

Rural conflicts in the Doce River Valley: setting, actors, script and experiences (1945-1961)¹

Conflitos rurais no Vale do Rio Doce: cenário, atores, roteiro e vivências (1945-1961)

Haruf Salmen Espindola*

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4609-288X>

Alisson Cardoso de Oliveira**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0001-1975-828X>

Maria Terezinha Bretas Vilarino***

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2093-5159>

Resumo

No Vale do Rio Doce, particularmente no vale do rio Urupuca, municípios de Itambacuri, entre 1945 e 1961, os conflitos agrários se intensificaram, como demonstram as fontes utilizadas: processos de legitimação de terras, jornais e entrevistas. Constitui-se um caso particular dos conflitos agrários nas áreas de fronteira agrícola, em função da presença de comunidades de agricultores familiares posseiros, de fazendeiros pecuaristas e grandes empreendimentos capitalistas siderúrgicos, madeireiro e de mineração de mica. Esses conflitos são indissociáveis do processo de formação histórica do território do Rio Doce, particularmente na porção setentrional, entre as cidades de Governador Valadares e Teófilo Otoni. O estudo demonstra serem operacionais os conceitos de “frente de expansão” e “frente pioneira” para compreendermos o mundo rural e os conflitos agrários nas zonas de fronteira.

Palavras-chave: Vale do Rio Doce. Vale do Urupuca. Zona de Fronteira. Vivências Rurais. Conflitos Agrários.

*PhD in Economic History, USP. Full Professor at the Vale do Rio Doce University, linked to the Observatório Interdisciplinar do Território, laboratório do PPG Interdisciplinar em Gestão Integrada do Território (GIT/Univale), and the Law undergraduate course. E-mail: haruf@univale.br

**MSc, PPG GIT/Univale. E-mail: alisson.oliveira@educacao.mg.gov.br

*** PhD in History, UFMG. Adjunct Professor at Vale do Rio Doce University, linked to the Núcleo Interdisciplinar de Educação, Saúde e Direitos (NIESD), laboratory of the PPG GIT/Univale. E-mail: maria.vilarino@univale.br

¹ This article results from research funded by Capes, CNPq and the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de Minas Gerais-Fapemig.

Abstract

In the Doce River valley, particularly in the Urupuca valley, in the municipality of Itambacuri, between 1945 and 1961, agrarian conflicts intensified, as demonstrated by the sources used: land legitimization processes, newspapers and interviews. This constitutes a particular case of agrarian conflicts in the agricultural frontier areas, due to the presence of communities of small family farmers, cattle ranchers and large capitalist steel enterprises. These conflicts are inseparable from the historical formation of the Doce River territory, particularly in the northern portion, between the cities of Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni. The study demonstrates that the concepts of “expansion front” and “pioneer front” are operational for understanding the rural world and agrarian conflicts in the bordering areas.

Keywords: Doce River Valley. Urupuca Valley. Border Zone. Rural Experiences. Agrarian Conflicts.

Introduction

Between 1930 and 1960, Brazil experienced a process of industrialization and urbanization with significant governmental investment in road infrastructure, energy, sanitation and communication. In the same period, the occupation of the so-called “empty spaces” of the national territory was also incentivized. In southeastern Brazil, the last continuous areas of unoccupied lands covered by the Atlantic Forest, even if they were not targeted by the official colonization policy, were also occupied².

In the late 1930s, in the east of the Minas Gerais state, the last large forest reserves and empty lands of that federation unit were located, between the cities of Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni, in the south-north direction,

² The occupation of the so-called “empty spaces” refers to two simultaneous movements. The first was the occupation and incorporation to the Rio-São Paulo market of the last large areas of Atlantic Forest, located in the west of Santa Catarina; north, southwest and west of Paraná; west of São Paulo; Mato Grosso de Goiás; and east of Minas Gerais, north of Espírito Santo and south of Bahia, particularly in the Doce, São Mateus and Mucuri River valleys. The second movement, more precisely, started during the Vargas government, in the Estado Novo [New State] (1937-1945), and was called “March to the West”, whose objective was to promote integration by means of colonization of the Midwestern and Northern regions of the country. See, respectively, WAIBEL, Leo H. As zonas pioneiras do Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*. out./dez. de 1955, ano XVII, n. 4, pp. 389-422. Retrieved from <https://pt.scribd.com/document/476532703/As-Zonas-Pioneiras-No-Brasil-Leo-Waibel>. Accessed on 26/11/2024. LENHARO, Alcir. *Colonização e Trabalho no Brasil: Amazônia, Nordeste e Centro Oeste*. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 1985; ANDRADE, Rômulo de Paula. “Conquistar a terra, dominar a água, sujeitar a floresta”: Getúlio Vargas e a revista “Cultura Política” redescobrem a Amazônia (1940-1941). *Bol. Mus. Para. Emílio Goeldi. Cienc. Hum.*, Belém, maio-ago. 2010, v. 5, n. 2, p. 453-468. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/bgoeldi/a/CSBRwGrXhdL6DKJG5bGQWwG/abstract/?lang=pt>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

from the Suaçuí Grande-Urupuca rivers up to the border with Espírito Santo, in the west-east direction. The area included the São Mateus River basin, a conflict zone between Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo (Contestado Zone³). The initial point of occupation of that area was the implementation of the Itambacuri (Our Lady of Angels) indigenous village, in 1873, by the Empire Government. With their catechetical action, the capuchin Franciscan friars created the conditions for the penetration of a front of demographic occupation, coming from the populated zones located in the west and north, mainly from the municipalities of Peçanha, Serro and Teófilo Otoni.

The demographic occupation front is here understood as the expansion front addressed by José de Souza Martins, when discussing the notion of border. For that author, the border as an area within the national territory incorporated to the capitalist economic dynamics, to the detriment of family farming, traditional communities, and the environment, is better adjusted to the conception of a pioneer front. That author differentiates the pioneer front from the expansion front when referring to the demographic border, which, therefore, would be a “population’s movement over new territories”, a demographic occupation front, mainly by farmers and cattle ranchers. As regards the pioneer front, it focuses on the “idea that on the border something new is created, a new sociability, founded on the market and the contractual bases of social relationships”. Therefore, it configures a spatiality and social relationships marked by modernization and industrialization, thus implying the “formulation of new life conceptions and social change”.⁴

The capuchin Franciscan friars promoted the grouping of indigenous populations in locations situated at strategic points and, at the same time, fixed immigrants from several origins close to the indigenous villages, which resulted in inter-ethnic marriages. Those friars’ catechetical action favored the advancement of the agricultural frontier towards the state of Espírito

³ In the area comprising the north of the middle course of Doce River and the São Mateus River basin, the Contestado zone was formed due to the conflict between the states of Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo regarding their borders. Such dispute started in 1903 and was only resolved by the final agreement between the governors of both states in 1963. Cf. ANUNCIAÇÃO, Flávio Luciano da. *Entre Trâmites Políticos e Conflitos Sociais: a memória do contestado mineiro-capixaba*. Dissertation (History Master’s Program). UFJF, Juiz de Fora, 2019. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.ufjf.br/jspui/handle/ufjf/12136>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

⁴ MARTINS, José de Souza. O tempo da fronteira. Retorno à controvérsia sobre o tempo histórico da frente de expansão e da frente pioneira. *Tempo Social; Rev. Sociol. USP*, S. Paulo, maio de 1996, v. 8, n. 1: pp. 25-70, p. 29. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/ts/a/87HYbTyy3WqHHt49HTWJNjb/?format=pdf>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

Santo, which resulted in the Contestado conflict, where the expansion fronts from Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo battled.⁵

On 18th May 1924, with the creation of the municipality of Itambacuri, the village Nossa Senhora dos Anjos became the main city. It was connected via dirty road with the city of Teófilo Otoni, main station of the Bahia and Minas Railroad (EFBM). The settlements created by the capuchin friars correspond to 10 municipalities in the state of Minas Gerais from the former middle reach of the Doce River (current intermediary regions of Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni): Itambacuri, Campanário, Jampruca, Frei Inocência, Nova Módica, Pescador, Frei Gaspar, Ouro Verde de Minas, Ataléia and São José do Divino.

The interest in the region increased with the opening of the first road in 1936, linking the Figueira Village (currently, Governador Valadares) with the city of Teófilo Otoni, going past Itambacuri. The greatest impulse, however, occurred from 1945 onwards, due to the conclusion of the Rio-Bahia road (BR-4, later called BR-116, Rodovia Santos Dumont, in that stretch), whose work was accompanied with sanitation actions and combat to the malaria fever.⁶ On the one hand, the region was connected to the markets of the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. On the other hand, the road created a corridor that favored immigration coming from the Northeast region and the Zona da Mata of Minas Gerais.⁷

The road-rail junctions with the Leopoldina Railroad (EFL), Vitória-Minas Railroad (EFVM) and Bahia-Minas Railroad (EFBM), respectively in Caratinga, Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni, favored the advancement of the pioneer front over the available unoccupied lands and those that had been previously occupied by the expansion front, in the valleys of Doce, São Mateus and Mucuri Rivers.⁸ In the 1950s, with the closure of the agricultural

⁵ PALAZZOLO, Frei Jacinto de. *Nas selvas dos vales do Mucuri e do rio Doce*. São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1973. Retrieved from <https://bdor.sibi.ufrrj.br/bitstream/doc/48/1/277%20PDF%20-%20OCR%20-%20RED.pdf>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

⁶ PINTO, Cesar. Um ano de combate às doenças parasitárias que atacam os rodoviários da estrada Rio-Bahia, 1942 a 1943. *Memória do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 40, n. 3, jun. 1944. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/mioc/a/wFQYqRRbpQL3wkHCgNkKsSx/?format=pdf&lang=pt>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

⁷ BRITO, Fausto. A ocupação do território e a devastação da Mata Atlântica. In.: PAULA, João Antônio de. (Coord.) *Biodiversidade, população e economia: uma região de Mata Atlântica*. Belo Horizonte, UFMG/Cedeplar; ECMXC; PADCT/CIAMB, 1997, pp. 48-90. Retrieved from https://www.cedeplar.ufmg.br/pesquisas/padctII/livro/CAP_2.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

⁸ EGLER, Walter Alberto. Zona pioneira ao norte do rio Doce, *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, Rio de Janeiro, IBGE, 1951, v. XVIII, p. 223-264. Retrieved from https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/115/rbg_1951_v13_n2.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

frontier, when the unoccupied lands became scarce, the zone between Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni was marked by intense rural violence and illegal occupation of lands, which affected drastically those occupying the area and their lifestyles. It also revealed the resilience of the peasant families.⁹

Considering the different pioneer zones formed in the Atlantic Forest areas, according to Waibel¹⁰, the pioneer zone called “Region to the north of Doce River”, as a part of what was identified during the Vargas government (1930-1945) as Vale do Rio Doce¹¹, must be distinguished by the presence of power relationships operating at different levels (local, state, national and global)¹². In the 1920s, the region started to call attention of political, administrative, and fiscal interests of the state government of Minas Gerais, mainly due to the objective of installing a steel mill there¹³. In the 1940s, the federal government interest was observed when plans were made for the implementation of industrial scale iron mining (Vale do Rio Doce Company - VALE) and transformation of the mica extraction into a large scale industry for the processing and export of that mineral, in the context of national development and the demands created by the World War II.¹⁴

This article, considering the context marked by several scales, addresses agrarian conflicts originated from land ownership disputes between 1945

⁹ “Percorrendo a região infestada de grileiros, entre Governador Valadares e Teófilo Otoni – Conversa com o líder dos posseiros, Alfredo Ferregheleti – A indignação, a alegria e a esperança de muitas famílias. (Report by Adauto Alves dos Santos, 1st of a series.)” SANTOS, Adauto Alves dos. A Rapinagem de Terras no Vale do Rio. Homens Poderosos e Empresas Riquíssimas Mandam Saquear, Incendiar, Roubar e Matar. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 1957, a. 10, n. 2092, p. 3. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02092.pdf. Accessed on 26.11.2024. BORGES, Maria Eliza Linhares. *Utopias e contra utopias: movimentos sociais rurais em Minas Gerais (1950 - 1964)*. Dissertation (Sociology Master's Program), Faculdade de Filosofia Ciências e Letras, UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 1988.

¹⁰ WAIBEL, Leo H. Op. Cit., p. 17.

¹¹ O VALE DO RIO DOCE I. Reportagem Especial de “Cultura Política”. *Revista Cultura Política (Revista Mensal de Estudos Brasileiros)*. Rio de Janeiro, dez. de 1943, v. 03; n. 35, pp. 122-133. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/163538/per163538_1943_00035.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024. O VALE DO RIO DOCE II. Reportagem Especial de “Cultura Política”. *Revista Cultura Política (Revista Mensal de Estudos Brasileiros)*. Rio de Janeiro, jan. de 1944, v. 04, n. 36, pp. 169-185. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/163538/per163538_1944_00036.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

¹² To deepen this issue, see: LEAL, Victor Nunes. *Coronelismo, enxada e voto: o município e o regime representativo no Brasil*. 7. ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012.

¹³ The first impact entrepreneurship is the Companhia Siderúrgica Belgo-Mineira (currently, ArcelorMittal Aços Longos), operated by the Belgium-Luxembourg group ARBED, since 11th December 1921.

¹⁴ STRAUCH, Ney. Zona metalúrgica de Minas Gerais e Vale do Rio Doce. Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Nacional de Geografia, 1958; MARINHO Jr., L.D.; ESPINDOLA, H.S.; NODARI, E.S. A fronteira do carvão: siderurgia e floresta em Minas Gerais (Brasil) no século XX. *Revista Ambiente e Sociedade*, São Paulo, 2024, v. 27, p. 1-22. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/asoc/a/r4rHK6KLqbbpvFj4C6wCdvf/abstract/?lang=pt>. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

and 1961, at the valley of Urupuca River, in the municipality of Itambacuri, according to the 1939 delimitation. Such time limit considers two moments of rupture, namely, the conclusion of the Rio-Bahia road and the organization of the first peasant congress held in Brazil, in the city of Belo Horizonte.¹⁵

Urupuca River Valley: land ownership disputes.¹⁶

In the municipality of Itambacuri, in the 1950s, the Urupuca Valley became a territory of tensions and agrarian conflicts, as described in the Public Order Specialist Police Station (DEOP - Delegacia Especializada em Ordem Pública) report, marked as confidential:

The fact observed there [municipalities of Itambacuri and Governador Valadares] has been the subject of news already supplied by this DEOP and the conflicts between the interested parties worsened in May 1952, which motivated the destination of a Military Police Troop to Governador Valadares, where they currently have a main office. The issue [conflict] exists but has no characteristics of a fight or guerilla. The interested parties filed their complaint and the justice shall decide who is right in this matter.¹⁷

The DEOP document reports the transfer of one of the main military police battalions of Minas Gerais from Belo Horizonte to that region, due to the growing agrarian conflicts. The press echoed the situation: “The public opinion of Minas Gerais follows with interest the revelation of another tragedy experienced by dozens of families of poor peasants, who live in municipalities of the Doce River Valley, between Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni”.¹⁸ The report refers to the eviction of peasants promoted by

¹⁵ The sources comprise land legitimization processes, newspapers and interviews. This study is part of the project called “O Vale do Rio Doce: a História dos movimentos sociais de luta pela terra” (Rio Doce Valley: the History of social movements in the fight for land), funded by CAPES, Call 12/2015 - Memórias brasileiras: conflitos sociais (Brazilian Memories: Social Conflicts) – which supported projects financially to “rescue and register untold memories of Brazil”.

¹⁶ The Urupuca River belongs to the Suaçuí Grande River basin, an affluent of Doce River, located in the north of that basin.

¹⁷ MINAS GERAIS. *Resenha de informações e fatos chegados ao conhecimento da Delegacia Especializada de Ordem Pública*, de 4 a 7 de janeiro de 1953. Retrieved from <https://docplayer.com.br/22692795-Minas-geba6-rssbnha-db-infohm4coe3-e-de-fatos-chegados-40-conhecimento-d4-delegacia-especializada-de-ordem-publica-de-ia.html>. Accessed on 20/11/2019.

¹⁸ GRILEIROS, no Vale do Rio Doce, Espancam, Matam, Ateiam Incêndios. Centenas de famílias de posseiros despejadas na zona de Gov. Valadares a Teófilo Otoni – O chefe do bando assassino orienta em Itambacuri um processo contra as próprias vítimas. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 25 de abr. de 1957, a. 10, n. 2097,

two large companies, namely, the Brazilian Industry and Commerce Company – COBRAICE - Companhia Brasileira de Indústria e Comércio (lumber) and the Special Steel Company of Itabira – ACESITA - Companhia Aços Especiais de Itabira (currently, Aperam South America).

In 1957, the journalist Aداuto Alves dos Santos worked on a series of special reports about the region between Governador Valadares and Teófilo Otoni. The first article was called: “A Rapinagem de Terras no Vale do Rio Doce” (Land Grabbing in the Doce River Valley). The subtitle was even stronger: “Homens Poderosos e Empresas Riquíssimas Mandam Saquear, Incendiar, Roubar e Matar” (Powerful Men and Wealthy Companies Order Looting, Burning, Robbing and Killing). The eviction of those living on that land started in 1950, when Renato Sá Mota, “a COBRAICE’s lawyer at that time, who is currently one of its bosses”, accompanied by bodyguards and police officers, had led the invasion of Sta. Julieta Farm.¹⁹ Forest reserves also started to be disputed by the steel mills, which had stolen the peasants’ lands, employing hired henchmen and even military and former military forces.²⁰

Even small victories achieved by the peasants were followed by new violent attacks. In June 1955, the judge of the court of Teófilo Otoni issued an order guaranteeing the peasants’ right to the ownership of that land. However, a year and a half later (15th December 1956), hired henchmen and police officers acting on behalf of COBRAICE reappeared. “They burnt 35 huts. The dwellers were expelled with violence.” The police opinion regarding the facts narrated in the police report confirmed the accusation.²¹

In the current municipality of Jampruca (Itambacuri District at that time), at the Boleira stream, “14 houses were burnt”; on the left margin of the Itambacuri River, at the Cafezinho, Limeira and Quiabo Assado streams, “26 colonial houses were burnt in the same way”. The police report also revealed the presence of cattle “ruining” the peasants’ crops. Some photos were attached. In the last report of Santos’s special series²², Alfredo Ferreghelti, a

p. 4. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02097.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

¹⁹ Cobraice was created in 1939 to explore lumber in the Eastern Minas Gerais, and to keep large livestock farms supplying the Rio de Janeiro market.

²⁰ SANTOS, Aداuto Alves dos. A Rapinagem de Terras no Vale do Rio Doce. Op. Cit., p. 3.

²¹ SANTOS, Aداuto Alves dos. O Drama da Terra nos Latifúndios. Grileiros no Vale do Rio Doce Ateiam Incêndios, Matam e Roubam. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 5 de maio de 1957, a. 10, n. 2105, p. 3. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02105.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

²² SANTOS, Aداuto Alves dos. O Drama da Terra no Vale do Rio Doce: sitiantes são presos e aterrorizados

councilman in Itambacuri, after narrating several violent eviction episodes, launched the following challenge:

I am describing concrete facts. These are such huge crimes that what I say might sound absurd to those living away in big cities. In fact, it is easy to confirm whether what I say is true or false. The government should list all the land acquired by COBRAICE. And only then they will verify how much was robbed.

The testimony by the dweller Jorge Francisco Agostinho illustrates the situation: “They stole everything I had. They only left my 11 children and eight grandchildren”. He had been living on that land since 1935, after having abandoned the mining activity to work on the construction of the Figueira - Itambacuri Railroad (Governador Valadares). He also said that at that time it was “easy to get a piece of land”, since “progress had not reached the region yet, which occurred around 1945”, at the time there was not illegal occupation of the land. In 1952, he filed for the preferential right to buy the land where he had been living and producing, according to the law, and even so, in 1953, he lost his piece of land due to the action of land invaders. According to Agostinho, this occurred because the land was highly valued at the time.²³

We can ascribe this change in the progress intensity described by Agostinho, to the direct impact of communication, transport, and commerce infrastructures introduced, mainly the Rio-Bahia road. The network of interior roads linked to the Rio-Bahia road, which was also connected to the local railroads, created a type of capillarity that accelerated the region incorporation to the domestic market ruled by the Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis, and to the foreign market, in the context of the World War II.

That new context was marked by the entrance of the pioneer front. The formation of a market to prospect the sales and purchase of lands, including the purchase of “rights of ownership”, even if it was illegal, is associated to the introduction of the transport infrastructure, the circulation of trucks and jeeps, sanitation measures, and the malaria combat.²⁴ The new situation

para que façam a transmissão da posse. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 11 de maio de 1957, a. 10, n. 2110, p. 3. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02110.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

²³ SANTOS, Adauto Alves dos. O Drama da Terra nos Latifúndios: posseiros do Vale do Rio Doce contam sua história dolorosa. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 4 de maio de 1957, a. 10, n. 2104, p. 1 (chamada), p. 3. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02104.pdf. Accessed on 26/11/2024.

²⁴ VILARINO, M.T.B. *Da lata d'água ao SESP: tensões e constrangimentos de um processo civilizador no Sertão do*

witnessed frequent agrarian conflicts, mainly due to the dispute for pieces of land (SIMAN, 1988).²⁵

In 1957, the “Imprensa Popular” newspaper from Rio de Janeiro, reported the attempt to evict 76 dwellers from the Urupuca Valley. The article described how the invaders operated, mainly regarding the so-called “*medição de envolvimento*”, which was characterized by the inclusion, by the measurer, of the area of several neighboring properties as if they belonged to the piece of land owned by the farmer or company who was filing for legal ownership. Therefore, the first inhabitants of those pieces of land, who had lived on that land and cultivated it for many years, were expelled due to the scheme forged by the invaders and the state agents. This action was also promoted by large steel mills in the area.

The invasion of lands in the Doce River and Mucuri Valleys usually followed the model presented by the Belgo-Mineira company. The invader acquired two or three pieces of land paying a very low price to the dwellers and filed for measurement by the state. After some «arrangements» with the state measurer, the invader involved in the measurement other pieces of land of neighboring areas; the new area was registered, and the invader became the owner of the large area involved in the measurement — therefore, the former owners of the area were transformed into «invaders»; so the police was easily summoned and horrible crimes occurred. That is how small pieces of land were swallowed by large properties. (...) Good land awoke the appetite of unscrupulous individuals and invaders plagued the Doce River and Mucuri Valleys.²⁶

Among the large steel mills, the Belgo-Mineira company outstood for the implementation of a large plant, vegetable charcoal in João Monlevade

Rio Doce (1942-1960). Tese (Doutorado em História), Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 2015. Retrieved from <https://historia.fafich.ufmg.br/defesas/213D.PDF>. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

²⁵ SIMAN, L.C. *A história na memória: uma contribuição para o ensino de história das cidades*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História), Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da UFMG, 1988. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.ufmg.br/bitstream/1843/FAEC-87HHJV/1/1000000104.pdf>. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

²⁶ PEREIRA, Carlos Olavo da Cunha. Nas Margens do Rio Urupuca. Audaciosa tentativa de “grilo” contra setenta e seis posseiros. O dr. Tito de Oliveira Lima comprou 30 alqueires e quer, agora, ocupar mais de 600! – O agrimensor do Estado compactuou com o grileiro, no plano de roubo das terras. – Auxiliados pelo prefeito, os lavradores, há vários anos vêm defendendo os seus direitos. A luta chegou ao ponto culminante. *Imprensa Popular*. Rio de Janeiro, 12 de dez. de 1957, a.10, n. 2289, p. 8. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02289.pdf. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

(currently the Intermediary Region of Ipatinga, in the Rio Doce Valley), whose activities started in 1937. The Belgo-Mineira implemented an extensive production of vegetable charcoal in the Doce River Valley, expanding to the “Atlantic Forest islands” which were preserved, particularly in the North of Doce River. Belgo-Mineira appropriated large land extensions and forest resources, not only to produce charcoal since it also extracted and processed lumber and founded a large plywood plant in Governador Valadares. In the areas controlled by Belgo-Mineira (Acesita acted the same way), agricultural production practically disappeared. The companies were quite appealing to the rural population and recruited them for charcoal and lumber activities. Such demographic attraction power was accompanied by constant population flow due to the dislocation of charcoal production areas and its consequent soil degradation.²⁷

The Urupuca Valley can be considered a classic case for the explanation of conflicting relationships between the pioneer front and the demographic expansion front, as reported in the special article by the journalist Carlos Olavo Pereira (1957b) for the “Imprensa Popular” newspaper from Rio de Janeiro:

Invaders are more and more offensive. After the bombastic denouncements by the *Jornal do Povo* (newspaper) and other press agents from Minas Gerais regarding the land and wood stolen in the Doce River and Mucuri Valleys, which motivated the creation of a Parliamentary Inquiry Committee by the Legislative Assembly, the invaders felt threatened of having their fraud revealed, started to play the role of the thief that shouts ‘catch the thief’ to deceive their chasers.²⁸

The Parliamentary Inquiry Committee (PIC) cited by Carlos Olavo da Cunha was created by the Legislative Assembly and aimed at investigating the land conflicts and robbery of wood, mainly in the Urupuca Valley zone. When giving evidence to that PIC, on 2nd December 1957, the state secretary of Agriculture of Minas Gerais, Álvaro Marcílio, stated that powerful and wealthy people occupied in fact or on paper the lands that had been previously kept

²⁷ STRAUCH, Ney (Org.). *A Bacia do Rio Doce: Estudo Geográfico*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1955; SILVA, Edmundo de Macedo Soares. *O ferro na História e na Economia do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro, s/ed, 1972; GUERRA, Cláudio. *Meio ambiente e trabalho no mundo do eucalipto*. Belo Horizonte: Associação Agência Terra, 1995; e MARINHO Jr., L.D.; ESPINDOLA, H.S.; NODARI, E.S. Op. Cit.

²⁸ PEREIRA, Carlo Olavo da Cunha. Milhares de Alqueires de Terras Fértis Estão Sendo “Grilados” pela Belgo Mineira. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, de 17 de set. de 1957, a. 10, n. 2217, p. 8. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02217.pdf. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

by peasants, mainly those located “closer to more densely populated areas, which had better access and means of transportation”. He mentioned the different processes through which the land would be appropriated by those powerful individuals or companies, thus violating the “right of the legitimate dwellers, humble workers who had to provide for large families”.²⁹

Álvaro Marcílio, mentioned two names Tiago and Horácio Luz as examples of the practice of invading pieces of land that belonged to others. He confirmed that they would not be limited to lands that were still in the process of ownership but also invaded “lands that had been measured and legally marked long ago”. Tiago Luz was the plaintiff in processes claiming the ownership of land that in the past belonged to 105 different users. The agriculture secretary stated that Tiago Luz had also invaded 32 neighboring pieces of land and added that there were another six processes claiming land ownership that favored his sons.³⁰

According to a special article by Pereira (1957c) there was some reaction by the former dwellers, who organized themselves and managed to recover the lands invaded.³¹ The article highlighted the conditions that favored such recovery of the land or prevented the conclusion of the invasion; the “firmness of the original occupiers defending their property,”; the “protests by the union leaders of Governador Valadares,”; the “press denouncements,”; and the “strict positioning” by the judge Joaquim Assis Martins da Costa, from the Court of Governador Valadares. Whenever the peasants managed to recover their lands, the invaders would file legal repossession suits, thus accusing the ‘invading’ peasants.

However, this strategy stopped to work in the mid-1950s, when the judge of the Court of Governador Valadares determined the *in loco* verification, thus confirming the legitimate right of the peasants to keep their pieces of land. This change of attitude increased the conflicts in the field and, consequently, the agrarian conflicts and their violence became generalized.

The conflicts did not involve only farmers and lumber owners, as expected in agricultural frontier regions, but also included mining companies and large steel mills. Created during World War II, the mica processing

²⁹ MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. *O problema das terras devolutas e suas matas no Estado de Minas Gerais*. Belo Horizonte: Santa Maria, 1961, p. 15.

³⁰ Idem, p. 43-44.

³¹ PEREIRA, Carlos Olavo da Cunha. *O Drama da Terra. Expulsos os Jagunços da Belgo pelos colonos da Suassuí Grande*. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 28 de nov. de 1957, a. 10, n. 2277, p. 8. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02277.pdf. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

industry, located in the city of Governador Valadares to cater for the Allies' war effort, became extremely successful in the following years. Mines to extract this strategic mineral were opened all over the Doce River Valley region, mainly in the Urupuca Valley, thus worsening the dispute for land control. In the special report by Carlos Olavo Pereira, in November 1957, the elements mentioned above are noticed.

In the municipality of Santa Maria do Suassui, at the junction of the Urupuca River entering the Suassui Grande River, there were over 600 acres of officially unoccupied land belonging to the state, 76 peasant families occupied them long ago. In 1942, one of the peasants, Simplício found a rich mica mine there, which was soon leased by Dr. Tito de Oliveira Lima, one of the owners of COMIL [Comércio e Indústria de Mica Ltda]. Planning to become the proprietor of the whole area, the latter acquired 3 pieces of land from other peasants and requested measurement by the state. As soon as the peasants noticed that their land was being involved in the measurements, they joined their efforts and prevented it from happening.³²

In 1945, in a cunning maneuver, the state surveyor managed to measure the area. The peasants only knew about it in 1950, when they were informed that the governor of Minas Gerais would issue the ownership title to Tito de Oliveira Lima. The peasants organized a group and sent the State Agriculture Secretary a petition in which they reported to be living on that land and making it productive. About this event, Pereira (1957a) informed:

No one better than the mayor of Santa Maria do Suaçuí, Mr. Geraldo Benigno Lima, would know this case. For knowing what was going on, he set off to Belo Horizonte and managed to convince the Agriculture Secretary that such business could not be concluded. The fair attitude of that mayor was also followed by his successor, elected in 1954, Dr. Nacip Raydan Coutinho³³, who has been working tirelessly to prevent the occurrence of such invasion.

The secretary, Álvaro Marcílio sent an inquiry committee formed by three surveyors, however, the peasants were not satisfied when they observed

³² Idem.

³³ On 14th April 1962, the state deputy Nacip Raydan Coutinho (PSD) was assassinated when arriving home, in Santa Maria do Suaçuí. This crime was in the center of political disputes between two political parties PSD and UDN, belonging to the governor Magalhães Pinto (1961-1966).

that the work was monitored, all the time, by the COMIL company owner. “While it is true that the peasants are looking forward to the governor’s word about their case, it is also true that they have firmly decided not to be robbed”.³⁴ The 1957 Inquiry Committee of the Legislative Assembly³⁵ clarified who were the “powerful and wealthy”, by listing lumber companies, private properties and steel mills:

Answer [Álvaro Marcílio]: – IMAPEBRA, COBRAICE, Augusto de Souza Pinto & Filho Ltda., ANASTRIS, Adir Martins de Barros, Isalpino Carlos de Oliveira and Geronil de Freitas Heringer are the main companies or individuals that extract wood ...

Mr. Deputy Hernani Maia – You stated that the only company that acquired large pieces of land was the ACESITA, and you concluded, like us, that all the other areas were obtained directly by individuals and sold to other companies, is that true?

MR. ÁLVARO MARCÍLIO – Undoubtedly true.

Rural Experiences in the Land Ownership Conflict in Urupuca

The reports by individuals who lived in the Urupuca Valley zone between 1945 and 1961 might favor the understanding of the agrarian conflicts discussed in this article. Therefore, the reports by two sisters are presented³⁶. They were born in the Suaçuí Grande River basin region, in two places belonging to the municipality of Peçanha³⁷. The older sister, hereinafter referred to as Interviewee 1, was born in 1928, in the district of Ramalhete (emancipated as Virgolândia in 1948). She married a police officer and, due to her husband’s work, she lived in different cities in the region of Governador Valadares (emancipated from the municipality of Peçanha in 1938). The younger sister, Interviewee 2 was born in 1933, in the district of São Pedro do Suaçuí (emancipated with the same name in 1962). Since she was 14 years old, she resided in a rural property, close to the margins of the Urupuca River,

³⁴ PEREIRA, Carlos Olavo da Cunha. Nas Margens do Rio Urupuca. Audaciosa tentativa de “grilo” contra setenta e seis posseiros. Op. Cit., p. 12.

³⁵ MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. Op. Cit., p. 130 and 135.

³⁶ Interviews carried out in 2017, belonging to the collection of the Research Project: O Vale do Rio Doce: a História dos movimentos sociais de luta pela terra, funded by CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior). Call 12/2015 - Memórias brasileiras: conflitos sociais. Observatório Interdisciplinar do Território do Programa de Pós-graduação Interdisciplinar em Gestão Integrado do Território da Universidade Vale do Rio Doce – OBIT/GIT/Univale.

³⁷ Peçanha was a village formed in 1758 around a gold mine; it became a district in 1822, and was emancipated from Serro, in 1875.

in the municipality of Frei Inocência, when she married with the owner of that land.³⁸

The interviewees' testimonies provide an overview of the changes occurring at that time, such the opening of roads, the use of trucks as the main means of transportation of goods, and the formation of a regional market. The reports also agree with the information previously provided about the exploitation of forest resources by companies such as the Belgo-Mineira and the attraction and displacement of the rural population, sometimes due to recruitment for the formation of work fronts, other times due to their eviction from the land. Such changes were part of the formation of a pioneer front on the border zone, which substituted the previous demographic occupation front, thus establishing a new rationale based on the "market" logic.

The report by Interviewee 1 reveals that in the 1940s there was a gradual substitution of crops with meat cattle rearing alongside the growth of the wood extraction activity, which supplied the lumber companies located in Governador Valadares, the city where the interviewee lived.

"The sawmill was here on the way to the church; near the Cathedral, there was a lumber, while the sawmill was at Brasil Avenue. [Where] currently is the Santa Terezinha Hospital and some commercial addresses (...) [In the past] there was only the sawmill". "He [the interviewee's father] took any job that appeared, but he was in fact a driver. He transported wood". (interviewee 1, Governador Valadares, 2017.)

The two interviewees lived in the region formed by the Suaçuí Grande River basin. This is one of the main affluents on the Doce River left margin, mainly the zone known as Urupuca Valley. In that region, the peasants' ownership of the land was brief, it only lasted until the side roads put the region in contact with the Rio-Bahia road. The high value of that land and its appropriation by farmers and companies provoked the destructuring of peasants' communities, the rural lifestyle and the peasant families and their neighboring productive systems (joint effort, cooperation and solidarity).³⁹

³⁸ It seems relevant to emphasize that the transcription did not alter the content of the interviewees' speech, there was just a small edition. The interviewees' names were not mentioned to secure their right to confidentiality and thus prevent the disclosure of any data that might compromise them.

³⁹ The study carried out by Castaldi allows the knowledge of such destructuring processes in the Urupuca Valley and their consequences to the rural lifestyle of those peasant communities. CASTALDI, Carlo. A aparição do demônio no Catulé. *Tempo Social, revista de sociologia da USP*, São Paulo, jun. de 2008, v. 20, n. 1, pp. 305-357. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/ts/a/bGy4xnZkfRnRyj4YFL4nX7v/?format=pdf&lang=pt>. Accessed on 27/11/2024,

The processes to legalize land ownership, being developed by the Land Institute of the State of Minas Gerais (ITER), provide rich information about the Urupuca Valley and the municipality of Itambacuri areas in the period between 1945 and 1961. The information found in those processes enables the observation of how the access to roads and the increased value of that land were related.⁴⁰

The processes also show that land invasion was recurrent in Urupuca and generated conflicts with the peasants-dwellers that had been there for some time already. The land invasion resulted, in addition to the conflicts, in a high concentration of land ownership. As a response to the invasion action, the agrarian conflicts in Urupuca increased and peaked in the second half of the 1950s and the first years of the following decade, as reported by Interviewee 1, with certain hesitation:

“Urupuca, my uncle had a piece of land there, in that Urupuca. It was there, I know that Urupuca is on the margins of Suaçuí, isn't it?”. Ah... now I remember the name of the man who had a problem (with) uncle Zé Pena. They had a fight. It was Horácio Lúcio [Horácio Luz, mentioned by Marcílio at the Inquiry Committee of the Legislative Assembly, on 2nd December 1957⁴¹] (...) But we did not bother about that, we did not know, we had no..., we were not aware of these things. I used to hear that they did not like each other. I don't know exactly what happened to them.

Interviewee 2 mentions the same conflict involving her uncle: “José Martins Pena had it. I don't know if it was a farm, I know that he had a piece of land there, close to the Urupuca. He used to say that Urupuca was like Valadares, that it was a beautiful piece of land, (they called it) Lagoa Dourada (Golden Lagoon)”⁴².

⁴⁰ The land ownership process, which would grant the titles, provides information about the plaintiff, location of the land requested, soil quality, use and occupation, proximity with roads and railway stations, water resources, relief, climate and healthiness, extension of forests, and the existence of minerals, existing rural activities, agricultural and grazing areas, facilities, number of cows, types of crops, and wood exploration activity. Other information found include neighbors, land situation, area, perimeter, date of measure, price of the land when it was measured, surveyor's name, and land office to which the process is linked.

⁴¹ MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. Op. Cit.

⁴² Lagoa Dourada (Golden Lagoon) comprises the water complex of the Suaçuí Grande and Urupuca Rivers, located on the Urupuca River banks. Cf. LIMA, J. M.; SANTOS, C. A. Análise da evolução temporal da degradação ambiental da Lagoa Dourada inserida no complexo lacustre do Rio Suaçuí Grande e Urupuca, afluentes do Rio Doce-MG. *Anais XIV Simpósio Brasileiro de Sensoriamento Remoto*, Natal,

Interviewee 2: he sent sergeant Antônio, who was his henchman, and he sent him there to show the border. But my uncle was quite smart, and brave. At that time, there wasn't this justice thing (...). And he [Horácio Luz] sent [the sergeant] there to kill him [Jose Martins Pena]. He [the sergeant] arrived and called him outside, so that he could kill him. He shouted: oh Zé Pena. Oh Zé Pena come outside. And my uncle replied: as a man you can enter here, but as a police officer, as a sergeant, you cannot. No, I didn't come for that. But he [Horácio Luz] had sent him, he should check the border, and then he could kill my uncle inside the woods and nobody would know.

When asked about other cases involving land invasion, Interviewee 1 gives a direct answer again, but very soon she changes the topic:

I've heard that in those times these facts had occurred around here, but I don't remember well and don't know who those people were, because I was always busy working. I used to sew at other people's homes. They were sometimes talking about it and might have overheard it, but I was not paying attention.

When Interviewee 2 talked about the conflicts, mainly those involving relatives, she chose her words carefully. Horácio Luz's name always appeared in the conversation: "There were lots of people, buyers, who were buying the farms. There was Horácio Lúcio. There was Zé Nicolau. However, I never met them, since they would not appear on that side, where we used to live. They were the commanders. They had people killed".

Such memories confirm the evidence given by the Agriculture Secretary to the Inquiry Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais in 1957, as previously mentioned.⁴³ The thorough choice of words and the interviewees' hesitation reveal that such subjects are still hard to deal with, even after such a long time. In that context, in the 1950s, however, while the eviction of peasants grew, many agrarian conflicts arose from the dwellers' resistance and the press coverage.

In other regions of the country, it was not different, for example, there were rural socio-political movements emerging in other Brazilian states at the same time such as the Peasant Leagues created in Pernambuco in 1955.

Brasil, 25-30 abril 2009, INPE, p. 1417-1424. Retrieved from <http://marte.sid.inpe.br/col/dpi.inpe.br/sbsr@80/2008/11.17.13.06.22/doc/1417-1424.pdf>. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

⁴³ MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. Op. Cit., p. 43-44.

In addition to the dissemination of the Peasant Leagues to other states, in the same period, the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB)⁴⁴ made an effort in the early 1950s to organize rural workers into unions, even if there was not a labor law authorizing rural union adhesion. In 1956, the “Terra Livre”⁴⁵ newspaper from São Paulo reported the existence of 49 rural workers’ unions in Brazil. They were distributed as follows: 18 in São Paulo; 10 in Pernambuco; 5 in Minas Gerais; 4 in Paraná and Bahia; 3 in Rio Grande do Sul; and one in each of the following states: Rio de Janeiro, Alagoas, Ceará, Goiás and Santa Catarina. In Minas Gerais, there were two unions in Southern Minas and three in Doce River and Mucuri Valleys, including that of Governador Valadares.⁴⁶

In the early 1960s, agrarian conflicts played a significant role in the national political context. Such conflicts motivated the proposal of a Parliamentary Inquiry Committee, by the federal deputy Cunha Bueno, in 1964, which was installed at the House of Representatives according to Resolution nº 51 of 1965. The personality that most appeared both in the interviews and in the newspaper articles was Horácio Luz. He also outstood in the issues raised by that deputy, including in relation to his death when confronting the peasants. That death occurred in 1961, according to the “Terra Livre” newspaper that displayed the following headlines: “The death of a large and dangerous landowner”⁴⁷:

This is about the infamous colonel Horácio Luz, owner of large pieces of land in the Doce River Valley, only comparable to those owned by the Belgo Mineira Company. It has been reported that the well-known peasant killer attacked one of his workers with a whiplash on the face, which was paid back with some gun

⁴⁴ BORGES, Maria Eliza L. Representações do universo rural e luta pela reforma agrária no Leste de Minas Gerais. *Rev. Brasileira de História*, São Paulo, 2004, v. 24, n. 47, p.303-326. Retrieved from <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbh/a/J6mSyPGtY5GNKTtKWv7Hpp/abstract/?lang=pt>. Accessed on 27/11/2024.; COSTA, Luiz Flavio de Carvalho. PCB e a questão do sindicalismo rural 1954-1964. Tese (Doutorado em História), USP, São Paulo, 1991; COSTA, Luiz Flávio Carvalho. A construção da rede sindical rural no Brasil pré-1964. *Estudos Sociedade e Agricultura*, Rio de Janeiro, nov. de 2013. v. 2, n. 1, pp. 67-88.

⁴⁵ VIDA SINDICATOS RURAIS. 49 sindicatos organizados. *Terra Livre*, São Paulo, segunda quinzena de outubro de 1956, a.8, n. 74, , p. 2. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/814261/per814261_1956_00074.pdf. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

⁴⁶ The Land Workers’ Union of Governador Valadares promoted in 1955, a great march for the agrarian reform, it gathered rural workers coming from several places in the Doce River Valley. Cf. PEREIRA, Carlos Olavo da C. *Nas terras do Rio Sem Dono*. Rio de Janeiro: Codecri, 1988, p. 85-86.

⁴⁷ LIQUIDADO UM PERIGOSO LATIFUNDIÁRIO. *Terra Livre*. São Paulo, out. de 1961, a. 12, n. 104, p. 1. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/814261/per814261_1961_00104.pdf. Accessed on 27/11/2024.

shots that gave him another 7 feet of land, but this time at the cemetery.

The deputy Cunha Bueno asked the witness Colonel Altino Machado about the procedures used by the “late Horácio Luz”, referring to his practice of starting a fire in the peasants’ homes and “even” castrating those he persecuted. The witness tried to avoid answering the questions but ended up saying that “he new the deceased had been a difficult person, as was his brother Tiago Luz...”.⁴⁸

Even nowadays the violent posture and the death of that landowner are topics of conversation, as observed in the Interviewee 1 speech:

In fact, I don’t know whether Horácio Luz was from here, Frei Inocência, where he used to live, or what. I know that they were not in speaking terms. There was always the news that we heard that it was because of a troubled farm owner that they killed, like they kill there in Pará, see. They killed. There were some people, some troubling people, among those people. I don’t know their names; I keep forgetting.... They were too, the first newcomers, they were angry, but they were angry and quiet, nowadays they make some noise first.

Interviewee 2, talks about the use of force by the large landowners, she reports that

Other farmers... they said. I saw them saying. I was talking. That in old times, our parents would not let us stay among their visitors. But I hear them saying there, that they stole things from others, they stole other people’s land. The ones who did that and that I heard were Zé Nicolau and Horácio Lúcio, who was also believed to burn houses with the inhabitants inside them. Horácio Lúcio, I know for sure that he did that, because he tried to kill my uncle more than once.

Interviewee 2 also mentioned the death of Horácio Luz and his conflicting relationship with her uncle José Martins Pena. “Yes, he wanted to kill because of the Lagoon. He wanted to have the lagoon, but my uncle

⁴⁸ CPI - Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito (Parliamentary Inquiry Committee) was destined to verify “in loco” the origins, nature, and depth of the unrest observed in the rural environment of Governador Valadares, in Minas Gerais, and at any other point of the national territory. Resolution Project, n. 103, of 1965. Diário do Congresso Nacional, Seção 1, Suplemento 110, 17 de agosto de 1965, p. 59. Retrieved from <https://imagem.camara.gov.br/Imagem/d/pdf/DCD17AGO1965SUP.pdf>. Accessed on 28/11/2024.

would not let him have it. Then, he wanted to kill my uncle. In the end, he (Horácio Luz) was killed. Because a disabled man killed him". The fact that the landowner had been killed by a peasant was engraved in the interviewee's memory. She emphasized the fact that a farmer with such power in the region was the victim of his own actions and punished by somebody "below" him, a "disabled" individual.

The episodes recalled by both interviewees helped us to understand the everyday life of the different actors linked to the land conflict in the Doce River Valley, here represented by the violent events of the Urupuca Valley. The reasons triggering those conflicts were linked to capitalist interests, from private owners (farmers) and companies (steel mills, lumber, and mining companies), which also kept large pieces of land to rear cattle. That became a territory marked by unbalanced power relations, where "powerful individuals"⁴⁹ used generalized force/violence with the complicity of public agents.

Advancements of the pioneer front and the land conflicts

According to Sawyer, the eviction of the de peasants-occupiers from their lands is related to the advancement of the "speculation fronts", that is, the expectation of increased prices for that land, mainly those located near the newly-opened roads.⁵⁰ This concept can be applied to the facts occurred in the Urupuca Valley, especially regarding the land to be disputed regardless of its value for the agricultural or livestock production, but rather for the speculation of its high value. This can be found in the "Imprensa Popular" newspaper, whose headline read: "The land farmers were evicted, and their belongings were "seized"⁵¹. After explaining the action to invade the peasants' lands, the article goes on:

Their objective, however, was soon revealed: it was a huge scam aiming to sell their land to the Acesita (Companhia de Aços Especiais Itabira S/A), within a certain period freed from

⁴⁹ As previously mentioned, the expression was firstly used by the Agriculture Secretary of Minas Gerais, Álvaro Marcílio, when giving evidence in the PIC of the Legislative Assembly, in 1957.

⁵⁰ SAWYER, Donald R. *Ocupação e Desocupação da Fronteira agrícola no Brasil: Ensaio de interpretação estrutural e espacial*. In: Seminário Regional Expansão da Fronteira Agrícola e Meio Ambiente. 1981. Belo Horizonte: CEPAL/PNUMA/ UFMG, 1981. p. 1-28.

⁵¹ INDIGNAÇÃO EM GOVERNADOR VALADARES. Despejados os Lavradores da Terra e "Confiscados" os seus Bens. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, ano 10, n. 2007, de 6 de janeiro de 1957. p. 4. Retrieved from https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02007.pdf. Accessed on 28/11/2024.

the previous occupiers. The planned invasion by the company was taken to court, but the judge immediately saw how illegal it was and refused to grant then the “repossession” of the land. The same attitude was taken by the judges of Teófilo Otoni and Governador Valadares.

Although there were other actors obtaining pieces of land in a violent way or manipulating breaches in the law, the names Tiago and Horácio Luz stand out in the whole documentation and the interviewees’ speech, which reveals the large extensions of land they controlled in the Urupuca, Itambacuri and Suaçuí Grande River Valleys. One example is the process legalizing lands started in 1950, which refers to a piece of land located in the Urupuca zone. Tiago Luz requested on behalf of his son, who was eight years old at the time, the measurement of a 250 ha plot, alleging that he had been planting in over a fifth of that area. From the initial area, Tiago Luz obtained large portions of neighboring land.⁵²

This process allows the understanding of several ways of tackling the law, among them is the purchase of a piece of land by a child (Friedrich Luz), even if it was legally forbidden for foreigners and minors to buy land. Another strange fact is the full payment of that piece of land two years before the approval of the measurement and sale. The elements of this process are more than enough to prove that the Luz family neither lived on the piece of land nor produced regular crops, as required for the ownership legitimation and register of the property of those areas. Such situation corresponds to the testimony given by the Agriculture Secretary: “misappropriation, carried out by greed large landowners, messing the limits and the decisive defense of the ‘natural’ right created by the real occupier”, which generated the “conflicts where the iniquity of spoliation many times occurred among bloody tragedies”.⁵³

The issue of unoccupied lands and the formation of a land market in a context in which the private property must be legitimated by public power, involved power relations, in which one of the sides (farmers and companies) held all the advantage, including receiving favors from public agents and exercising pressure on local and state public powers. Friedrich Luz’s father,

⁵² ESPINDOLA, H.S. Legitimação e mercantilização de terras em Minas Gerais. In: XXV Simpósio Nacional de História. Anais Eletrônicos. Fortaleza: ANPUH, 2009, p. 7. Retrieved from https://anpuh.org.br/uploads/anais-simposios/pdf/2019-01/1548772189_ce8345a4dc1645470bc64d0b6ad4f6c2.pdf. Accessed on 28/11/2024.

⁵³ MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. Op. Cit., p. 16.

was well-advised by lawyers who knew the issue, as identified in the process, and resorted to public agents and influent people to help him. One example is the occasion on which the Director of the Agricultural and Industrial Credit Portfolio of Banco do Brasil S/A wrote to the State Agriculture Secretary, Álvaro Marcílio, to defend that family's intent. In the end, the decision was favorable to the Luz family.

When giving evidence to the Legislative Assembly PIC, the Agriculture Secretary Álvaro Marcílio stated that the Urupuca and Itambacuri Valleys were areas of constant “formulated complaints and denouncements” around the land issue.⁵⁴ Several land legitimization processes examined were filed by the Luz family in the period between 1930 and 1960.⁵⁵ All these processes show the personification of power by the individual Horácio Luz. However, the land issue was not limited to that period, on the contrary, it crossed the 20th century reaching present days, as shown in an article in the “O Estado de São Paulo” newspaper of 05th June 2003, entitled “Farmer files for repossession in the Doce River Valley”. The report addressed the land conflict in the region, involving some of Horácio Luz's relatives.⁵⁶

The farmer Horácio Ferreira de Souza Luz, owner of the Royal Aranã farm, in the municipality of Itambacuri, in the Doce River Valley, informed this Thursday that he filed for repossession of a piece of land. The area was invaded on Saturday [31/5/2003] by around 140 families linked to the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST). (...). According to the MST, approximately 280 families are camped on the property.

Under the effect of the institutional political crisis generated with the resignation of the president Jânio Quadros (25th August 1961), the capital Belo Horizonte sheltered between 15th and 17th November 1961, the First

⁵⁴ Idem, p. 36.

⁵⁵ His name appears in six processes, numbered as follows: 15,628 with measurement approved in 1930; 16,372 with measurement approved in 1947; 15,610 with measurement approved in 1939; 15,623 with measurement approved in 1939; 16,634 with measurement approved in 1938. Rural Land Archive of Minas Gerais, guarded by the Institute of Lands of the State of Minas Gerais (ITER). Data base of the Interdisciplinary Territory Observatory of the Doce River Valley Integrated Management Interdisciplinary Graduate Program – OBIT/GIT/Univale. (Law nº 21.082, of 27/12/2013, extinguished the ITER agency, transferring its attributions to the State Agriculture, Livestock and Supply Secretariat – Seapa, and creating the Land Access and Regulation Sub-secretariat)

⁵⁶ AGENCIA ESTADO. Fazendeiro pede reintegração de posse no Vale do Rio Doce. *Estadão*, São Paulo, 05/06/2003. Retrieved from <https://www.estadao.com.br/politica/fazendeiro-pede-reintegracao-de-posse-no-vale-do-rio-doce/?srsltid=AfmBOorlaTtkhbsbxphfEcBFivb1uJHPHtro3gvayvFtXtPyIW-r-U3f9>. Accessed on 28/11/2024.

Congress of Brazilian Small Farmers and Agricultural Workers. Summoned by the Union of Small Farmers and Agricultural Workers of Brazil (ULTAB-União dos Lavradores e Trabalhadores Agrícolas do Brasil), with around 1,600 representatives from 20 Brazilian states, the congress also had the participation of other political forces acting in the field such as the Peasant Leagues and the Landless Workers' Movement - Master.⁵⁷ The agenda revolved around the land ownership problem in Brazil, the unoccupied land issue, agrarian reform, land lease, small farmers' rights, security for rural employees, and the organization of field workers. The presence of the Republic President João Goulart, who had taken office two months before, the first-minister Tancredo Neves, and the governor of Minas Gerais, Magalhães Pinto⁵⁸ contributed to the expectancy that the land struggle was starting to become favorable to the rural workers.

In the period between 1961 and 1964 the land struggle in Brazil was strengthened, mainly in the Governador Valadares region, even motivating the PIC proposed by the federal deputy Cunha Bueno. In March 1964, the "Terra Livre" newspaper presented a "Special Issue", covering the events in Governador Valadares.⁵⁹ The supplement had six articles about the agrarian conflicts in the Doce River Valley, thus allowing the understanding of the tense situation reached by the land struggle, whose center was the city of Governador Valadares. The headline on the first page was expressive: "Chicão and over 5 thousand peasants want the large areas of Anglo and Grã-duquesa farms".⁶⁰

⁵⁷ COSTA, Luiz Flávio de Carvalho. *Sindicalismo rural brasileiro em construção*. Rio de Janeiro: Forense universitária: UFRRJ, 1996, p. 71.

⁵⁸ According to Borges, the governor of Minas Gerais, Magalhães Pinto, played on both sides, that is, he sometimes supported the rural workers' organization, other times favored the large landowners. BORGES, Maria Eliza Linhares. *Utopias e contra utopias*. Op. Cit. p. 80.

⁵⁹ On the front page, the headline "Chicão and over 5 thousand peasants want the large areas of Anglo and Grã-Duquesa farms" is followed by another headline: "In the Doce River Valley, a man is the nightmare of the 'cattle colonels'". The shoemaker, Francisco Raimundo da Paixão, leads the landless workers' fight in Governador Valadares and the whole region. Opening eyes for the future, aiming at basic reforms, Chicão states to the special journalist sent by the Terra Livre newspaper: 'Only now could I understand the disaster of the Brazilian agriculture, the way it has been treated'. (Read Chicão's interview on the internal page of this issue Special Supplement)." For all articles published, see: *Terra Livre*, São Paulo, mar. de 1964, a. 14, n. 132, p. 1.

⁶⁰ These are the articles published in the supplement: 1) "The scream for agrarian reform coming from Minas Gerais echoes all over the country. Over 2 thousand rural workers adhere to the union in less than a month - 'Cattle colonels' organize 'gunman militias' for fearing the reforms demanded by the local people. Chicão, leading the movement, will not retreat until the land is given to the rural workers (Grito de reforma agrária dos mineiros repercute em todo território nacional. Mais de 2 mil lavradores sindicalizados em menos de um mês - 'Coronéis de boi' organizam 'milícias de capangas', com medo

However, the tragic end of this story is well-known. With the coup-d'état of 31st March 1964, the repression impacted violently the peasants' organizations and aborted the agrarian reform project that should start in Governador Valadares, with the settlement of landless rural workers in the federal government property located close to that city, called the Ministry Farm. Rural social movements were repressed all over the country. In the Doce River Valley, the coup consolidated the transfer of the small farm ownership to the large cattle breeding farms as well as the power of large steel, wood and mining companies, thus setting the predominance of the capitalist logic.

However, this was not enough to stop the settlers fight, as reported in the "Jornal do Brasil" newspaper issue of 6th June 1970: "Minas has a large region in conflict because the settlers' land is threatened". That report described the settlers' fight against the illegal invasion of their land: "settlers in the government land in the Urupuca Valley — Municipality of São José da Safira — decided to use guns to defend the land they have been occupying for several years".⁶¹ Currently, the term Urupuca⁶² is still associated with agrarian conflicts, since former peasants occupied the Formosa-Urupuca farm, in 1995, giving birth to the agrarian reform settlement.⁶³

With the redemocratization of the country in the 1980s, rural workers' unions were gradually reorganized alongside the land reform social movement such as the national movement led by the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), which started to be articulated in the Doce River Valley. Then, in the

das reformas que o povo exige. Chicão, à frente do movimento, não recuará até a entrega das terras aos camponeses.") 2) "Valadares: Workers' Unions support their peasant brothers and request the Army against armed gangs ("Valadares: Sindicatos Operários apoiam irmãos camponeses e pedem Exército contra grupos armados"). 3) "Workers' Solidarity to Peasants" ("Solidariedade Operária aos Camponeses"). 4) "Governador Valadares: Ministry Farm for the Peasants" ("Governador Valadares: Fazenda do Ministério para os Camponeses"). 5) "Expropriation of Anglo and the abandoned land of Grã-duquesa de Luxemburgo farms ("Desapropriação da Anglo e das terras abandonadas da Grã-duquesa de Luxemburgo."); and 6) "Chicão and over 5 thousand peasants want the large areas of Anglo and Grã-duquesa farms" ("Chicão e mais 5 mil camponeses querem os latifúndios da Anglo e da Grã-duquesa").

See: Idem, pp 9, 10 and 11.

⁶¹ **Jornal do Brasil**. Rio de Janeiro, ano 80, n. 51, 6 de junho de 1970, p. 12. Retrieved from http://memoria.bn.br/pdf/030015/per030015_1970_00051.pdf. Accessed on: 14 Aug 2019.

⁶² The Urupuca Valley corresponds to the municipalities of Água Boa, São José da Safira, Malacacheta, Itambacuri, Marilac, and Franciscópolis, located in the north of Doce River.

⁶³ Ordinance INCRA/SR-06/Nº22, of 2nd July 1997, creates the Settlement Project called Formosa Urupuca, located in the municipality of São José da Safira/MG, published in the Federal Official Gazette - DOU nº 125 of 03/07/1997. Diário da União, Published on: 12/07/2018, ed. 133, seção 1, p. 4.

early 1990s, several land occupations occurred. In 2010, in the Doce River Valley, there were 23 agrarian reform settlements.⁶⁴

Final Considerations

The Brazilian territory occupation research developed in the 1940s and 1950s, under the influence of the French geographers Pierre Monbeig (1908 -1987) and Pierre Deffontaines (1894-1979), motivated the German Leo H. Waibel (1888-1951), whose work sought to understand the border zones in Brazil by focusing on the study of the so-called pioneer fronts.⁶⁵ Waibel, in his 1955 study, “The Pioneer Zones of Brazil”, inaugurated an investigation line about borders, different from the studies that predominated at that time, focusing on the economic cycles and the population of the country such as the works developed by Caio Prado Júnior⁶⁶, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda⁶⁷ and Celso Furtado⁶⁸. Waibel sought to investigate the Brazilian territory occupation process (border expansion), differentiating it from the USA “frontier”, characterized by the non-stop advancement of peasants towards the Western region. In Brazil, the population started in the Atlantic Forest region, which became the pioneer zones in the 1940s and 1950s, attracted by the development of the capitalist market centered in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The occupation process in the Doce River Valley, the conflicts that marked the Urupuca Valley and the formation of the Contestado Zone between Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo, confirmed Waibel’s thesis regarding the pioneer zones in Brazil between 1945-1960, by showing that they “were not a primary phenomenon of new land conquer”, but rather the occupation and use of land that was covered in wood and located close to populated zones. The implementation of the road infrastructure was a decisive factor in the

⁶⁴ To know more about the agrarian reform fight in the Doce River Valley, see: VILARINO, Maria Terezinha Bretas; GENOVEZ, Patrícia Falco. *Caminhos da luta pela terra no Vale do Rio Doce: conflitos e estratégias*. Governador Valadares. Ed. Unival, 2019. Retrieved from: <https://projetosbic.wixsite.com/lutapelaterra/livros>. Accessed on 23 Nov 2024.

⁶⁵ WAIBEL, Leo H. Op. Cit.

⁶⁶ PRADO JÚNIOR, Caio. *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo: colônia*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, Publifolha, 2000.

⁶⁷ HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de. *Caminhos e fronteiras*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Quiron, Companhia das Letras, 1994.

⁶⁸ FURTADO, Celso. *Formação econômica do Brasil*. 27. ed. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, Publifolha, 2000.

formation of the pioneer zones in such “insulated” areas, which due to their condition “could not be expanded indefinitely”.

The peasants who penetrated those zones came from the east, south, north and “in part from the west, thus making a penetration from the rear”. This is the case of the Doce River Valley border, whose main penetration front came from the west, the central region of Minas Gerais. As observed by Waibel, such movement coming from several directions very “often led to conflicts” between states, as in the case of the Contestado region between Minas Gerais and Espírito Santo.⁶⁹

For Sawyer, understanding the agricultural frontier requires the consideration of its relationship with emptying, stagnation, and rural exodus, since the constitution and end of the agricultural frontier “is owed to the market, capitalist character or certain transition into capitalism”. Sawyer showed that the Brazilian territory was occupied in a disordered way and “... different markets developed at unequal pace. They do not coincide in space and their flow follows different directions”.⁷⁰ These thoughts were relevant to contextualize the occupation process and the land conflicts in the Doce River Valley, mainly in the Urupuca region, between 1945 and 1961.

The process occurred in the Doce River Valley, and mostly in the Urupuca Valley, also confirmed the thesis presented by José de Souza Martins⁷¹, since there was a structural change in the territory historical formation. This is not about the spontaneous movement of populations seeking unoccupied lands, but rather the entrance of a pioneer front, characterized by the imposition of a new logic marked by the “market” and “contractual social relationships”.

The changes provoked by the pioneer front were accompanied by growing tensions and open and violent agrarian conflicts, mainly due to the expropriation of peasants’ land (land used and owned) by illegal invasions, that is, land market speculators, farmers, and capitalist companies, mainly the large steel mills, lumber and mining businesses.

At the local level, a situation of social inequality was created, experienced in a systemic way by those who persisted and managed to remain on their land. As prophesized in 1957, by the Agriculture Secretary Álvaro Marcílio: “today, a paradise of the varied industry, therefore, wealth and prosperity, even if

⁶⁹ WAIBEL, Leo H. Op. Cit., p. 26.

⁷⁰ SAWYER, Donald R. Op. Cit., respectively p. 2-3 and 11.

⁷¹ MARTINS, José de Souza. *Fronteira: A degradação do Outro nos confins humanos*. 2 ed., 3ª reimpressão. São Paulo: Contexto, 2016.

temporary, due to the uncertain future of our environmental conditions, as a result of the criminal and disorganized destruction of its forests”.⁷²

Finally, we can state that the agrarian conflicts in the Doce River Valley synthesize the agrarian issue in Brazil, where the peasants must defend their property against the illegal occupation by large landowners, whose personification could be observed in Horário Luz, and against entrepreneurial interests, whose greatest examples are two large steel mills, namely, Acesita and Belgo-Mineira. These conflicts have produced a territory marked by the culture of violence, resulting in the fear and silence of those who suffered this process.

References:

ANDRADE, Rômulo de Paula. “Conquistar a terra, dominar a água, sujeitar a floresta”: Getúlio Vargas e a revista “Cultura Política” redescobrem a Amazônia (1940-1941). *Bol. Mus. Para. Emílio Goeldi. Cienc. Hum.*, Belém, maio-ago. 2010, v. 5, n. 2, p. 453-468. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/bgoeldi/a/CSBRwGrXhdL6DKjG5bGQWwG/abstract/?lang=pt>. Acessado 26/11/2024.

ANUNCIAÇÃO, Flávio Luciano da. Entre Trâmites Políticos e Conflitos Sociais: a memória do contestado mineiro-capixaba. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). UFJF, Juiz de Fora, 2019. Disponível em <https://repositorio.ufjf.br/jspui/handle/ufjf/12136>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

BORGES, Maria Eliza L. Representações do universo rural e luta pela reforma agrária no Leste de Minas Gerais. *Rev. Brasileira de História*, São Paulo, 2004, v. 24, n. 47, p.303-326. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/rbh/a/J6mSyPGtY5GNKtTKWrV7Hpp/abstract/?lang=pt>. Acessado em 27/11/2024.

BORGES, Maria Eliza Linhares. Utopias e contra utopias: movimentos sociais rurais em Minas Gerais (1950 - 1964). Dissertação (Mestrado em Sociologia), Faculdade de Filosofia Ciências e Letras, UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 1988.

BRITO, Fausto. A ocupação do território e a devastação da Mata Atlântica. In.: PAULA, João Antônio de. (Coord.) *Biodiversidade, população e economia: uma região de Mata Atlântica*. Belo Horizonte, UFMG/Cedeplar; ECMXC; PADCT/CIAMB, 1997, pp. 48-90. Disponível em https://www.cedeplar.ufmg.br/pesquisas/padctII/livro/CAP_2.pdf. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

⁷² MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. Op. Cit., p. 23.

CASTALDI, Carlo. A aparição do demônio no Catulé. *Tempo Social*, revista de sociologia da USP, São Paulo, jun. de 2008, v. 20, n. 1, pp. 305-357. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/ts/a/bGy4xnZkfRnRyj4YFL4nX7v/?format=pdf&lang=pt>. Acessado em 27/11/2024,

COSTA, Luiz Flavio de Carvalho. PCB e a questão do sindicalismo rural 1954-1964. Tese (Doutorado em História), USP, São Paulo, 1991; COSTA, Luiz Flávio Carvalho. A construção da rede sindical rural no Brasil pré-1964. *Estudos Sociedade e Agricultura*, Rio de Janeiro, nov. de 2013. v. 2, n. 1, pp. 67-88.

COSTA, Luiz Flávio de Carvalho. *Sindicalismo rural brasileiro em construção*. Rio de Janeiro: Forense universitária: UFRRJ, 1996, p. 71.

EGLER, Walter Alberto. Zona pioneira ao norte do rio Doce, *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*, Rio de Janeiro, IBGE, 1951, v. XVIII, p. 223-264. Disponível em https://biblioteca.ibge.gov.br/visualizacao/periodicos/115/rbg_1951_v13_n2.pdf. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

ESPINDOLA, H.S. Legitimação e mercantilização de terras em Minas Gerais. In: XXV Simpósio Nacional de História. Anais Eletrônicos. Fortaleza: ANPUH, 2009, p. 7. Disponível em https://anpuh.org.br/uploads/anais-simposios/pdf/2019-01/1548772189_ce8345a4dc1645470bc64d0b6ad4f6c2.pdf. Acessado em 28/11/2024.

FURTADO, Celso. *Formação econômica do Brasil*. 27. ed. São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, PubliFolha, 2000.

GUERRA, Cláudio. *Meio ambiente e trabalho no mundo do eucalipto*. Belo Horizonte: Associação Agência Terra, 1995.

HOLANDA, Sérgio Buarque de. *Caminhos e fronteiras*. 3. ed. São Paulo: Quiron, Companhia das Letras, 1994.

LENHARO, Alcir. *Colonização e Trabalho no Brasil: Amazônia, Nordeste e Centro Oeste*. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 1985.

LIMA, J. M.; SANTOS, C. A. Análise da evolução temporal da degradação ambiental da Lagoa Dourada inserida no complexo lacustre do Rio Suaçuí Grande e Urupuca, afluentes do Rio Doce-MG. Anais XIV Simpósio Brasileiro de Sensoriamento Remoto, Natal, Brasil, 25-30 abril 2009, INPE, p. 1417-1424. Disponível em <http://marte.sid.inpe.br/col/dpi.inpe.br/sbsr@80/2008/11.17.13.06.22/doc/1417-1424.pdf>. Acessado em 27/11/2024.

MARCÍLIO, Álvaro. O problema das terras devolutas e suas matas no Estado de Minas Gerais. Belo Horizonte: Estabelecimentos Gráficos Santa Maria, 1961.

MARINHO Jr., L.D.; ESPINDOLA, H.S.; NODARI, E.S. A fronteira do carvão: siderurgia e floresta em Minas Gerais (Brasil) no século XX. *Revista Ambiente e Sociedade*, São Paulo, 2024, v. 27. p. 1-22. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/asoc/a/r4rHK6KLqbbpvFj4c6wCdvf/abstract/?lang=pt>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

MARTINS, José de Souza. *Fronteira: A degradação do Outro nos confins humanos*. 2 ed., 3ª reimpressão. São Paulo: Contexto, 2016.

MARTINS, José de Souza. O tempo da fronteira. Retorno à controvérsia sobre o tempo histórico da frente de expansão e da frente pioneira. *Tempo Social; Rev. Sociol. USP*, S. Paulo, maio de 1996, v. 8, n. 1: pp. 25-70, p. 29. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/ts/a/87HYbTy3WqHHT49HTWJNjb/?format=pdf>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

PALAZZOLO, Frei Jacinto de. Nas selvas dos vales do Mucuri e do rio Doce. São Paulo, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1973. Disponível em <https://bdor.sibi.ufrj.br/bitstream/doc/48/1/277%20PDF%20-%20OCR%20-%20RED.pdf>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

PEREIRA, Carlos Olavo da C. *Nas terras do Rio Sem dono*. Rio de Janeiro: Codecri, 1988, p. 85-86.

PINTO, Cesar. Um ano de combate às doenças parasitárias que atacam os rodoviários da estrada Rio-Bahia, 1942 a 1943. *Memória do Instituto Oswaldo Cruz*. Rio de Janeiro, v. 40, n. 3, jun. 1944. Disponível em <https://www.scielo.br/j/mioc/a/wFQYqRRbpQL3wkHCgNkKsSx/?format=pdf&lang=pt>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

PRADO JÚNIOR, Caio. *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo: colônia*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, Publifolha, 2000.

SANTOS, Adauto Alves dos. A Rapinagem de Terras no Vale do Rio. Homens Poderosos e Empresas Riquíssimas Mandam Saquear, Incendiar, Roubar e Matar. *Imprensa Popular*, Rio de Janeiro, 1957, a. 10, n. 2092, p. 3. Disponível em https://hemeroteca-pdf.bn.gov.br/108081/per108081_1957_02092.pdf. Acessado em 26.11.2024.

SAWYER, Donald R. Ocupação e Desocupação da Fronteira agrícola no Brasil: Ensaio de interpretação estrutural e espacial. In: Seminário Regional Expansão da Fronteira Agrícola e Meio Ambiente. 1981. Belo Horizonte: CEPAL/PNUMA/ UFMG, 1981. p. 1-28.

SIMAN, L.C. A história na memória: uma contribuição para o ensino de história das cidades. Dissertação (Mestrado em História), Faculdade de Filosofia e

Ciências Humanas da UFMG, 1988. Disponível em <https://repositorio.ufmg.br/bitstream/1843/FAEC-87HHJV/1/1000000104.pdf>. Acessado em 27/11/2024.

STRAUCH, Ney (Org.). *A Bacia do Rio Doce: Estudo Geográfico*. Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1955; SILVA, Edmundo de Macedo Soares. *O ferro na História e na Economia do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro, s/ed, 1972.

STRAUCH, Ney. *Zona metalúrgica de Minas Gerais e Vale do Rio Doce*. Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Nacional de Geografia, 1958.

VILARINO, M.T.B. *Da lata d'água ao SESP: tensões e constrangimentos de um processo civilizador no Sertão do Rio Doce (1942-1960)*. Tese (Doutorado em História), Faculdade de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas da UFMG, Belo Horizonte, 2015. Disponível em <https://historia.fafich.ufmg.br/defesas/213D.PDF>. Acessado em 27/11/2024.

WAIBEL, Leo H. As zonas pioneiras do Brasil. *Revista Brasileira de Geografia*. out./dez. de 1955, ano XVII, n. 4, pp. 389-422. Disponível em <https://pt.scribd.com/document/476532703/As-Zonas-Pioneiras-No-Brasil-Leo-Waibel>. Acessado em 26/11/2024.

Article received for publication on 28/11/2024 and approved on 26/03/2025.