters Building Committee, headed by military engineers Major Raul de

Albuquerque and Captain Rubens Teixeira, was established to direct and supervise such works. Calculations on the reinforced concrete structure were entrusted to the Calculus subsection of the Army Engineering Directorate.²³

Inaugurated on 28 August 1941 under Minister Dutra’s administration during the New-State and in parallel to the inauguration of Presidente Vargas Avenue, the headquarters of the Ministry of War, with an area of 86.000 m², was the largest public building in those days. Unlike the initial project and respective model, it had been decided that the side wings of the old Barracks (one facing Cristiano Ottoni Square and the other one facing the Itamaraty Palace) were to be preserved and the rest of the site was to be demolished, keeping the

definitive plant with the same square configuration and the central courtyard originally found in the existing building.²⁴

The new wing overlooking Praça da República was built as a horizontal 10-floor construction, intercepted in the symmetrical axis by the 23-floor-high main square body, staggered at the top end, causing the floor plan to diminish inasmuch as the height increased. The Boards and Inspectorates were housed in such wing, right beside the Noble Room, with high double ceiling decorated with 5 patriotically-themed stained-glass windows designed by Armando Viana. The ground floor of the new front wing across from Marcilio Dias Street hosted the Companhia de Guarda barracks, which consisted of the barracks themselves, the mess, a casino for officers and several other rooms.²⁵

D. PEDRO II STATION

Favored by its monumental aspect and strategic location, right next to the newly opened Presidente Vargas Avenue in the former Capital City, the buildings of the Ministry of War and the D. Pedro II Station marked the meeting of “*two*

scales in such strong contrast [...] : the old, European-style town of Rio and the new American-style of the building.”²⁶

Popularly known as Central do Brasil, the D. Pedro II station – the labor of the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MVOP) – was designed by architects Roberto Magno de Carvalho, Geza Heller and Adalberto Szilard. It was built to replace the old Campo Station, whose initial works dated back to November 1936. The station was finalized in 1940 and it was built immediately behind the Campo Station area in a 2-block long plot of land.

The horizontal aspect of the building, marked by three 7-floor wings with two underground levels bordering neighboring streets, was strongly contrasted by the 21-floor, 135-meter-high square tower emerging from the corners of Marechal Floriano Avenue and Bento Ribeiro Street. Showcasing a staggered top, the tower, topped by four 10-meter-radius watches, was able to house ancillary services to line divisions, traffic, transportation and power, with the top three floors available for the radio and telegraph sections.

The “U” shape formed by the three wings internally delimited the 4,063-square-meter covered hall, turning it into a single vault providing for the movement of passengers, room for the ticket office and access to thirteen platforms. This space also housed a Post Office and a Telegraph, the Caixa Economica bank and a tourism agency in addition to restrooms, telephone booths, lockers and the premises of the then National Propaganda Department (DNP). The six floors on the other wings were to be occupied by commercial, staff and equipment departments, in addition to bookkeeping and all administration services for the D. Pedro II Station. On the first underground level there were parking spaces for sixty vehicles, whereas the second one housed the archives, storage area and other services.²⁷

In the architectural design for the D. Pedro II station, one is able to extrapolate the relationship between artistic intention and purpose of the building, marked by the use of a streamlined profile as a way to convey a sense of speed suggested by illustrations of the meeting of the two wings with the tower and themselves on the corner of Senador Pompeu Street.

THE FISH PROCESSING PLANT

A spawn of legislation with which the Vargas government controlled fishing in the country, the new Fish Processing Plant building in Rio de Janeiro was inaugurated by Vargas on October 3, 1941. In the words of Vargas himself, the “*support to more vulnerable sectors of the population*” and the *defense of the “working class” economy with a view to granting access to staple food items demanded the creation of plants which facilitated the supply and the “control over public power”*. The initiative of erecting new buildings for this purpose was entrusted to the Ministry of Agriculture, under the management by Fernando Costa,²⁸ which was marked by “*measures for intensifying multi-culture*” and the enhancement of agricultural research and education.

Accustomed to employing the neo-colonial style for constructions of “rural” character, the Ministry elected to resort to a different modern style for the urban building erected alongside the XV de Novembro Square docks, one

Picture 5: scale model of the Fish Processing Plant, labor of the Ministry of Agriculture projected by architect Humberto Nabuco dos Santos. Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Jan. 1939, p. 56.



which was more in tune with the concerns the Art Deco facade. With a project by architect Nabucco Humberto dos Santos (Ministry of Agriculture) and structural calculation by engineer Leopoldo Schimmelpfeng, the construction of the processing plant begun in 1936 and was headed by a committee made up of the aforementioned professionals and two other employees. The nearly 3,500-square-meter area was designed in an “L” shape, which bordered the private dock for fish landing on the bay side. The department was allocated in two blocks, with the refrigeration area and the ice-making machine located in the smaller, lower and airtight corner (perpendicular to the bay).²⁹

The larger block, with six floors and an area of approximately 2,500 m², measuring 110.70 m. x 21.50 m with trusses at 5.80 m. x 7.0 m housed retail and wholesale on the ground floor, whereas the health and statistical monitoring of the Hunting and Fishing Directorate services were located on the mezzanine.³⁰ The first floor housed the packaging services and the first group of cold storage rooms, with the premises for the Hunting and Fishing Museum and the General Fisherman Polyclinic located on the second floor.³¹

The third floor housed the rest of the board, as well as the industrial section, the research area and the conference hall. The fourth floor housed the weather service, which had become the responsibility of the Agriculture department. In the fifth and last floor there was a restaurant, where the various live fish tanks contributed to the decoration of the dining area.³²

This is how the JSP welcomed the new headquarters of the Fish Processing Plant to Rio de Janeiro:

*A visit to the new processing plant provides splendid views. **The palace-like grandeur of the work has nothing superfluous. The magnificent aesthetic solution achieved presents a happy correspondence with usefulness.** The new warehouse is not only an expression of intelligence and of clear determination at the service of overall well-being. **It is also an embodiment of good taste. Apart from solving a pressing problem, cultural manifestations of art have not been left aside, having been integrated into the layout and architectural finishing, decorations, etc.***

*It should be considered, therefore, as an auspicious event for art. Now, **the new State Government staff request the cooperation of real artists, particularly avant-garde ones, much to the likes of what ended up taking***

place in the building of the Ministry of Education and Health headquarters, whose "hall" was decorated by painter Candido Portinari.³³

The artist at hand was young sculptor Armando Schnoor who, at the age of 25, "*accomplished his first major work [...] precisely for the portico*" of the building. The article by JSP compared the work of Schnoor to Frenchman Jeuniot, highlighting that "*the entire sequence of attitudes of the fishermen in their fishing labors form a balanced composition, which fully reveals the unusual personality of the artist.*" It further clarified that the technique used by the artist was "**modern**", "*resembling the very special traits of Diego Rivera, without a doubt.*" It concluded by claiming "*the new and imposing Fish Processing Plant headquarters in Rio de Janeiro to be [...] rich in decorative stylization.*"³⁴

THE NATIONAL PRESS

In 1937, after a few failed attempts to build the new headquarters of the National Press (pic. 6), Minister of Justice Jose Carlos de Macedo Soares ordered the opening of a competition for the selection of a project to be built in an area of 120 m x 140 m at Rodrigues Alves Avenue. Of the thirteen projects entered in the competition, the one by architect Anibal de Melo Pinto was the winner, with Ernani de Vasconcelos and the duo Jaziel de Cerqueira Luz e Gabriel de Queiros Vieira winning the 2nd and 3rd places, respectively.³⁵

The development and specifications of the project, as well the as financial and technical direction of the work, were under the responsibility of the Works and Engineering Division of the Ministry of Justice, and the structural calculation was entrusted to Frago and Ness LLC.³⁶

Inaugurated by President Vargas on December 28, 1940, the new headquarters of the Government Printing Bureau occupied 11,876 m² out of 16,800 m² of land in the plant, achieving a total 29,960 m² total built-up area, of which little more than 15,500 m² were taken up by workshops. The building, whose plants housed industrial-scale services, was enclosed by two four-story wings (front and back) and two 3-story wings (sides), enclosing the central courtyard, which was crossed over by three service blocks posted side by side. The composition, with American Art Deco influences, was signaled by a 43-meter-high tiered tower topped by clocks and built in the same axis as the front facade, which granted access to patrons.



Picture 6: Model of the National Press building (current headquarters of the Federal Police Inspectorate in Rio de Janeiro).

Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Nov. 1944, p. 111.

THE RIO DE JANEIRO CUSTOMS BUILDING

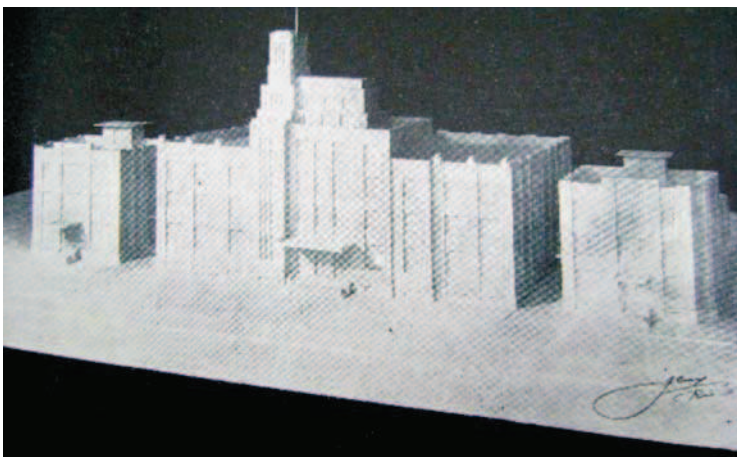
Accustomed to modern patterns other than the Corbusian style employed at the MES Headquarters, the board of Domínio da União (DDU) in the Ministry of Finance adopted a new criterion for its projects, which was to “avoid extreme uses of the modern style because it is not appropriate for government offices”.³⁷

Thus, the Santa Catarina Fiscal Police Office and the Florianopolis Customs office, the Uruguaiana Customs Office in Rio Grande do Sul and the Porto Esperança Customs Revenue Bureau in Mato Grosso were built. Similarly, the Rio de Janeiro customs (pic. 7), the Pernambuco Tax Police Office and Recife Customs, as well as the Mato Grosso Tax Police Office – the last two designed by architect Ernani de Vasconcelos (employee of the Ministry) – were also built.³⁸ Projects for the Rio de Janeiro and Recife Customs, as well as the project for the Porto Feliz Customs Revenue Bureau - the brainchild of DDU's Works Division - were approved directly by Getúlio Vargas.³⁹

Through a resolution passed by Ulpiano de Barros, Head of DDU, the definitive project for the Rio de Janeiro Customs building was entrusted to engineer Aristides Fernandez de Figueiredo and engineer-architects Jose Affonso Soares and Edson Nicoll, both with the Engineering and Works Section of the regional arm of the DDU. Although the project had been completed by September 1938, the fact that the first studies were initiated at the end of 1934 guaranteed that it would not be subject to a December 1935 Decree on competitions for “public buildings of large proportions”.⁴⁰ The natural choice of location for the construction of the Rio de Janeiro Customs Department was the harbor area since the customs warehouses were already located there, making the clearance services and the assessment of imported goods, as well as the safekeeping of the vessels, quite easier. Thus, a choice was made to employ the land on block 11H at Rodrigues Alves Avenue, in the stretch opposite warehouse 1 (in the vicinity of Praça Maua) since it was serviced by tram and bus lines and close to the downtown area.⁴¹

With regards to the design solution for the program that rounded up the three services – Customs offices, Guardamoria and the analysis laboratory – they

opted for housing them in independent buildings placed side by side at the Rodrigues Alves Avenue block (beside warehouse 1, just around the corner from Maua Square). The tallest building, at the center, was assigned to customs; the identical 4-floor buildings on the right and left were assigned to the



Picture 7: Model of the three buildings of the Rio de Janeiro Customs Building complex (center), with the Analysis Laboratory to the left and the Guardamoria to the right.

Source: *Civil Service Magazine*, Apr-May. 1939, p. 109.

Guardamoria and the analysis laboratory – respectively. Daring to design new internal spatial arrangements, a choice was made for an independent structure resting on top of Franki pile foundations. The final construction area achieved 10,642 m², with 7,778 m² assigned to Customs, 1,530 m² to the Guardamoria and 1,334 m² to the analysis laboratory.⁴²

According to the JSP article, the solution adopted was justified for administrative and technical reasons, since those departments operated in different schedules, with two fixed shifts (Customs and lab) and a non-standard one (Guardamoria). The technical reasons had to do with future expansions of services assigned to each of the divisions as well as bringing the light and ventilation levels to a more satisfactory configuration, thus avoiding the inner courtyards. The possibility of having a unified system for water supply, gas, chilled water (for the mechanical ventilation system), telephony and power meters for the three buildings was perceived as an important economy factor. Equally important was the fact that each Division was to have a dedicated ground floor for the provision of services to the public, which would prevent excessive traffic on elevators by staff members and patrons.⁴³

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

As a “structuring agent” of the modernization of the country, the State under Vargas (1930-45) was characterized by the growing interventionism and administrative centralization, especially during the New State regime (post-1937). It was also the great driver of renewing architecture with more rational purposes, having in mind the broad construction program for “modern” public buildings to house the various bodies, services and federal programs throughout the national territory.

Given the building concerns stemming from that and related to “usefulness”, “convenience”, “comfort”, “purpose” and the standardization of architectural and “regional” styles, the State gave a stamp of approval to buildings considered to be modern and ready to symbolize the “*State/National visual identity*”⁴⁴, one that would further Brazilian culture and identity.

If architecture under the Vargas State was supposed to be modern and exemplary, even if almost all of it fell under a mantle of conservative modernity (neo-colonial, Art Deco and variations), there certainly was coherence and discursive consistency among the actors (authorities and designers) and media channels.

JSP articles on public buildings provide evidence of such scenario, since they reflect the Government’s mentality and architectural concerns. That was made even more evident in the speech by Minister of Labor Alexandre Marcondes Filho. Delivered at the opening of the Public Buildings Exhibition (1944) and directed to Vargas, it could not, therefore, fail to give credit to State patronage on the steering of Brazilian architecture.

[...] providing public services with perfect and appropriate facilities which are in line with the practical requirements inherent to the modular structuring of administrative bodies, Your Excellency [...] performs, in one fell swoop, a far-reaching task for the furtherance of architectural

*possibilities, providing Brazil with the necessary stimuli for the creation of architecture which is adapted to our reality and allied to the collaboration of our best artistic vocations in the realms of administrative space, functional efficiency and public comfort. Therefore, Your Excellency presides over the **rebirth of the official Brazilian architecture**, seeking and encouraging the establishment of our representative standards **through the eclecticism of forms and the variety of suggestions tailored to our changing times and peculiarities of our climate.***⁴⁵

NOTES

¹ Among the aforementioned works, we highlight: BITTAR, William Seba Mallmann. *Arquitetura no Estado Novo*. In: GAZZANELO, Luis Manoel (Org.). *Da Baixa Pombalina a Brasília: patrimônio e historicidade*. Rio de Janeiro: UFRJ/FAU/PROARQ, 2010; BONDUKI, Nabil Georges. *Origens da habitação social no Brasil*. Arquitetura moderna, Lei do Inquilinato e difusão da casa própria. São Paulo: Estação Liberdade: FAPESP, 1998; CAVALCANTI, Lauro Pereira. *As preocupações do belo*. Rio de Janeiro: Taurus, 1995.; _____. *Moderno e Brasileiro: a história de uma nova linguagem na arquitetura (1930-1960)*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2006; CHÃO: Revista de Arquitetura, Rio de Janeiro: Tridimensional, n. 2, jun./jul./ago. 1978; LISSOVSKY, Maurício; SÁ, Paulo Sérgio Moraes de. *Colunas da educação: a construção do Ministério da Educação e Saúde (1935-1945)*. Rio de Janeiro: MINC/IPHAN; Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, 1996; MARTINS, Carlos Alberto Ferreira. *Arquitetura e Estado no Brasil: elementos para a investigação sobre a constituição do discurso moderno no Brasil: a obra de Lúcio Costa – 1924/52*. Thesis (Masters') – Universidade de Filosofia, Letras, Ciências Sociais e História. Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1987; SEGAWA, Hugo. *Arquitetura na Era Vargas: O avesso da unidade pretendida*. In: Pessoa, José; Vasconcellos, Eduardo; Reis, Elisabete; Lobo, Maria (Orgs.). *Moderno e Nacional*. Niterói: EdUFF, 2006. See also: AMORA, Ana Maria Gadelha Albano. *O Nacional e o Moderno na arquitetura e saúde no Estado Novo nas cidades catarinenses*. Tese (Doutorado) - IPPUR/UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, 2006; AL ASSAL, Marianna Boghosian Ramos. *Arquitetura, identidade nacional e projetos políticos na ditadura varguista – as escolas práticas de agricultura do Estado de São Paulo*. Dissertação (Mestrado) - Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo – FAUUSP, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2009; BOTAS, Nilce Cristina Aravecchia. *Entre o progresso técnico e a ordem política*. Arquitetura e urbanismo na ação habitacional do IAPI. Tese (Doutorado) - FAUUSP, São Paulo, 2010; REIS, Márcio Vinicius. *O Art Déco na Obra Getuliana*. Moderno antes do modernismo. Tese (Doutorado) - FAUUSP, São Paulo, 2014.

² Apart from any existing exceptions and as far as we know, we have appointed works by Lauro Cavalcanti (respectively from 1995 and 2006) and Hugo Segawa (2006) and, more recently, the doctoral thesis by the author of the present article.

³ It is surely a reference to the provisional title of the unfinished “documentary book” by Minister of Education and Health Mr. Gustavo Capanema (1934/45), assembled in commemoration of the first decade of the Vargas administration, in 1940, clearly within the New-State regime (1937/45) In the words of the Minister himself, the publication would be one meant for “elucidation and propaganda”, through extensive photographic and written (non-scholarly) records commissioned from intellectuals and prominent figures in public administration. Not finished in time to be launched in the occasion of the first decade and the celebrations of the 15 years of Government, the book - with hundreds of pictures (many from federal buildings and public works) - still remains a draft to this day (LACERDA, Aline Lopes de. A “Obra Getuliana” ou como as imagens comemoram o regime. *Revista Estudos Históricos*, v. 7, n. 14, p. 241-263, 1994. Available at: <<http://bibliotecadigital.fgv.br/ojs/index.php/reh/article/viewArticle/1982112>>. Viewed on: 22 Jan. 2012.

⁴ Civil ministries - a total of 7 - included Labor, Education and Public Health, Transport and Public Works, Economy, Agriculture, Justice and Department of the Interior and Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the two military ministries were the Ministry of War and the Ministry of Defense (Navy).

⁵ EDITORIAL. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 1, v. 1, n. 1, p. 3-5, Nov. 1937.

⁶ The architectural antagonism perceived during the construction of the first three ministerial headquarters (Education and Health – Labor – Economy) and reported on by Cavalcanti, revealed a State which lacked in aesthetic censorship muscle after all. From this point of view, when focusing on the Public Buildings Exhibition – described by the government, in other words, as an answer to the problem within its departments -, Segawa brought about an event which presented the diversity in style that characterized the official architecture during the Getúlio Vargas era in a clearer manner.

- ⁷ MARTINS, Carlos Alberto Ferreira. *Arquitetura e Estado no Brasil: elementos para a investigação sobre a constituição do discurso moderno no Brasil: a obra de Lúcio Costa – 1924/52*. Thesis (Masters') – Universidade de Filosofia, Letras, Ciências Sociais e História. Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1987.
- ⁸ Mr. Luiz Simões Lopes' trip to the United States. Some insights by the head of DASP regarding the American civil service. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 2, n. 1-2, p. 101-103, Apr.-May. 1939 [emphasis added].
- ⁹ Linked to the MES, the National Service of Historic and Artistic Heritage (SPHAN) was covered in the magazine, which also published the decree establishing the Museu das Missões (Missions Museum), in the municipality of São Miguel, Santo Angelo (RS).
- ¹⁰ MURGEL, Angelo A. Rural Architecture. *Arquitetura e Urbanismo*, Rio de Janeiro, p. 607-611, Sep./Oct. 1939, p. 608.
- ¹¹ O NOVO edifício do Ministério da Educação e Saúde. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 2, n. 1-2, p. 105-107, Apr./May. 1939, p. 106.
- ¹² O NOVO edifício do Ministério da Educação e Saúde *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 2, n. 1-2, p. 105-107, Apr.-Mai. 1939, p. 105.
- ¹³ RIBEIRO, Adalberto Mario. O palácio do Ministério da Educação e Saúde. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 8, v. 4, n. 2, p. 75-98, Nov. 1945, p. 75-76, [emphasis added].
- ¹⁴ AVIAÇÃO CIVIL no Brasil. Seus primórdios – desenvolvimento – aspecto atual. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 1, n. 2-3, p. 77-104, Feb./Mar. 1939, p. 99.
- ¹⁵ O PALÁCIO da Imprensa. Casa do Jornalista. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 1, v. 4, n. 2, p. 121-135, Nov. 1938, p. 122.
- ¹⁶ COSTA, Lucio. Muita conversa, alguma arquitetura e um milagre. In: _____. *Lucio Costa: registro de uma vivência*. São Paulo: Empresa das Artes, 1995, p. 167.
- ¹⁷ O NOVO edifício do Ministério da Fazenda. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 1, v. 3, n. 1, p. 122-132, Jul. 1938, p. 125, [emphasis added].
- ¹⁸ Cf. CAVALCANTI, Lauro Pereira. *As preocupações do belo*. Rio de Janeiro: Taurus, 1995; _____. *Moderno e Brasileiro: a história de uma nova linguagem na arquitetura (1930-1960)*. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2006.
- ¹⁹ PALÁCIO DO TRABALHO. O majestoso edifício onde se acha instalado o Ministério do Trabalho. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, ano 2, v. 1, n. 2-3, p. 69-76, Feb./Mar. 1939, p. 72.
- ²⁰ O NOVO edifício do Quartel General do Exército. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, ano 1, v. 4, n. 2, p. 105-115, Nov. 1938, p. 105-107, [emphasis added].
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 105, [emphasis added]. Similarly to the supposed “North American modern style”, the Ministry of War has also built the Army School of Physical Education in Urca, RJ; The Army Health School, right in the heart of town, and the General Staff School at Praia Vermelha.
- ²² NEVES NETO, Christiano Stockler das. *Arquiteto Concreto*. São Paulo: Dialetto Latin American Documentary, 2008, p. 84.
- ²³ O NOVO edifício do Quartel General do Exército. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 1, v. 4, n. 2, p. 105-115, Nov. 1938, p. 115.
- ²⁴ PALÁCIO DUQUE DE CAXIAS. *Inventário de ativos imóveis – lista sumária*. Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria de Estado de Cultura e Esportes. Instituto Estadual do Patrimônio Cultural (INEPAC). Departamento de Pesquisa e Documentação. Departamento de Patrimônio Cultural e Natural, p. 9-12, 1998, p. 9-10.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9-10.
- ²⁶ KORNGOLD, Lucjan; PARIS, Haussmann. Rio de Janeiro e o Concurso do Itamarati. *ACRÓPOLE*, São Paulo, year 6, n. 61, p. 450-460, May. 1943, p. 450.

- ²⁷ RIBEIRO, Adalberto Mario. A nova Estação D. Pedro II. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 3, n. 1-2, p. 69-72, Jul./Aug. 1939, p. 72.
- ²⁸ O ENTREPOSTO da Pesca do Rio de Janeiro. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 1, n. 1, p. 56-61, Jan. 1939, p. 58.
- ²⁹ CONAB – Companhia Nacional de Abastecimento – former Federal Fish Processing Plant. *Inventário de ativos imóveis* – lista sumária. Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria de Estado de Cultura e Esportes. Instituto Estadual do Patrimônio Cultural (INEPAC). Departamento de Pesquisa e Documentação. Departamento de Patrimônio Cultural e Natural, p. 1-23, Sep. 2003, p. 18.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18. O ENTREPOSTO da Pesca do Rio de Janeiro. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 1, n. 1, p. 56-61, Jan. 1939, p. 59.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.
- ³² O ENTREPOSTO da Pesca do Rio de Janeiro, op. cit., p. 60.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 60-61, [emphasis added].
- ³⁴ O ENTREPOSTO da Pesca do Rio de Janeiro. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 1, n. 1, p. 56-61, Jan. 1939, p. 60, [emphasis added].
- ³⁵ Before a decision was made regarding the final location of the headquarters, architect Adolfo Morales de los Rios Filho had designed a “classic” style project for an area at the Esplanada do Castelo back in 1928. A second project by Henrique de Almeida Gomes was designed to be built by E. Kemnitz in an area located at Francisco Bicalho Avenue. In the year the competition was open (1937), the very own Works Division within the Ministry had also come up with a project. Pursuant to article 5 of decree-law no. 125 (December 3, 1935) on the obligation of opening a competition for “public buildings of large proportions”, the Minister had the public bidding notice published. The competition jury was composed by Joao Felipe Pereira, with the Engineering Club, Raul Lessa Saldanha da Gama, with the Belas Artes National School, Celso Kelly, with the Brazilian Press Association, Viterbo de Carvalho, National Press Director, and Luiz Hildebrando Horta Barbosa, representing the Minister of Justice. (RIBEIRO, Adalberto Mario. A remodelação da Imprensa Nacional. *Revista do Serviço Público*, Rio de Janeiro, ano 4, v. 1, n. 2, p. 67-100, Feb., 1941, p. 72.)
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.
- ³⁷ O NOVO edifício da Alfândega do Rio de Janeiro. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 2, n. 1-2, p. 108-111, Apr./May. 1939, p. 110.
- ³⁸ RIBEIRO, Adalberto Mario. A Exposição de edifícios públicos. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 7, v. 3, n. 3, p. 90-113, Sep. 1944, p. 110-112.
- ³⁹ RIBEIRO, Adalberto Mario. Edifícios públicos. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 7, v. 2, n. 3, p. 53-78, Jun. 1944, p. 63.
- ⁴⁰ O NOVO edifício da Alfândega do Rio de Janeiro. *Civil Service Magazine*, Rio de Janeiro, year 2, v. 2, n. 1-2, p. 108-111, Apr./May. 1939, p. 108.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 108.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 109-110.
- ⁴⁴ GORELIK, Adrian. Nostalgia e plano. O Estado como vanguarda. In: *Das vanguardas a Brasília. Cultura urbana e arquitetura na América Latina*. Trad. Maria Antonieta Pereira. Belo Horizonte: Editora UFMG, p. 15-56, 2005, p. 27 et seq..
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Editor's note

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