

## Getúlio Dornelles Vargas



### Biography

Lawyer, born in São Borja, state of Rio Grande do Sul, in April 19th, 1883. He entered Brazilian politics as a state deputy (1909-1912; 1917-1921) by the Rio-Grandense Republican Party (PPR), and was elected in the same party in October, 1922, to the Chamber of Deputies and, on 1924, he was reelected as a federal deputy (1923-1926). When president Washington Luís took office, on November 15th, 1926, he was nominated for the Ministry of Finance, remaining in the post until December, 1927. He was elected governor of Rio Grande do Sul and took office on January 25th, 1928.

In August, 1929, the Liberal Alliance, an oppositionist colligation of national extent was formed, which launched Getúlio Vargas and João Pessoa's applications to the presidency and vice-presidency of the Republic, respectively. Once he was defeated in the elections by the paulista candidate Júlio Prestes, Vargas took office again of the Rio Grande do Sul government, and articulated the removal from office movement of president Washington Luís, which would culminate with the Revolution of 1930. After the exercise of the triumvirate, Getúlio Vargas has taken effect as head of State of the provisory government on November 03rd, 1930.

With the promulgation of the 1934 Constitution, he was elected president of the Republic by the Constituent Assembly. In November 10th, 1937, he announced the dissolution of the Congress and granted the new Constitution, beginning the "Estado Novo" ("New State").

He governed the country until he was removed from office in October 29th, 1945. He was elected as a senator (1946-1949) by the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and ran for the presidential elections of 1950 by the Labor Party of Brazil (PTB), founded by him in 1945. Vargas received 48.7% of the votes, beating his opponents by a vast majority, and took office in January 31st, 1951. He committed suicide in Rio de Janeiro in August 24th, 1954.

## Presidential period

Getúlio Vargas began governing a country with approximately 37 million inhabitants, out of which 70% lived in the rural area.

Throughout his fifteen years in the government, Brazil had two federal constitutions: the first was promulgated in July, 1934, with liberal characteristics; the second was granted in November, 1937, committed to the authoritarian thinking. During this period, several labor laws changed the social scenery of the Brazilian worker, with the establishment of the workday of eight hours both in the industry and commerce, the regulation of women and minors' work in commercial as well as industrial establishments, the institution of the work card, the minimum wage as well as the mixed conciliation committees, besides other laws which influenced the union and employers' organization.

These agencies were also created: the ministries of Education and Public Health, Agriculture, Labor, Industry and Commerce. Other agencies, such as the National Coffee Department (DNC), the Sugar and Alcohol Institute (IAA), the National Historical and Artistic Patrimony (SPHAN) and the Press and Advertising Department (DIP), are examples of the great public administration reform which marked the Vargas era.

The government also promoted a series of nationalistic manifestations in the cultural and educational area, which included monumental parades in civic dates, with student choirs conducted by choirmaster Villa-Lobos and choreographies which should exalt the grandeur of the "New State".

In domestic politics, the government fought the Constitutionalist Revolution, a movement against Getúlio encouraged in São Paulo in 1932; the National Liberation Alliance (ANL), lead by Luís Carlos Prestes, and the communist movement of 1935.

In this context, the Congress promulgated the National Security Law and the National Security Court was created. In 1938, he confronted the integralist attempt, an extreme right wing coup movement performed by conspirators connected to the recently extinct Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB), lead by Plínio Salgado.

In the economic extent, the international crisis of 1929 affected the country in all sectors: the reduction of the export disorganized the public finance, the production rhythm decreased as well as the wages' purchasing power. The coffee economics crisis obliged the new government to purchase and destroy coffee stocks, aiming to decrease the product's price in the international market.

From the 1940s, an effective industrial growth was verified, with the entrance of North-American private funds in the country. In August 31st, 1942, the Brazilian government declared war to the Axis countries, once it was pressured by the allied nations, mainly the United States, and the domestic public opinion. In 1944, he sent the Brazilian Expeditionary Force (FEB) to Italy to combat along with the North-American forces. Brazil's participation in the conflict, besides enabling an investment in its armed forces, contributed to the construction of the Usina Siderúrgica de Volta Redonda, which counted with a loan from the United States.

The "New State", which began in 1937, ceased in 1945, with the end of the war and the consequential society pressures for democracy to be restored. This very year, the condemned

were granted amnesty by the National Security Court and the National Constituent Assembly was summoned. The disputes around the presidential succession were crossed by the “queremismo”, movement which had as a motto “queremos Getúlio!” (“we want Getúlio!”) and, as a proposal, the postponing of the direct elections for president and the maintenance of Vargas in the government, concomitant with the Constituent installation. The campaign, supported by the working class, unions and communists, generated a strong reaction in the military environment and in the so-called liberal opposition, and would be considered as one of the reasons for Vargas’s removal from office, in October 29th, 1945.

In October 03rd, 1950, Getúlio Vargas was reelected as president, governing a 53 million inhabitants’ country.

The second presidential period was characterized by a national-oriented economic politics and searched to conciliate the popular demands with the economic growth acceleration demands, besides accomplishing the political pact which guaranteed Vargas’s permanence in the government. Having as ministers of Finance Horácio Lafer and, afterwards, Osvaldo Aranha, the government projected two guidelines which aimed at the overcoming of the Brazilian development stage: on one hand, the decisive participation of the State and national private sectors in the industrialization process and, on the other, the stimulus to the entrance of foreign capital.

Brazil experienced an inflationary tendency, derived from the increase of prices generated by the high prices obtained by coffee in the international market, expanding the quantity of currency in circulation. The inflation also derived from the indebtedness with the import promoted by fear of an international crisis which would be announced with the Korean war. Finally, another problem which the country faced was related to the very industrial growth, incompatible with the power and transport structure existent till now.

In the foreign extent, the Brazilian government refused to participate of the intervention of the United Nations in North Korea and found hindrances to the obtainment of North-American funds, due to criticism made to the process of remittance of profits abroad by foreign companies. Such criticism was reaffirmed by means of the decree of January 04th, 1952, which restricted these remittances.

Domestically, the government sanctioned a new minimum wage law, with the increase of approximately 300% over the previous level, and revoked the demand of ideological certificate for unions, imposed by Dutra's government.

Some public bodies which were created were important for the Brazilian political history, among which, the Instituto de Aposentadorias e Pensões dos Industriários (IAPI) in 1951; the Brazilian Development Bank (BNDES), in 1952; and, after a great campaign, Petrobras, in 1953, the National Coal Plan and the Superintendency of the Plan for Increasing the Economic Value of the Amazon (which would be transformed in Sudam).

In January, 1954, the National Institute for Immigration and Colonization (INIC) was created.

In 1954, Vargas faced the opposition of the National Democratic Union (UDN), of the military men and press, represented especially by Carlos Lacerda, and even of the bureaucratic structure. Politically isolated, Vargas committed suicide in August 24th, 1954, leaving behind a document known as the Letter of Will. The reasons

for this outcome are assigned, mainly, to the inefficiency of the economic stabilization plan: the resort to monetary issuing unbalanced the government political alliances, both in relation to the workers, and to sectors of the elite which supported him, afraid of the effects that the labor politics could generate.

The attempt practiced against the journalist Carlos Lacerda, in August 05th, in Rua Toneleros, in Rio de Janeiro, which resulted in the death of aviation major Ruben Vaz, had wide repercussion in the country, and is considered as the incident which advanced the government crisis.

Vargas's death reverted, in the symbolic extent, the political situation which could have conducted him to renounce, leading the people to the streets in defence of the "father of the poor".

Source: National Archive – Centro de Informação de Acervos dos Presidentes da República

## **Summary**

### **Eleventh Period of Republican government – Provisory Government**

Government period: from 11.03.1930 to 07.20.1934

Birth: São Borja - RS, 04.19.1883

Death: Rio de Janeiro(DF)-RJ, on 08.24.1954

Profession: Lawyer

Government Period: from 11.03.1930 to 07.20.1934 (03y08m19d)

Age when he took office: 47 years old

Type of election: indirect in the terms of the Constitution of 1934

Inauguration: he took office by the Revolution of 1930, as Head of State of the Provisory Government

Observation: There is no registration of Getúlio Vargas's inauguration as head of State in 1930.

The political imbalance, generated by the exceptional character of the government affected due to a revolution, can explain this omission

### **Twelfth Period of Republican Government**

Government Period: from 07.20.1934 to 11.10.1937

Age when he took office: 51 years old

Type of election: indirect

Government Period: from 07.20.1934 to 11.10.1937 (03y03m24d)

Inauguration: 07.20.1934, in the Deputies assemblies room, presided by Mister Antônio Carlos Ribeiro de Andrada

- Removal: from 05.16.1935 to 06.08.1935, due to travels to Uruguay and Argentina, period in which the President of the Chamber of Deputies took office
- Observation: In November 10th, 1937, Getúlio Vargas elaborated a coup d'état, instituting the "New State" which maintained him in government, ending the successory dispute of the candidates for the Presidency of the Republic.

### **Thirteenth Period of Republican Government – 1st phase**

Government Period: from 11.10.1937 to 29.10.1945

- Age when he took office: 54 years old
- Inauguration: Granted inauguration. Vargas do not sign any term after maintaining himself in power after the coup d'état of 1937.

It is as if his mandate was automatically extended, once the predicted presidential election was cancelled

- Government Period: from 11.10.1937 to 10.29.1945 (07y11m24d)
- Observation: With the coup d'état, in November 10th, 1937, and the institution of the "New State", the Congress was dissolved, the new constitution was granted and Vargas's permanence in the government was guaranteed.

### **Fifteenth Period of the Republican Government**

Government Period: from 01.31.1951 to 01.31.1956

1st Phase: until 08.24.1954

- Age when he took office: 68 years old
- Government Period: from 01.31.1951 to 08.24.1954 (03y06m26d)
- Type of election: direct
- Received votes: 3,849,040 (three million eight hundred forty nine thousand and forty)
- Inauguration: 01.31.1951, in the National Congress, in an assembly presided by Mister Fernando de Melo Viana
- Observation: Vargas committed suicide in August 24th, 1954