Speech of Getulio Vargas at Commemorations of Labor Day,
1 May 1939

Workers of Brazil:

I was delighted to hear the eloquent and expressive greeting that the minister of Labor, in your name and at your request, just directed to me. Better than words of thanks, I demonstrate my appreciation, sharing in your commemorations of "Labor Day", thus reaffirming the sense of cooperation and mutual confidence that we have kept steadfastly in the solution of social problems.

Since 1930, we have shared the same line of action, and, though there always were obstacles and difficulties, workers unequivocally manifested their comforting and spontaneous solidarity with the National Government, efficiently repulsing the lure of anarchy and extremist coups.

This already long experience speaks well for the rightness of the route marked out in our labor policy and therefore requires its maintenance to continue to assure Brazil order and peace, in an hour of such great apprehensions for humanity.

With the active cooperation of the producing classes, we elaborate and execute our advanced social legislation that simultaneously guarantees the rights of workers and the country’s economic development.

To reach such results, we do not divide Brazilians, we do not create castes, we do not cultivate hatreds, we do not start fights, we do not attempt destructive leveling of individual value, abandoning ourselves to discredited utopias.

We did only what common-sense indicates: approach men and from all demand understanding, collaboration, agreement, and respect for social duties. What we aim to carry through already satisfies them, surprising even observers from countries older than ours, where identical problems still await peaceful and harmonious solution.

The policies that we have followed, exempt of sectarian concerns, serene and persistent, allowed us to heed proper feelings and needs to institute the Brazilian order incorporated in the Constitution of 10 November, whose primary objectives are: the defense of nationality, the stimulation and support of all creative energies in our economy, and the satisfaction of, and assistance to, the legitimate aspirations of the people. Until here, there were no discouragements in the execution of the tasks on which we voted.

Significantly, we mark today for the signature of laws creating Labor Justice, popular refectories, and craft schools in industrial establishments. You can easily understand the reach of these initiatives. One of your oldest aspirations was a special justice in charge of deciding, efficiently and fast, common agreements in labor relations. We have it now, completing labor law as the fruit of years of experience. Another measure aims to offer healthy and cheap meals to laborers in the plants and, in schools attached to the companies, to facilitate their technical proficiency
and the professional education of their children, under the supervision of their parents. One originated from my personal contact with workers, when I was visiting various industrial establishments to ascertain their most immediate needs. I announced it in my last interview to the press and, after studying the most practical way of implementing it, today I give it legal form. However, we do not limit ourselves to what we have achieved. New complementary and improved measures will arise to complete our work of social justice, currently activating steps to determine the level of minimum wage and to make its benefits effective throughout the country.

Workers: as you see, in the current regime, you directly participate in the organizing activities of the State, in flagrant contrast with the situation previous to 1930, when your interests and claims were not even heard and died suffocated within the narrow enclosures of policymakers. Today, you have your own wing in the greatest and most beautiful public building of the country and you can enter it without constraint.

Look and compare this recent past, and rejoice in the role you played, conscious of your responsibilities, as a constructive force in the nation’s development, within a spirit of order that guarantees your future and the greatness of Brazil.