

EXPERIENCES OF THE SERINGUEIRO IN THE AMAZON PRESS: AN OVERVIEW OF REPRESENTATIONS (1890-1920)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the multiple representations produced by the Amazonian press about the rubber plantation and the rubber tapper, catching a plurality of dimensions of this presence and experience in the Amazonian context. Thus, the research follows both the debate around the migratory process, seeking to cast a scrutiny look at its dimensions and motivations, in addition to prioritizing the images produced by the press about the dilemmas derived from the adaptation of the northeast both in the face of a hostile environment, as well as in the face of a crippling work process and its practices of resistance.

Keywords: Daily; rubber tapper; Press; Representation.

INTRODUCTION

Historical research in the interior of the Amazon has enabled the construction of numerous works evidencing the protagonism of important historical subjects, bringing to the fore new perspectives and debates on decisive historical issues for the understanding of what we call the formation and development of the Amazon region. This analysis can recover, in addition to the traditional historiographical discourses, the discussion on important issues of what is usually ready to be forgotten, or perhaps already forgotten.

In this article we propose to analyze the northeastern migration process to the Amazon region during the period when the gum activity gave the economic tone to the

Amazon region. In this clipping of time and space, figure the rubber tapper¹ as the main social subject of the region at that moment, on which we seek a different look, as well as on the category of workers that it integrates, establishing an analysis of its possible representations in the Amazonian press, at the end of the century XIX and beginning of the century XX.

In the middle of the century XIX the use of rubber was improved, which made it possible to expand its use as a raw material in the production of belts, hoses, shoes, tires, among others. The rubber production of this period represented a large part of Brazilian exports,² in addition to representing an important factor for the economic and demographic growth of the Amazon region. Although we are clear about the fact of the immense demographic propulsion brought about by the activity linked to rubber, we cannot make the mistake of thinking that rubber acted alone in this economic context, as it is perceptible through the light brought by the new local historiography.³ The alert for the diversity of forms of production experienced in the Amazon region in this period, where rubber appears as a phenomenon in a certain conjuncture, being difficult to take it as defining the structure.

This way, we seek to present a new approach, or version of the facts, bringing to light a story that is not told, which according to Edward P. Thompson,⁴ often “dead ends, lost causes and losers themselves are forgotten”.⁵ In the conceptualization of Roger

1 In her article entitled “Social movements of rubber tappers and Resex Chico Mendes”, Gisele Souza defines the rubber tapper as the individual who organizes and executes the activity of extracting latex from the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*) and transforming it into natural rubber.

2 OLIVEIRA, José Aldemir de. *Manaus de 1920-1967: A cidade doce e dura em excesso*. Manaus: Valer, 2003. p.37.

3 SAMPAIO, Patrícia Maria Melo. *Os Fios de Ariadne: tipologia de fortunas e hierarquia sociais em Manaus: 1849-1880*. Niterói, 1993. Dissertação de Mestrado, 1994. UFF: Niterói, 1994. (As an example of this historiography)

4 Edward P. Thompson was an English Marxist historian, representative of the new left who sought in his historiographical works to give voice to forgotten men and women in the analyzes of Marxist historians in tune with structuralist theories. To this end, he sought to perceive, through the class struggle, the formation of historical experiences of the English working class in the 18th century.

5 THOMPSON, E. P. *A formação da Classe Operária Inglesa*. Vol.1 São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 6ª ed. 2011. p.14.

Chartier,⁶ representations generate identity for the individual and for the group, and are carriers of the symbolic, which is socially and historically constructed,⁷ and what Sandra Pesavento calls “the presentification of an absent past”.⁸ Since representation is related to the formulation of past experiences that are understandable and plausible to the present, it is possible to rescue representations of what was already represented in the past, namely, the representations of the rubber tapper.

THE AMAZON PRESS AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY XIX

In her doctoral thesis, Maria Luíza Pinheiro presents us with a very rich press at the turn of the century XIX for the century XX, with real archives of everyday life, which thus serve to put an end to what she calls “documentary silence” on popular segments, especially on urban and underprivileged workers in the city and countryside. These journalistic sources can become important counterpoints to the official discourse of the facts that is based on the current mechanisms of control and domination, as we can visualize a much more complex and problematic society than that projected by the memoir chronicle or by a historiography conniving with the processes and interests of dominant groups.⁹

We can face sources attentive to the power of discourse imbued in them and loaded with interests on the part of those who write them, so Maria Luíza Pinheiro also states that

“journalistic discourse enables the perception of tensions and conflicts that permeate society itself”,¹⁰ it is through which it was possible to perceive the multiple dimensions of social living. Thus, the daily press represented a counterpoint of plurality of discourses, which breaks this so-called monolithic view of the press.

It is in this everyday press at the turn of the century XIX for the XX, that Maria Luíza Pinheiro in her work “A cidade sobre os ombros” informs us of the presence of workers (coach drivers, catraieiros, stevedores, cart drivers, fishmongers, conductors, etc.) from the universe of work.¹¹ Among these workers, we also infer the presence of the rubber tapper, since he represented the main labor force in the extraction of rubber latex from rubber plantations in the Amazon.

Both the mention of workers and the varied perspectives of the news in the city’s newspapers allow us to glimpse their experiences under these perspectives. From the information found in the press, in the daily news of the Amazon, we can perceive many representations of the rubber tapper, as matrices that generate social practices and behaviors, and that provide cohesion and explanation for reality.

In this universe of perspectives of press discourses, we find predominant diaries that seem to have been spokespersons for a local elite that sought to present a cosmopolitan, beautiful and rich Manaus.¹² And we also

6 Roger Chartier is a French historian linked to the current historiography of the Annales School. One of Roger Chartier’s decisive contributions to Cultural History is related to the elaboration of the complementary notions of “practices” and “representations”.

7 CHARTIER, Roger. *O mundo como representação. Estudos avançados* 11(5), 1991. p.177.

8 PESAVENTO, Sandra Jatay. *História e história cultural*. São Paulo: Autêntica, 2008. p.40.

9 PINHEIRO, Maria Luíza Ugarte. *Folhas do Norte: letramento e periodismo no Amazonas, 1880-1920*. São Paulo, 2001. Doutorado em História, 2001. PUC-SP, 2001. p. 7.

10 PINHEIRO, 2001, p. 7.

11 PINHEIRO, Maria Luíza Ugarte. *A Cidade sobre os ombros: trabalho e conflito no porto de Manaus (1889-1925)*. Manaus: EDUA, 1999. p. 4.

12 As an example, one can cite: “O Mariauaense” de José Antonio Nogueira Campos; “Cidade Cabocla” de Genesino Braga; “Porta do El Dorado” by Clovis Barbosa; “Cidade Risonha” de Raul de Azevedo. *Jornal do Comercio de Vicente Reis* (fundado por J. Rocha dos Santos).

identified a press, often called the workers' press, which in its periodicals could offer the opposite view of a scenario marked by tensions, demonstrations and demands.¹³

The Amazonian press at the end of the century XIX and beginning of the century XX, as we have already said, it constitutes a dense and rich universe of sources, which are transformed into representations of the daily life of the city, the countryside, work, and the rubber tapper as an active social subject of that period. The collection of "Jornal do Commercio" can be highlighted here, traditionally linked to dominant groups, but which we find fragments of popular interest such as the sessions *Police Stuff and People's Complaints*, and which becomes the main journal of the period, uninterruptedly covering the periods, so to speak, of expansion and crisis of the rubber economy. The newspaper "The Mariauense" of Colonel José Antonio Nogueira Campos, owner of rubber plantations in Barcelos/Am; The "Official Diary", which was a newspaper belonging to the federated state of Amazonas, where the presence of the rubber tapper is always in the column of *public security*; The newspaper "Quo Vadis"? represents a periodical that sought to give voice to common people, presented itself as an organ of popular interests. The *Correio do Purus*, which was an organ belonging to M. Freire & Ca. an association that more closely followed the movements of work and rubber plantations in the interior of the Amazon. And the newspaper "The capital" by Dr. Epaminondas de Albuquerque, an intellectual from Manaus, who in the interior brought news associated with tragedies involving the rubber tapper in his relationship with other rubber tappers and other agents.

All these diaries are very rich sources where we are finding different representations

of the rubber tapper and constitute a valuable framework for the development of our research in the master's degree.

EXPERIENCES AND OVERVIEW OF THE REPRESENTATIONS OF THE RUBBER TABLETS IN THE PRESS

As a social subject, the rubber tapper can be interpreted under Edward Thompson's concept of "experience", in which he seeks to recover the active role of the social subject by establishing his own history, which will not cease to be responsible for his condition from his own actions., which can also be inserted in the so-called recovery of the dimensions of "making oneself".¹⁶

Some authors who studied the Amazon region reflect on the tensions and movements of the rubber tapper. In her work "A Cidade, o Teatro, e o País das seringueiras", Ana Maria Daou highlights the many life trajectories of these individuals who migrated to the Amazon. They were incorporated into a new lifestyle and new social insertion activities. In general, they were professionals, students, merchants involved in business along the rivers and in the cities of the interior, and especially men related to the recruitment of workers for the rubber plantations, as well as a flow of northeasterners to a lesser extent incorporated into the elite. from Manaus. The choice of Manaus was valued for its "symbolic".¹⁴

In his work "História Econômica da Amazônia", Roberto Santos talks about the lack of labor shortages in the region, of solutions put into action to solve the problem, and states that "the external support arm of extractive and agricultural activities, was the northeast par excellence". The way in which this migratory flow was guided must be studied

13 As an example, one can cite: Quo Vadis? Commercio do Amazonas; Correio do Norte; Lucta Social, among others

14 DAOU, Ana Maria Lima. *A Cidade, o Teatro e o País das Seringueiras: práticas e representações da sociedade amazonense na virada do século XIX*. Tese de Doutorado, 1998. UFRJ: Rio de Janeiro, 1998. p.109-111.

and analyzed with caution and consideration. But, it is from this universe of populations that came to the Amazon that are found the men who would later become rubber workers, that Arthur Reis classifies them as the “the nervous man and the rubber tapper”.¹⁸

From here, we want to visualize in the press, a whole, in nuances of news, where we can find images and representations of the rubber tapper or what refers to him in various aspects of his experience, whether in the rubber plantation or in the atmosphere of the city. The newspaper “A Construção”, an organ of the conservative party, brings the news printed in the “Diário do Gram-Pará” (Gram-Pará Diary), section, informing both the situation that Ceará was in during the great drought of 1877, and the attitude that these populations took:

Every day the news that reaches us are more desolating [...] the secca spreads its disastrous effects throughout the interior of the beautiful province of Ceará, a vast arid desert without a drop of water to cool the sun cracked by violence from the heat, without a green branch to shelter the populations scorched in the feverish delirium of misery, the morbid and desperate atony of hunger [...] without hope [...] they leave home and emigrate in delusion [...] this migration speaks to us with the eloquence of the pain of suffering that uprooted her from the land of her cradle.¹⁵

The work of the rubber tapper within the Amazonian rubber plantations is directly related to the climate of the region. We noticed different news about the rubber tapper’s experience, from the flood period of the rivers where the commercialization of the rubber product takes place, and in the ebb period of the rivers in the extraction of latex.

The newspaper “O Correio do Purus”

brings news about the Amazon winter in 1905, in which the heavy rains of that year ended up influencing more than due, the production of rubber, which invariably will be the rubber tapper who will feel the first impact:

It is very possible that repeated rains from October onwards will greatly influence the production of rubber, in the Purus River and its tributaries, and if they fall with equal violence in other rivers, the decrease in this type of export will be sensibly felt. In the Purus River, there were days, in the last few weeks, when the rubber tapper was forced to completely suspend his work.¹⁶

In his article, “O Trabalhador Amazônico no Discurso do Empregador”, Alexandre Avelino, through the source of a newspaper in the Manaus press, presents the tension between employers and rubber tappers in the rubber plantation environment. In the newspaper “O Mariauense”, by owner Coronel Antonio Nogueira de Campos, a wealthy owner of rubber plantations in Barcelos/Am, the rubber tapper is represented in the employer’s discourse:

If the rubber tappers were employed in the planting of cereals, during the seven months that they are not destined to work with rubber, they would have peace and fortune. They do the opposite, waste their time, spend it on doomed diversions, and when rubber production arrives, they, no matter how hard they work, cannot pay for what they spent in the long and heavy months that were not enlightened by work... if from the boss, claiming that he sells everything at the highest price and that’s why they’re in arrears, when the delay comes from long loitering and from society that promotes all rottenness.¹⁷

We performed from this speech, that in general, the rubber tappers were always seen by the boss as vagrant and promiscuous

15 *A Constituição*. Belém do Pará, June 1, 1877.

16 *O Correio do Purus*. Labrea, December 08, 1905.

17 *O Mariauense*. Manaus, April 29, 1897. Apud AVELINO, Alexandre Nogueira. *O Trabalhador Amazonense no Discurso Patronal*. In: *Fronteiras do Tempo: Revista de Estudos Amazônicos*, nº3, jan-dec 2012. p.31.

individuals always inclined to the vices of life, and thus were dangerous to society, she the holder of moral values, in addition, we can observe, what the employers say, when they say that if the rubber tappers were orderly and committed to work in the winter, rainy months, “they would have peace and fortune”, but we know that even if this happened it was not a general rule, but an exception. , only a distinct minority attained wealth and prosperity, and it was not necessarily because they had “planted cereals” in the rainy season, but because of a variety of factors. The vast majority of rubber tappers never got rich.

It is interesting to highlight here a fragment of what we can call a utopian poetry, found in an extensive chronicle in the newspaper “O Correio do Purus” about the oppression of the rubber tappers on the rubber tappers in the region, already in the great heyday of rubber:

Indoctrinating himself, one could say to the owner of rubber plantations: the nature of the Amazonian soil, its marginal culture of the rivers, standing out far from the centers of civilization, gave you a power, a faithful copy of that medieval other in that the nobleman had, at his discretion, the life of the serfs: – you are better prepared for existence, with the ease with which you move every day, you learn what society is, humanity in short, why not do you lift your worker – the rubber tapper – from his physical and moral degradation – who is the cornerstone of this edifice of your fortune? Why exploit it, you, with the ruthlessness of a loan shark, deceiver of faith and defrauder of the law?²⁰

In the same chronicle we have another fragment, in which we realize that the diary, or whoever writes it, also blames the rubber tapper in his inertia, for accepting with resignation the state in which he finds himself, without attitude and mobilization of struggle, which could bring them greater respect,

although imagining this in general may also seem utopian, and much more complex:

To the worker, it would also be said: Lift yourself up through economy, ennoble through work and become strong through education; the hours that you waste, uselessly, in the long summer afternoons, either in the inertia that depletes, or in the entertainments where the addiction of alcohol is born, you must apply to the study of your native language, to the understanding of the civic duties so that, improving, you can if not level with your master, at least acquire his respect and esteem.¹⁸

When we read in the source “Stand up for the economy”, it is impossible not to remember the riots and uprisings that Edward Thompson describes in “The moral economy of the English multitude in the 18th century”,¹⁹ for we clearly see how significant and transformative it is when a class of workers achieves class consciousness, not just lived, but perceived, to the point where they together change the situation in which they find themselves.

In the “Official Diary”, it is reported what the agents of the rubber plantations still had to face many times, the contact with cruel and murderous Indians. In the news there is a petition made by the owners of rubber plantations on the Madeira River, requesting “guarantee of life and property” to Dr. Fileto Pires Ferreira, Governor of the State of Amazonas, since the inhabitants of these rubber plantations had been fighting for over thirty years against a tribe of Parintintins:

[...] these Indians have taken the audacity to the point of attacking the barracks on the banks of the Madeira [...] considering that even last year they succumbed closed on the banks of the Madeira, five unfortunates from this rubber [...] the residents of the said area are abandoning their rubber plantations, due to the periodic aggressions

18 Ibidem.

19 THOMPSON, E. P. *Costumes em Comum*. São Paulo: Companhia da Letras, 1998. p.152.

of the terrible Indians, who this year have already killed an unfortunate woman in the “Tres Casas”, and a rubber tapper in São Pedro. Considering that it is not only private fortune that suffers from this abandonment of rubber plantations, but the State that so worthily v. exc^a administrates [...] considering that the Parintintins fear the Mundurucú tribe, which only with their presence will scare them away [...] they see full of hope and just reason to ask v. except that a colony of Munducurús is established [...] only in the first six months [...] one year after the colony is established, the increase in the rubber harvest will be such that the State will be pocketed [...] Madeira River, November 19, 1896.²⁰

This extensive news piece, which we have fragmented here, shows us clearly what the population of the Amazonian rubber plantations faced with the indigenous populations. Although the undersigned clearly outlines the interests of the owners of the rubber plantations, it is possible to perceive between the lines, so to speak, that possibly the rubber tappers faced the conflict with the Indians to the point of being killed, or of abandoning the rubber plantations. At the end of the undersigned, we find the response of Governor Fileto Pires Ferreira, who seems to ignore, although not explicitly, the suggestion made of the relocation of the Mundurucus Indians (the Parintintins feared the Mundurucus, as they were already civilized) to a kind of colony in the period of extraction and work of rubber, thus guaranteeing the “fortune” of the rubber plantations and the State in compensating the

²⁰ *Official Diary*. Manaus, June 24, 1897.

²¹ *Ibidem*

²² PINHEIRO, Luís Balkar Sá Peixoto. *Na contramão da história: mundos do trabalho na cidade da borracha (Manaus, 1920-1945)*. In: Revista Canoa do Tempo, v.1, n.1, Jan/Dec.2007. p.15. In this article, the historian Luís Balkar lists among some historians, Mário Ypiranga and Arthur Reis, who narrate a positivist, conservative and elitist regional history, effective and unchallenged, even without the endorsement of new academic interpretations of History. With a discourse of order, this Amazonian historiographical culture ignores popular demands and experiences, if not, despises them and rejects them as irascible, impertinent and misguided..

²³ VAINFAS, Ronaldo. *História das mentalidades e história cultural*. In: VAINFAS, Ronaldo & CARDOSO, Ciro Flamarion (org). *Domínios da história*. SP: Campus, 2011, p.143-195.

capital invested in solving the problem. Let's see what the governor responds after more than six months of the undersigned:

The government does not refuse to support the idea of the signatories and encourages itself to sponsor any and all attempts aimed at safeguarding the interests of the inhabitants of the upper Madeira. Thus, the signatories that come together to carry out what it proposes and the government will cooperate with them as is fair. Present a workable and well-designed plan and the government, after studying it properly, will tell you for sure what favors it can bestow on the petitioners. Government Palace, June 21, 1897 – Fileto Pires Ferreira.²¹

We found several reports about the rubber tapper's experience, always marked by profound experiences in a context full of social contradictions which are ignored and disregarded by some historians of the so-called “historiographical culture” of the Amazon.²² But they are objects of study and analysis, as they come to us as stories full of representations which reveal the process of formation of the identity of common people, here the rubber tapper is highlighted, as in Marc Bloch's concept that all human experience is bearer of a story.²³

The Journal of Commercio brings together many of these stories, among them we highlight here a story entitled “Tragic Revenge”, presenting us with certain details the intrigues and disagreements between two rubber tappers, companions of trade, but not of friendship:

Another bloody scene we have to record

today, unfolded in one of the dens of the rubber plantation, which is on the banks of the Acre River. There lived the rubber tappers José da Silva Ramos and Anísio Gomes Brandão, both engaged in the rubber extraction service, but separated by the uncontained hatred of old personal feuds, similar to those that always arise between men educated in the school of ignorance. Ramos, who had always shown himself to be a bad-tempered individual, had devised a plan to harm his co-worker. He had penetrated the savvy terrain of ignominious lies and, without the slightest decorum, had told his employer that Anísio was forging rubber in order to unravel the rubber plantation's credit. The boss, naturally, was warned by Anísio, but a few days later, scrupulously examining his rubber, he found that José Ramos' complaint was unfounded. Aware of the deception and even more disgusted with an infamous act with which his enemy had sought to desecrate the honor of his home and the pride of his family, Anísio decided, using a single suggestion: the elimination of José Ramos' life, before he went on to other cases of more serious affront to his family. And so, on the morning of the twenty-first of last September, when Ramos was looking for a road on his way to work, Anísio, who was hiding in a tree, shot him in the skull with a rifle, which killed him instantly. After the fact, the criminal escaped leaving the family in the rubber plantation, in ignorance of his whereabouts. The victim was from Pernambuco and was thirty-nine years old.²⁴

That same day the newspaper "The capital", also reported the same episode, but with one or another detail, such as the fact that Ramos still looked for Anísio to apologize saying that he "had given the boss all the explanations that had been required of him".²⁵ Apparently, in the description above, in the term "infamous act", Anísio has still, from the apology, tried to approach Ramos' family, or even Ramos's wife, with the still impertinent, lewd and lascivious

²⁴ *Jornal do Commercio*. Manáos, October 13, 1917.

²⁵ *A Capital*. Manáos, October 13, 1917.

²⁶ The phrase is attributed to Carlos Drummond de Andrade as an aphorism, meaning a concise sentence, which usually contains a moral precept.

desire of " desecrate the honor of your home and the pride of your family. The solution found by Ramos was "a single suggestion" to kill Anísio, which was, as it were, natural, considering the context in which they lived. The story of Ramos and Anísio is symbolic in this sense, as countless crimes of this nature took place within the Amazonian rubber plantations. Even so, this episode still intrigues us, namely, that Ramos had escaped from the rubber plantation, abandoning his family, as if she were no longer worthy of such an honor.

The newspaper "Capital" brings within it many news associated with tragedies involving the rubber tapper in his relationship with other rubber tappers and other agents in the rubber plantation environment. Here we will highlight two sources that give color to the relationship that the rubber tapper has with the woman, the latter considered as a scarce wealth in the rubber plantation environment and, therefore, the pivot of many sentimental disputes between the rubber tappers themselves.

We will still see in the press a last story of the experience of the rubber plantations with regard to the relationship between man and nature, because the northeastern rubber tapper who adapts and assimilates this new geographical environment ends up having to deal with situations that are at least unusual and hilarious. , although they can also be tragic, as the poet said: "It would be comical if it were not tragic".²⁶ The newspaper "The Capital" informs us about a strong wind in the rubber plantation, which ended up placing a tapir as the main protagonist of a story, entitled "In Rio Machado – Fire of a tent and death of a man":

Rubber tapper Luiz Moreira da Silva, residing in the "Tabajara" section of the

Machado river, owned by the firm Asensi & C^a, made a swidden close to his tent on the 15th of August. Taking advantage of the 16th, which was sunny and good for burning the fields, Moreira set fire to the woods and waited for the result. At first, the fire was always burning, until the 19th; the next day, a terrible storm was falling over the place; The wind roared with fury, lashing out at the trees and giving the fire more impetus. Around midnight, while Moreira was lying in the tent, with his wife and 4 young children, he saw a tongue of fire erupt through the straw, and soon the tent was invaded by flames. Moreira barely had time to remove the family, leaving the tent and everything in it left to the destructive fury of the flames. Screaming for help, several people responded to the call, among them the rubber tapper named Miguel de tal. Moreira owned and cherished a small tapir. At the time of the fire, the poor animal tried to flee; He was already achieving this goal, when Miguel, seeing her, tried to pursue her. The animal went into the woods and Miguel always keeps coming back. The next day, the neighbors were surprised to find, inside a hole, in the middle of the swidden, the unfortunate Miguel, with the little tapir under his body, both dead.²⁷

This tragedy has subsidies and fragments that call our attention. In the Machado River, the burning of a field on a good day for this purpose, starts a general fire, thanks to a storm wind, which we can see enters at night, scaring away with flames, in his own house, the Moreira rubber tapper, responsible for the fire and owner of a tapir. Apparently, this animal, as a valuable representation, must have a special meaning for a rubber tapper, who, in this case, Moreira still “esteemed” it. It was not enough that Moreira’s family had been saved from the fire, although he had lost “the tent and everything that was in it”, and perhaps for this reason, his neighbor and probably friend Miguel, considered that

27 *A Capital*. Manaus, September 27, 1917.

28 CUNHA, Euclides. *Amazônia – Um paraíso perdido*. Manaus: Valer, 2^a Ed. 2011. p.221.

29 GINZBURG. Carlo. *Mitos, emblemas, sinais: morfologia e história*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2^a Ed. 2002. p.143.

saving that tapir would bring less heartache and suffering to Moreira, the tragedy becomes even greater, as we have seen, in what seems to have been a heroic act by Miguel, a friend and tapir die inside a hole, possibly a precipice not seen in the darkness of the night, neither by Miguel nor by the dear tapir.

CONCLUSION

The rubber tapper, as well as everything that involves him, can be researched in a field with vast sources and documents that become representations with many symbolic and distinct aspects to be analyzed. This way, we can demonstrate, so to speak, the legitimacy of research on this social subject, and that far from exhausting the studies on him, there is still a vast field and many possible topics of studies to be developed about the rubber tapper in History.

Euclides da Cunha states in his text “Entre os Seringais” that there “man is a loner”.²⁸ Although we can try to understand how legitimate and true this was under the eyes of Euclides, as well as those who testify to it, we will never miss the opportunity to hear the voices and experiences of the rubber tapper, because it is certain that he spoke, even if he was alone. By listening to him, we can become his companion, trying, even if groping the old sheets of newspapers, to know and understand his representations of the past.

From the small print of newspapers from a distant time, from past lives, from mentalities of another time, this study brings the understanding of A. Warburg’s sentence: “God is in the particular”,²⁹ which closes the understanding of Carlo Ginzburg’s evidential paradigm, which means the expansion of the field of observation, with attention to details, which become rich and revealing elements within the paths and detours of history.

As we said at the beginning, under thompsonian inspiration, we can find in the working class, here in particular, in the representation of the rubber tapper, the possibility of telling a story seen from below,³⁰ what was usually ready to be forgotten, stories of common people, experiences of men and women in the construction of their own history. This enhances our role as a historian, as Eric Hobsbawm said, “the historian’s job is to remember what others forget”.³¹ Here, perhaps we can even expand this maxim, stating that the historian’s job is to remember what many “want” to forget. Rethinking History, in this sense, is to incorporate the idea that the social role of historians of labor history is to contribute to the rescue of the practices adopted by the working class in its endless process of identity construction.

30 THOMPSON, E. P. *As peculiaridades dos ingleses e outros artigos*. Campinas: Ed. da Unicamp, 2001. p.185.

31 HOBSBAWM, Eric. *Era dos extremos: o breve século XX (1914-1991)*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2ª Ed. 1995. p.12.

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