

## **GETÚLIO VARGAS SPEECHES (1940s–1950s)**

*Lourival Fontes, Getúlio Vargas's press secretary in the 1940s and 1950s, compiled a book based upon the Brazilian president's notes and instructions for speechwriting. He asserted that Vargas, always in control, provided the ideas, editing, rephrasing, polishing, and pacing. The speeches were simple and straightforward, always beginning with "Brasileiros!" Vargas avoided slang and stilted wording and always kept his sentences and paragraphs short. Below are a few comments and criticisms that Vargas sent to Fontes.*

I am imprisoned by a wall that separates me from the suffering and humble people, who elected me in the hope of a better life. I must fulfill that promise!

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I need the support and confidence of the workers, and they in turn will find in me a true friend, ready to help them in their just aspirations. They should avoid being misled by agitators and rabble-rousers. They may come to me without fear, and I will lead them to just and equitable solutions, using the official agencies created to accomplish this.

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This is too highfalutin. I don't see here the reference I made to the working classes, as the dynamic element in the social equilibrium and force that is organizing to influence the future, not in a purely political democracy, such as we have, but instead in an economic and social democracy. "Workers in the cities and the countryside: those who drive the factories and till the fields. You are the people who follow me and on whom I depend to frighten the hornets waiting to sting me." I wrote that during the scary plane flight. After we arrived, I reread it more calmly. Reduce it to a concept or phrase and send it back for me to look at.

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This is all right, but only speak of the cultural part and drop the reference to the worker, the laborer, in the most industrialized city in Brazil. We should say something like, "In this city of São Paulo there are as many thousands of organized and enlightened workers as our dreams of greater economic development, a higher standard of living, and social harmony."

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I am not very impressed with the tenor of some of these draft speeches that arrived. They are very academic, very correct, but they won't make an impression on the masses [*povo*]. It seems that they are not addressed to the masses. They are more for highbrows. They don't deal with the heart of the social and economic crisis that we are undergoing. The one for São Paulo is good . . . São Paulo is the largest industrial center and has the largest concentration of workers in the country, yet the speech doesn't deal

with the social question: the misery, the high cost of living, the declining wages, the industrial crisis, the lack of bank credit, commodity hoarding, etc. You may say that I can add all that later. But it isn't easy, because I don't have the material. I don't have the data to illustrate or even refer to these statements, and it would mean totally rewriting these speeches. And time is short. They are pressuring me to go on the campaign trail and I don't have speeches, I don't have a travel itinerary, and the committee doesn't have money to pay for its activities. P.S. Don't work on the São Paulo speech, I already rewrote it.

**Taken from Getúlio Vargas, "A Consummate Speechwriter," in *Problems in Modern Latin American History: Sources and Interpretations*, trans. Michael Conniff and eds. John Charles Chasteen and James A. Wood (Lanham: SR Books, 2005), 241–242.**