

# A strike which endangered national security: the case of sugar and the struggle of workers for better living conditions<sup>1</sup>

*Uma greve que pôs em risco a segurança nacional: o caso do açúcar e a luta dos trabalhadores por melhores condições de vida*

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## RESUMO

Com base no estudo da “Greve do Açúcar”, ocorrida em março de 1964, às vésperas do movimento civil-militar que destituiu o presidente João Goulart, o artigo busca identificar as reivindicações dos grevistas e analisar suas principais formas de ação política em prol dessas demandas. A greve foi organizada no interior do estado do Rio de Janeiro por um sindicato de trabalhadores têxteis, após a denúncia de que armazéns da vila operária estavam estocando o produto em benefício de alguns consumidores “ilustres” e recusando a venda aos tecelões. Outros sindicatos declararam greve de solidariedade, e a greve serviu de argumento para se enquadrar o presidente do sindicato na Lei de Segurança Nacional, após os militares tomarem o poder. Ancorados no conceito de economia moral, buscaremos compreender o quanto as questões cotidianas influenciaram na adesão dos trabalhadores às mobilizações populares.

Palavras-chave: greve; trabalhadores têxteis; economia moral.

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the “Sugar Strike” of March 1964, which occurred on the eve of the civil-military movement that deposed the Brazilian president João Goulart. The article aims to identify the grievances of the strikers and to analyze the main forms of political action used in support of these demands. The strike was organized within the state of Rio de Janeiro by a union of textile workers after a denunciation that warehouses in the workers’ village were stockpiling sugar for the benefit of some “wealthier” customers and refusing to sell the product to weavers. Other unions took industrial action in solidarity and the strike served as a pretext to charge the union president under the National Security Act after the military took power. Based on the concept of moral economy, this paper will try to understand how everyday issues influenced the adherence of workers to popular mobilizations.

Keywords: strike; textile workers; moral economy.

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It is five o'clock in the morning of Thursday, 26 March 1964 and a young weaver wakes up to another day of work at the factory. She gets up quickly so as to get to work on time; she has only been in the job for a few months, which she got after numerous requests from family members who already worked in the company. There was great competition for the job, but because she was the daughter of weavers and she lived in a house within the workers' village she was successful.

Before leaving home for another day of toil, the weaver has her breakfast. However, there is a problem; the lack of sugar in the workers' house due to supply problems and the consequently high price of the product in the local market. As a solution, the weaver (like many of her neighbors) uses a technique that was very common in periods of shortage during World War II – her morning drink is prepared with sugarcane juice instead of water. Thus, the coffee has a slightly sweetened flavor and it is usually accompanied by some day-old bread smeared with butter.

Arriving at the textile factory – always about fifteen minutes before the start of work because she is responsible for switching on the machines in her sector – the young weaver is surprised by the large number of workers outside the entrance to the factory, forming a picket. The union had decreed a strike and the order is no one is to touch the machines. She is soon approached by an older worker, a union leader, who informs her that she is to enter the factory and to go to her sector, but that she is to remain motionless beside the machinery until she receives further instructions. The weaver is very disturbed, fearful of being noticed by the manager, who had arranged this job for her at the request of her family, and scared of being accused of being a “traitor” or “scab” by her fellow workers. With every strange movement near the machines, the union leader who oversees the maintenance sector frowns, with a disapproving look, and pounds his fist into the palm of the other hand, in order to dissuade any workers who are trying to return to work. As another worker later recalled, “anyone who did not strike was in for it!”<sup>2</sup>

Later, everyone would know the reason for the strike; the misappropriation of sugar by a local merchant. However, contrary to all expectations, this apparently unassuming episode took on an extremely unexpected significance, or as is often said in Brazil “*deu pano pra manga*”.<sup>3</sup>

I remember well that there was a time when there was a lack of rice, beans, sugar. I don't know if there was a real shortage or whether people were hiding these things to sell for higher prices. Someone was in the warehouse ... and they wanted

to only pay the legitimate price ... Then a big mess started ... It finished with everyone going to the police station at Magé.<sup>4</sup>

The “Sugar Strike” is often mentioned in interviews with workers but it has not always been analyzed with academic rigor. For example, the recollections of the young weaver described above came to light through an informal “off-limits” conversation with the author, which most likely would not have been possible in a recorded interview because, for many workers, there is still a taboo about publicly talking about their memories related to the civil-military movement of 1964. In the city of Magé, which is situated in the state of Rio de Janeiro and is the geographical area of study of this article, police raids on unions, indiscriminate arrests of workers, and the sharp repression that has been in force since that time has meant that these memories have remained submerged<sup>5</sup> for many years.

Numerous military police investigations (*inquéritos policiais militares*, IPM) were opened by the Military Police in Brazil from April 1964 onwards in order to frame “communists and subversives” by using the National Security Law (LSN). The “Sugar Strike” was used in this manner by the authorities in Magé, who argued that union leaders had urged the textile workers to promote an attack against the public prosecutor of the city when he visited the scene of the conflict. This particular IPM was forwarded in 1965 to the Superior Military Court (*Superior Tribunal Militar*), as indicated by the Second Institutional Act (*Ato Institucional 2*) and was included as number BNM 211 in the list of legal cases compiled by the “Brazil: Never Again” project (*Projeto Brasil Nunca Mais*).<sup>6</sup>

This article is based on the concept of moral economy<sup>7</sup> and aims to identify the main demands presented by these strikers, to analyze their main forms of political action, and to understand how the most everyday issues outside the workplace environment influenced the workers in their decision-making. Therefore, our approach will not concentrate on the struggles for better wages and labor rights, but mainly the issues of everyday life of these workers, who also lived in the city.<sup>8</sup>

Among these everyday issues were the lack of food supply in the city; the constant oscillation of inflation and its impact on prices and the budget of working families; problems connected with public transport in the city; the lack of housing for workers and the high price of rents; and the occurrence of outbreaks of disease in the region. In short, all these elements characterized the structural framework of insecurity experienced by workers during the period.<sup>9</sup>

Consequently, this article will use as its main sources the legal proceedings brought against the textile workers of Magé by the STM, police documents, the annals of the city council, the records of popular demands and reports in major newspapers, as well as the records of the views of workers concerning these issues.

#### AGAINST SHORTAGES AND IN FAVOR OF BETTER LIVING CONDITIONS

Ever since the first strikes that were recorded in the city of Magé, the theme of shortages was evident. In the “Cloth Strike”, which occurred in 1918 and is still celebrated in the memories of local workers, one of the main targets of the striking workers was the warehouse of a trader known as Emygdio Fernandes. One of his descendants even published a memoir in the 1960s, which mentioned the incident:

They uttered the greatest infamies against Crespi, Matarazzo and other capitalists, and inflamed the workers against the local traders, mistaking them for large trusts and consortia ... The name of Emygdio Fernandes topped the list of the agitators and he was the first to have his business looted and his home blown up ... At dusk, hundreds of people armed with rifles, machetes and anything they could lay their hands on stood before his store and screamed: “Die, Emygdio Fernandes” and the mob responded: “Die!”...<sup>10</sup>

The rise of communist agitation during World War II resulted in workers in Magé intensifying their protests against shortages. The stance taken by the Communist Party of Brazil (PCB) in coordination with the Magé weavers was notable because the PCB did not disregard the previous experiences of industrial unrest in the city, but legitimized them as part of the learning process of these workers. In this context, the “Cloth Strike” undoubtedly figured as an icon of these past struggles.

Also during this post-war period, the local textile industries began to increase their social policies, using the pattern of the “working factory-village” (Lopes, 1988). One of the actions taken by the management of the companies was the creation of cooperatives, which provided for the sale of foodstuffs to the workers, offered them credit and deducted it from workers’ salaries. Although the intention was to provide necessities at affordable prices, many workers did not view the cooperatives in a favorable light.

The cooperative sold everything, but I never bought there because we would have just ended up in debt. The things they sold were a bit expensive. I saw people who when they got paid received nothing because it all went to pay the bill of the cooperative.<sup>11</sup>

My father used to do the shopping, which wouldn't last for the whole month. You couldn't buy more because they held your pay ... This was the struggle of the workers; they earned little and were held hostage by the cooperative. The pay check was already empty when it arrived.<sup>12</sup>

Aware of the dissatisfaction of the workers, especially regarding the issue of access to foodstuffs, the PCB used an important tactic to establish direct contact with the workers; the newspaper *Tribuna Popular*, which repeatedly published reports on the situation of the weavers in the city. Founded on May 22, 1945 by the PCB, this newspaper served as an important source of industrial agitation and also spread the ideas of the PCB.

For example, at the inauguration of the PCB headquarters in Santo Aleixo in 1945 the newspaper highlighted the role of local party leaders in dealing with the problems experienced by workers, such as the lack of milk (which prejudiced the fight against infant mortality and children's diseases); the limited number of schools; the absence of a cafeteria in the textile factories, which forced many workers to feed themselves "sitting on the sidewalk"; poor electrical and sanitary facilities; and the need to construct bridges in the district.<sup>13</sup>

It is noteworthy that the PCB had an intense profile in the city between the 1940s and 1960s and had several representatives elected to the Magé city council, although this became more difficult after the banning of the party in 1947. Most of these councilors were textile workers.<sup>14</sup>

Even when they had to operate in a clandestine manner, local communists organized a series of campaigns and associations in order to mobilize workers around the party. One of them, the Women's League of Santo Aleixo, which was founded in 1946, was directed at working women or the wives of workers.

Among other things, the *Tribuna Popular* highlighted the struggle for more bread, milk and meat, and argued against the extortionate prices of basic foodstuffs; "against queues, the black market, hunger and shortages".<sup>15</sup>

The communist councilors who were elected in 1947, and banned the following year, proposed the free distribution of vacant land and the organization of food markets to reduce the prices of foodstuffs.<sup>16</sup> They even organized polling stations near the workers' villages in order to establish direct contact between councilors and the population. At the opening of one these stations,

councilors highlighted the issue of the high cost of foodstuffs in relation to the wages of workers in the textile factories mills of Magé, where “salaries for a fortnight ... are not even sufficient for a week”.<sup>17</sup>

The *Tribuna Popular* was closed down at the end of the 1940s. The editors of the defunct newspaper subsequently tried to revive it under the name of the *Imprensa Popular*; it remained the main organ for divulging the ideas of the PCB and also published several articles about the labor movement in Magé.

The cooperative attached to the textile factories and the recently-elected mayor soon found themselves targets of the communists. In 1951 the *Imprensa Popular* reported that the management of the factory in Santo Aleixo had given the building that had been intended for the use of the cooperative to Mayor Waldemar Lima Teixeira, who was a member of the Social Democratic Party (*Partido Social Democrático*, PSD). He was also a trader and, according to the *Imprensa Popular*, he wanted to “get rich overnight”. The newspaper added, “he does harm to workers, stealing in both the weight and price of goods”.<sup>18</sup>

Two days later, the *Imprensa Popular* published another complaint about this cooperative, complaining about the lack of milk. The newspaper reported that without milk, “there is no point in the company’s nursery because the weavers cannot feed their children in their breaks from work”.<sup>19</sup>

In another textile factory, located in the city center, the workers went on strike demanding back pay, and the company’s management decided to close its supply warehouse, known as a cooperative, “in an attempt to break the spirit of struggle of the workers through hunger”.<sup>20</sup>

It is interesting to note that many of the workers’ demands were published in PCB newspapers, but they were also brought to the city council by PCB representatives. On one occasion, the communist councilor José Aquino de Santana protested against the attitude of the police, who had “mistreated people engaged in gathering signatures”. This concerned a petition for the return of a bread and milk wagon in Santo Aleixo. However, Councilor Aníbal Magalhães supported the police stance “because the two women [who were collecting signatures] are unfortunately under suspicion, one of whom is the wife of a blacklisted communist”.<sup>21</sup>

This matter was raised in a letter published in the *Imprensa Popular*, in which a worker complained that a trader in Petrópolis, who had been providing bread and milk to the population at affordable prices, had been prevented from doing so by the city council through the imposition of fines and demands for tax payments. According to the newspaper, one of the largest producers of milk in the city was the uncle of the mayor and therefore the municipal

government had used tax demands to put the trader in Petrópolis out of business. In response, the Women's League of Santo Aleixo waged a vigorous campaign for the return of the trader, and organized a petition signed by workers. During the campaign, police assaulted two women who were collecting signatures.<sup>22</sup>

The *Imprensa Popular* also criticized the *Pau Grande* factory and its “co-operative just for show”, with prices that were “incredibly, higher than in Rio [de Janeiro]”.<sup>23</sup> The newspaper also criticized the *Andorinhas* factory, particularly the firm's doctor José Borrajo, who, during a Children's Festival spoke about the problem of a healthy diet for children and recommended that all children should eat fruit, cheese, milk, eggs and meat. In the opinion of the *Imprensa Popular* this statement was “demagogy, instead of measures against food shortages”, a position which was reinforced by the testimony of a worker who said that she had fed her son before the party, with a “dish just of beans” because the cost of living was so high and wages were so low.<sup>24</sup>

In the following elections in 1954 a communist councillor, Manoel Ferreira de Lima, was elected and he devoted himself to combating the high cost of foodstuffs, even suggesting the installation of social security food stations in the municipality, especially in working class neighborhoods. He also asked the city government to assess the balances of trade and criticized the performance of the Price Commission, which was “allowing a real debacle to occur regarding the prices of basic foodstuffs”.<sup>25</sup>

Since the creation of the Federal Commission on Supplies and Prices (*Comissão Federal de Abastecimentos e Preços*, Cofap) in 1951, demands for better living conditions, especially in relation to food, acquired greater force throughout the country. Indeed, the government's decision to create such a commission was an attempt to solve the serious problems related to the cost of living, which had been growing since the end of World War II.<sup>26</sup>

The Cofap was directly subordinate to the then Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce and was composed of government representatives (mainly ministries), as well as representatives of the media, industry and workers. Auxiliary bodies of Cofap were established at state level in the form of the Commissions on Supply and Prices (*Comissões de Abastecimento e Preços*, Coap) and at the municipal level the Municipal Commissions on Supply and Prices (*Comissões Municipais de Abastecimento e Preços*, Comap).<sup>27</sup>

Recent studies have shown the strong attempts by labor unions to control the Cofap and Coaps, even proposing tables of indices of “fair prices” for basic items of necessity (Pereira Neto, 2006, p.201-202). In an attempt to question

the indices announced by the government, unions in São Paulo founded the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (*Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Socioeconômicos*, Dieese) in 1955. This organization also performed studies about the economic problems faced by working families and included collaborations with university students. These surveys largely served to substantiate the claims of the working class (Corrêa, 2011, p.96).

Within this wider context, the communists managed to win the elections in the textile trade unions in the city of Magé and organize an association of farm workers (later transformed into a union). Simultaneously, textile workers directly linked to these new directors also elected councilors in the 1958 and 1962 elections, showing the influence of the PCB in the city, which lasted until 1964.<sup>28</sup>

The terms of office of Councilors Astério dos Santos (president of the textile union of Santo Aleixo) and Darcy Câmara (a central character in a strike at the *Pau Grande* factory) were characterized by intense and victorious struggles to protect workers' rights.

In the Magé council chamber, the question of food supplies for workers was championed by the aforementioned duo of communist councilors with the decisive support of councillors from other parties. In 1959, in his very first year in office, Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra of the Social Progressive Party (*Partido Social Progressista*, PSP) presented a bill to grant aid to the value of 200,000 cruzeiros in foodstuffs for factory workers in Santo Aleixo who were on strike. The communist councilor Darcy Câmara even included an amendment increasing the value of this aid 320,000 cruzeiros in order that each worker should receive at least 1,000 cruzeiros in basic foodstuffs, considering that there were 320 workers at the factory. However, the amendment did not receive the support of the majority of councilors and the initial proposal was approved. During a meeting in the council chamber, Councilor Astério dos Santos received as much criticism as he received support from his fellow councillors.

On behalf of the workers, Councilor Astério dos Santos expressed his thanks for the approval of the project. Councilors Paulo Leitão Junior and Mário Fernandes Maia suggested a committee of councilors to be appointed by the President because they thought that the presidency of the union was at odds with the management of the factory. Councilor Paulo Leitão Junior said that he had heard from a worker that the management of the factory was at odds with the president



of the union and that it was for the union to look after the interests of workers. Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra stated that there really was a struggle between the union and the company. Councilor Mário Fernandes Maia suggested a committee of councilors to make arrangements with the factory, alerting everyone that there was a campaign against Communism and that many people were trying to take advantage of opportunities to make workers make sacrifices. Councilor Mário Fernandes Maia stated that he was not a communist, but that his wife would continue to be on strike in solidarity with the other workers. Councilor Emigdio Dutra de Farias said that what was happening would happen for any union president...<sup>29</sup>

The impasse that existed between the management of the Santo Aleixo factory and the workers deteriorated to such an extent that the city council called a special meeting just to deal with this issue. Once again, Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra took the floor to present applications to various authorities, including the President and Vice President of the Republic, Congress, the Minister of Labor, the State Governor, the Rio de Janeiro State Legislative Assembly (Alerj), the regional delegate of the Ministry of Labor, the Federation of the Trade Unions of Textile Workers, the State Secretary for Public Security, the Municipal Delegate and the *O Fluminense* newspaper. He spoke about the conflicts that were occurring in Santo Aleixo between the Bezerra de Mello Company (the owner of the factory) and the workers of the weaving section, as well as denouncing “the antisocial measures that this firm has been adopting and blamed it for any abnormalities that might eventually come to pass”.<sup>30</sup>

Although this issue was resolved, with the weavers returning to work and the factory committing to better assist its workers, confrontations between the communist councilors and the factory owners and the mayor continued. From time to time these clashes became explicit in the council chamber and sometimes they included contributions from Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra, who changed political parties in early 1960, leaving the PSP to join the Brazilian Labor Party (*Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*, PTB):

Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra informed the House of the persecution by the Mayor, who had judicially ordered Mrs. Luiza Reis, the owner of the Luiza guesthouse, to pay her debt to this municipality ... He received an aside from Councilor Mário Fernandes Maia, who advised him that the mayor was only following the advice of Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra, who had requested

that all debts owed to the city should be honored. Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra responded that that there had been much protectionism in favor of the powerful. Councilor Astério dos Santos informed the House that he had been in the office of Bezerra de Mello in Santo Aleixo when a municipal tax officer entered and that there had been amicable discussions between the two regarding the payment of tax owed by the factory to the city. Councilor Domingos José Dias Guerra intervened to state that this proved once again that the city council was not acting impartially and was only chasing poor debtors. Meanwhile, Councilor Mário Fernandes Maia came to the defense of the Mayor. As matters were coming to a head, the President warned the three councilors repeatedly in the gallery, but to no avail. At this point, because of the heat of the discussion, the session was suspended indefinitely...<sup>31</sup>

In fact, not all of these confrontations had the desired effect, but that did not stop the speeches of the communist councilors finding an audience outside the council chamber. This observation is echoed by other academic studies that have researched other regions of Brazil, and which have reached similar conclusions.

Analyzing the performances of the workers' representatives in the local parliament, whether communist or socialist, we can notice the presence of many of the issues that characterize working class experiences and the construction of their citizenship during the period. In many instances these debates went beyond the specific duties of the city council and they turned into a much broader ideological political debate. However, there was a simultaneous effort to define a form of legislative intervention that was capable of ensuring the rights of workers within the framework of urban issues (living conditions, transport, culture and leisure, etc.). (Fortes, 2004, p.441)

Strengthened by moral views about the dignity of workers, justice and the liberation of the working class, as well as the difficulties experienced by workers (as evidenced in the speeches in the council chamber concerning “protectionism in favor of the powerful” and “only chasing poor debtors”), and above all by the support of the majority of workers to their proposals, the communist councilors joined forces with the PTB in an attempt to end the hegemony of the PSD in the local council, which had been in power since the first post-*Estado Novo* municipal election in 1947.

Meanwhile, the support of the *Ultima Hora* newspaper, which was linked with the PTB, was crucial. Several articles were published regarding the

activities of the Magé unions and their elected representatives in the city council. Initially, they were published in the section entitled “Labor Column”, which was written by the journalist and union activist Jairo Mendes. Subsequently, these types of articles were published in the “UH in the Municipalities” column, which was written by Waldir Cardoso, who was based in Magé.

Regarding the cost of living, in 1961 *Ultima Hora* covered two matters raised by Astério dos Santos in the city council: one questioned the high prices of rents, especially those charged by factories in the workers’ villages;<sup>32</sup> and the other was against extortionate food prices, suggesting the restructuring of Comap to improve the fiscal control of greedy traders.<sup>33</sup>

The *O Globo* newspaper also published a denunciation made by Astério dos Santos in the council chamber, regarding the fact that local SAPS office had been “appropriating merchandise for a long time and selling it to local traders”.<sup>34</sup>

Another initiative that resulted in intense popular mobilization was the preparation of a petition containing 464 names calling for a 50% reduction in bus fares on some municipal lines. It was subsequently argued that a new bus company should operate in the city because the population was dissatisfied with the service provided by the current operator.<sup>35</sup>

The issue of the right to strike was also discussed several times by Councilors Astério dos Santos and Darcy Câmara. They protested against the arrest of union leaders, supported strike movements undertaken by other groups of workers, and criticized all those who acted against the interests of the working class. For example, in 1961, when it was proposed to grant the title of “Citizen of Magé” to Georgino Ferreira Mosque, the communists were the only councilors to vote against this proposal, arguing that they would not honor somebody who “beat up workers when he was sub-deputy in the Second Police District.”<sup>36</sup> The duo’s political stance provoked much reaction from opposing councilors in the council chamber.

It was difficult for councilors ... to contain their radical, systematic and vehement pronouncements, dictated by their party leaders. I remember well that the President had to ring the bell many times in order to calm tempers and bring order to several debates, many of which were initiated by the duo of Astério and Darcy; the “Left Wing” of the Magé council chamber.<sup>37</sup>

Councilor Pedro Botelho reproached Councilor Astério dos Santos for his attitude, claiming that instead of dealing with issues related to the city, which would

really benefit the community of Magé, he had systematically filed motions to the President of the Republic, the Vice-President of the Republic, federal deputies and senators, appealing to them to urgently address the issue of right to take strike action and other matters, which do not have anything to do with the city, or bring it any benefit ...<sup>38</sup>

## SUGAR AND THE FIGHT AGAINST THE “EXPLOITERS OF THE PEOPLE”

The irregular distribution of sugar in the Saps office resulted in violence. The deputy chief of the office, Américo Thomás, attacked Joaquim dos Santos in the street, days after the latter had complaining in front of a committee about the disorganized manner in which sugar was being sold. Eight hundred kilos of sugar had arrived at the Saps office to be sold to the public. Because the sale was being made in a disorderly manner without any quota limits for buyers, a commission approached Américo Thomás, who refused to meet their requests, claiming that he had been authorized to sell any amount of sugar. Meanwhile, the deputy police chief, Jair Arruda, arrived and forced the Saps office to sell sugar in a more rational manner. In the police district to which he was taken, Américo Thomás received protection from officers after intervention on his behalf by Councilor Waldemar Lima Teixeira, who arranged for him to be released.<sup>39</sup>

In an article entitled “Magé: sugar distribution leads to violence”, *Última Hora* reported on this episode, which became a sort of test for the “Sugar Strike”. Coincidentally, the article was published on March 25, 1964; in the afternoon of the same day the strike movement began that would end up with a case lodged in the Superior Military Court.

Considering the characters mentioned in this newspaper article, as well as the ongoing political situation in Brazil (the military took power on March 31, 1964) it is understandable how the issue of food shortages became acute.

In 1961, under the administration of President Jânio Quadros, a plan was established to liquidate Cofap. However, when Quadros resigned and his vice-president João Goulart took over it was decided to create a new organization dedicated to addressing the high cost of living in Brazil, and in 1962 the National Supervision of Supply (*Superintendência Nacional de Abastecimento*, Sunab) was formed. Henceforth, the Brazilian government began to supervise traders in a more rigorous fashion. The following year, the Popular Economy Defense Commission (*Comissariado de Defesa da Economia Popular*, Codep) was also created, which had specific responsibility to supervise food prices.

With inflation rising, and a looming supply crisis in the country, Sunab sought to mitigate the impact of these problems, especially among poorer workers. For example, in 1963 Sunab developed campaigns for the sale of basic foodstuffs directly to consumers, thus avoiding intermediaries (who were considered to be mainly responsible for price increases). This was the case of “Operation Rice”, which occurred in Niterói, then capital of the state of Rio de Janeiro, where more than thirty tons of rice were sold to the population at lower prices. This operation was supported by the military because of the large numbers of people who gathered in the area.<sup>40</sup>

However, it was sugar that generated the biggest problems for Sunab during this period. From the end of 1963, newspapers reported studies that had been conducted in relation to basic foodstuffs, which indicated sugar shortages of about 50%, and Sunab was severely criticized “for considering that sugar shortages were normal”.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps in response to these criticisms, in February 1964 Sunab distributed about 72 tons of sugar that had been withheld in the city of Campos dos Goytacazes (Rio de Janeiro state), which was one of the largest producers of cane sugar in the country at the time.<sup>42</sup>

To complicate the situation of sugar shortages even further, about 4,000 workers in the sugar refining industry in the state of Rio de Janeiro began a general strike that month; they demanded salary increases and a bonus, precisely because of the high cost of living. In addition, more than 20,000 workers in the fields and factories of Campos dos Goytacazes, Macaé and Resende supported the strike of the refinery staff.<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, Sunab had to authorize an increase in the price of sugar, which increased to 140 cruzeiros per kilo in São Paulo, Niterói, Nova Iguaçu, Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro and Nilópolis (then in the state of Guanabara). In Brasília, the price of sugar rose to 155 cruzeiros per kilo, a record for price increases at the time, according to newspapers.<sup>44</sup> In the light of these price increases, it was decided to implement a plan to distribute sugar among the regions of the country in order to avoid shortages and civil unrest from a population that criticized the sugar trade for its “extreme greed”.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile, the Brazilian government, through the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, began to use part of the immigrant hostels on the Ilha das Flores with a view to installing a prison for those who were misappropriating merchandise and hiking up prices.<sup>46</sup>

Popularly known as “sharks” and “exploiters of the people”, traders who were convicted under the so-called “Popular Economy Law”<sup>47</sup> were arrested

and transferred to the Ilha das Flores, while those of foreign origin who were similarly convicted were liable for deportation.

In order to ensure the security of the island, which was being used as a prison, a police headquarters was set up, which was linked to the Federal Department of Public Safety, an organ of the Ministry of Justice.<sup>48</sup> The garrison of that headquarters consisted of officers who, after the transfer of the capital of Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to the new capital Brasília, opted for federal public service, the so-called “opting police”.<sup>49</sup> The *Correio da Manhã* newspaper reported that the police force on the island comprised ten lieutenants, one warrant officer, 18 sergeants and 188 non-commissioned officers and soldiers, all “opting” from the military police of Guanabara. The article also pointed out that among those detained on the Ilha das Flores, were three traders who were newly arrived immigrants to Brazil.<sup>50</sup>

It is worth noting that these measures taken by the Brazilian government were widely reported in the press and were issues that the public were concerned about. During a rally organized in support of grassroots reform, held in front of the Central do Brasil railway station in Rio de Janeiro, on March 13, 1964, there were several banners and posters in the crowd with slogans such as: “We want jail for the exploiters of the people”, “Out with the sharks” and “Jango, Ilha das Flores is a paradise. Send the sharks to Ilha Grande”.<sup>51</sup>

In the newspapers, many columnists wrote opinion pieces or humorous notes about the campaign headed by the Justice Minister Abelardo Jurema, against the price speculators. For example, the “Snapshots (*Flagrantes*)” column written in the *Correio da Manhã* by “J., J. & J” (a pseudonym attributed to the journalist José Álvaro), contained two comments on the subject. In one of them, entitled “Offending (*Infratora*)” the columnist addressed the unhappiness of a citizen with the “greed of a *copacabanense* butterfly” (probably a greedy trader) who threatened to report him to the “commandos” of the Ministry of Justice: “Either you conform or you will end up in the Ilha das Flores”.<sup>52</sup> In the other comment, entitled “Squeeze (*Aperto*)”, the columnist was sarcastic:

Militia from the Ministry of Justice, after questioning a misfortunate Portuguese about his pastries and *empadinhas*, wanted to send him off for a summer on the Ilha das Flores, because the pastries had too much air in them and the *empadinhas* not enough olives. Only after much begging and promising did the pastry negotiator managed to escape from the fierce group...<sup>53</sup>

In the *Ultima Hora* newspaper, the famous columnist Stanislaw Ponte Preta (a pseudonym of the writer Sergio Porto) also published an article that addressed the issue of price controls. Entitled “Snitching is the best way to return to Portugal,” the author described the dilemma of Manuel 1, a Portuguese who was sad because he did not have enough money to return to his homeland. Seeing his friend so sad, Manuel 2 sought to help him. “Yes! Two Manuels” wrote Ponte Preta, “the other was not Joaquim, as so often happens in Portuguese stories that only have one Manuel”. So Manuel 2, who owns a warehouse, made an “unrefusable” offer to the depressed Manuel 1:

You can work for a few days in my store! ... You stay there and sell onions at a much higher price than the official one, OK? ... I'll call Codep and I'll tell Mr. Jurema that you have been cheating on prices ... So Manuel 2 called Codep and made the complaint. The agents went there, arrested Manuel 1 and took him to the Ilha das Flores, from where he was deported and he is now happy and back in Lisbon.<sup>54</sup>

In Magé, the impact of all these measures against food shortages was also intense, and it was emphasized by several workers' leaders. Workers arrived from all over the country for a big rally outside the Central do Brasil railway station in Rio de Janeiro. Ten buses and two special trains left from the cities of Duque de Caxias and Magé, carrying urban and rural workers in support of the movement for grassroots reform.<sup>55</sup> The communist councilors Astério dos Santos and Darcy Câmara also attended the event.

Five days after the rally, at a meeting in the council chamber in Magé, Councilor David Pinto d'Almeida of the PTB submitted a request, to be sent on an emergency basis to the presidency of Sunab, protesting at the lack of basic necessities in the city: the request was unanimously approved.<sup>56</sup>

In the same week, the Federation of Trade Unions of Textile Workers of the State of Rio de Janeiro, of which Astério dos Santos was a director, started a widespread campaign in support of an emergency allowance (an adjustment in salary until the end of the union agreements that were then in force) for about 30,000 textile workers in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The campaign was justified by the Federation because of the high cost of living in several municipalities, which had been calculated towards the end of the previous year. Among these municipalities, Magé had suffered an increase of about 70.73%.<sup>57</sup>

Shortly afterwards, Councilor Astério dos Santos also filed an application for consideration by the plenary of the city council, which was to be sent

directly to the President of the Republic, demanding measures to prevent irregularities in the delivery of foodstuffs; this was also approved.<sup>58</sup>

It is noteworthy that the latter application was filed on the same day as the assault case at the Saps office, which was triggered by allegations about methods of distribution of sugar. The person who was assaulted, Joaquim dos Santos, was Astério dos Santos's brother and the deputy chief of the post was "protected" by Councilor Waldemar Lima Teixeira.

The following day, March 25, these two political leaders were again involved in a conflict – the so-called "Sugar Strike". A demonstration was called after a military police officer, Gilberto Lopes da Silva, discovered that a local trader named "Aristides" (Waldemar Lima Teixeira's brother-in-law) was withholding sugar from poorer customers, which amounted to a crime against the popular economy. Instead of taking him to the police station, the police officer forced the trader to sell sugar without restrictions. On 26 March, the union declared a strike and a group of workers gathered in front of the property to protest. Police reinforcements were sent, and even the public prosecutor went to the scene in a vehicle that was stoned by protesters. Finally, some workers and the president of the union were detained and subsequently released. A rumor arose that Astério dos Santos had been arrested and was being held at the police station; the other textile factories in the city, and part of the rail of the Leopoldina Railway declared a solidarity strike.<sup>59</sup>

Once the strike was over, tempers apparently calmed and workers returned to work in their factories as usual. However, the civil-military movement that ousted President João Goulart on April 1, 1964 had overwhelming consequences in Magé, resulting in the invasion of the union headquarters by the police and the persecution of many workers, even within factories.

Many workers, and also residents, were arrested and/or taken to Magé police station for questioning in investigations that related to "acts of subversion"; all were considered to be communists many of them incorrectly.<sup>60</sup>

In [19]64, it was crazy there, you know? Communist business, right ... They invented communist business! Those were some very sad days ... Many householders were picked up unnecessarily. People would say: "Oh, so and so is a communist!" The guy was working, he went to work, and the police went there ... they got him! They began hitting him right there ... There were many complaints ... They caught many, many people, who they said were communists. Many who they caught were innocent. Even today, if you call someone a communist, in truth we



don't even know what a communist is ... They talked like that as a way to catch people, you know?...<sup>61</sup>

The state of Rio de Janeiro, which like the state of Pernambuco was considered to be one of the great centers of communist activity in the country, contained the headquarters of the major unions and numerous communist cells ... The actions of Colonel Campelo [the new State Secretary for Public Security] rapidly extended to the entire state of Rio, with numerous communists being imprisoned ... Many offices, headquarters of trade unions, and residences of communist agents were raided by the Police, helped by the Army. The type and volume of the seized subversive material was impressive....<sup>62</sup>

At the time of the Revolution ... they fell over themselves to arrest people, guilty and innocent, people who had never even been in a union. ... My uncle... was already retired, sitting on the couch; they came and arrested him too. They also arrested Nelson, my brother-in-law, my sister and another uncle of mine. None of them had anything to do with the union! ...<sup>63</sup>

During the night of April 3 [1964], Councilors Astério dos Santos and Darcy Câmara of the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) had their political rights suspended by their peers. The distinguished guest in the council chamber, the state deputy Waldemar Lima Teixeira, praised the attitude of the House for “helping to clean up the political situation of the city by rightly stripping the two communist elements of their political rights”.<sup>64</sup>

The headquarters of the unions were raided by the police and the Regional Labor Office intervened in the running of the unions. For example, in the unions in Santo Aleixo and Magé, where Councilor Astério dos Santos was president, a governing board was established with Alexandre Magalhaes Neto as president and Adalberto Pinheiro de Souza and Rolien Dias Castilho as assistants.<sup>65</sup>

In early April 1964, several newspapers reported police searches within the union, where “a large quantity of sailors’ uniforms”<sup>66</sup> was found. This information came to be used at the beginning of investigations to prove the formation of a “Group of 11” in Magé, headed by the president of the union Astério dos Santos. In the investigation initiated by the Magé police station on May 29, eleven people (mostly workers) were called to testify as defendants. However, it was later found that the “sailors’ uniforms” were actually caps, which were souvenirs donated by the Association of Sailors and Marines of Brazil (*Associação dos Marinheiros e Fuzileiros Navais do Brasil*, AMFNB) in

thanks to the union for the support and solidarity they had provided. The caps featured the following inscription: “To witness the popular victory of the sailors, marines and the Brazilian people”.<sup>67</sup>

The delegate of Magé then proposed the investigation of the suspicious activity of the accused, but did not actually define what that activity amounted to. The scenario chosen for the investigation was the so-called “Sugar Strike”, which had taken place months earlier. The prosecution argued that the defendants had used “the pretext of being concerned about the inflated price of domestic goods to raise the population against the authorities, almost causing a real social catastrophe”, and they also continued to denounce them for forming a “Group of 11”.<sup>68</sup>

Because the evidence was not shown in court, the accusations went through various changes, even reaching the stage that three of the “Group of 11” were accused under the National Security Law (*Lei de Segurança Nacional*) of an attempt on the life of a magistrate (the public prosecutor who had his car stoned). At the end of the process, in 1966, when it had reached the STM, all the accused were acquitted for lack of evidence.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering this whole scenario, which involved a strike that allegedly endangered national security, we believe that this episode contains elements that have been hitherto little studied, given that it relates to the working class, and particularly the values that the working class constructs, which are built on the experiences of past struggles.

By analyzing the legal case referred to as BNM 211 in the “Brazil Never Again” project more closely, as well as various other sources of information about the lives of the workers of Magé, it is possible to observe that the mobilization of workers regarding food shortages became more intense, not only because of increases in the price of basic necessities, but mainly because of the cases related to the inadequate distribution and withholding of foods.

In a sense, it was as if the increase in prices, although they were considered to be unfair by the workers, was part of a game, given the understanding that the supply crisis affected everyone and the fact that, to some extent, traders would have to pass higher prices on to consumers (as long as price rises were not over-exaggerated). It is worth pointing out that, in many cases, the relationships between workers and traders were well-established and involved family members and/or emotional ties, which were supported by credit being

extended to workers in the factories and negotiated terms of payment, elements that undoubtedly contributed to alleviate conflicts between the parties.

For the union leaders, the price increases were part of a dispute; the employers' associations producing research on the cost of living to contradict government rates (the employers' rates were usually lower) during wage negotiations. However, price increases were ultimately used as one of the main arguments in the debate for wage increases for workers.

However, bad faith in the distribution of foodstuffs, and the selective withholding of the same were considered unforgivable by workers, the latter being much worse from a moral point of view. When these cases were discovered the crisis regarding supplies of foodstuffs explicitly ceased to be something that affected the whole of society, and became something that clearly only affected the "lower" classes, thereby wounding working class dignity.

These observations are quite complex to demonstrate empirically and, at the same time, they have also been largely neglected in much of the discussion about the world of work. However, we believe that the analysis provided in this paper provides a valuable contribution by avoiding the trend of studying workers merely as the driving force of political parties, unions, associations, clubs and factories, in short, often failing to recognize workers as key actors, and as the subject of their own histories, defending their rights and fighting for new social advances and better living conditions.

Regarding the legislation, undoubtedly all the practices listed in this article (price increases, withholding foodstuffs and unequal treatment of customers) were crimes against the popular economy. Social relations are established through other matrices and are forged from experience. Thus, a more comprehensive analysis is necessary.

There are references in the BNM 211 legal case that can strengthen this argument. In his first testimony, collected at the police station after spending 53 days on the run, Astério dos Santos stressed that "the confusion because of the sugar originated because of the conduct of the trader who held up a can of ant killer and said: 'Someone who cannot live, should die!'"<sup>69</sup> When Waldemar Lima Teixeira, testified he confirmed that the facts described in the case occurred in his brother-in-law's store because of sugar:

The incident occurred with a military police officer ... who sent a girl to return the sugar because the price was higher than the official price ... then people started gathering at the door of the store, which numbered a crowd of more than

eight hundred people. The witness was inside along with another friend of his brother-in-law.<sup>70</sup>

Thus, we can infer how the phrase used by the trader (put in other words: “If you can’t afford it, die!”) was linked with the “immorality of profiting from people’s needs” (Thompson, 1998, p.257) and rapidly inflamed the feelings of eight hundred people outside the store. Both the actions of the trader (who was a relative of the deputy, and was protected by him) and the attitudes of the deputy chief of the Saps (who was accused of inappropriate distribution of foodstuffs, favoritism to customers, and hoarding for resale to local shops) pointedly disregarded the “sacrifices” of those textile workers in the face of sugar shortages, such as the young weaver mentioned at the start of this article (and so many other workers) who had to use sugarcane juice instead of sugar to prepare breakfast.

The Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) was undoubtedly an important actor in the context of the “Sugar Strike”, especially in terms of maintaining close links with the workers for a long period. However, unlike the official government analysis that permeated almost all of the BNM 211 case, the strike was not simply a “simulation of just demands” aimed at the “implementation of a *mazorca vermelha* [red turmoil]”; it was the manifestation of the defense of rights, both legally constituted and symbolic, which were forged from the values and customs of that group of workers throughout their trajectory.

Therefore, rather than jeopardizing national security, the “Sugar Strike” actually emerged from the interpretation by workers that some of their moral premises were being threatened, which encouraging them to resort to political action in support of their demands.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This article is the result of a paper presented at the XXXII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA), held in Chicago, USA, in 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Maria Oneida Péclat, which was included in the documentary *Loom* produced by Taiane Linhares (2013). Available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc917aJdfjo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc917aJdfjo); accessed: 31 Mar. 2014.

<sup>3</sup> The expression “*deu pano pra manga*” (literally, “provided enough material to make a sleeve”) is very popular in Brazil. It arose from an analogy about the estimate of how much material was necessary for making a shirt. When the amount of cloth is lower than expected, but it is still possible to finish the piece, this expression is used because a small amount of material can still be used to make a sleeve, for example. Figuratively, “*deu pano pra manga*” means something surprising, unexpected, which results in something that is far more than was expected.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Nito Lima Teixeira conducted by Juçara da Silva Barbosa de Mello, 5 Jan. 2005. Researcher’s archive.

<sup>5</sup> Regarding submerged memories, this article is supported by the work of sociologist Michael Pollak. See, POLLAK, 1989.

<sup>6</sup> The *Brasil Nunca Mais* (BNM), “Brazil: Never Again”, project was developed by the World Council of Churches and the Archdiocese of São Paulo during the 1980s. The initiative had three main goals: to prevent lawsuits for political crimes being destroyed at the end of the military dictatorship, as occurred at the end of the *Estado Novo*; to obtain information about torture practiced on behalf of political repression; and that the disclosure of the project would fulfil an educational role within Brazilian society. Available at: <http://bnmdigital.mpf.mp.br>; accessed: 12 Dec. 2013.

<sup>7</sup> The concept of moral economy was used in this article based on the reflections of the historian E. P. Thompson. See, THOMPSON, 1998, especially Ch. 4 (p.150-202) and 5 (p.203-266).

<sup>8</sup> In 1956, the city of Magé had five textile industries running simultaneously: the Santo Aleixo and the Andorinhas factories in the Second District; the Pau Grande and Santana factories, both in the América Fabril Company in the Sixth District; and the Mageense factory in the city center (First District); not counting the Cometa factory in Meio da Serra, which paid taxes to the city of Petrópolis, but was a cause of permanent dispute between the two cities. See, SANTOS, 1957, p.187.

<sup>9</sup> These implications about the structural safety of the working class refer to comments made by Mike Savage. See, SAVAGE, 2004, p.25-48; 2011, p.6-33.

<sup>10</sup> FERNANDES, 1962, p.54-58. The “Cloth Strike” was so named by older workers in a reference to the action agreed during the strike, which recommended that the weavers take pieces of fabric from the factory to their homes. This was recounted in interviews with Waldomiro Pinto Carneiro and Benedito Queiroz Vieira, now deceased, conducted by the Grupo Centenário on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the creation of the Santo Aleixo district in 1992. Archive of Ademir Calixto Oliveira. This strike in Magé, which occurred in the context of the so-called “Anarchist Insurrection” in Rio de Janeiro, was also reported by newspapers in Rio de Janeiro. Cf. *A Noite*: 22 Nov. 1918, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Almir de Castilho conducted by Juçara da Silva Barbosa de Mello, 10 March, 2005. Researcher’s archive.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Evonete de Araújo Souza and Luiz Porfírio de Souza conducted by Taiane Linhares during the production of the documentary *Tear* (2013). Producer’s archive.

<sup>13</sup> *Tribuna Popular*, 4 Jul. 1945, p.8.

<sup>14</sup> In 1947, the following were elected to the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB): Irun Sant’Anna (a doctor); José Muniz de Melo (a trader and former textile worker who was licensed during the mandate), Feliciano Costa and Agenor dos Santos (weavers); and Argemiro da Cruz Araújo (a former worker in a gunpowder factory who was sworn in as a substitute during the mandate). These councilors had their mandates arbitrarily annulled in 1948 and the weavers who were militant in the party were harshly persecuted, including the presence of police inside factories. In 1950, the following were elected to the National Labour Party

(PTN): José Aquino de Santana (an electrician); Petronilho Alves (a weaver who was sworn in as a substitute only at the end of the mandate); and Ilza Gouvea (a weaver who was sworn in as a substitute at the start of the mandate). In 1954, the peasant leader and former textile worker Manoel Ferreira de Lima was elected to the Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB). In 1958 and 1962, the workers Astério dos Santos and Darcy Câmara were elected and re-elected to the PSB.

<sup>15</sup> *Tribuna Popular*, 17 Nov. 1946, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> *Tribuna Popular*, 19 Sept. 1947, p.8.

<sup>17</sup> Public archive of the State of Rio de Janeiro (Aperj). *Relatório do investigador Edson Braga Machado ao Comissário Geral Heráclito da Silva Araújo*. Niterói: 26 Apr. 1948. p.1.

<sup>18</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 27 Mar. 1951, p.5.

<sup>19</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 29 Mar. 1951, p.5.

<sup>20</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 23 May 1951, p.4.

<sup>21</sup> Câmara Municipal de Magé (CMM). *Livro de Atas* n.17 (1/31/1951 to 11/3/1954). fl.104.

<sup>22</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 22 Nov. 1952, p.4. Reports about the lack of wheat and bread in Magé were also published in other newspapers but the latter stressed that Mayor Waldemar Lima Teixeira was making every effort to solve the problem. Cf. *A Noite*, 28 Dec. 1952, p.2.

<sup>23</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 4 Mar. 1953, p.6.

<sup>24</sup> *Imprensa Popular*, 22 Oct. 1953, p.2.

<sup>25</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.19 (7/15/1955 to 7/15/1958). fl.76v.

<sup>26</sup> From the end of World War II there was a considerable shortage of grain in the country and evidence of serious urban problems, including food shortages, triggered a series of strikes at the end of the 1940s, which extended into the 1950s. See, MUNHOZ, 2002, p.45-50.

<sup>27</sup> Law no. 1522, 26 Dec. 1951.

<sup>28</sup> I researched the political performance of these communist councilors and their relationship to the working class in my Master's thesis. See, RIBEIRO, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.20 (7/18/1958 to 11/6/1959). fl.51v.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*, fl.53v.

<sup>31</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.22 (11/30/1960 to 2/13/1962). fls.4v-5.

<sup>32</sup> *Última Hora*, 6 Jan. 1961, p.6.

<sup>33</sup> *Última Hora*, 7 Jan. 1961, p.6.

<sup>34</sup> *O Globo*, 14 Mar. 1963, p.3.

<sup>35</sup> *Última Hora*, 8 Jan. 1964, p.5.

<sup>36</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.22 (11/30/1960 to 2/13/1962). fl.55.

<sup>37</sup> Statement written by Plácido Agra Neto to Felipe Augusto dos Santos Ribeiro, Oct. 1999. Author's archive.

<sup>38</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.21 (11/10/1959 to 11/29/1960). fl.12.

<sup>39</sup> *Última Hora*, 25 Mar. 1964, p.7.

<sup>40</sup> *Última Hora*, 18 Dec. 1962, p.1.

<sup>41</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 10 Jan. 1964, 1st supplement, p.5.

<sup>42</sup> *Última Hora*, 1 Feb. 1964, p.3.

<sup>43</sup> *Última Hora*, 26 Feb. 1964, p.3.

<sup>44</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 28 Feb. 1964, 1st supplement, p.2.

<sup>45</sup> *A Noite*, 28 Feb. 1964, p.2.

<sup>46</sup> The immigrant hostels on the Ilha das Flores, which is located in the municipality of São Gonçalo, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, were inaugurated in 1883 and were the first of their kind to be created by the imperial government of Brazil. This important center for the reception and distribution of migrants and immigrants was in operation until 1966. Currently, the old hostel facilities house military units of the Brazilian Navy, which, in partnership with the State University of Rio de Janeiro (Uerj), maintains a visitor's center that is open to the public by appointment. Available at: [www.hospedariailhadaflores.com.br](http://www.hospedariailhadaflores.com.br); accessed: 12 Dec. 2013.

<sup>47</sup> Law 1.521, 26 Dec. 1951.

<sup>48</sup> Decree 53.844, 25 Mar. 1964.

<sup>49</sup> Law 4.242, 17 Jul. 1963.

<sup>50</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 18 Mar 1964, p.9. Interestingly, this same report noted that at that time the immigrant hostels on the Ilha das Flores housed about six hundred farm workers who had been evicted from farms located in the city of Magé, and who were awaiting placement by the of the Superintendency of Agrarian Reform (*Superintendência de Reforma Agrária*, *Supra*), which intended to expropriate those farms.

<sup>51</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 14 March 1964, 1st supplement, p.8. The wording of the last poster alluded to the prison on Ilha Grande, which is located in the municipality of Angra dos Reis in the state of Rio de Janeiro. This notoriously harsh prison was built in the early 1930s during the government of Getúlio Vargas.

<sup>52</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 20 Mar. 1964, 2nd supplement, p.1.

<sup>53</sup> *Última Hora*, 25 Mar. 1964, p.7.

<sup>54</sup> *Correio da Manhã*, 12 Mar. 1964, p.1.

<sup>55</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.25 (12/30/1963 to 4/28/1964). fl.43.

<sup>56</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.25 (12/30/1963 to 4/28/1964). fl.53.

<sup>57</sup> BNM 211. fls.26v; 66v and 67v.



<sup>58</sup> In Santo Aleixo, Joaquim dos Santos and Valdemar de Souza were arrested as agitators; the brother of Astério dos Santos was accused of inciting agitation against local traders. See, *O Globo*, 6 Apr. 1964, p.10.

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Hermínio Santos conducted by Joana Lima Figueiredo on 6 Apr. 2008. Researcher's archive.

<sup>60</sup> *O Brasil Despertou a Tempo*. Newspaper supplement published by the new government in collaboration with the National Agency. Apr. 1964, p.5. Author's archive.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Lúcia de Souza Lima conducted by Juçara da Silva Barbosa de Mello on 10 Oct. 2007. Researcher's archive.

<sup>62</sup> CMM. *Livro de Atas* n.25 (12/30/1963 to 4/28/1964). fl.70.

<sup>63</sup> DELEGACIA REGIONAL DO TRABALHO (RJ). Decree 55/40, 11 May, 1964.

<sup>64</sup> See, *Jornal do Brasil*, 8 Apr. 1964, p.1; and *Última Hora*, 9 Apr. 1964, p.7.

<sup>65</sup> *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 7 Apr. 1964, p.9.

<sup>66</sup> BNM 211. fl.3.

<sup>67</sup> BNM 211. fl.85.

<sup>68</sup> BNM 211. fl.120.

<sup>69</sup> BNM 211. fl.85.

<sup>70</sup> BNM 211. fl.120.