

## Humor against Vargas: communist drawings from the election campaign period to suicide (1950-1954)

### Abstract

This article aims to analyze the editorial cartoons and caricatures on Getúlio Vargas published by the communist press within the period from Vargas' election campaign to his suicide (1950-1954), including the reaction of communists to this dramatic act. These images by the party press are usually relegated to the background by historiography, but they also express the ideology of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) and its reading of the national political reality. Thus, the characters observed in the drawings and their characterization are significant sources for understanding the communist reading of Getúlio Vargas and the context of that time.

**Keywords:** Vargas, Getúlio, 1883-1954; Brazilian Communist Party; Caricature; Press – Brazil.

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## O humor contra Vargas: desenhos comunistas do período da campanha eleitoral ao suicídio (1950-1954)

### Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as charges e caricaturas sobre Getúlio Vargas publicadas pela imprensa comunista no período compreendido entre a campanha eleitoral de Vargas e seu suicídio (1950-1954), incluindo a reação dos comunistas a esse ato dramático. As imagens da imprensa partidária são usualmente relegadas a segundo plano pela historiografia, mas também expressam a ideologia do Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB) e sua leitura da realidade política nacional. Nesse sentido, os personagens presentes nos desenhos e sua caracterização são fontes importantes para a compreensão da leitura comunista de Getúlio Vargas e o contexto daquela época.

**Palavras-chave:** Vargas, Getúlio, 1883-1954; Partido Comunista Brasileiro; Caricatura; Imprensa – Brasil.

### Introduction

The history of caricature in Brazil owes much to the monumental eponymous work of Herman Lima (1963). His greatness may have inhibited the researchers of the next generation to complete or update a work of this magnitude, as has envisaged Pedro Correa do Lago (1999). The work of the researcher, designer and collector Lailson de Holanda Cavalcanti (2005) about the history of graphic humor in Brazil, to address 500 years of history of the country, is the one that most closely approximates the purpose of Lima (1963) by the breadth and depth. Published in Spain as part of a collection of the graphic humor in several countries, sometimes it presents didacticism about the history of Brazil that is directly linked to an attempt to reach a wider audience, unfamiliar with

the events unfolding in the country. In this sense, although the focus of research Cavalcanti (2005) is the image, there aren't few moments in the book where it merely illustrates the text (TAVARES, 2008).

Regarding the historiography of Marxism, traditionally rich repertoire of images (cartoons, posters, photographs, etc.) produced by the communist movement is practically ignored. At the international level, where many communist parties seized power, the mismatch between the production of images and reflection on them is marked. One of the reasons for their absence, no doubt, has to do with the negative aesthetic appreciation of these images. By stifling the vanguards and establish themselves as official Soviet art, socialist realism was poorly measured by critics, considered a regression in creativity outbreak that surfaced in Russia in the pre-revolutionary era, whose works were relegated to basements. To be inspired by the Soviet model, the Chinese art North Korean counterparts and ended up receiving similar appreciation, although the same can not be said about Cuban posters (CUSHING, 2003), who fled from the rigidity of Soviet dictates.

Recently, a set of international work has taken this iconographic collection as a source of research, reproducing government posters and analyzing this official propaganda. This bibliography already has a large volume of works, such as Stephen White (1988), Stefan Landsberger (1995), Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (1999), being the most significant work in scope and analysis, the Victoria Bonnel (1997).

In Brazil, although the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) has never taken power, the repressive aesthetic influence of socialist realism also left its mark in the art, as was it demonstrated by Denis de Moraes (1994) and, in a way, Jorge Ferreira (2003). However, more recent studies take the communist images as a research topic. As emphasises Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta (2013), the field is not completely blank, but there are still many possibilities to be explored within the communist visual culture. There is still no comprehensive vision about the image role in the Brazilian communist movement that identifies artists and imaging techniques, investigate the circulation of images in the communist press, consider how often they appear at certain times, and list the artistic influences etc.

Among the recent researches, Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta (2002) touches the communist iconography to analyze its opposite, the images and the anticommunist discourse in Brazil, and ultimately analyzes it later (MOTTA, 2006), in addition to analyzing the clashes on the figure of Luiz Carlos Prestes in drawings of different social actors (MOTTA, 2004). On the other hand Alberto Gawryszewsky (2004 and 2010), focuses his research in this iconography and brings an important element to show the use of images in the discussions that followed the Stalinist crisis, with the release of the report Khrushchev in 1956. Paula Elise Ferreira Soares (2011) analyzes in depth the figure of the Brazilian peasant in the press and painting, starting from an immersion in theoretical writings on the agrarian question to understand the images created by the artists.

Concerning the Communist press, the work of greater chronological and geographical reach remains Antonio Rubim (1986). Because of the repression against the party, getting copies of their newspapers demands an arduous search, being still more difficult to locate the files of writing, interviewing journalists, rebuild the newspaper everyday dynamics, conflicts etc. In the visual field itself, the identification of designers and photojournalists is not simple. The research on the *Jornal Hoje* (Today Newspaper) Pedro Pomar (2006), gained access to part of the newspaper archived seized by the political police, the Department of Political and Social Order (DOPS-SP), which allowed entering the intricacies of writing in a survey that gives attention to the photographs published in the newspaper, which is unusual. Cassandra Goncalves (2005) investigates one of the most important experiences in the production of communist imagery, engraving clubs, woodcuts made in an effort to popularize art and cheapen the price of production. The experience of the clubs is also considered in the comprehensive study Aracy Amaral (1984) on social concern in Brazilian art. Elio Chaves Flores (1999 and 2001) focuses on two articles representations of *getulismo* using various caricatures, although none of the communist newspapers. Andrea de Araújo Nogueira (2005) analyzes the character *Zé Marmiteiro*, created by Nelo Lorenzon a designer left sympathetic to the PCB who dribbles the predominant discourse of the newspaper *Folha da Noite*, *Folha da Tarde* and *Folha da Manhã*, where the character was published.

## Caricatures, cartoons and drawings

The objective of this research is the representations of Getúlio Vargas in the drawings of the Communist press, to approach the party's view about him. The emphasis on design elements does not imply ignoring the textual element, especially those linked to the image as possible titles and subtitles, although sometimes they have purely repetitive character.

Pierre Francastel (1982, p. 1) may have taken further emphasis on the importance of the image to emphasize that the history

[...] does not attribute decisive value unless the written document, curiously, giving it an absolute value, while refusing figured document or the monument. It only uses it to "illustrate" a truth established on the basis solely of written sources that by chance was put into its hands.

And the author continues:

[...] it would be immature think that the only values created by history are those the writing consigned [...]. The arts serve at least as much as the literature as a tool to masters of society to disseminate and impose beliefs (FRANCASTEL, 1982, p. 3).

However, as well pondered Marcos Silva (1992, p. 2), the emphasis on the importance of the image "is not intended [...] locate any messianic force in such sources or place the text under suspicion."

The very definition of caricature, charges and cartoon is controversial. To Cassio Loredano (apud LAGO, 1999, p. 10):

Nothing is very accurate. Charge and caricature are the same word: load; but when a Brazilian newspaper office says charge, in general if you are thinking of graphic satire to political, cultural situation etc. strictly current; caricature is usually synonymous with portrait-charge; and cartoon goes for satirical comment of a situation, regardless of today.

As for Chico Caruso (LAKE apud 1999, p.11), the criterion is spatial:

[...] a wide horizon scene would be a cartoon; centered on a situation or defined characters would be a charge, and focused exclusively on a person, a caricature. But "caricature" is still the generic term applied in Brazil to humor design in general.

In their literature review on the concept of caricature and cartoon, Alberto Gawryszewsky (2008, p. 24) points out that the difficulty of finding a definitive concept, especially for the caricatures and political cartoons, and proposes the creation of new concepts, "such as caricature ideological and ideological charge. These images more focused on the ideological struggle in defense of a political ideal, political, economic and social transformations. " Although the search for conceptual rigor is interesting, we will not use here the concept of charge or political design, because every design is political in a broad sense, but not every design is coming from a political party.

In the image analysis, the series reconstruction is an important methodological procedure. Sergio Miceli (1996, p. 142), when analyzing the pictures of the Brazilian elite, points out that the option of privileging "iconographic series in different cuts, instead of the consideration of individual work, was proving to be a profitable methodological strategy for a significant number works. " Although the type of documentation is different, this procedure has been used by several authors whose specific focus drawings. Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta (2006, p. 11) selects the subjects to structure the chapters of his book based on the incidence, favoring the most applicants, which allow to realize "the main lines of the political debate [...] The fact that certain topics have been the subject of repetition and reiteration [...] helps to reveal the central axis of controversy and criticism of the government. " Genny Abedelmalack (1991) also groups the cartoons that analyzes by thematic focus: coffee, vote etc. Already Alberto Gawryszewsky (2004, p. 107) analyzed communist drawings, states that "the quantity produced of this material is huge" and wonders "which the subject to study? What subject to leave out? What image to choose? Which best represented the last message? What associated more than one subject? ". Question that also runs through international work, therefore, to study the Chinese posters, Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald (1999, p. 9) question whether these sources should be analyzed by political, aesthetic, formal qualities, the production period etc.

Of course, the images are open to multiple interpretations. Christie Davies (2011, p. 94), discussing in general the meaning of the cartoons and the relationship between the intention of the cartoonist and the interpretation of the reader, argues that "the

cartoonist's view of its creation is important, though, of course, is not definitive. We are in an area where the meanings are slippery. " And Alberto Manguel (2001) ends his thought-provoking book stating that

[...]essentially, the whole image is nothing more than a splash of color, a light effect on the retina, which triggers the illusion of discovery or recall [...] Anyway, these reductions do not offer explanations or clues about what constellation in our mind when we see a work of art, relentlessly, seems to require a response, a translation, an apprenticeship of some kind - and maybe, if we're lucky, a small epiphany. These things seem beyond the reach of any book, and this certainly made notes at random and indecisions.

## Getúlio Vargas

The most important character of Brazil in the twentieth century is Getulio Vargas, which marks the national life decisively. Thus, it is not surprising his presence in communist iconography as the main opponent of the party. Lima (1963) considers Dom Pedro II and Getúlio Vargas, by the time been at the forefront of the country, the two most targeted characters by the designers. Both in quantity and in attendance, it certainly is the fundamental enemy of the PCB. Although the Communists sometimes the have supported its trajectory and present moments of approach to Luiz Carlos Prestes, Vargas was represented, in a way, as the antithesis of Prestes in communist iconography.

The first biographical data that approaches is the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Amado (1979, p. 1) begins the work *The Knight of Hope, 1942*, laudatory biography of Prestes, highlighting the scenario of "pamps gaúchos", to point out that the land formed caudillos and revolutionary, it is not hard to imagine who it was referred to.

Both the lives intersect of both of them in many times. By starting with the search for Getulio Vargas by Prestes support during the Revolution of 1930, after the attempt to Prestes to overthrow Vargas in 1935; the subsequent arrest of Prestes and sending his wife to the Nazi concentration camps; Prestes support to Brazil's entry into the war; the *queremismo*; criticism around Vargas to the presidency; Finally, his suicide and the resumption of contact with the labor people. All these moments are marked by almost permanent combat and tactical approaches.

The campaign for the return of Getúlio Vargas to the presidency met the opposition of the Communists, who recalled the election of General Eurico Gaspar Dutra. The Minister of Vargas War, after deposing the president and end the Estado Novo, only won the election with the support of the deposed president. The slogan "He said, vote for Dutra" was the critical endorsement for workers and the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB) would support the candidate.

Communist press recreates what "he said" with another connotation, compared to what "he did". A Quirino Campofiorito drawing showing Getúlio's past in the "New State", formed by monsters - Court of National Security, Department of Press and Propaganda (DIP) and Special Police, all larger than Getulio and watching as henchmen (what the bureaucrat Justice lost in stature and brutality to his companions gained in ferocity). The drawing was published in Workers' Voice of August 5, 1950, with a caption on the "tyranny of bloodthirsty" Vargas, referring then to the exception of court, censorship and repression. Social legislation created by the dictator did not enter this representation, only the monsters, which reinforced and justified their authoritarian characteristics and demystify a "New State Ideology" (Figure 1).



Figure 1: "Workers' Voice" of August 5, 1950, p. 11.

Subtitle: Thus was the tyranny of bloodthirsty Getúlio Vargas: police against the working class and the people the most ferocious class justice against those who fought for national liberation and muzzling of the free press (sic)

Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>



The same “Workers' Voice” of September 2, 1950, on the last page (Figure 2) puts an old Vargas standing in the Senate Tribune chair talking ( "He said") in defense of the “New State”, compared to what " He did". His bad breath is a symbol of decadence and is away from the microphone. In the rest of the page, the paper lists the injustices of the regime. It is essential the "he said," because it refers to radio propaganda, both in the time of “New State” or as the tribune of the Senate, or to his speeches in various manifestations, a strong link with the crowd. When viewing an animated microphone, retreating before the cadaverous breath, the drawing shows how Getúlio’s message is rotted: it is the voice of the past, death. Not coincidentally, it appears a wrinkle and the reduction of its throat, which calls the reader's attention, showing the weakness of his message to the president close to get voiceless. The microphone is away, but for the party is the workers' mass metaphor moving away from the dictator. To complete the picture, it is a dwarf who needs to climb the chair to reach the microphone. In some variations, this “Varguista” representation appeared at various times.



Figure 2: “Workers' Voice” September 2, 1950, p. 12.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

These images of the Communist Party recall and demystify the advertisement and the “New State” ideology, these are already the subject of important historiographical

studies (CAPELATO, 1998; LENHARO, 1986), drawing the political returning from his refuge in São Borja-RS as an old, decrepit and decaying man.

The electoral victory of Getúlio Vargas in the presidential campaign in 1950 and the return to Catete in the "arms of the people" made the PCB needed to deal with a known enemy. Among the highlighted aspects by the Communists designs are featuring him like a big farmer in Rio Grande do Sul, the "achievements" during the "New State", the "Labour" (cited in quotes in the Communist press), and, as is typical in the description of politicians opponents, their submission to US interests.

One of the recurring images of Vargas characterizes as a farmer, with a cigar, whip and spur, and repeated at various times unrelated to those of the same page. In "Workers' Voice", of 12 January 1951 (Figure 3), for example, he smokes a cigar, with his eyes that can not be seen, without showing us where he is looking to. According to García (1980, p.696), the whip "is to punish and exercise the horses," but the horse does not appear in the picture, which suggests that the whip here is used as a "symbol of power judiciary and its right to inflict punishment, "as quoted by Chevalier and Gheerbrant (2003, p.233). Vargas whip does not turn against horses, but rather against the workers, which shows his power of squire and explorer. He has in his hand the Judiciary, the prerogative of the State, may inflict punishment to the workers. The whip can also be a reference to the scourging in the slavery times.



Figure 3: "Workers' Voice" January 12, 1951, p.9.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

With these features, the party builds the image of an authoritarian personality figure from the landowner farmer times in São Borja-RS. Journalist Wainer (1988), when visited him in the “gaucho” retreat, said it was called “the boss” and was surprised to see him, since it literally looked like a “gaucho” doll.

The “Fundamentals” magazine of July 20, 1951 (Figure 4), publishes a design that follows the same line, but this time Vargas does not have a whip, but rather a rope used literally to lasso a farmer instead of cattle, which reveal the treatment of his employees and, by extension, all workers in the country. Probably, the goal would be to deny one of the great slogans of “father of the poor”: that government, since 1930, stopped treating social issue as a case of police, time in which the employee often was stuck in the loop, as well as the Getúlio’s charge was in his dominions in South.



Figure 4: “Fundamentals” of July 20, 1951, p. 24.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

The spur also follows the same web of meaning. In the strict sense, it is for the rider to incite the horse, beating him to obey the rider. However, “call, or look for the spurs, [in Brazil]” or “give spurs [in the South]” means “reprimand, censure,” while “respond to spur” figuratively means “to obey the will of someone be docile to your wishes”, according to García (1980, p.1415). Amado (1979, p. 24), the novel about the life of Prestes, describes the tyrants who “starting from their farm, the whip on the oxen and the spur on the riders, they would whip and spur, humiliate, dishonor and disgrace Brazilian race.” Thus, the spur confirms the meaning of the whip and loop since it can also be a reference power against the workers, transformed into riding animals.

In “Workers' Voice”, the implied character above becomes clearer in a cartoon entitled “The Strike mediators in São Paulo”, published under an editorial on May 1, 1953 (Figure 5), during the strike of 300,000. On it, we see Vargas with spurs, sword and cudgel starting up worker, aided by a bandit on horseback. Here, there may be a subtle reference to regionalism, a union of retrogressive and well armed forces, represented by a “gaucho” and a typical Northeast figure, cowardly, for more, and the back, attack the working class of São Paulo, It has only his fists to defend himself.



Figure 5: Workers' Voice 1. May 1953, p.2.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

This image of Vargas "Knight" is a counterpoint to talk about Prestes as “Knight of Hope”. “Workers' Voice”, of 9 February 1952 (Figure 6) shows Vargas guiding horses, but here the reference is to the Christian tradition of the “Horsemen of the Apocalypse”. Vargas pulls emaciated animals ridden by skulls, each bringing a disgrace: Plague, Famine, War and Death. In this image, he is in physical decline, pulling forces of the crisis, backwardness and death. This "Horsemen of the Apocalypse" is the opposite of hope represented by Prestes. The idea that Vargas will bring disgrace is also present on the last page of Workers' Voice, February 1, 1952 (Figure 7), which interacts with three monsters, famine, tuberculosis and illiteracy, evils that President promised extinguish.



Figure 6: "Workers' Voice" February 9, 1952, p.3.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

### O "DESMEMORIADO"



Eles — Você não disse que ia acabar conosco?  
Getúlio — Eu? Eu disse isso?

Figure 7: "Workers' Voice" 1. February 1952, p.12.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Even as the antithesis of Hope Knight, was published another drawing on double-page article "The ox oligarchy in Rio Grande do Sul," in "Workers' Voice", of 21 November 1953 (Figure 8). Interestingly, when effectively Vargas riding an animal, the saddle is linked to steer, not the horse. The intention to draw it this way, is to increase the

opposition to the “Knight of Hope”, riding a horse, showing the way to people, while Getúlio riding a passive and animal ready for slaughter, which symbolizes the accumulation of flesh, power and money (Canetti, 1995), both led by the imperialist vulture indicating the destination, where to feed their spoils. It is worth noting associations between money and food, obesity and power: in a way, the ox represents a continuation of Vargas' body, so great was his power, greed and money.



Figure 8: “Workers' Voice” November 21, 1953, p.7.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Also in relation to ox, it should be noted that he has not sawed the horns, as usually occurs to decrease the aggressiveness and the risk of accidents, but rather huge horns, a symbol of power. For more contemporary analysis associates the horns to retrogressive forces, as the devil is represented with horns and cloven hooves (CHEVALIER and GHEERBRANT, 2003). These delay forces are also represented by the direction that the group takes from right to left, marching to the past. Something different representations of Prestes on his horse predominantly walks toward the future, to the right or forward, towards the reader. Vargas actually own does not appear riding while Prestes surge in communist iconography on the horse, even if truly used a donkey, is related to the fact that ride, as stated Canetti (1995, p. 390), "gives always the impression not be an end in itself, that is riding him, we intend to achieve a goal and reach it faster than would be possible otherwise".

In this extensive report, Vargas is called king vulture commanding an oligarchy that linked to US imperialism, has much influence on national policy and makes a living at the expense of hungry people. The animal is not drawn the king vulture, more graceful bird, but rather the common animal, which reinforces the idea of return, as lives of carrion, death. In slang, buzzard is undertaker agent (GARCÍA, 1980) and it is noteworthy that there are a bunch of these birds populating the sky on the trail trodden by this oligarchy, flying over a subtle pile of crosses diminished by the distance, indicating a path of death and destruction . Perhaps the own skull of an ox dead at the foot of the group reference to drought in the Northeast, a major theme in the period, and on which the Communist press accused Getúlio to be silent.

Even the buzzard has ascendancy over Getúlio, since it is the US imperialism, as shown in hat with stripes and stars. The report includes other central design, in which Getúlio Vargas acts as butcher, but does not kill cattle, but rather the population. The farmer of San Borja walks toward the reader, dirty blood and wielding a knife, an ax and wearing an apron. Instead of targets are animals that guarantee their richness, the readers, or employees, are. The aggression desire is evidenced in the hallucinated look Vargas (Figure 9).



Figure 9: "Workers' Voice" November 21, 1953, p.6.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

This bunch of "knights" of destruction, delay and power were a counterpoint to the hope of a new life, Luiz Carlos Prestes, PCB leader. While one of them headed the country for the release, the other led the forces of backwardness, ignorance and corrupted power. It is interesting to approach other representation linked to Vargas as a gorilla or ape. Motta (. 2007, p 198) calls attention to the importance of gorilla in left newspapers, noting that this symbol "suggests a being endowed with massive, brutal force, but at the same time - and therein lies part of the comic effect - the animal evokes the idea of rudeness, ignorance. The gorilla was one of brutality and stupidity synthesis. " The author also notes that the symbol shows the prevailing perception on the left that "the right are the forces of backwardness, ignorance and repression" (MOTTA, 2007, p. 198).

When making a historical of this figure, Motta (2007, p. 198) highlights the fact Gorilla use cartoons have not been created in Brazil but imported from Argentina, where the expression "has began to be used in 1955 when Peron experienced time to severe political instability. "Originally, it referred to the right's putschist military, but, with time, came to represent all the right forces. Although the influence of the Argentine political debate may have contributed to the spread, was in the press communist some previous representations in which the simian figure had been used.

On the cover page of "Today News" of August 4, 1954 (Figure 10), Getúlio Vargas comes as a monkey in a design unrelated to the news around. With the legend "Mac Carthy, Mac Arthur, Mac Kaco," the designer puts the two members of the US imperialism carrying weapons (atomic and machine gun pump), while Vargas mimics both, but prosaically with a toy rifle that shoots stopper. Here, monkey representation is also related to the verb "macaquear" in portuguese, which according to García (1980), means to imitate the customs, costumes, habits, the decorations, the food of others, especially of foreigners. The submission of Vargas to US imperialism was such that it turns out to mimic the behavior of foreigners, on a path to war.





### Mac Carthy, Mac Arthur, Mac Kaco

Figure 10: "Today's News" August 4, 1954, p.1.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Calling Getúlio "Mac Kaco," playing with the sound of the word, also reinforces the idea that Vargas is decadent to be a "sick person or old," a "shard" (García, 1980), the popular expression. The use of a zoomorphic Vargas also refers to human evolution from ape to homo sapiens, associating him to a primitive state. Also in this design, there is an iconographic reconstruction of the evolution of the human species, or rather the powerful involution, as the three go towards the left, to the past. The meaning of "regression" of the characters is also given by reference to weapons, the most primitive, in Vargas's hand, until the most powerful in the hands of Mac Carthy, thus, enhancing the art of killing: this is the trodden path by this decadent class that exercises the command of the world.

On the last page of "Workers' Voice", March 1, 1952 (Figure 11) shows us Getulio upon a cage beside two bourgeois, ready to set the fascist beast free, a gorilla. With the key in hand, he appears ready to use fascism, this regressive form of social organization, to give a political coup. The animal was controlled in the cage and is Vargas who has the "key" to release this beast and unleash a new political coup, a "fascist terror," as the report said. However, even being the key holder, Vargas appears surrounded by bourgeois fat, much bigger than him, and which it seems subservient, as one gives you

directions while the other rests his hand on her shoulder, signaling control and superiority. Above the drawing, the headline says: "Plan of provocations and fascist terror".



Figure 11: "Workers' Voice" March 1, 1952, p. 12.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

When reading the reality of the 1950s in the context of World War II, which deeply marked the identity of the PCB itself, the party seems to lose to see and show the worker who actually "created" the gorilla.

With opposing forces to President articulating a political coup, communists insist on drawings representing Vargas as a political coup. Ramiro caricaturist of News Today, drawing on the front page of February 26, 1954 (Figure 12) the President requesting the military to put into operation the "Robot" reaction, called "political coup of the State" and the symbol of the swastika on the chest. The subject is not in the newspaper page reports. The choice of military and plan executor shows the belief that Vargas would the army support in a possible coup, which refers again to the context of the "New State". Getulio distemper who was with his arms raised, speaks about "only salvation" shows the

hope of the PCB that the robot could fail, the military itself can not seem to put the machine in action: his arms to remain static.

### O «ROBOT» DA REAÇÃO



Figure 12: "Today's News" February 26, 1954, p.1.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Deconstructing Vargas's performance in the "New State" and his speech was critical to the party, given that the ideological construction of Vargas as "father of the poor" the approaching of urban workers, preferred target PCB. The Labour was a risk to the communists, because the PCB sought to identify as the only legitimate workers' party. Vargas advertising created after the founding of the PTB in 1943 was directed to the working masses, being a major rival to the PCB in the election dispute, union and symbolic.

On the last page of the Working Class, 1 September 1951 (Figure 13), the party criticizes the "labor" policy. The design, unrelated to the page matters, shows Getúlio pulling a rope attached to a pulley bringing down wages, while the price of goods rises; on the other hand, the worker uses the power in an attempt to reverse the situation. The conflict is focused on the working class versus Vargas, which produces famine. Featured on the cover of Workers' Voice, of 9 February 1952 (Figure 14), which takes stock of the first year of the Vargas government, again the word "Labour" in quotation marks, with the same sense: this ideological banner shown by Getúlio Vargas to the workers hide his

sneaky look, to sharks and to the US President, Harry Truman, recipients of funds from the Brazilian workers.



*A política "trabalhista" de Getúlio: enquanto os trabalhadores lutam por aumento de salários, os tubarões são favorecidos com novos aumentos dos preços*

Figure 13: "The Working Class", 1 September 1951, p.6.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>



Figure 14: "Workers' Voice" February 9, 1952, p. 1.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

This association between imperialism and Brazilian presidents, shown as submissive or controlled by American leaders, by Uncle Sam, the heads of the US State Department etc., is constant in communist iconography (GAWRYSZEWSKY, 2004). Getulio Vargas appears as submissive countless times: greeting with a handshake and a smile a representative of Standard Oil, on September 8, 1951, June 2, 1951 and April 12, 1954; as Truman marionette on February 9, 1952; It is governed by an American conductor and following its agenda, on July 5, 1952; serving as a drumstick for imperialism playing the bass drum in favor of sending troops to Korea, July 5, 1952; like a dog chasing American currencies, on August 9, 1952; almost like a puppet of American ventriloquist, on November 29, 1952; like a miniature toy Americans, on January 10, 1953, all of the Workers' Voice; as spokesman for the American People in the Press, of 8 March 1953; as the tip of a battering ram controlled by the Americans, in March 13, 1953; member of "sinister orchestra" in which the instruments are weapons conducted by a US military in Workers' Voice, of April 11, 1953; as marionette, on April 26, 1953 in Today News; dressed as an American in Workers' Voice, of 9 May 1953; as a draft animal of Uncle Sam in Workers' Voice of May 16, 1953; marching along with other politicians under the direction of Uncle Sam in Workers' Voice of October 3, 1953; as a prostitute thrown at the feet of Uncle Sam in Today News of February 7, 1954; commanding a carnival march as Pierrot with a ironic "standard" "Standard and light boys" in Workers' Voice of March 6, 1953; with American flag in hand on Workers' Voice of March 27, 1954 and June 26, 1954; with American flag in hand and literally in the hand of Uncle Sam in Today News of April 18, 1954, and as hurdy-gurdy monkey in Workers' Voice, August 21, 1954. The purpose of this relationship is to highlight the continuing Vargas's vision as submissive to US interests in a period in which the pressure of national and international sectors coup against the government was growing. Initially, there is the clearest characterization that the US interest in Brazil is purely financial. In this character building line, a sweaty Getúlio appears clutching a press, crushing workers with the measures and government policies, Workers' Voice, of 6 December 1952 (Figure 15), drawing included under the editorial "Let us organize the fight against the famine. " Exhausted by the force used, Vargas asks

financial aid to President Eisenhower, since there is no way to extract anything more of exploited workers.

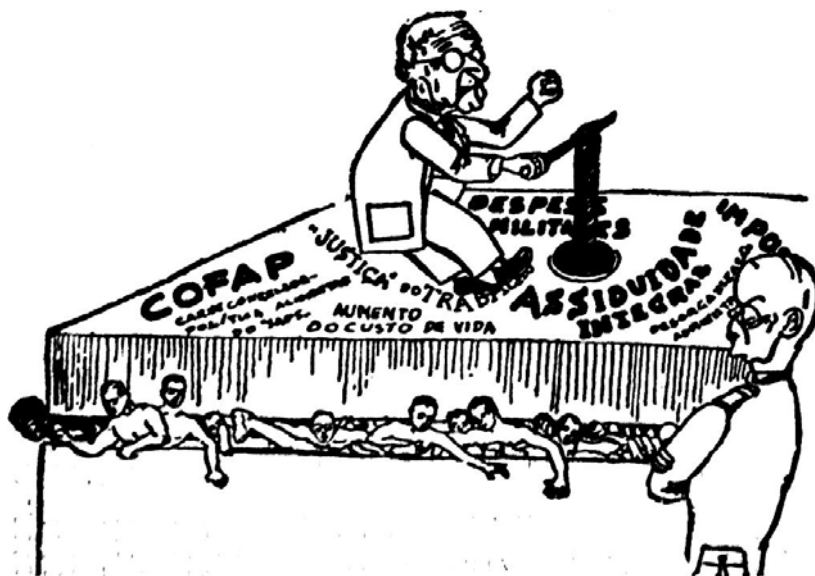


Figure 15: Workers' Voice of December 6, 1952, p.2.

Subtitle: Due to small compressibility of consumption ... It must be external financing ... (The secret letter of Getulio Vargas to the State Department)

Getulio to Eisenhower - Chief, there is more to compress and they will eventually busting the press. Send more dollars ...

Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Another characterization of Getúlio was a "submissive", a ruler who offers national wealth abroad. The word "submissive" hides the production process involved in economic activity suggested, whatever it may be. Never appear technical resources and investments in Brazil for the extraction of any raw materials, the drawings only emphasized these being "stolen" by imperialism.

The emphasis is almost absolute in the US imperialism, mainly represented by Uncle Sam, which appears to be almost ubiquitous in Brazilian economy. This simplification aimed to arouse the workers to the issue of asymmetric trade with the US, the political consequences of what was being sold and what the destination of the products. Among the representations that exploit this feature, it is worth mentioning the waiter, as Getulio is featured in "Workers' Voice", of 2 August 1952, whose function does not involve the actual manufacturing of a product (no work, so), but rather "Serve" something. Here, the relationship of "submission" of the word "serve" is evident also

enhanced by "tray", "give to the tray" means giving without expecting something in return, exactly what Getúlio Vargas made to serve an avid citizen North American. The most important question may be what he serves, which "delivers with the tray." In this design, it serves for American oil, troops and apparently some ore.

Vargas is best characterized as a waiter in Workers' Voice, of 23 January 1954 (Figure 16) and on July 24, 1954, in the same paper, although with different subtitles. The American citizen is still eager waiting of national wealth, but here the characterization of Getulio as a waiter is more crafted, both in uniform and in cloth it brings, possibly to contain the salivation of the American man. The dish served is the Brazilian homeland, since the food takes the form of Brazil, while it stands out the oil, represented by the towers, and the Brazilian troops. The fat of the mighty was directly related to "eat" the Brazilian nation, its wealth and potential.



Figure 16: "Workers' Voice" January 23, 1954, p.3  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

The party emphasizes the natural and mineral resources that can be exploited by the Americans, and also includes the Brazilian troops, as was an extensive campaign

against sending troops to the Korean War. In this campaign, the figure of the woman has an important role (Torres, 2009). The argument was that Vargas intended to give, in addition to the black blood (oil), the blood of Brazilians to the American war machine.

Perhaps the clearest design in their meanings and implications be published in the *Workers' Voice* of 3 July 1954 (Figure 17), accompanying two-page report on the submission of the president trusts Yankees. The "negotiation" of President Vargas with Yankee imperialism does not occur with an employee any of the US government, but with a military bigger than Vargas. The products offered to the quite well stocked commander make up a significant number of the national economy. The military has several "products" that helped in the American war machine: as much money as the military agreement, to the international support to the vote at the United Nations (UN).



Figure 17: "Workers' Voice" July 3, 1954, p.7  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Exploitation of workers is highlighted by communist iconography, however, the emphasis is on the possibility of exploitation of Brazil directly serve the interests of war the US military machine, involved in the Korean War (1950-1953) and in a rush militate against the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Thus, the exploitation of workers



and the Vargas government action, the Manichean framework then appear as an expression of an alignment to a possible attack on the "peace camp" and its leader, the USSR. Vargas appears in many ways to complete this warlike appearance. The drawing published in *Workers' Voice*, of 26 April 1952 (Figure 18), attached matter denouncing military agreement between Vargas and Truman. The drawing shows the Vargas face being changed to become a plane dropping the atomic bomb, weapon used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by Truman's order.



Figure 18: *Workers' Voice* April 26, 1952, p.5.  
Caption: From smile to the atomic bomb or the evolution of American aid  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

## Suicide

Vargas was seen as authoritarian squire farmer, submissive, follower of moribund ideology of Labour, mere servant of interest, mainly war Americans and preparer of a coup to perpetuate himself in power. Although several Prestes's statements published in the Communist press corroborating the PCB view, there is doubt as to the opinion "prestista" at that time.

According to Anita Leocadia Prestes (2016, p 296.):

Prestes clarified that disagreed with such guidance ... [and defending] need to change the tactics of the party, approaching Vargas and support the organization of a kickback. But the secretariat was fifteen days discussing the alert [...] and nothing was done in this direction.

After the suicide, at an extraordinary meeting of the party leadership, the leader Diogenes Arruda, according to Prestes (2016, p. 296), "defended the thesis that the

conditions would be created for a popular uprising led by the PCB [and Prestes would have criticized] strongly the proposal. "

Reis (2014, p. 261) points out that Prestes in later statements, said it has advocated a change in the PCB policy of alliances since 1949 and would have been the author of the union resolution 1952, which eased the union alliances political party . Reis (2014, p. 261), however, it states that "proposals, [...], if formulated, disappeared in the storms of hiding." Reis (2014, p. 262-263) also indicates that Prestes:

[...]insisted, more than once, a posteriori, have been sensitive to antivarguista and anti-popular radicalization process, led by the right, and as a result would have formulated in extremis the proposed approach with the president [but] the executive committee [... ] have not discussed or disclosed their new positions.

The text with the Prestes's proposals :

[...]It was not found in either file, or the memory of old consulted militants, although its existence has been confirmed by Maria Ribeiro, second wife of Prestes, who also reported that the leader would acknowledge in private conversations, the PCB responsibility in the death of Vargas (REIS, 2014, p. 262-263).

The internal dimension of the alleged divergence of Prestes with the PCB policy remains in doubt, but the visible face of the party, expressed in the press, undergoes a dramatic change with the suicide of Getulio Vargas. With the great popular commotion, the party radically changes and graphic humor leaves the scene, but the designs are still being published. The new approach emphasizes an alliance with labor, so far rivals the Communists. The party publishes a drawing showing the revolt in Franca-SP, with popular pulling a banner of the National Democratic Union (UDN) and a fire in the background. The drawing, published in *Workers' Voice*, of 11 September 1954 (Figure 19), channel public anger exclusively on the UDN, while the Communists have also suffered from the revenge of the population. Jorge Ferreira (2005, p. 192) has a mapping of popular riots after Vargas's suicide, trying to identify patterns and, in the press, the "Last Hour" was the newspaper spared by the crowd. The "Tribune", PCB newspaper in Porto Alegre, was also jammed.



Figure 19: Workers' Voice September 11, 1954, p.7.  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

Vargas, the great rival of Luiz Carlos Prestes, criticized and ridiculed by the communist press passes after death, to be incorporated into popular outcries supported by the PCB. "Today's News", of September 26, 1954, published full-page article showing a haughty Prestes's face and the title "Communist and labor shoulder to shoulder in the fight against the common enemy." One possible reading of this image is that Prestes also suffered by the Brazilian people (though conveniently omits who contributed to part of their difficulties) and therefore labor must mourn the death of their leader acting from now with the Communists. Rodrigo Patto Sá Motta (2004, p. 105) describes the drawing in pen and ink as a "Prestes in heroic and manly position, looking forward steadily, with slightly disheveled hair, to suggest a man fighter and action." Popular Press, also from September 26, 1954, shows a handshake occupying the entire top of the newspaper, traditional image of who seals a commitment, and uses exactly the same headline of "Today News".

The most important transformation and charged symbology is the incorporation of the Vargas name as the Communists fight flag. After so much criticism, the PCB just making the "father of the poor" exactly what he predicted in the letter-testament: make your name a battle flag. Following the headline "Do not give up to the Café government,

Brigadeiro & Cia.", the design published in Workers' Voice, of 4 September 1954 (Figure 20) shows a crowd of Brazilians carrying banners with the words "let us fight against political coup ", down with the submissive "and" Vargas killers. " By design, the watchwords appear as a result of honest desires of the Brazilian people, which, here, are added to the claims of the PCB. Vargas suicide turns into murder, but the party quickly points the finger to the killers, and takes the focus off his campaign against Vargas. Prestes could admit privately the party's responsibility in Vargas suicide, but in communist drawings assassins were other and Labour, then, was an ally.



Figure 20: Workers' Voice September 4, 1954, p.10  
Source: Cedem/Unesp. <http://www.cedem.unesp.br/>

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