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The social dramas of rubber tappers during the "Battle of Rubber" period

The social dramas of the rubber tappers in the period of the "Battle of the Rubber"

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Summary
In the text, an analysis of a topic of such historical importance will be sought, knowing that one of the jobs of historians is to remember historical facts and reinterpret them, based on this assumption, we could not forget to mention social dramas by which were passed by migrants from the Northeast who came with the mission of cutting rubber to help in the Federal Government's war effort, through the "Washington Accords", and who became known as "Rubber Soldiers". Our objective is to demystify the "rubber soldiers", without, however, using them, as these social and historical actors, as subjects, were extremely important for the history of Amazonas, Brazil and the world.

Key words: Rubber tappers. Battle of Rubber. Amazon.

Abstract
In the text, an analysis of a topic of such historical importance will be sought, knowing that one of the jobs of historians is to remember historical facts and reinterpret them, based on this assumption, we could not forget to mention the social dramas by which the Northeastern migrants who came with the mission to cut rubber to help in the Federal Government's war effort passed through the "Washington Accords", and who became known as "Rubber Soldiers". Our objective is to demystify the "rubber soldiers", without, however, victimizing them, since these social and historical actors, as subjects, were extremely important for the history of Amazonas, Brazil and the world.
Keywords: Rubber tappers. RubberBattle. Amazon.

1. Introduction

To begin the analysis, we highlight below the songs of the rubber soldiers, which reflect the situation they found themselves in at that time, many without knowing where they were being sent, without even understanding the context of that war, without ever being aware of the reality of a rubber plantation, in these conditions they came.

> Just as soldiers go to war singing their hymns, the victims of the Battle of Rubber created, in their despair and hope, folkloric characters and expressions, whose snapshots we were able to capture. Characters and expressions of great sociological and human value, as they reveal the different states of the northeastern soul in their first encounter on the Amazon front. These manifestations and explosions of the country spirit cover an extensive range of individual and collective situations, constituting a challenge and a spontaneous, almost lyrical manifestation of the drama they went through, often unconscious of the role they were playing in the "Amazonian amphitheatre". In them we will find a true human typology revealing psychic feelings of revolt, hatred, passion, despair, hurt, affliction, regret, sacrifice, as well as faith, love, hope, courage, fascination, fortune and salvation. Hence the reason for this songbook. In it we seek to describe the human classification of the immigrant, repeat his spontaneous folk singing, translate my interpretation and my sociological singing, and identify the name and origin of the immigrant character. From that moment on, a little later, in the middle of the Second World War, in 42 and 43, when the interviews were carried out, the

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> northeasterners would begin their Long March and participate in the fight on the rubber tapper "front".
> Repeating the biblical text, we could remember: "The time of pruning has arrived: songs can be heard in our land". The rubber trees will be bled, and from their "crying" and their latex, factory tires will emerge for warplanes to fight many battles. The allies won the war, but the "rubber tapper" was left alone, in the solitude of the forest and in the wilds of the forest, unable to celebrate the victory, because his Battle of Rubber – had, for him, neither beginning nor end. Let's at least let him sing his song, here, before I forget.
> Scourges: "The drought poked me – either run or die. I came from hunger" – geography of hunger in the expulsion of man. Joaquim Moreira de Souza, from Russas. Delusional and deluded: "I came with the syringe, which is a blessing. Money here comes together with scrapers" – the rubber in the economy of appeal. Joaquim Ferreira, from Cachoeira.
> Transhumants: "I came to summer in the syringa. When it rains, I'll come back like a sheep looking for pastures." – traffic economy "modes" winter geography. José Lino de Araújo, from Campos Sales. Romantics: "I'm not a money fanatic" I came looking for a place to live happily with my wife and children" – Promised Land: "Leave your land, your relatives and your father's house and come to the land that I will show you" – Genesis. José Florêncio, from Serra Meruoca.
> Brave: "with slime in my belly, a fire stick on my back and a sharp knife on my belt, I call any mouth a beast" – courage in the pioneering institute of penetration. Francisco Timetable Sobreira de Belém do Rio São Francisco, Pernambuco.
> Farmers: "I am lost in the plantation. I came looking for a place that rains all year round so I can create and plant" – the rain correcting the drought. João Garcia de Medeiros, from Carnaúbas.
> Misadapted. "I only see this ugly, soggy land. I don't move my foot from the firm. Anyone who lives in the water is a caboclo or a fish. I like dry feet. I'm dying to go back" – the panicked terror of water in the psychological geography of the backlands. Alfredo Constantino, "born and raised in Crato". (BENCHIMOL, 1982, p. 177-179).

From these songs and reports from these workers who came to the Amazon, it is clear that they had different feelings from what they expected when they arrived here. Certainly, the Estado Novo propaganda was very important in convincing these migrants, who thought they were leaving in search of a better life. Unfortunately, the vast majority were unable to fulfill their dreams, which were lost deep within the forests of the Amazon.

> In this way, a study of the toponymy of the rubber and rural enterprise in the Amazon could be an important contribution in the field of sociology and landscape geography and regional human occupation, because it reflects the hopes, suffering, success, fortune and despair of the immigrant who arrived here and of the native himself, with all his soulful load, the values of his culture, the roots of his ancestry, the memory of his past and the expectation of his future. (BENCHIMOL, 1982, p. 205).

When taking as a reference the Algerian immigration to France studied by Abdelmaleck Sayad (1998), we find similarities between the social conditions of northeastern migration to the Amazon, in the period called "Battle of Rubber" and the immigration analyzed by the French sociologist, being able to deepen and narrow the view on these two population movements. For the sociologist, migration is formed by three principles:

1) the identity of the migrant;

2) due to the social conditions of the society of origin, which motivated the subject to leave in search of better conditions. material conditions of life;

3) by the society to which this migrant is heading, focused on the perspective of change and forms of stability Social.

Under the history of the migratory bridge between Ceará and the Amazon in the 1940s, we find important data to affirm that the social conditions of Algerian society, as well as that of Ceará, as well as French and Amazonian society become similar, become closer, they funnel into the social experience of life of the people who arrive and those who receive. Therefore, seeking to resolve the dilemmas caused by the drought and trying to alleviate social conflicts, Ceará, Algeria, France and the Amazon Valley come together through the migratory experience and the contextual forms that the Government of each created for the purpose of human and demographic accommodation.

In the national experience in the 1940s of the 20th century, through international treaties, Ceará people headed to the Amazon to supply the labor necessary for the extraction of rubber, and in this the social contexts of departure and arrival, as well as the sociability network created to support the migrant, are fundamental to understanding the suffering, neglect and degrading forms of work that these individuals undertake to reverse their miserable condition.

two

At this point, migration is established within the fields of personal relationships, requiring the researcher to analysis of domestic group relations. As a fundamental step, the family and the social support conditions of this institute show us images, trajectories, contexts, dilemmas and feelings involved in the migration process.

Therefore, according to Eunice Durham (1973), due to agricultural work in Brazil being related to the family universe, migrating to other regions in search of working conditions to carry out this type of work, makes us observe a movement of internal readaptation of the family sociability network.

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Image 01 - Cearenses marching through Fortaleza towards the Amazon.



Source: MAUC/UFC Collection.

2 From the northeastern fixation in the Amazon to government propaganda

Benchimol (1977) points out two important cases about the northeastern settlement in Amazon, which make us reflect, on the one hand, on the social conditions of social reception of the "Rubber Soldier", and on the other hand, a question arises: why return to the land of origin? For the author, there are two pertinent identities in the northeastern migration to the Amazon, the adventurer and the alone, but, due to family belonging to their land of origin, these two identities soon returned to Ceará, thus emerging an imminent risk for the labor needed to exploit rubber in the Amazon. I would like to emphasize, firstly, that there were differences within the "Battle of Rubber" itself between the first and second coming. According to Benchimol:

> The difference between these two streams of immigrants was striking. While the first, in the first two years, motivated by the scourge of drought, which expelled man from the backlands, the countryside and the caatinga, was made up, for the most part, of "Cearenses" who moved from the interior with their families, The second current, from 1943 to 1945, came from urban centers, generally made up of single men or men who had strayed from their relatives, many of them unemployed or without a defined profession. The angry were left to their own devices, to survive as best they could in the centers, in the settlements and in the tapiris. Or they remained huddled and idle in the boss's sheds, restlessly waiting for the summer that was not enough for the factory to start, the debts growing, the illness decimating them, little by little the flame of hope and the will to fight were extinguished. (BENCHIMOL, 1982, p. 227-229).

Benchimol's (1982) thinking about these two identities included in the migration process to the Amazon leads us to conclude that transporting country people without their family to the work camps is the same as making a temporary, ephemeral migration, without committing to permanent residence. them to the land, and that this would worsen the labor shortage in the region, affecting the economy of rubber extraction to serve the main buyer of this product, the USA.

In this way, bringing the northeastern backlander with his family favors the production of rubber, as well as the formation of family centers and settlements. With his close family, the migrant from Ceará would continue his family and social bond, which, even expelled by the drought of 1942, this "transertanejo" settled in a new territory, antagonistic to that of his origin, with his family at his side, the conditions for return would be resolved.

The family within the migratory process during the period of resumption of rubber production to meet the demand required by the Second World War, functioned as a fixing element for the country people in the Amazon Valley, but most of the settled families exchanged the problems caused by the drought for identical dilemmas experienced in the Amazon regions where they were established.

On this point, Benchimol (1977) states that, if there were better conditions for women in their places of origin, the countryman's family establishment in the Amazon would not have a major degrading impact, and could even promote a stronger colonizing and civilizing process in the Amazon. However, this did not happen, everyone fleeing from hunger, without minimum subsistence conditions, signed work and assistance contracts just so as not to have their last social hopes and health conditions consumed by the scourge of hunger caused by the state of drought that the

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Ceará faced in the early 1940s of the 20th century.

> There will be no more peace for me in a land where I don't know anyone [...] "I didn't want to come, it was he who forced me" [...] "The only way was to come with my four children" [...] "I really didn't want to come" [...] "I'd rather die of hunger in my homeland." (BENCHIMOL, 1977, p. 187-197,*passim*).

The syringe "doesn't get along with women", deepens the loneliness already cultivated by loss, by folly, by the lack of advantages and inconveniences in a daily task in which the sun is the closest element to time, measuring the life that passes. The "balata" drives away love, feeds the ghosts cultivated in lack, created in solitude, in the daily monologue about hope. Women and men fleeing the drought found a green landscape in the Amazon, a field that was missing to make the change worthwhile. In the heat, in the backwaters of the river, they concluded that the best thing was not to come, it was just to stay hungry that one day would pass, but it was to stay.

It should be a harmonious settlement, aligned with the new labor dynamics encouraged by federal and American coffers, linked to the rationality of land use and no longer an element of extractivism, but the social and labor dynamics of rubber exploitation made settlement and settlement impossible. humanity and the construction of a new demography of the Amazon.

It was as if the new, in the blink of an eye, became old, worm-eaten, full of eventualities. As if the commercial bridge between Brazil and the USA, which was supposed to remodel the Amazonian environmental landscape, produced an eternal recurrence of territorial failure and economic, social and population discontinuity, making a civilizing process in the Amazon impossible.

At that time, in the 1940s, local administrators wanted the bulk of the population to explore lands previously imagined for civilization, but for lack of reason, they left it for another day. A day that arrived through the strong arms of those free men, workers of the land, even though they were fleeing from hunger, the future trembled in the shadow of those fearless, "brave" people, without ground and with a purpose: to train nature in a milk that would turn the wheels of a car and other utensils, from the hospital staff who care for mutilated soldiers at the front to the blessings of high-ranking officials at military bases.

Image 02 - Poster for the Rubber March.



Source: MAUC/UFC.

Rubber went beyond a simple product benefiting from the raw material of an extractive item. During the Second World War, it became a diplomatic measure between countries, between regions that competed for the same power and prestige, across Europe, America, Asia, and, mainly at the national level, between Ceará, Rio de Janeiro and the Amazon Valley, as the arrival of these individuals with their families to the forest recesses in search of material conditions of life and survival did not only mean the opening of a new economic frontier or the commercial resumption of a product extractivist, meant more, far beyond the gains and losses of that context.

It structured the geographic position of the Amazon in a national and international economic scenario that continues to this day. Since the late 1980s of the 19th century, this territory has served as a vast deposit of souls available to work manually and with the land.

But, let us return to the context of the 1940s when the Vargas government "concerned" with two situations, Ceará and the Amazon, only sought to benefit the surroundings of the Capital, Rio de Janeiro, with the Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional, while all the suffering I would stay in a land where the sound of whining would be confused with the sound of birds, the swaying of the treetops. The color of the day was green, and it was full of improvised training for those less free men and women.

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We must agree with Samuel Benchimol (1977) that the Northeastern migrant cycle to the Amazon followed the course of one of his memorable study chapters:*Scourged, Retreatant, Angry, Meek. And maybe Paroara*. Benchimol's capitular assertion is acceptable, as most of the families that migrated here due to the close relationship between those who arrived as scourges and those who recovered with the life opportunities that working the land offered them, and returned to Ceará in search of new free men willing to explore new Amazonian lands.

That is why the reference to the category of brave, meek and enticing migrant in Rodolfo Teófilo's (1974) novel "O Paroara", made by Benchimol (1977), is fundamental to understanding the notions of suffering, hope and work of northeastern migrants to the Amazon. Since "[...] the greatest convincing force, therefore, was not necessarily in his speeches about a seductive Amazon, but in his example, as an equal who had managed to prosper in other lands [...]" (CARDOSO , 2011, p. 24).

And they came with their differences and plans, they arrived in the Amazon and found an atypical context to that reported in the adventures of Seu José, who stopped being "Zezé da mironga" when he left his homeland; or in the accumulation of wealth by Senhor Raimundo who left "Timungo" behind the front door, after his parents' blessing, at the time of departure. Diseases, labor exploitation, debts contracted through a aviation system perfected by the first work experiences in the Region, and unhealthy living conditions, which decimated many due to "water belly", "beriberi", diarrhea, cholera, malaria , yellow fever, typhus, pneumonia.

Image 03 - Gathering for the Rubber March (Rua General Sampaio, Fortaleza, CE).



Source: MAUC/UFC.

The notion of accumulating wealth through manual work with the land, suffering, hunger, territorial displacement in search of cultivable and housing space, the figure of the recruiter, the migrant, longing, are internal ideological and social constructions pertinent to civilizing constitution of the northeast, which carries with it stigmas, marks, memories and forgetfulness. Some novels from Brazilian fictional literature present us with important ballast regarding the construction of these elements by the people of the Northeast.

José Américo de Almeida, Raquel de Queiroz, Graciliano Ramos, João Cabral de Melo Neto, Ariano Suassuna and others who filled their novels and poems building the image of a harsh Northeast and a suffering, hard-working but fearless man who achieves his objective with a lot of effort and sacrifices.

Through this ideological landscape, we can assimilate the internal logic of the constitution of Ceará's life in their land of origin and transpose all these experiences to the historical moment between 1942-45, when migration occurred mass of northeasterners, mainly from Ceará, to the Amazon. When referring to Ceará in a speech given in Fortaleza, 1940, Getúlio Vargas saw it this way:

> [...] he adapted to the new life, advanced through the virgin forest, was a pioneer in the Amazon, facing countless dangers, bold, heroic, persistent. Deep in the forest, he went to the confines of Brazil, claiming his homeland and incorporating 200,000 square kilometers into national sovereignty – all of Acre's territory. This work is yours, Ceará. (VARGAS, 1940, p. 95-96).

Resuming the Northeastern experience in the incorporation of Acre, Getúlio Vargas once again calls on the people of Ceará to undertake yet another heroic undertaking: to populate the Amazon and organize the national economy. Because of your experience

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migratory, the people of Ceará should be the protagonists of a Brazilianness and the consolidation of the national territory, as if they were artisans of the body of the Fatherland.

However, what contextual conditions for maintaining life in the middle of the forest would provide a means of perpetuating the idea of Ceará people as artisans of the body of the Fatherland? In addition to working on extracting the syringe, very few. Josué de Castro in *Geography of Hunger*, proposing a geographical method that understands the social phenomenon of hunger that could "[...] precisely locate, delimit and correlate the natural and cultural phenomena that take place on the surface of the Earth.". (CASTRO, 2002, p. 37).

It states that hunger in the Amazon is caused by permanent social foundations and the absence of certain nutrients, which, in the long term, accelerated the mortality of more vulnerable populations dependent on regional geophagy, which is why the State's action to alleviate this dilemma is fundamental to population establishment, as man alone would not be able to extract adequate food for local maintenance (CASTRO, 2002).

For this reason, the suffering of Ceará migrants to the Amazon was due to their permanent food, housing and social conditions. Since the end of the 19th century, a vast literature has been produced to understand the causes and conditions of man's establishment in the Amazon forest. In this sense, Regina Horta Duarte highlights that:

> The Amazon is analyzed as a place established in historical temporality by a myriad of subjects who, in turn, face the conditions of the physical environment. To this end, Garfield dialogues with geographer David Harvey, for whom places are material and ecological artifacts built and experienced within intricate networks of social relations, full of symbolic meanings and representations, social products of political and economic powers. With Bruno Latour, the author argues that "nature" is inseparable from social representations, and that society also results from non-human elements. With Roger Chartier, he considers social conflicts in light of tensions between the inventiveness of individuals and the conditions outlined by the norms and conventions of his own time. These horizons need to be evaluated in the investigation of what men and women thought, did and expressed (DUARTE, 2014, p. 2).

Initially, Euclides da Cunha's report on an official visit to recognize the Purus River stands out, the objective of which was to demarcate the territorial limits between Brazil and Peru. The work, published posthumously in 1909, presents a damning account of the degrading conditions of work in the rubber plantation, which he called a human martyrdom to live under laws similar to those recently abolished, in comparison to that of the slave who had his freedom granted in 1888.

For Cunha, work in the rubber plantation causes "[...] to injure and kill the man and the tree", to which the man "[...] works to enslave himself [...]". (CUNHA, 1999, *passim*). We highlight that Euclides da Cunha had a positivist and generalist view when it came to these workers migrating to the Amazon. In "Judas -Ahsverus", a passage from his travel report, Euclides da Cunha sees the rubber tapper as follows:

> The countryman sculpted the damn thing in his image. He takes revenge on himself: he punishes himself, after all, for the cursed ambition that led him to that land; and he is faced with the moral weakness that leaves him with the impulses of rebellion, repressing him more and more to the lower plane of fallen life where childish credulity has bound him as a slave, to the swampy land of the traffickers who deceived him. (CUNHA, 1999, p. 55)

Rodolfo Teófilo, writer and pharmacist, in his naturalist spirit, writes the novel "*The hunger*" in 1890, in which he chooses as his protagonist the northeastern migrant to the Amazon, stating that this subject would only experience suffering during his stay, as "[...] work and illness awaited him there [...]" (TEÓFILO , 1979, p. 198).

Alberto Rangel (1927), in his 1907 work, "*Green Hell*" tells the story of Gabriel, a caboclo who has his land coveted by a northeasterner, and because of what he went through to become a large landowner, the northeasterner proves his anger and turns this caboclo's life into hell, letting the vein of evil is distilled in the nature that surrounds them, commands their lives.

Leandro Tocantins (1988), in "*The River Commands Life*" makes a strong allusion to Gilberto Freyre (2015) when evoking similarities between the rubber plantation and "*Big house & slave quarters*": "the rubber plantation, headquartered on the riverbank, had its large house – the shack, even if it was crude – and the slave quarters: all jungle". Highlighting the forms of exploratory work whose supply and production conditions were incompatible between the subjects of the rubber plantation, as the local hierarchy has a strong belonging to the levels of power and patrimony.

When researching the trajectory of northeasterners who migrated to the Amazon due to public policies developed by the Getúlio Dorneles Vargas Government, in the case of the second phase of rubber, we would need to be very criteria to carry out this analysis. First of all, we need to understand the political, economic and social context, and then we can get into the essence of this migration trajectory. I would like to reiterate that, when discussing migration policies for northeasterners, the vast majority of whom are from Ceará, the drought argument is almost always used.

However, we want to oppose this argument, stating that the reason for the migration of these people from Ceará is not just about the issue of drought, as many people who were in a bad social situation, in a land structure unfavorable to small agriculture, structural unemployment, everything This contributed to them seeing a chance at that time to try a new life elsewhere.

There was also the possibility of avoiding conscription for the war, as we were in the middle of World War II at that time. We emphasize that due to the government's strong participation in convincing through drawings,

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illustrative figures, they made us think about the possibility of a new life and the very flavor of adventure, as Benchimol (1982) said at that time.

For Jânia Maria de Paula (2010), when it comes to northeastern migration and the poverty that plagued the northeastern hinterland and the period of the rubber boom, we need to be cautious to realize that the territory does not exist only in the context of demarcation or even as a portion of a given space, physical limits, but to the broad space, formed and incarnated by the structure of those who were fundamental to its formation.

The process of de(re)territorialization that the Northeasterners went through, both in the first and second phases of rubber, absorbing the horrors of the drought and the opulence of the capitalist system, through inhumane exploitation and above all the unbridled ambition of the rubber plantation owners, adapted their living inside an unknown land, and not even this suffering discouraged these migrants from forgetting the ancient space of their roots, on the contrary, they added their customs, their ways of living that joined with the local culture, reinvigorating this new territorialization.

Therefore, when we look at the feasibility of northeastern migratory lines to the Amazon, we must be aware that these lines are material and secular paths, renewing the same supply and production routes through a model made only for export.

Thus, understanding the conditions of life within this model is to visualize various forms of suffering, longing, exploitation and representative consolidation due to the yoke of possessions and gains, with which the rubber plantation owners lived on the estates, and the rubber plantation employees, many with their families , suffered from dispossession, debt and serious unhealthy lifestyles, which were decisive for their early death and oblivion.

3 Some cases of rubber tappers and rubber tappers who ended up in court

It is worth highlighting that, even after the end of the “Battle of Rubber” around 1947, when the “Washington Accords” ended, the rubber tappers who remained in the rubber plantations continued to receive inhumane treatment, with practices of ill-treatment, threats of beatings and even expulsion from the bosses' lands, of those rubber tappers who no longer bought from the rubber tapper and sold their production to third parties, under the allegation that they were in debt to the bosses.

Eliane Cantarino O'Dwyer (1998) states that in the basins of the Tagus and Breu rivers, belonging to the upper Juruá river basin, she was present to observe social work relations. Her visit to this location was a request from the Attorney General's Office, as she explains:

> Fulfilling a request from the Attorney General's Office of the Republic to carry out an anthropological survey of the basins of the Tagus and Breu rivers, tributaries of the Alto Juruá hydrographic complex, I went up the river towards the headwaters to recognize in loco the social relations and the system of domination characterized as a form of slave labor prevalent in rubber plantations. This centuries-old extractive activity distinguishes that region by a specialty: rubber exploitation, the appropriation of nature through human labor. (O'DWYER, 1998, p. 15).

O'Dwyer (1998) reiterates that he came to this place after a complaint filed by the Federal Public Ministry, regarding violations of personal freedoms, a considerable variety of forms of illegal constraint against people established in those places, these populations still continued with the practice of the syringe cut.

It is important to add that the term rubber tapper did not just mean a working condition, but a form of insertion in the world mediated by the forest, which, according to their employers, they called “the rubber tapper animals”.

O'Dwyer draws attention to a meeting in which the creation of the Tagus River Rubber Tappers Association was consolidated. On this occasion, Pedro Ribeiro dos Santos requested the testimony of his co-workers to discuss the definition of a “rubber tapper”, as they were called by their bosses.

> He explained: “the rubber tappers who are good payers and produce more than 1000kg per harvest are considered animals by their bosses”, addressing us: “in the forest, scientist, we don't have the name of people. Isn’t that the case, parish?”, he said, asking for confirmation from his companions. “We do [rubber production] but we don’t have a name,” he concluded. (O'DWYER, 1998, p. 18).

For O'Dwyer (1998), this negative type of exploitation is absorbed by rubber tappers as a reflection on their work and their relationship with their employers. It is possible that there will be the construction of an ecological awareness, although “wild”, unlike current naturalist utopias. In this case, nature is conserved because they they need it, not because they are aware that they need to preserve it for posterity.

The author draws attention to the fact that acquiring animals to eat through hunting did not make them less critical nor did they oppose the exaggerated hunting practiced by the bosses. But, when observing the song of the uirapuru, the author highlights how it is the only one that cannot be imitated by another bird called japiim, from there, she makes the following comparison between the uirapuru bird and the rubber tappers in the forest.

> It is the priority of this inimitable song that they rejoice, as perhaps themselves, the only animals that can take from the forest the syringe that the bosses sell in the big cities. They are, at the same time, the ones who watch over the forest and the rubber trees, so that the milk does not dry out and Mother Nature remains eternally fertile. (O'DWYER, 1998, p. 19).

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O'Dwyer (1998) emphasizes the legal dispute between rubber tappers Jaime Pereira da Silva and José Prudêncio Filho and rubber tapper Francisco Praxedes Brandão Filho, who was the tenant of Seringal Oriente, located on the upper Juruá River. This hearing was held on June 19, 1989.

The reason for the dispute was the lack of payment of rent by the aforementioned rubber tappers. The rubber tapper's lawyer spoke first, arguing that the income was the right of the rubber tapper, as this had been paid for more than ten years by the defendants, a fact that would give them the right to exploit the rubber plantation roads.

Subsequently, the defense lawyer considered the eviction action to be wrong. Considering that there was no legal support for this, as the defendants were protected by Law nº 4,504 of November 1964 (BRASIL, 1964) and by decree 59,566, of November 14, 1966 (BRASIL, 1966a), which prohibit negotiate as a lease price a specific quantity of fruits, or product, or even the equivalent in cash – and the defendants pay for rubber tree road, 33 kg of rubber per year. In addition to this allegation, the lawyer also stressed that there is no written contract and with a further aggravating factor the fact that the contract is indeterminate, which completely goes against legal regulations. (O'DWYER, 1998).

When the rubber plantation owner Francisco Praxedes Brandão Filho, who was a tenant of Seringal Oriente, testified, he stated that he wanted the rubber tree roads to be returned, due to non-payment of rent for the year 1988, he even gave up the housing areas, with their houses, their crops and raising chickens, pigs, sheep. However, he would not accept compensating them for these improvements. On the other hand, the rubber tappers stated that there was no point in living in such a large area without being able to extract the latex from the rubber trees. (O'DWYER, 1998).

O'Dwyer (1998) suspects that the fact that the rubber tapper required the rubber tappers to buy his goods and sell their rubber production was the reason for the eviction action brought by the tapper, as the tappers no longer purchased goods from the boss. nor did they sell their rubber production, a fact that contributed to this legal dispute.

The argument used by the rubber tappers was that they prepared the entire process to remove the latex, that is, they cleared the land, prepared the roads, placed the ladders on the trunks of the rubber trees, without the boss paying them for this service, whereas, previously, the rubber tapper was only responsible for the cutting.

After carrying out the entire investigation process, observing that, in order to file a specific action, it was essential to have interest and legitimacy, a fact that did not occur, because the author of the action did not prove with documents the lease of Seringal Oriente, which contributed to the termination of the process and its archiving.

It should be noted that the end of this process did not mean a truce between both parties involved. The rubber tappers sent a message via radio declaring themselves victorious, however, the rubber tapper sent a counter message to Alto Juruá, denying it. O'Dwyer highlights this judgment as follows:

> Because this judgment can be valid as encrypted news, inside a bottle, like those used by shipwrecked men, and sent down the Juruá before we even report the expert journey to the tops of the rivers. And yet, as an event, it reveals a singularity: it can be observed throughout its entire course, from the moment the rubber tappers were mentioned to the opinions they expressed in those circumstances, following their arrival in the city, traveling at night, to arrive in time at the hearing. (O'DWYER, 1998, p. 31).

O'Dwyer (1998) highlights that, unfortunately, there were malicious and prejudiced comments from both the employees and the members of the District Civil Court regarding the rubber tappers, labeling them as illiterate and unaware of legal procedures. The author highlights that:

> The ethnocentrism of this type of opinion is part of anthropological knowledge, which considers the opposition between primitive thought, considered pre-logical, and civilized thought, as a synonym of cultured and scientific, to be scientifically unfounded - on this, see the open letter from anthropologist Raymundo Heraldo Maués refusing to participate in a medical examination requested by the judge of the 3rd court of federal justice because he saw the Indian "as having incomplete mental development" (ABA Bulletin, nº 6, 1st semester of 1989 apud O'DWYER, 1998, p. 33).

4 Aviation system, worker exploitation mechanism

When it comes to dramas, difficulties and even atrocities to which rubber tappers were subjected in the Amazon, we could not fail to point out the aviation system,[4] who contributed to these problems happening. It is not in our interest to make a detailed and in-depth study of aviation. We simply wish to emphasize that this was a means by which the expropriation of Northeastern migrant workers in the Amazon took place. In this sense, we use Roberto Santos, as the main reference on this subject, as he is considered a classic of Amazonian literature when it comes to economic history. This author makes the following observation:

4 On this topic, see also MIYAZAKI, N.; ONO, M. Aviation in the Amazon. Sociology, vol. 20, no. 3, p. 336-396, Aug. 1958. Available at: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclc ndmkaj/https://www.alice.cnptia.embrapa.br/bitstream/doc/1090281/1/TC0917LIVROColhendoNaturezaAINFO.pdf. Accessed on: Jul 29, 2022.

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> Aviar, in the Amazon, means providing goods on credit. The lowest-level "aviator" provided the extractor with a certain amount of consumer goods and some work instruments, possibly a small amount of money. In payment, he received extractive production. The prices of goods were fixed by the "aviator", who added normal interest to the value of the utilities provided plus an appreciable profit margin, as what could be called "extra interest". This "aviator", in turn, was "aviatored" by another and paid appreciably high "extra interest". (SANTOS, 1980, p. 159).

Santos (1980) also adds that, at the highest part of the chain, were the exporting firms, they were those that benefited most from the accumulation of income through "extra interest" and the decrease in the local price of rubber. Santos stressed that the chain was simplified when the rubber collector became a businessman of a certain magnitude. "In this case, he himself constituted an "aviator" of Belém and Manaus and, on the other hand, the rubber extractor, his "aviado" or customer". (SANTOS, 1980, p. 159-160, emphasis added).

Santos (1980) comments that there was the illusion that the arrival of northeasterners would contribute to "monetization", expanding the system and minimizing traditional relations of dependence. Many people from the Northeast had in mind the strong feeling and desire for enrichment and the dream of huge fortunes in money. But they soon fell into reality, and this became a great illusion, suggested by the effectiveness of the psychological. Santos comments on the situation these migrants found themselves in after such disappointment:

> The rubber tapper was so isolated, due to the geographical layout of regional productive activities, that his link with the "shed" became exclusive and he almost completely lost the freedom to use what he earned. Under these conditions, the main function performed by currency continued to be the provision of calculation services. (SANTOS, 1980, p. 158).

Santos (1980) observes that, even after a century, aviation still left its trace, which deeply marked regional society. Santos further states that:

> In 1966, Amilcar Tupiassu analyzed it from a sociological perspective; even then he conceived of Amazonian society as a continuum at whose antipodal ends were the "urban macronucleus" and the "extractive micronucleus". Connecting the ends together, the "link" of the plane emerged. In this conception, aviation played the role of a supporting and articulating element of the entire social structure of the Amazon; Furthermore: as it was the route for contact between rural Amazonian men and national society, preventing this man from returning to the indigenous state, the aviation constituted, according to Tupiassu, the mechanism that managed to integrate the isolated character within the Amazon immensity into global society. . (SANTOS, 1980, p.158).

Santos (1980) makes an important observation about the possible embryo of aviation, stating that, at the time of colonial Brazil, a credit regime was born, where the dealer based in Belém supplied supplies to the company collecting "drugs from the backlands", which received payment at the end of the expedition, the physical product collected. This became known as aviamento, which would function as a major mechanism throughout the economy of the Amazon region, in the process of rubber extraction and production and which persists to this day, with small modifications, without much importance.

Regarding aviation, he highlights that it arises from the moment the Amazon region comes into contact with European industrial capitalism through a heavily monetized system. He draws attention to the fundamental characteristics that served as the basis for this emergence, where he highlights that:

> a) Natural resource base that is spatially broad and difficult to access;
> b) Delay in production techniques;
> c) Zero or very low participation rate of money in exchanges;
> d) Presence of local commercial leaders – indigenous or foreign – or agents capable of exercising them;
> e) Connection of these leaders with a fully functioning monetized market that, from the outside, provides credit;
> f) Active external demand for one or more products in this area. (SANTOS, 1980, p. 155).

Faced with such conditions, this author admits that the use of the shipping system became inevitable, causing local mercantile leaders to integrate with the interests of the foreign market, gaining doubly, through two different ways. Firstly, with the prices they charge abroad, and secondly with the traditional system of labor exploitation.

Regarding the Maria do Perpétuo Socorro aviation, Rodrigues Chaves (2011) has the following understanding:

> In traditional rubber plantations, the supply chain, the main articulator of production relations, whose political nature is domination/exploitation, coordinates the technical production process and defines the appropriation of the results of the process. [...] This system articulates the different segments involved in rubber extraction in an extensive and complex network of economic, political and social relations. The rubber economy constituted a web of material and ideal relationships between men and nature, founded on the web of relationships between men and women. (CHAVES, 2011, p. 17-33).

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Chaves (2011) elaborates on aviation, stating that it is characterized by different ways of exchanging goods, however, without the use of money. Due to the absence of monetary circulation within the rubber plantations, the food used by the rubber tappers and their dependents was supplied, in other words, "dispensed" to only be paid for when the production process ended. Chaves highlights that:

> During that period, the rubber tapper, entangled in the plots of rubber production for the European market, became the central character of Amazonian plots. This condition did not mean improvements in his living conditions for this producer; on the contrary, it relegated it to extreme impoverishment resulting from labor relations, based on the super-exploitation that marked extractive companies (traditional rubber plantations) in the aviation chain. (CHAVES, 2011, p. 13).

It is important to emphasize that, although they were subject to semi-servile relationships, the rubber tappers always practiced some way of reacting, according to the situation, states Chaves (2011). Some, although indignant, did not speak out, others fled or got into trouble with the boss. Regarding these facts, the author confirms that:

> According to statements from older rubber tappers, one always heard of "strikes", where workers rebelled against exploitative conditions. The spoliation suffered by rubber tappers cannot be understood as being restricted to the rubber tapper-syringalist relationship, but within the relationships between a mode of production, extractivism, and the dominant mode of production, capitalism. Although rubber production does not fit the mold of specifically capitalist production, it was subordinated to the condition imposed on the Amazon, that is, European industry, in its growing need for expansion, assigns this region the role of supplier of raw materials. (CHAVES, 2011, p. 38).

When dealing with the nutrition of rubber tappers during the rubber production period, Chaves (2011) states that when the workers went to the forest with the aim of removing latex, on the rubber plantation roads, they did not take anything to eat, a fact confirmed in the statement of a rubber tapper called Dorvalino. Notice what he says:

> We arrive sometimes at eleven o'clock, ten hours from the road, sometimes, sometimes we don't have anything to eat, we have other work on our farm: - the old woman makes a flour fry there, so I can keep my stomach up. There's nothing for lunch, there's nothing. So we're only going to eat at night, because when I get there I'm going to work. I picked up my tunic and when it was five o'clock (in the afternoon), I couldn't take the weakness anymore, my legs were shaking. When I arrived at the edge of the (river): - hey old lady! Bring the net! Then she would bring it to me on the shore, and then I would catch my fish. When it was seven or eight o'clock (at night) we were already home, so we went to dinner. (Mr. Dorvalino). (CHAVES, 2011, p. 46).

If there is a problem with food, imagine the health of these workers who live deep in the jungle in search of the much-coveted latex. How complicated it was, when the worker, who earned his living in that high-risk job, became ill. Chaves (2011) highlights that, in relation to the rubber tapper's health, in the case of serious accidents that would render the worker disabled, or even in the case of death, it was the women who were responsible for taking their husband's place in the process of production of latex removal, as a way of supporting their offspring.

Chaves (2011) found another situation that deserves to be highlighted, regarding the smoking process, which caused a lot of harm to workers, due to the daily inhalation of smoke, so the lungs could not withstand much, after two years, they were compromised. It is worth noting that this smoking process was changed in the late 1970s, to the use of a press, which greatly contributed to reducing working time and less effort during the process.[5]

For Teixeira (2009), the novel *The jungle*, published in 1930, by Ferreira de Castro, was the greatest demonstration of the social dramas and violence suffered under the aviation regime. At a young age he was orphaned and emigrated to Belém, to his uncle's house, who encouraged him to go to a rubber plantation, where there, he would realize the brutal contradiction between the shed and the forest, the difference between the latex extraction trade and the servile form of work relationships, marked by excessive physical violence. Ferreira de Castro can perceive with great intensity the human suffering through the harvesting of rubber, the profits of which were destined abroad, unlike coffee, where the profits remained here in Brazil, contributing to economic and social development in their places of production and sale. .

Teixeira further states that:

> Rubber created immense wealth for a parasitic bourgeoisie and created misery for workers who had the walls of their prison and captivity in the jungle itself. Coffee created, without a doubt, concentrated wealth in the hands of the coffee elite, but it fed the means of a bourgeoisie that fully assumed the possibilities of capital and diversified its investments in commerce, industry, finance, transport, in order to decolonize the wealth that came into his hands. (TEIXEIRA, 2009, p. 11).

For Teixeira (2009), what happened with coffee was very important to guarantee economic development

5 It is very important to emphasize that migrants who came to the Amazon to work cutting rubber,TheThe vast majority only worked in the summer, as the winter period was unsuitable for harvesting, due to the rain. This was an additional complication in relation to the debt, which, therefore, only grew.

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of Brazil and the social changes that occurred during that period. Bárbara Weinstein (1993) also drew attention to the discrepancy between the production of coffee, cocoa and rubber. The coffee economy is a spectacular example, throughout Latin America, of continued development, resulting from the generation of profits from coffee exports. However, regarding rubber, the author is very emphatic, stating that:

> The prosperity promoted by the rubber business, on the contrary, proved to be ephemeral and superficial. The world-famous opera houses, the sumptuous mansions and the extravagances of legendary nabobs created a dazzling façade for the region, behind which, however, there was a production system and a network of exchanges that differed little from the socioeconomic structures characteristic of the period. colonial. (WEINSTEIN, 1993, p. 16).

Final considerations

In the text analyzed for now, the different nuances of northeastern migration to the Amazon region were discussed, in particular, from the perspective of the subjects themselves, from primary sources, in addition to a bibliographical review that deals with the topic.

With this, we sought to understand the processes of settlement and mobility of northeastern migrants to the Amazon, against the backdrop of Vargas government propaganda.

Furthermore, some specific cases were explored regarding labor issues involving both rubber tappers and rubber tappers, at a time when these relationships and working conditions were quite precarious.

Finally, the situation of the aviation system was analyzed, with an emphasis on analyzing how these mechanisms contributed to the exploitation of local labor. Therefore, it can be observed, and it is clear, that labor relations were precarious, and the migratory process was influenced by Getulista, with the aim of meeting the demand for North American rubber and part of the domestic market.

The text does not intend to be something stagnant, but rather to point out paths for possible questions and discussions.

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