
Slaves and immigrants are what matter: sourcing and control of the workforce for the agro-exporting economy in the Eighteenth Century

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362

Abstract

Throughout the nineteenth century, the new configuration of the world economy reserved the role of producer and exporter of coffee for Brazil, resulting in expansion of crops and increase in the demand for hands: initially slaves, then immigrants. In the context of the transition from slave to free labor the article intends to analyze comparatively the strategies developed by large landowners and by the State to obtain and control the labor destined for coffee plantations.

Keywords

Slavery; Free Labor; Coffee Economy

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Escravos e Imigrantes são o que importam: fornecimento e controle da mão de obra para a economia agroexportadora Oitocentista

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363

Resumo

Ao longo do século XIX, a nova configuração da economia mundial reservou ao Brasil o papel de produtor e exportador de café, resultando na expansão das lavouras e no aumento da demanda por braços: inicialmente escravos, depois imigrantes. No contexto da transição do trabalho escravo para o livre, o artigo pretende analisar de forma comparativa as estratégias desenvolvidas por grandes proprietários de terras e pelo Estado para obtenção e controle da mão de obra destinada às plantações de café.

Palavras-Chave

Escravidão; Trabalho Livre; Economia Cafeeira

In *O trato dos viventes*, Luiz Felipe de Alencastro points out that between 1550 and 1930 the workforce in Brazil was deterritorialized, since the main contingent of manpower had been born and grew outside colonial and national lands.¹ First, the importation of slaves, that went on after the Independence and was strengthened in the first half of the Eighteenth century; then, the arrival of European immigrants that grew expressively in the final decades on the same century.

Compulsory or spontaneous, the displacement of these populations correspond, on one side, to the internal demand for labor force due to the expansion of agriculture for exportation in Brazil; on the other, to the happenings of each region of origin. Both were, nonetheless, within the economic world order, historically transformed because of the industrialization of the United States and the major countries in Europe, around the middle of the 19th century.

In spite of the major differences between slaves and immigrants, it would be interesting to highlight that both transoceanic displacements demanded complex and capillary organization, composed of individuals and institutions who were responsible for obtaining, transporting and allocating the multitudinous workforce, making this task a sizeable and profitable business.² Another relevant aspect is the social control of the enslaved and free workforce in the farming export industry. A slave was defined by law as private property and forced to work for the owner. Free work was organized as an agreement between parts – a relationship always tilted towards the stronger side: the farmer.

Still within the field of similarities, avoiding the ties of the duality of free work/slave work, the area of Global Labor History, developed

¹ ALENCASTRO, Luiz Felipe de. *O trato dos viventes: formação do Brasil no Atlântico Sul*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2000, p. 354.

² About the profitability of slave work, cf. CONRAD, Robert Edgar. *Tumbeiros: o tráfico de escravos para o Brasil*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985 e FLORENTINO, Manolo. *Em costas negras: história do tráfico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro (séculos XVIII e XIX)*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1997; about the business of recruiting and transporting immigrants, see GONÇALVES, Paulo Cesar. *Mercadores de braços: riqueza e acumulação na organização da emigração europeia para o Novo Mundo*. São Paulo: Alameda/Fapesp, 2012.

by Marcel van der Linden as an “area of interest”, brings essential elements to the perception that free work was much less free than one might suppose and, in many cases, approached servitude and coerced work all over the world, including in central areas. Free and unfree, paid and unpaid work, formal and informal organizations constitute thus objects for a Global Labor History in a transnational and trans-continental approach of work relations within a wide temporal scope.³

Marcel van der Linden observes that the “real wage earners” discussed by Marx – the urban proletariat that had nothing but their labor power to sell in the market – were just one of the forms through which capitalism transformed labor power into a commodity. The History of Capitalism, since the expansion of the world market during the 14th century, has always been the history of both physically and economically coerced labor. This assertion constitutes the essence of the thesis of the Dutch historian. His main contribution is to bring into discussion the teleological thought in which slavery, contractual servitude, self-employment and domestic, child and subsistence labor are residual forms of the exploitation of the worker, not subordinated to the logics of capitalist mercantilization and, therefore, fated to disappear. A wider view on a global scale allows one to verify that all these forms of work coexists and, many times, complement each other.⁴

To van der Linden, the common foundation of all these workers is the coercive commodification of their labor power, which makes it important to list the reasons for the use or hindrance of some form of exploitation of labor power – considering economical calculations, and behavioral, legal, political and moral norms. In his perspective, he develops his definition of *subaltern workers*, comprising the free wage earners, self-employed workers, tenants, workers under contract and slaves: every carrier of labor power whose labor power is sold (or rented) to another person under economic or non-economic compulsory con-

³ LINDEN, Marcel van der. *Trabalhadores do mundo: ensaios para uma história global do trabalho*. Campinas: Editora da Unicamp, 2013, p. 14.

⁴ LINDEN, Marcel van der. *Op. Cit.*, p. 30 et ss.

ditions belongs to the class of *subaltern worker*, whether or not the carrier of the labor power sells or rents it himself, whether or not the carrier of labor power also owns means of production. The common ground for these workers is the coercive mercantilization of their labor power.⁵

A similar path is the undertaken by Alessandro Stanziani. According to this Italian historian, the history of “free” labor is closely connected to coerced labor. His thesis holds that between the 17th and the 20th centuries, forms of works and slavery through all of Eurasia – analytical profile chosen by Stanziani – were defined and practiced as a two-way road. A wide range of configurations of dependence, slavery and work existed in Russia, India and Indonesia, as well as in Japan, China, Great Britain, France, Prussia and around the Indian Ocean. It happened not only in specific areas, rooted in local institutions, values and economic relations, but on a global scale. Servitude in Prussia and Russia expressed an extreme variant of the notions and practices of labor such as domestic service and social obligation in Western Europe. Similarly, in European colonies, the practice of *indentured labor*⁶ was conceived as an extreme form of subordination of

⁵ LINDEN, Marcel van der. Op. Cit., p. 40-41.

⁶ Immigration under work contract was the solution found to substitute slavery in *plantations* after the end of slavery in the British and French Caribbean colonies, which shows that the demand for servile work did not disappear. BLACKBURN, Robin. A queda do escravismo colonial: 1776-1848. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2002, p. 576. This experience expanded to other areas around the world, both in terms of demand (West Indies, Cuba, Peru, Guianas, Hawaii, Mauritius, Transvaal) as in the regions of origin of workers (Asia, Africa, South Pacific islands, Madeira and Azores islands). For a world perspective, cf. NORTHROP, David. Indentured labor in the age of imperialism, 1834-1922. Nova York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. According to this historian, between 1831 and 1920 more than two million people moved under the tag of immigration under contract: out of those, 927 thousand came to the Americas, with the British Caribbean being the main landing point, with around 58 thousand people per decade; the golden period was between 1850 and 1880. Op. Cit., p. 159-161. Under the system of hiring free Africans in Mozambique for working in the French colonial areas (Antilles, Guiana and Réunion), see FLORY, Céline. De l'esclavage à la Liberté Forcée. Histoire des travailleurs africains engagés dans la Caraïbe française du XIXe siècle. Paris: Karthala/Société des Africanistes, 2015. For the British Caribbean, see LOOK LAI, Walton. Indentured labor, Caribbean sugar: Chinese and Indian migrants to the British West Indies, 1838-1918. Baltimore; Londres: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

domestic service and servitude in Europe. That is, without the identification of a worker as a servant in Great Britain, France and Holland, the *indentured labor* of these areas would not be possible.⁷

These common tendencies and local perspectives in work relations find their origins not only in the global circulation of models, populations, goods and institutions, but also in the dynamics of the market. From the 17th to the end of the 19th century, proto-industry, agriculture, commerce and manufacture suffered an unprecedented growth in all of Eurasia. The increase of intensive labor and its growth long term created considerable amounts of pressure on work resources and contributed to the increment of coercion and legal constraints over mobility of the workforce in Asia and Europe.⁸

In another study about the French colony on the island of Réunion, Stanziani analyzed how working under contract effectively helped to protract slave conditions, or at least its status, long after formal abolition, and came accompanied by the introduction of extremely restrictive forms of contract and status with regard to rights of immigrants. Paradoxically, the forms of domestic service, penal sanctions and rules for the colonies were reinforced at the same moment in which the rights of workers became more favorable to wage earners in Europe.⁹

In short, based on Global Labor History, van der Linden and Stanziani use arguments to “push further” the moment in which one might justify discussing “free labor” as a data much later than the one usually stipulated. As Cooper, Holt and Scott, state, in regards to time, the studies of slavery, at least in the Atlantic, could go from the beginning of the slave trade in the 16th century up to the Brazilian abolition in 1888, but the post-slavery period stretches deep into the 20th century.

⁷ STANZIANI, Alessandro (org.). *Labour, coercion, and economic growth in Eurasia, 17th-20th Centuries*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2013, p. 1.

⁸ STANZIANI, Alessandro (org.). *Op. Cit.*, p. 10-11.

⁹ STANZIANI, Alessandro. Beyond colonialism: servants, wage earners and indentured migrants in rural France and on Reunion Island (c. 1750–1900). *Labor History*, Londres, v. 54, n. 1, 2013, p. 79.

The economic and social conformations that followed slavery were far from the ideals of free land, free labor and free men.¹⁰

Bringing this discussion to Brazil, Henrique Lima observes that the transition from slavery to free labor was neither linear nor direct. Questioning the application of the concept of “freedom” – that, as well as “slavery” were juridical terms related to the idea of property in the 19th century¹¹ – in the definition of free labor, he lists a series of relations established with the Brazilian work market that put into question the independence of the wage earner and the liberal perspective that understood that contract relations were a synonym to freedom, that is, that the ties between worker and employer should not be defined as dependence, tutelage or coercion.¹²

Moving forward on the meaning of “freedom”, Lima highlights its complexity that, in empiric reality, has been translated in varied configurations: from the ideal-typical situation of the free wage-earner to a myriad of conformations of work that recombined different degrees of “freedom” and financial compensation for labor, with elements of physical and pecuniary coercion, tutelage, forced and contracted work, and also forms similar to slavery, such as debt bondage.¹³

In his view, neither paid nor free work had a fixed and well defined meaning; the boundaries between one and the other were very foggy. It is worth remembering that defined characteristics of free labor, such as financial compensation for work, were not uncommon in slave rela-

¹⁰ COOPER, Frederick; HOLT, Thomas C.; SCOTT, Rebecca J. Além da escravidão: investigações sobre raça, trabalho e cidadania em sociedades pós-emancipação. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005, p. 43.

¹¹ See, for example, the definition by Pessoa da Silva: “slave is the man who has lost the rights of property over his own person, belonging this right to another man or society, which is therefore named lord and can dispose of that one as any other good and belonging”. SILVA, José Eloy Pessoa da. Memória sobre a escravatura e projeto de colonização de europeos, e pretos da África no Imperio do Brazil. Rio de Janeiro: Typographia de Plancher, 1826, p. 7.

¹² LIMA, Henrique Espada. Sob o domínio da precariedade: escravidão e os significados da liberdade de trabalho no século XIX, Topoi, Rio de Janeiro, v. 6, n. 11, 2005, p. 293 e 299.

¹³ LIMA, Henrique Espada. Op. Cit., p. 295.

tions. Along the same lines, collective bargaining agreements, such as “crossing arms”, were present in some measure among the strategies of slaves when negotiating with their owners. On the other hand, coerced labor, which includes many forms of contract, indentured labor, debt bondage, as well as physical coercion, was part of the routine of free workers during and after the slavery period.¹⁴

Henrique Lima analyzed 56 “contracts of tenancy of services” of ex-slaves in the city of Desterro (currently Florianópolis), between 1849 and 1887. Considering that the options for a freedman to enter the labor market in an urban setting were very restricted, transforming slavery into a work contract could also mean an attempt to somehow maintain an occupation that could guarantee subsistence and fewer uncertainties in the future. Pecuniary compensation for this kind of labor was certainly subordinated to this condition.¹⁵

Transposing this experience to the freedmen and to the Court, in the first decades of the 19th century, it is possible to verify another difficulty: the presence of poor Portuguese immigrants, who abandoned their motherland in general oppressed by misery. This presence, according to Gladys S. Ribeiro, worsened the competition among immigrants, freedmen and slaves for the meaner and lower paid jobs. Taking up spaces in the urban environment, the Portuguese element, even with many survival difficulties, created a hierarchy in the labor market, in which a white man’s work was more valued than the black man’s or those of mixed race, in a city where the ideals of “modernization,” “civilization” and “progress” were spreading.¹⁶ Added to that, other more direct measures of control were taken, such as police and

¹⁴ LIMA, Henrique Espada. Op. Cit., p. 297.

¹⁵ LIMA, Henrique Espada. Op. Cit., p. 303 e ss.

¹⁶ RIBEIRO, Gladys Sabina. *A liberdade em construção: identidade nacional e conflitos antilusitanos no Primeiro Reinado*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Campinas, 1997, p. 250-251. Studying the coach and cart drivers in Rio de Janeiro in the second half of the 19th century, Ana Moura observes that even immigrant Portuguese labor force lived as equals, in the same life and work conditions as the nationals, while rented slaves or even freedmen rarely held this type of job status. MOURA, Ana

judicial apparatus, to defend the order, disciplined work and morals, characteristics that were not ascribed to the poor national workers, freedmen over whom the stain of slavery soared¹⁷ – the tendency to sloth and laziness of the national workers would be more and more explained in racial terms.¹⁸

According to Lima and Ribeiro, therefore, there was no lack of impediments, evermore limiting the degree of autonomy attained by freedmen to negotiate the price for their labor power and, thus, guarantee their own subsistence. Another example of the new form of coercion imposed by the organization of free work under the juridical regime of contract: misery, want and precariousness, enemies that would haunt poor workers not only in Brazil, but all over the world, entailing a transoceanic movement of European, Chinese and Indian populations.¹⁹

An addendum is necessary regarding the slave system in large rural properties. Understood as different from the ones in previous periods and called by some authors “second slavery”,²⁰ this concept also marks out the analysis in this paper and conditions its time frame: the 19th century.

The term “second slavery” was coined by Dale Tomich to differentiate 18th century slavery from colonial slavery. While the latter

Maria da Silva. *Cocheiros e carroceiros: homens livres no Rio de senhores e escravos*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1988, p. 81-82.

¹⁷ CHALHOUB, Sidney; RIBEIRO, Gladys Sabina; ESTEVES, Martha de Abreu. Trabalho escravo e trabalho livre na cidade do Rio de Janeiro. *Revista Brasileira de História*, São Paulo, v. 5, n. 8-9, 1984-1985, p. 96-97.

¹⁸ MATTOS, Hebe. Prefácio. In: COOPER, Frederick; HOLT, Thomas C.; SCOTT, Rebecca J. *Além da escravidão: investigações sobre raça, trabalho e cidadania em sociedades pós-emancipação*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2005, p. 32.

¹⁹ LIMA, Henrique Espada. *Op. Cit.*, p. 312.

²⁰ TOMICH, Dale. *Pelo prisma da escravidão: trabalho, capital e economia mundial*. São Paulo: Edusp, 2012; MARQUESE, Rafael. *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente: senhores, letrados e o controle de escravos nas Américas, 1660-1860*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2004; BLACKBURN, Robin. *Por que segunda escravidão?* In: MARQUESE, Rafael; SALLES, Ricardo (orgs.). *Escravidão e capitalismo histórico no século XIX: Cuba, Brasil e Estados Unidos*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2016.

was connected to colonial monopoly, mercantilism and played a fundamental part in the formation of world economy between the 16th and the 19th centuries, the former blooms within a period of radical change in world economy, held up by European and American industrialization, which changed the qualitative and quantitative demand in the international market. Modern industry started to demand new commodities on an unprecedented scale, while the population growth and new consumption habits increased the interest in specific products from peripheral areas, which reorganized themselves under the mark of slavery to take part in the new international division of labor, producing sugar, coffee and cotton in huge quantities at low prices.²¹

Following a global view of the historical process, Tomich observes that in this new configuration the conditions of slave work within the global economy had changed. The extinction of slavery in the British Empire encouraged the expansion and intensification of slavery outside it. The high demand for sugar, cotton and coffee during the 19th century revitalized slavery in Cuba, the United States and Brazil, with reflections in the scale and nature of slave production itself, upheld by the technological revolution in transportation and communications (railways, steamers and the telegraph): the opening of new lands, the amplifying of the size of plantations and the number of slaves.²² For the slaves, the direct consequence was the intensification of the exploitation of their labor by the owners.

Within the perspectives of the “Global History of Labor” and of “second slavery”, this paper explores, comparatively, the strategies developed by the plantation owners and by the Brazilian Government to obtain and control the labor power destined to the plantations throughout the 19th century, going from unfree to free labor; and, therefore, analyzes the role of public and private agents in relation to the exercise of power in establishing the necessary conditions for the multiple forms of coercion – physical, economical and legal – over continuous,

²¹ TOMICH, Dale. *Op. Cit.*. The discussion of the concept can be found in chapter 3.

²² TOMICH, Dale. *Op. Cit.*, p. 90-91.

systematic and disciplined work, be it “free” or compulsory, in an attempt to reduce the costs of labor power and overcome the resistance of this large group of “menial workers”.

The geographical focus is set to the rural environment, more specifically the coffee plantations in the Center and South, where slaves and immigrants worked for the landowners, busy with defining strategies for social control of the workforce, improvement of productivity and decrease of the costs of production, making the commodity more and more competitive in the international market.

After the proclamation of independence, the Constitution published in 1824 did not mention the figure of the slave in its articles, a silence that conferred legitimacy to the institution of slavery.²³ At the same time, the recognition of the right to property in a specific article legitimized the permanence of slavery.²⁴ Nonetheless, the emancipation from the metropolitan state marks a division between colonial and national slavery. From then on, the reiteration of the Brazilian slave relations would depend on the action of the State apparatus through legal or illegal means.²⁵ If the Constitution was silent, the Criminal Code of 1830, in its 60th article, not only legislated over the slaves, but also reserved for them the most severe punishments that, it is worth noting, were customary in slave systems:²⁶

If the defendant is a slave and incurs in punishment that is not capital or hard labor, will be condemned to flogging, and after suffering it, will be returned to his owner, who will be obliged to bring him in shackles for the time and manner that the Judge determines. The number of strokes shall be fixed in the senten-

²³ MARQUESE, Rafael. Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente. *Op. Cit.*, p. 262.

²⁴ MATTOS, Hebe. *Op. Cit.*, p. 22.

²⁵ MARQUESE, Rafael; SALLES, Ricardo. A escravidão no Brasil oitocentista. In: *Escravidão e capitalismo histórico no século XIX: Cuba, Brasil e Estados Unidos*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2016, p. 135.

²⁶ Malerba observes that mutilations and physical punishments were suppressed in the Phillipic Ordenanzas, only flogging being kept. MALERBA, Jurandir. *Os brancos da lei: liberalismo, escravidão e mentalidade patriarcal no Império do Brasil*. Maringá/PR: EDUEM, 1994, p. 37.

ce; and the slave shall not be subjected to more than fifty per day.²⁷

Within private ground, violence was always the hallmark of slave relations, revealing the strategy of domination by the owner to keep the slave disciplined, within the duality of “fear” and “respect.” The punishment secured the continuity of slave work connecting coercion and lucrative production. Discipline, violence and forced labor were, thus, elements that organized the owner’s economy in dealing with slaves. The “economical government of owners” resulted from the balance among lucrative production, survival of the slave and maintenance of lordly domination.²⁸

Private violence also pointed to another characteristic of slave societies: patriarchy. Therefore, in regards to respect to the hierarchy and exercise of legitimate power, its use was justified when committed by a superior against his dependent (son, slave or disciple) with specific goals. That is, the figure of the slave compelled the owners to give themselves the right to the private exercise of justice and force when directed towards the correction of any act of disobedience.²⁹ In practice, it also meant that the slave had no protection outside his owner’s jurisdiction.³⁰

As Emília Viotti da Costa emphasizes, in the slave system, in which work is demoralized and results from coercion, the dominant group trusts physical violence to reach its goals: to keep the rhythm of work, to stop indiscipline or stifle revolts, intimidate the slaves to keep them humble and submitted, to avoid or punish flights.³¹ In short, on plantations, control and punishment of slaves was a domestic issue. The

²⁷ Código Criminal do Imperio do Brazil. Law of 16 of December of 1830. <<https://www.planalto.gov.br>> Access on December 21 2016.

²⁸ LARA, Sílvia Hunold. Campos da violência: escravos e senhores na capitania do Rio de Janeiro, 1750-1808. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1988, p. 55-56.

²⁹ MALERBA, Jurandir. Op. Cit., p. 41.

³⁰ Complaints about abuse by the owners, however, became more and more common in the 1870s. MACHADO, Maria Helena P. T. Crime e escravidão: trabalho, luta e resistência nas lavouras paulistas (1830-1888). 2ª ed. São Paulo: Edusp, 2014, p. 41.

³¹ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. Da senzala à colônia. 3ª ed. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 1998, p. 336-337.

government would only act in exceptional situations, such as insurrection or murder.³²

To illustrate this perspective, Viotti da Costa stresses the resistance found by Carlos Augusto Taunay, author of *Manual do agricultor brasileiro* (1839), when he suggested that a general code of servile work be instituted. The idea was feverishly opposed by those who defended the right to the property of slaves. Taunay, though abolitionist, recognized the need of perpetual vigilance and the application of physical punishment so that the productivity of labor would not decrease and recommended punishment when needed: a maximum of fifty strokes, which could be repeated in one week intervals.³³ That is, he associated humane treatment towards the slave with public and private usefulness³⁴ – the country and the owner’s economic interests.

Following the path opened by Emília Viotti, Marquese analyzed some treatises about the administration of slaves in Brazil and identified the construction of a theory about slave management by authors who spoke in the name of the landowner classes in certain regions of the national territory. The context was the expansion of the exporting plantation, tensions in relation to slave trade and slave rebellions.³⁵

The management of slaves in 18th century Brazil, according to Marquese, established a tight correlation between severe discipline and paternalism, with the goal of creating a slave community shaped according to the wishes of the owners. In accordance to the model of slave *plantation*, well organized and productive, the ideal slave worker – disciplined and obedient – was projected to be obtained through the

³² “The blacks in the farms were more brutally treated than the ones in the city, where control over arbitrariness was easier, even though the protection of justice was, in the beginning, much more theoretical than practical”. COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p. 339.

³³ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p. 337.

³⁴ The goal of Taunay’s “code” was to standardize “the treatment to be dispensed to slaves” and combine “the interest of owners with the tolerable well-being of blacks, because religion, humanity and ordinate and public good demand so”. TAUNAY, Carlos Augusto. *Manual do agricultor brasileiro*. Organização de Rafael de Bivar Marquese. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001, p. 38.

³⁵ MARQUESE, Rafael. *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente*. Op. Cit., p. 266-267.

use of certain advocated means.³⁶ The authors studied by the historian were unanimous in defining slavery as a necessary evil, in sustaining the employment of rationality in the management of slaves, but also in the defense of the owner's unquestionable right of action – severe, just, humane – over his private property, the slave.

In regards to the slave trade, the support of the national government came in illegally. Pressures by England, where the slave trade had been abolished since 1807, the Brazilian monarchy instituted, in 1831, a law that declared all slaves who came from outside the borders of the Empire free, and imposed severe sanctions to importers, whether they were dealers, supporters, or buyers. The opposition to the law gained a significant political profile, recently studied by Parron, who highlighted the indissociability, from the end of 1837 on, of illegal slavery and the Brazilian government. This process started in 1835, when landowners from the expansive basin of the Paraíba river, stimulated by the world market, and a group of politicians, in search of wealth and power, forged an alliance to guarantee the reopening of the transatlantic slave trade, as smuggling, an activity widely accepted in great volumes and vertically, from the high structures of power to the squire in a forgotten corner of the country.³⁷

The inefficiency of the law was proven by the number of slaves that landed in Brazil's main ports. In the three years prior to the prohibition, the expectation of the end of slavery caused the arrival of 175 thousand Africans, while between 1830 and 1832, few slaves were imported.³⁸ The quick expansion of agriculture for exportation – sugar, cotton, coffee – in response to international demand, however, fomented the immediate increase of the need for labor power and conse-

³⁶ MARQUESE, Rafael. *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente*. Op. Cit., p. 292.

³⁷ PARRON, Tâmis Peixoto. *A política da escravidão na era da liberdade: Estados Unidos, Brasil e Cuba, 1787-1846*. Tese (Doutorado em História). Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2015, p. 318 e 330. For an in-depth discussion, see chapter 7.

³⁸ BETHELL, Leslie. *A abolição do tráfico de escravos no Brasil*. São Paulo: Edusp/Expressão e Cultura, 1976, p. 79-80.

quently the strong recovery of traffic. In 1837, for example, approximately 46 thousand slaves were illegally disembarked in the ports in Rio. In the period between 1840 and 1851 (one year after Eusébio de Queirós Law) registers point to the arrival of over 371 thousand slaves.³⁹ Another movement that deserves to be highlighted was the prevalence of the arrival of African slaves in the ports of the Center and South. In the first decade after the independence, 64% landed in Rio de Janeiro, but in the period of illegal traffic, between 1835 and 1850, of the over 690 thousand slaves that came to Brazil, almost 80% landed in the coffee-driven South.⁴⁰

More than the precision of numbers, it is plain to see the deliberate lethargy of the Brazilian State – chiefly after the return of the conservatives to the government – in repressing the slave traffic and mainly the resistance in declaring those that came through illegal trade as free and demand their repatriation; instead many of them were put under the tutelage of landowners.⁴¹ That is how the political power of the plantation owners of Vale do Paraíba, the then most important area of production of coffee, the product that would soon become the number one item of the country's exportations, was revealed. As Marquese and Tomich observe, a slavery with a modern profile started to be delineated, which would allow Brazil to dominate the coffee world market, supported by intense flowing of enslaved and traded Africans, for the most part, illegally.⁴²

The definitive closing of the Atlantic traffic, in 1850, marked the transition of unfree to free work. Its impact was immediate, because it limited the maximum size of the enslaved population and signified

³⁹ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p. 77.

⁴⁰ MARQUESE, Rafael; SALLES, Ricardo. *A escravidão no Brasil oitocentista*. Op. Cit., p. 140.

⁴¹ For a more in depth discussion about illegal traffic, see CONRAD, Robert Edgar. *Tumbeiros: o tráfico de escravos para o Brasil*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985.

⁴² MARQUESE, Rafael; TOMICH, Dale. *O Vale do Paraíba escravista e a formação do mercado mundial do café no século XIX*. In: GRINBERG, Keila; SALLES, Ricardo (orgs.). *O Brasil imperial, volume II: 1831-1870*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 2009, p. 373-374.

its relative decline.⁴³ The growing demand and shortage bumped up the price of slaves. From then on, only interprovincial trade, or even intraprovincial, would allow the exporting plantations of the Center and South to meet its demands, concentrating the slaves more and more in their dominions.⁴⁴ The *Ventre Livre* Law further contributed to lower the expectations to the conservation of the system. In parallel, the strength of the abolitionist movement and the growth of the resistance by slaves⁴⁵ indicated that slavery was living its last days.

Still, the *Ventre Livre* Law, promulgated on September 28th, 1871, was the first piece of legislation to deal directly with the organization of the work of freedmen, in the context of a project of gradual emancipation. It immediately freed all the children of slaves born after the date of promulgation, establishing rules for the reparation of the work of freed children and their commitments with the mother's owners, since they were submitted to their authority. It also gave juridical consistency to a series of then current practices within the slave relation that were until then only customary and whose validity depended only on the owner's wishes: the accumulation of an estate by the slave, the payment for his freedom with the accumulated wealth, the regulation of indemnities due to the owners, permission for the slave to acquire debt with a third party to buy his manumission.⁴⁶

The transition from slavery to free work had been, however, even though incipiently, previously considered. It is possible to identify it in the law of the 13th of September, 1830, not coincidentally within the

⁴³ LUNA, Francisco Vidal; KLEIN, Herbert S. *Escravidão no Brasil*. São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do estado de São Paulo/Edusp, 2010, p. 319.

⁴⁴ For a study about the interprovincial slave traffic, see MOTTA, José Flávio. *Escravos daqui, dali e de mais além: o tráfico interno de cativos na expansão cafeeira paulista (Arelas, Guaratinguetá, Constituição/ Piracicaba e Casa Branca, 1861-1887)*. Tese (Livre-Docência). Faculdade de Economia e Administração, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2010.

⁴⁵ The violent tensions intrinsic to the slave system are reflected in the homicides of owners, overseers and foremen, in the theft of product, suicides and other crimes. MACHADO, Maria Helena P. T. *Crime e escravidão*. Op. Cit., p. 120.

⁴⁶ LIMA, Henrique Espada. Op. Cit., p. 301-302.

context of discussions about the extinction of slave trade. The object of its eight articles was to regulate “the written contract about the provision of services done by Brazilian or foreigner”, be it by a fixed amount of time or by job. Only one article determined the obligations of the employer, who could be arrested if he did not pay what was due or did not give enough guarantee. Three other articles dealt with the employee, provisioning financial punishment, but mainly giving the judge the prerogative to “make the service provider fulfill his duty, punishing him for correction with imprisonment and, after three ineffective punishments, condemning him to work in prison until the other party is compensated”. In the same way, if “the service provider who, evading the fulfillment of the contract, is absent from his place, he will be returned, arrested by order of the judge, proving in his presence the contract and the infraction”. Finally, the 7th article deserves attention, which was explicit about who was excluded: “The contract maintained by the present Law cannot be celebrated, under any pretext, with African barbarians, except for those who currently exist in Brazil”.⁴⁷

378

The law from October 11th, 1837 was more complex. It had 17 articles and aimed at regulating the contracts of tenancy and service of settlers, indicating specific concern with the attraction of foreign labor power.⁴⁸ In it, the tenant’s dismissal with fair cause was defined:

1st Illness of the tenant, in such a way that he is unfit to continue providing the services agreed; 2nd Condemnation of the tenant to prison or any other that will forbid him to provide the service; 3th Habitual drunkenness of the same; 4th Injury done by the tenant to the safety, honor or property of the landlord, his lady, children or person of his family; 5th If the tenant, having agreed to the determined service, shows himself to be incapable in providing the same service.

And the fair cause for terminating the contract on the side of the tenant:

⁴⁷ Law of 13 of September of 1830. <<http://www2.camara.leg.br/>>. Access on December 27 2016.

⁴⁸ Law of 11 of October of 1837. <<http://legis.senado.gov.br/>>. Access on December 28 2016.

1st The landlord not fulfilling the conditions stipulated in the contract; 2nd If the same wounds the person of the tenant, or cause injury to the honor of his wife, children or person of his family; 3rd: If the landlord demands from the tenant services not specified in the contract.

Prison with hard labor was the punishment for those who did not fulfill their duties explained in the contract. The debts acquired by the tenant owed to the landlord should be paid off immediately, otherwise the tenant would be arrested and “condemned to hard labor for as long as necessary, until he satisfies with the liquid product of his working days everything that he owes”.

Similarly, the tenant who

with no fair cause excuses himself or leaves before the end of the contract will be arrested wherever he is found and will not be set free while he does not pay double of what he owes the landlord, excluding the overdue stipends: if he has nothing with which to pay, he will serve the landlord for free for the remaining time left on the contract.

379

The power of the landlord over the tenant was confirmed in article 11, for the former, at the end of the contract, should provide documentation attesting that the service was fulfilled, and the absence of such documents would be “reason enough to assume that the tenant was unduly absent”. On the other hand, the unfair competition among landlords for the labor power would be fined and, sometimes, punished with prison and hard labor “for as long as necessary, until he satisfies the landlord with the liquid product of his working days”. Anyone who corrupts others would be “condemned to prison for hard labor, for as long as it takes for the fulfilling of the contract of the corrupted, provided that the punishment is not shorter than six months or longer than two years”.

It is not the goal of this paper to make an in-depth analysis of the laws of 1830 and 1837, but to highlight that both reflected the power of landowners that counted on legislation to force the tenants to fulfill their contracts. Besides, in a society in which slavery offered the parameters for systematic work, it is emblematic that the harshest

punishment for workers that for any reason did not fulfill the service agreements was the privation of liberty combined with forced labor. The supposedly free work relations stipulated in contracts found their limits in the legislation, mainly for the weaker side.

Thereby, the first experiences of partnership in the coffee plantations were developed in the colony. To the eyes of the landowners and foreign tenants, however, the law of 1837 did not seem to meet the countless forms of litigation between the parts. Even its applicability to the system of partnership, diverse from the system of location of service, was brought into doubt.⁴⁹

The partnerships were a result of an agreement between the landowners and the families of tenants hired in Europe, who had their travel expenses and transportation to the farms paid for. Those expenses and the supplies for maintenance were considered advance payment until they could provide for their subsistence with their own work. To each family, a portion of the coffee plants, in proportion to its ability to plant, harvest and process, was allotted. They were also allowed to cultivate provisions for their own subsistence between the lines of coffee plants in newer crops or in places indicated by the landlords. In case of selling of leftover provisions, the landlord had the right to half of it. Once the coffee was sold, the landlord gave back half the liquid profit, after deducting all expenses with processing, transportation, sales commission and taxes. An interest of 6% was charged on top of any expenses incurred by the landlord in advance of the payment to the tenants.⁵⁰

In light of these countless obstacles, the partnership system soon lost prestige, undermined by its own contradictions. A real expectation breach happened. While the tenants – who came to Brazil with the ambition of becoming owners and improving their own life conditions – felt they were in the same condition as slaves, the landowners saw

⁴⁹ About the inadequacy of the 1830 and 1837 laws, see LAMOUNIER, Maria Lúcia. *Da escravidão ao trabalho livre: a lei de locação e serviços de 1879*. Campinas/SP: Papirus, 1988.

⁵⁰ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p. 124.

their economical interests shaken, since they intended to create a type of labor that would advantageously substitute the slave workforce in coffee plantations.

Moreover, the immigrant incurred high debts due to his arrival at the farm: the sea voyage, transportation to the workplace, goods necessary for his subsistence until he could produce enough to support himself, the tools: everything was financed by the landlord, who would also give him a small advance payment monthly. As a result, debts would accumulate and it would be years until the tenant could clear them. The situation could be even harder when the landlord charged high prices for the things the tenant needed. Another point of contention was related to the payment for the liquid profit of the harvested coffee. Tenants felt betrayed in their expectation of income and ended up rebelling.⁵¹ In many cases, these procedures were tricks to keep the tenants attached to the plantations for as long as possible or, at least, until they paid off their debt.

Problems with the partnership system made the recruiting of free labor more difficult, because debts subordinated the partners to the landowners. While the landowner was responsible for transportation, housing and feeding of the tenant and family, his capital was immobilized in the formation of the workforce. The worker was, in a way, perceived as his temporary property, at least until the repayment of the debt. The submission of the immigrant workforce was exacerbated by the patterns of interpersonal relationships dictated by the slave society.⁵²

In the face of crisis and discrediting of the partnership system, the work regime named *colonato* came into existence, characterized by the

⁵¹ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. Da senzala à colônia. Op. Cit., p. 137-138. The most representative event was the rebellion of the tenants at the Ibicaba farm, which belonged to Senator Vergueiro, in 1857. For more about this theme, see DEAN, Warren. Rio Claro: um sistema brasileiro de grande lavoura (1820-1920). Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977 e DAVATZ, Thomaz. Memórias de um colono no Brasil. Prefácio e Tradução de Sérgio Buarque de Holanda. São Paulo: Martins, 1972.

⁵² BASSETTO, Sylvia. Política de mão-de-obra na economia cafeeira do oeste paulista (período de transição). Tese (Doutorado em História). Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1982, p. 125-126.

family work and by the combination of three elements: fixed payments for the care of the coffee plants, payment proportional to the harvested coffee, direct production of other foods for livelihood with surplus being commercialized by the worker himself. The payment was done according to the quantity determined by *alqueire* of 50 liters of harvested coffee delivered. The higher the number of workers, the higher the quantity of coffee harvested by the family unit. The landlords themselves would rather hire families to reduce the costs per unit of labor.⁵³

The tenant would combine the planting of the coffee with the production of a substantial part of his own livelihood. In the new crops, he could grow corn, beans and other provisions between the coffee plants. The surplus not consumed by the family was sold to merchants or event to the landlord himself. The main source of income came from the coffee harvest. Other income would come from the caring of the plants, the cleaning of plots and any extra daily paid work at the farms. On the other hand, the tenant was subject to certain forms of unpaid work, such as the cleaning of pastures and the fixing roads.⁵⁴

Colonato, as a result of previous experience and agreements between landowners and immigrants, was established as the predominant system of work in the coffee economy, even presenting important contradictions that would worsen in periods of crisis of the coffee economy. Surely one of the main factors for its relative success was the government policy of subvention of fares for immigrants, freeing them of debt with transportation and avoiding the immobilization of a substantial portion of the landlords' capital. The immigrants' greater freedom would have to be compensated by the arrival of large contingents that would not only guarantee the necessary labor power but also the low salaries.

The experience with the European immigrants' free work put the plantation owners in a completely new situation. Used to dealing with

⁵³ STOLCKE, Verena; HALL, Michael. A introdução do trabalho livre nas fazendas de café de São Paulo. *Revista Brasileira de História. São Paulo*, v. 3, n. 6, 1983, p. 111-112.

⁵⁴ MARTINS, José de Souza. *O cativo da terra*. 6ª ed. São Paulo: Hucitec, 1996, p. 83-85.

slave or aggregated work, they had work relations with tenants first as partnerships and then in the system of *colonato* regulated by contract. The difference was substantial, the mediation between parts was not done according to right of property or sponsorship anymore, but through a written contract, signed in common agreement and within legal standards.⁵⁵

Mentalities, however, are not quick to change and the plantation owners tried to impose contractual conditions in an attempt to guarantee profits, recover the investments necessary for the hiring of tenants, but, mainly, force systematic, orderly and productive work, still within the logics of slave society.⁵⁶ With no private means to maintain the system, what was left was to appeal to State intervention through new legislation, or, in the words of the time, “a good law of location and services”.⁵⁷

On March 15th, 1879 a new law of location and services was published. It was understood at the time as the saving grace, as it was more specific than previous laws, meticulously treating the obligations of landlords and tenants exclusively in agriculture. Dedicating a full chapter to the agricultural partnership, its goal was to guarantee the stability of rural workers and low salaries, through the establishment of obligations and punishment – including prison caused by abandonment of work – for the fulfilling of longer contracts and also with precautions against strike movements, already well seen in the farms in São Paulo.⁵⁸ This new law pointed out the obstacles found by projects of transformation of work relations: free work was linked to the need of coercion to legitimate patterns of domination that characterized

⁵⁵ LAMOUNIER, Maria Lúcia. Op. Cit., p. 33.

⁵⁶ Dean points out that the mortgages of some landowner in the Rio Claro region show that they used the immigrants' debts as collateral of loans, exactly as if they were the prices of slaves. DEAN, Warren. Op. Cit., p. 115-116.

⁵⁷ Sentence that echoed in the meetings of the Congress for Agriculture in Rio de Janeiro in 1878, where the “lack of hands for the tillage” was intensely debated. CONGRESSO AGRÍCOLA, Rio de Janeiro, 1878. *Anais*. Introdução e notas de José Murilo de Carvalho. Edição fac-similar. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, 1988.

⁵⁸ LAMOUNIER, Maria Lúcia. Op. Cit., p. 121.

the slave-owner relationship, thus exposing the narrow limits of the “free” attribute of the work incorporated to the coffee economy.

Though the law of 1837 addressed only the relations that started to be drafted between landowners and European tenants, from the perspectives opened by the *Ventre Livre* law of 1871, the new legislation would also consider possible Brazilian tenants. The negative opinion regarding the national worker, considered lazy, loafing and contrary to productive work, was, however, patent in the regulation of contracts of service by the 1879 law, both in conditions and in punishment, much harsher than the ones reserved for the foreigners.⁵⁹ Besides the difference in the maximum time of contracts with free nationals (6 years) and freedmen (7 years), while the duration for foreigners was 5, the distinction between them is also present in another article. For the nationals, the renewal of the contract was automatic, in case neither the landlord nor the tenant demanded the dismissal; foreigners had to expressly confirm their intentions of renewal.⁶⁰

Close to 1880, most plantation owners seemed to be convinced that slavery was a lost cause.⁶¹ Slave traffic was extinct for three decades, the *Ventre Livre* law prevented the renovation of the slave house and the interprovincial commerce of slaves was under heavy taxation in the main buyer provinces, while the expansion of the coffee economy demanded more work power. It was necessary, therefore, to organize the free labor market through a legislative body that guaranteed the plantation owners’ interests facing a deliberate, gradual and slow process of abolition.⁶² The Brazilian State interfered, through legisla-

⁵⁹ About the view of the national worker in the context of the transition from slavery to free work, see GONÇALVES, Paulo Cesar. *Migração e mão de obra: retirantes cearenses na economia cafeeira do Centro-Sul (1877-1901)*. São Paulo: Humanitas, 2006.

⁶⁰ Decree number 2.827, of 15 March 1879. <<http://www2.camara.leg.br/>>. Access on December 29 2016.

⁶¹ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da monarquia à república: momentos decisivos*. 7ª ed. São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 1999, p. 363.

⁶² GEBARA, Ademir. *O mercado de trabalho livre no Brasil (1871-1888)*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986; LAMOUNIER, Maria Lúcia. *Op. Cit.*

tion, in the relationship between landowners and workers. After all, the loss of owner control over the workforce – an important characteristic of slavery – should have as its counterpart the social control of the State as the representative of economic and political power of the plantation owners.

It was not just through legislation that the Brazilian government acted on the free work market. On the contrary, the Avant-guard policy of landlords, imposing upon the State the role of financially subsidizing the formation of a market for free work that was wide enough so that one would not have to detain the worker in the farm for as long as possible was fast in making the law of 1879 obsolete, which caused its revocation in 1890, when the a relatively stable establishment of this market was under way. Subsidizing the arrival of immigrants, the goal was to create a constant flow of poor men and women for the coffee enterprise, so that salaries would be low and coercion would be avoided. In São Paulo, with the financial help of the State, immigration was extraordinarily accelerated from mid-1880's on, causing a plunge in salaries and, consequently, a great push to the expansion of the coffee economy.

The coming of European immigrants with official support to populate the Portuguese transoceanic possession was not new at the end of the colonial period. By mid-18th century, however, some royal provision in regards to the immigration from the Azores to Brazil were published, such as the one from August 9th, 1747, that had four thousand couples sent to “wherever was most necessary and convenient to populate”, giving them special privileges: financial help, land, food, draft animals, seeds, weapons and tools.⁶³ Later, Azorean and Swiss immigrants were brought by official orders, which culminated with the measures mandated by John VI, which reflected the interest of the

⁶³ Provision of August 9th, 1747. IOTTI, Luiza Horn (org.). *Imigração e colonização: legislação de 1747 a 1915*. Porto Alegre: Assembleia Legislativa do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul; Caxias do Sul: EDUCS, 2001.

Crown in incentivizing European immigration to Brazil.⁶⁴ By doing so, the king wanted those occupied lands to be made occupied, productive and valuable, establishing polycultures to supply cities and slave plantations and guarantee the occupation of areas close to borders to protect the lands from attacks from natives.⁶⁵

After the independence, the control of immigration policies by the State was accomplished. With the decree of December 2nd, 1825, a committee to organize a general plan of colonization, uniform to all provinces, was instituted. In a wider perspective, immigration, besides being used to occupy border regions, was understood as part of the solution for the problems faced by agriculture – lack of hands and wide tracts of uncultivated land.

Private entities were also committed to bringing foreign tenants. The constitution of the Society for the Promotion of Settling in Rio de Janeiro, for example, was recognized and enthusiastically hailed by the Imperial Government as an important act “so that Brazil will see, in a short time, its industry in the hands of free workers.”⁶⁶ Years later, in 1850, a contract celebrated by the Settling Society, established in the city of Hamburgo, for the foundation of an agricultural settlement in lands of the province of Santa Catarina was approved; this was the beginning of a series of contracts for the introduction of immigrants in that region that would last until the 1890s.⁶⁷

After the Law of Lands of September 18th 1850 and its regulation in 1854, which allowed the access to the ownership of land to any indi-

⁶⁴ Decree of September 1st, 1808, that sent from the Island of Azores 1500 families for the province of Rio Grande do Sul; Royal Letter of May 2nd, 1818, that authorized the establishment of Swiss families in Brazil. IOTTI, Luiza Horn. Op. Cit..

⁶⁵ PETRONE, Maria Thereza Schorer. Política imigratória e interesses econômicos. In: ROSOLI, Gianfausto (org.). Emigrazioni europee e popolo brasiliano – Atti del Congresso Euro-Brasiliano sulle migrazioni. Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1987, p. 260-261.

⁶⁶ Warning of March 8th 1836. IOTTI, Luiza Horn. Op. Cit..

⁶⁷ Warning number 6, June 1855, approved the introduction of 2.500 settlers by the Settling Society of Hamburgo. Law number 3349, October 20 1887, extended for 5 years the contract with the said Society. IOTTI, Luiza Horn. Op. Cit..

vidual, regardless of his nationality, and helped settlement, an increase in the relations between State and private entities for the introduction of immigrants and settlement in areas considered empty was observed. The transformation of land into commodities awoke private investors who, aware of the possibility of high profit, intensified the formation of settlements and settling companies.

As the result of wide debates in Parliament,⁶⁸ the law aimed at promoting the juridical organization of property to obtain the control over devolved lands that, since the end of the regime of concession of *sesmarias*, in July 17th. 1822, were freely and haphazardly passing onto private hands. It was necessary to reinforce the institutional frame. On one hand, the juridical organization of the property of land was intrinsic to the development of the State, which could not accept that the issue of appropriation of land taken off the hands of established authority. On the other, only at the moment of full recognition of the private property of land the class of landowners could constitute *de facto* and *de jure*.⁶⁹

One should not, however, lose sight of the destiny of slavery and the process of transition to free work. The Law of 1850, sanctioned fourteen days after the Eusébio de Queirós law, establishing that land could only be bought, tried to prevent the access to the great majority of native population, giving incentives to settlement, allowing immigrants to buy plots of devolved lands with their savings from a few years of work in the lands of the great owners. The product of the sale would

⁶⁸ According to Smith, the Parliament discussions about the project of the Law of Lands in 1843 showed the regional differences. While in the Northeast lands were property since the colonial times, in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro the frontiers were open, with no juridical refrain from taking property of lands. SMITH, Roberto. *Propriedade da terra e transição: estudo da formação da propriedade privada da terra e transição para o capitalismo no Brasil*. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1990, p. 296.

⁶⁹ SILVA, Lígia Osorio. *Terras devolutas e latifúndio: efeitos da Lei de 1850*. Campinas/SP: Editora da Unicamp, 1996, p. 91.

pay for the arrival of more European settlers. In this way, the labor power necessary to substitute the slaves was thought to be guaranteed.⁷⁰

In 1874, a new period in the Brazilian immigration policies start: the great contracts for the introduction of Europeans. The agreement, signed by the Government, determined the introduction of 100 thousand European immigrants at the farms all over the Empire, except for the province of Rio Grande do Sul, within 10 years.⁷¹ Caetano Pinto would receive, per adult settler, the following grants: 125\$000 for the first 50 thousand immigrants, 100\$000 for the following 25 thousand and 60\$000 for the last 25 thousand and half for the ones younger than 12 but older than 2. It was also agreed that the Government would offer the immigrants board and housing for eight days after their arrival and free transportation to the settlements in the provinces to which they were destined.⁷²

The 1880's was a fundamental period for immigration in Brazil, for the flow was increased, which set into action a series of measures to absorb it. In logistical terms, the creation of the Inn in Ilha das Flores was certainly the most important. The State, thus, took on the execution of the services of reception, boarding and landing, and lodging of the immigrants. Located on the island with the same name and bought from a senator by the Ministry for Agriculture, the Inn was built in 1882 and constantly renovated to handle the intense flow until at least 1895-1896, when the central power abdicated the services of the introduction of immigrants, as a late and final result of the end of

⁷⁰ GADELHA, Regina Maria d'Aquino Fonseca. A Lei de Terras (1850) e a abolição da escravidão: capitalismo e força de trabalho no Brasil do século XIX. *Revista de História*, São Paulo, n. 120, 1989, p. 160-161.

⁷¹ Decree number 5663 of 17 of June of 1874. IOTTI, Luiza Horn. Op. Cit..

⁷² The importance of this contract for the immigration policies can be evaluated by Martinho Prado's speech in the parliament of São Paulo, ten years later: "it is enough to ponder that among us settling was developed only after the contract with Caetano Pinto". *Anais da Assembleia Legislativa da Província de São Paulo*. Sessão de 11 de fevereiro de 1884. *Apud* BEIGUELMAN, Paula. *Formação do povo no complexo cafeeiro: aspectos políticos*. 3ª ed. São Paulo: Edusp, 2005, p. 105.

the Empire and so many measures taken by the Republic to meet the decentralizing interest of the states, mainly São Paulo.

In the beginning of the Republican period, some legislative acts marked the change in the paths of the Brazilian immigration and settling policies towards decentralization. Decree number 528 of June 28th 1890, also known as Glicério Law – from its author’s last name, Francisco Glicério – established changes in the laws of immigration and settlement aiming at meeting the needs of “fomenting and expanding the productive forces of the Republic” through European immigration.⁷³ It established the foundations for the creation of centers in private properties and in acquired devolved lands, and defined the conditions that the immigrants had to fulfill in order to be considered deserving of the treatment dispensed by the government. The government would only fund families of farmers, limited to their respective heads or their immediate family above 50 years of age; the single men older than 18 and younger than 50 years of age, if farmers; the factory workers or craftsmen and those able for domestic service, whose ages were also between 18 and 50. It also defined undesirable immigrants, forbidding entrance to “indigenous peoples of Asia or Africa”.

The State paid the sea travel companies the grant of 120 francs per fare of each adult immigrant transported from Europe, half of that for minors between the 8 and 12, and a fourth for those between 8 and 3. The immigrants introduced by contract should come with documents from the Brazilian consular agent demonstrating they all belonged to the same family. The private landowners who desired to receive immigrants should present a request to the General Inspector of Lands and Settling. The decree also established a prize of 100 thousand francs to the companies that transported, within a year, at least 10 thousand immigrants with no complaint in regard to luggage and treatment.

⁷³ Francisco Glicério. Introdução ao Decreto n. 528 de 28 de junho de 1890. IOTTI, Luiza Horn. Op. Cit.

On August 2nd, 1892, the Federal Government signed a contract with the Metropolitan Company⁷⁴ for the introduction of 1 million immigrants – 100 thousand a year – coming from Europe and Portuguese and Spanish possessions, within ten years. Besides the already traditional demand that they all be farmers, two others items revealed the discriminatory intentions of the State: the exclusion of single men and the fixation of a maximum limit for each nationality. The financial difficulties for its fulfillment came already in 1893, the first year of its execution, when the annual entrance was reduced to 50 thousand.⁷⁵ The government intended to distribute part of the immigrants in various regions, mainly in the North of Brazil. With regards to that, the almost exclusive concentration in the Southern states of the Republic was cause for lament, but action was taken to change the situation: official settlements were created in Ceará, Alagoas and Pará, with intensification of propaganda for these and other northerner states in Europe.⁷⁶

In 1895, due to the lack of financial resources, the executive power was authorized by law to transfer the contract with the Metropolitan Company to the states or terminate it.⁷⁷ When consulted about the possibility of taking on its part of the contract, the representatives of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo did not accept it, which in turn forced the government to make a deal with the company. Damages of eight thousand five hundred contos de réis was agreed, to be paid in two installments, while the company had until

⁷⁴ The information about the Company is scarce. Installed in Rio de Janeiro, it was presided by Carlos Augusto de Miranda Jordão, engineer and merchant from Rio. The acts of the Metropolitan were not restricted to the importation of immigrants. In the 1890s, it received land concessions from the general government in Santa Catarina, to be divided for settlement, such as Nova Veneza and Nova Trieste.

⁷⁵ Relatório do Ministério dos Negócios da Agricultura, Comércio e Obras Públicas de 1892, p. 9-10.

⁷⁶ The number was actually distressing. In 1892, for example, of the over 54 thousand who landed in Rio de Janeiro, only 112 were sent to Pernambuco and 95 to Bahia, while the other states of the North, written down as “diverse locations”, divided 280 more. Relatório do Ministério dos Negócios da Agricultura, Comércio e Obras Públicas de 1892, p. 11-13. According to the report, only Pernambuco and Bahia had Federal settlement centers well organized.

⁷⁷ Law number 360 December 30th 1895. Relatório do Ministério da Agricultura de 1896, p. 35-36.

December 31st to complete the introduction of the number of immigrants for that year.⁷⁸ The interruption of the contract with Metropolitan meant the end of the intervention of the Republican Government in the services of introduction of immigrants, significantly reducing the movement in Rio de Janeiro, until then the main port of entrance and distribution of Europeans, with the exception of São Paulo, to the rest of the country.

In that province, a budding official policy of formation of settlement centers sparked in 1827. The first one was installed in the Rio Negro backwoods, in lands that now belong to the state of Paraná, that, at that time, were part of São Paulo. Between 1837 and 1838, 926 German immigrants from Bremen arrived, brought by Major Jorge Antonio Schäffer, representing the Imperial government. One of the items of the contract is worth noting, since it stipulated that the settler should take up arms, if necessary, and their sons should perform military service.⁷⁹

By mid-century, however, Vergueiro & Cia., founded by Senator Vergueiro⁸⁰, became the first private company to establish contracts directly with landowners and with the provincial and central governments with the purpose of bringing immigrants. With the end of slave trade, the interest in this kind of settlement was enhanced, with direct impact in the increase of demand and in the offering of a new kind of service that was then coming to life: the providing of European

⁷⁸ Relatório do Ministério da Agricultura de 1896, p. 36. The last arrears were solved in court only in August 1897, when the State was condemned to pay the company approximately 6 thousand pounds.

⁷⁹ DEPARTAMENTO ESTADUAL DO TRABALHO. Contratos relativos á imigração. *Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho*. São Paulo, Ano VI, n. 22, 1917.

⁸⁰ Besides being a landowner, Vergueiro is seen by some scholars as slave dealer. This possible transition from slave dealer to European work power merchant deserves better investigation. Using some sources found in the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro, Alencastro is the one that gets closer to the subject. ALENCASTRO, Luiz Felipe de. *Proletários e escravos: imigrantes portugueses e cativos africanos no Rio de Janeiro, 1850-1872*. Novos Estudos CEBRAP. São Paulo, n. 21, 1988, p. 30-56. Conrad also mentions that activity as possible: "It was an easy step to take, one might suppose, to go from the importation of black slaves to Brazil to work in the São Paulo plantations to the recruiting and transportation of poor Europeans to Brazil". CONRAD, Robert Edgar. Op. Cit., p. 129.

hands. Many private settlements were founded by important characters in the economic and political life who, worried about the future of slave work, looked for alternatives to meet the demand for labor power. Beside the official settlement centers, organized by the distributing of lands to the settlers, these private enterprises busied themselves with the production of coffee in the partnership regime.

The relative success in the beginning of the partnership regime directly helped businesses at Vergueiro & Cia, which continued importing settlers in higher and higher numbers, extending its activities to other provinces. Many important plantation owners, such as Souza Queiroz, also financed, by themselves, the arrival of settlers directly from Europe.⁸¹ After the rebellion of tenants in the Ibiacaba farm, in 1857, which belonged to Senator Vergueiro, the partnership system, among many contradictions, rapidly lost prestige among tenants and landlords, having also acquired a bad name in Europe.

In 1871, the year of the *Ventre Livre* law, the Association for the Help of Settling and Immigration was funded in São Paulo, its statute being approved by Imperial decree on August 8th. Scheduled to last for five years, the entity had important plantation owners, such as Francisco Antonio de Souza Queiroz (president), Antonio da Silva Prado (vice-president), as members.

Indeed, even before being legally constituted in the month of April, the association published a bulletin defining its objectives.⁸² Certainly, it was not a mere coincidence that almost simultaneously Provincial Law number 42 was approved, in March 30th, which authorized the government of São Paulo to issue promissory notes to help fund the payment of fares to Northern European immigrants, favoring plantation owners who wanted to bring settlers to their agricultural possessions. Soon after, the central power associated to the provincial, increasing funds towards this goal.⁸³

⁸¹ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p.125.

⁸² BASSETTO, Sylvania. Op. Cit., p. 78.

⁸³ COSTA, Emília Viotti da. *Da senzala à colônia*. Op. Cit., p. 233-234.

Only after 1875 did the arrival of immigrants reached the thousands, but it was still the Imperial government who held the most responsibility in bringing them, while the Settling Association still crawled.⁸⁴ In this same period, many landowners, though still counting on State support, acted individually to obtain labor power from Europe. They also fought to change official policies in immigration directed to the populating of the province, arguing that the settlement centers were costly and useless, not helping at all in attracting immigrants. That group understood that the State should only help private individuals who intended to introduce settlers in their properties.⁸⁵ The Law of March 30th 1871, therefore, was the first experience, if looked at retrospectively, a timid rehearsal for the program of fare subsidizing that would be structured from mid-1880's.

If from an imperial perspective, settling meant the introduction of immigrants in terms of an oriented settlement of the country, with the expectation of land tenure by the ones who arrived. In São Paulo, from the early beginnings, this path was avoided in the name of the interests of the large plantations.⁸⁶ The term settler had two meanings in São Paulo. One interested the landowners – the person that would work in their lands – and the other was the traditional meaning – someone who owns a small amount of land in settling centers. The immigrants, as settlers, were welcome if they were directed to the coffee plantations; so were the settling centers, with the specific duty of giving incentive to the European emigration towards the province.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ In 1875, 3.289 immigrants came to São Paulo, including: 2.122 through the Official Settling Agency; 107 through the Association for the Help of Settling and Immigration; 43 through Commander Montenegro; and 1.017 spontaneously. Report presented to the Parliament of the Province of São Paulo by the President of the Province, Dr. Sebastião José Pereira, on February 2nd 1876, p. 65.

⁸⁵ CONGRESSO AGRÍCOLA, Rio de Janeiro, 1878. Op. Cit..

⁸⁶ BEIGUELMAN, Paula. Op. Cit., p. 89.

⁸⁷ MARTINS, José de Souza. A imigração e a crise no Brasil agrário. São Paulo: Livraria Pioneira Editora, 1973, p. 63; COSTA, Emília Viotti da. Da senzala à colônia. Op. Cit., p. 177-184.

In the beginning of the 1880's, some landowners from the west of the province were already defending subsidized immigration as the solution for the problem of labor power in the expansion of coffee fields. The few immigrants that the plantation owners had brought from Europe were not enough anymore; it was necessary to increase the recruiting. Therefore, the State was called into action, to promote, address and organize a transoceanic flow of immigration, becoming a sponsor to the landowners in a constant supply of hands for the plantations.⁸⁸ From then on, the São Paulo immigration policies suffered a change in route, financing the system of supplying hands to the coffee fields. It was a huge task, which only the State would be able to develop as an instrument of the landowners.

Following the legislation about the theme helps in understanding the first steps of the immigration policies in São Paulo to fund the arrival of immigrant labor power. In 1881, the Provincial Law number 36, of February 21, committed 150 contos for the payment of immigrant fares and determined the construction of an inn, because it was not enough to fund the coming of the workforce, it was necessary to create the conditions to receive it. In 1884, Law number 28, of March 29, reopened financial credits, this time widely, for the introduction of immigrants. The funds had a double goal: 200 contos de réis for the creation of the settling centers, according to the national settling policy, and 400 contos to help immigration destined to the coffee plantations and to the centers through the payment of fares. The law also guaranteed the fundamental condition to satisfy the coffee trade, mainly in the newer areas, to which the supply of labor power was urgent: the exclusive option for the family composition of the immigration.

In 1885, Law number 14 of February 11th allowed public fund to be given to companies or individuals who introduced immigrants. Favored by the law, that opened the path for the articulation of an orga-

⁸⁸ VANGELISTA, Chiara. Os braços da lavoura: imigrantes e caipiras na formação do mercado de trabalho paulista (1850-1930). São Paulo: Hucitec/Istituto Italiano di Cultura/Instituto Cultural Italo-Brasileiro, 1991, p. 54.

nization to promote immigration, on July 2nd, 1886, the São Paulo coffee growers, knowing how important it was to control the process in its various stages – propaganda abroad, recruiting, transport conditions, receiving, lodging and allocation at farms – constituted the Society for the Promotion of Immigration. Among its founders, were renowned characters in the west of São Paulo: Martinho da Silva Prado Júnior, Rafael Aguiar Paes de Barros e Nicolau de Souza Queiroz.⁸⁹

Subsidizing fares with State money, which also financed reception and transportation infrastructure, legal possibility to sign contracts with individuals to introduce immigrants, and a society constituted to defend the interest of the coffee plantation owners: those were the pillars of the success of the enterprise in terms of attracting immigrants. But what about the areas of origin of the emigrants? How is the success of the recruiting, mainly in Italy, explained?

From the last third of the 19th century, Italy became the main source of emigrants to the New World.⁹⁰ The United States received the largest number, followed by Argentina and Brazil. Some factors were similar to those European countries that pioneered the exportation of populations: increase in the rural population and agricultural depression. Others were peculiar to the peninsula, such as the seizing of small properties whose owners could not pay the flour taxation and the decrease in the demand for labor power in the Austrian-Hungarian

395

⁸⁹ Besides the three names cited, that formed the first board of directors, the act of constitution is signed by Conde de Itu, Conde de Três Rios, Visconde do Pinhal, Barão de Tatuí, Barão de Mello de Oliveira, Barão de Piracicaba, Augusto de Souza Queiroz, Joaquim da Cunha Bueno, Jorge Tibiriçá, Antonio Paes de Barros, Benedito Augusto Vieira Barbosa, Augusto de Almeida Lima, Francisco Antonio de Souza Queiroz Filho, Luiz de Souza Queiroz, Francisco de Aguiar Paes de Barros. Cf. BIANCO, Maria Eliana Basile. *A Sociedade Promotora de Imigração (1886-1895)*. Dissertação (Mestrado em História). Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas, Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1982, p. 44.

⁹⁰ According to Sori, between 1861 and 1940, approximately 20 million people left Italy. SORI, Ercole. *L'emigrazione italiana dall'Unità alla Seconda Guerra Mondiale*. Bolonha: Il Mulino, 1979, p. 19. For Rosoli, about 18 million Italians searched for work abroad between 1870 and 1930. ROSOLI, Gianfausto. *Um quadro globale della diaspora italiana nelle Americhe*. *Altreitalie*, Turim, n. 8, 1992, p. 11.

Empire and in Germany, traditional labor markets for temporary immigration of workers from Veneto.⁹¹

Franzina and Ercole Sori point out that these population movements, as in large areas in Europe, had already been seen since Napoleonic times. In the mountainous regions of Italy, adverse natural conditions forced the seasonal search for family subsistence in other regions or in neighboring countries, such as in the transhumance economy in the Alpine and Ager Romanus regions, the emigration of population from Veneto to regions of central Europe (France and Germany)⁹² and in the seasonal emigration from Abruzzo and Campania to the north of the peninsula, to work in drainage during the 18th century.⁹³

In the different areas in the Alps – Piedmont, Trent and Lombardy – where temporary migratory flows did not originate in the crisis at the end of the 1800's, but in a past of territorial mobility with a seasonal characteristic and strong craft and mercantile component such movement forged a style of life and a culture of mobility that help the maintenance of the economy of the Alpine societies during the Old Regime, and provided answers to the new internal and external conditions during the 19th century.⁹⁴

Starting from the North – as a result of the subordinate insertion of Italian economy in the western market and of the process of mechanization and centralization of agriculture – the mass emigration of Italians only later reached the south of the peninsula – occasioned by the strong tax pressure and consequent expropriation of lands – happening almost exclusively towards the other side of the Atlan-

⁹¹ TRENTO, Angelo. Do outro lado do Atlântico. São Paulo: Nobel/Istituto Italiano di Cultura di San Paolo/Instituto Cultural Ítalo-Brasileiro, 1988, p. 31.

⁹² FRANZINA, Emilio. L'emigrazione dalla montagna veneta fra Otto e novecento. La montagna veneta in età contemporanea. Storia e ambiente. Uomini e risorse. s.n., 1991.

⁹³ SORI, Ercole. Op. Cit., p. 12-14.

⁹⁴ CORTI, Paola. L'emigrazione temporanea in Europa, in Africa e nel Levante. In: BEVILACQUA, Piero; DE CLEMENTI, Andreina; FRANZINA, Emilio (orgs.). *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Partenze*. v. I. Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2001, p. 221.

tic.⁹⁵ In the Piedmontese mountains and hills, the hardships of the rural economy compelled the increase in the duration of the seasonal absence to multiennial, or even definitive, initially to Europe, then to America. A large part of the precarious Italian emigration, therefore, was inserted in the path of the territorial mobility of agricultural labor power that, growing within the national limits over the paths of the internal agricultural migrations, were in continuous geographical dilation.⁹⁶ That is, it was, in part, mobility from the Old Regime geographically overexpanding,⁹⁷ which culminated in the discovery of the law of value-work in a capitalist market extended beyond the borders of the nation.⁹⁸

The Italian emigration was inserted in a model of global growth and of development of international commerce that characterized a great part of the 19th century. The Italian fields watched the advancement of the industrial world, which penetrated the old society with cheaper products, new techniques and ideas, suffocating the small farmer and concentrating property. North American and Argentinian grains were more successful in the competition with the ones produced in Europe, because they were transported by large steamers in huge volumes at low cost.⁹⁹ The world was getting smaller and smaller for commerce, but also for the movement of populations.

The international labor market in formation throughout the 1800's did not require qualified workers. These could come from humbler activities such as agricultural settlers, craftsmen and workers that only

⁹⁵ Andreina DE CLEMENTI. La “grande emigrazione”: dalle origini alla chiusura degli sbocchi americani. In: BEVILACQUA, Piero; DE CLEMENTI, Andreina; FRANZINA, Emilio (orgs.). Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Partenze. v. I. Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2001, p. 200-2001.

⁹⁶ SORI, Ercole. *Op. Cit.*, p. 346.

⁹⁷ HOBBSAWM, Eric J. A era do capital, 1848-1875. 5^a ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1996, see chapter 11.

⁹⁸ SORI, Ercole. *Op. Cit.*, p. 395.

⁹⁹ Piero BEVILACQUA. “Società rurale e emigrazione”. In: BEVILACQUA, Piero; DE CLEMENTI, Andreina; FRANZINA, Emilio (orgs.). Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Partenze. v. I. Roma: Donzelli Editore, 2001, p. 106.

had the strength of their arms. The mass exodus of Italians moved, essentially, towards two areas: Central Europe, to work on railways and in mines, and America, where the policies of settling and the search for hands for the tillage of lands allowed for whole families of emigrants to establish themselves, not counting the huge workforce formed by single men that went to the main cities of the United States. This movement was facilitated and promoted by the technological improvement represented by railways and steamers, which decreased the cost of transportation and travel times.

Within this frame, the São Paulo coffee plantation owners turned to the Italian Peninsula in the expectation of massively recruiting the desired workforce. After some failed contracts interrupted in 1885, on May 17th, 1886, Queiroz Telles, then President of the Province, hired José Antunes dos Santos¹⁰⁰ for the introduction of four thousand European immigrants, including a thousand Swedish, Danes and Germans, claiming that, even though the Italians “have shown to be hardworking and intelligent”, one should not search in for the hands that the farms needed in only a single source.¹⁰¹ The agreement was partially fulfilled, with the arrival of 869 families (3174 individuals), at the cost of 240 contos de réis.¹⁰² This was the last agreement made between the provincial government with an agency in charge of introducing immigrants. From then on, all contracts would have the participation of the Society for the Promotion of Immigration. The first of them is dated July 3rd, 1886 – one day after its founding – and established the arrival of 6 thousand immigrants, through the grant of 85\$000 (older than

¹⁰⁰ José Antunes dos Santos and Angelo Fiorita became the main partners of the São Paulo Government in the introduction of immigrants. About both of them, see GONÇALVES, Paulo Cesar. *Mercadores de braços*. Op. Cit., 2012.

¹⁰¹ Relatório apresentado á Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo pelo Presidente da Provincia Barão do Parnahyba no dia 17 de janeiro de 1887, p. 124-125.

¹⁰² Exposição com que o Exm^o. Sr. Visconde do Parnahyba passou a administração da Provincia de São Paulo ao Exm^o. Sr. Dr. Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves Presidente desta Provincia no dia 19 de novembro de 1887, p. 117. The grants were as follows: 80\$000 for the ones older than 12; 40\$000 for the ones between 7 and 12; 20\$000 for the ones between 3 and 7.

12), 42\$500 (7 to 12 years of age) and 21\$250 (3 to 7). The second one, from July 22nd, 1887, called for the introduction of 30 thousand immigrants, at a lower cost, distributed within the same age groups: 75\$000, 37\$500 and 18\$750. The costs were the same for the third contract, on March 2nd, 1888, for the introduction of 60 thousand immigrants.¹⁰³

The agreements were fulfilled with the arrival of 99,882 immigrants at a cost of over 5.5 thousand contos de réis, paid during the period of a bit over four and a half years, that is, from the arrival of the first immigrant families in January 1997 to the landing of the last ones in July 1891. The high cost meant sacrifices had to be made for obtaining the financial resources. Rodrigues Alves, in the beginning of 1888, defended the expenses at the Assembly, arguing that “the service presented great development, and it was not convenient to benumb its march before the chain was “perfectly established” and that the issue was only one of pecuniary sacrifice, “because there is not only easiness in the coming of the immigrant, but his settling has also been fast.”¹⁰⁴ If the issue was lack of funds, a loan was necessary. The government of São Paulo, on September 12th, 1888, took a loan with the English bank Louis Cohen & Sons for the amount of 787,500 pounds sterling (7 thousand contos de réis), at an interest rate of 5% per year and the guarantee that the services of the debt would annually come from the income of the province.¹⁰⁵

Before its extinction in 1895, the Society for the Promotion of Immigration signed two other agreements with the government of São Paulo. The contract signed on February 23rd, 1892, for the introduction of 50 thousand immigrants, from Italians, Germans, Austrians and Portuguese; and the one signed on January 10th, 1893, to bring 40

¹⁰³ DEPARTAMENTO ESTADUAL DO TRABALHO. Contratos relativos á imigração. Op. Cit., p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ Relatório apresentado á Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo pelo Presidente da Provincia Exm^o. Sr. Dr. Francisco de Paula Rodrigues Alves no dia 10 de janeiro de 1888, p. 34.

¹⁰⁵ Termo de contrato celebrado entre o Governo da Provincia de São Paulo e os Banqueiros Louis Cohen and Sons. Anexos. Relatório apresentado á Assembléa Legislativa Provincial de São Paulo pelo Presidente da Provincia Dr. Pedro Vicente de Azevedo no dia 11 de janeiro de 1889.

thousand European workers, distributed as follows: 10 thousand Italians, 15 thousand Germans and Swedish, and 15 thousand of other nationalities (Portuguese, Azorean, Swiss, Austrians). The big contracts, however, did not end, but were agreed upon directly with the agencies that introduced immigrants: a contract on August 21st, 1894, to bring 50 thousand Europeans; a contract on March 7th, 1896, for the introduction of 45 thousand Europeans and 10 thousand Canadians; a contract on August 6th, 1897, to recruit 10 thousand Austrians, 30 thousand Italians, 10 thousand Spaniards, 5 thousand Portuguese and 5 thousand Germans, Belgians, Swedish and Danes, with different grants – lower values for Portuguese and Italians.¹⁰⁶

During the last two decades of the 19th century, the migratory movement to São Paulo presented huge oscillations as a reflex of the international price for coffee, the economic situation of the country and the areas of origin of the immigrants, factors that conditioned the significant increase of returns or even the exit to one of the neighboring countries, such as Argentina. Nonetheless, judging from the contracts of introduction of immigrants, the flow in the last decade of the 1800's was almost 735 thousand, with exceptional highs in 1891, 1895, 1896 and 1897.¹⁰⁷ However, at the turn of the century, the formula of the great contracts already gave signs of depletion, because it started being confronted with difficulties abroad, mainly in Italy, that imposed restrictions on this kind of recruiting with the promulgation of the Law number 23, on January 31st, 1901 and, one year later, through the Prinetti Decree, which forbade sponsored emigration to Brazil, which became the target of severe criticism due to the hard conditions of

¹⁰⁶ DEPARTAMENTO ESTADUAL DO TRABALHO. Contratos relativos á imigração. *Op. Cit.*, p. 45-46.

¹⁰⁷ The data compiled by the Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho start in 1889, but they are enlightening: between 1889 and 1901, out of the more than 857 thousand immigrants that arrived, 79,2% came through subsidies. From then on, the standard was reversed and, from 1902 to 1915, out of the 690 thousand, 63,1% came spontaneously. DEPARTAMENTO ESTADUAL DO TRABALHO. Dados para a História da Imigração e da Colonização em S. Paulo. Boletim do Departamento Estadual do Trabalho. São Paulo, ano V, n. 19, 1916, p. 183-185.

work on the coffee plantations, but also to the precarious conditions of the steamers that crossed the Atlantic, carrying immigrants in 3rd class.

The Law Number 673, from September 9th, 1899, established a prize of 50 francs per immigrant, to be paid to the naval or shipbuilding companies that managed to bring hands to the farms, provided they were coming to Brazil for the first time, in families, “exclusively farmers, healthy, of good moral and civil conduct, having each family at least one individual capable of work”, besides imposing limits to the number of immigrants to be introduced annually. From then on many decrees defined the quantity of immigrants to be introduced: 1900 (4 thousand); 1901 (25 thousand); 1902 (10 thousand); 1904 (5 thousand); 1905 (20 thousand); 1907 (10 thousand); 1908 (10 thousand); 1909 (10 thousand); 1910 (10 thousand).¹⁰⁸

The regulations also reached to “the question of introduction of immigrants with sure destination in the plantations”, in which landowners determined the desired amount of immigrants to the Secretary of Agriculture, which informed the naval company with which they had agreed the offering of fares.¹⁰⁹ As a result, the total amount of immigrants that reached São Paulo between 1900-1915 was above 746 thousand. This was the period in which the largest diversification of nationalities took place, when Italians, to that point the absolute majority, were supplanted by the number of Spaniards and Portuguese.

The landowners of the west of São Paulo, taking political control of the province, started to use public funds to set their immigration project in motion - workforce for the exporting plantation – which was different from the national plan – settling and populating. With government subsidies, they did not need to personally bear the costs of importing workers for their coffee fields and managed to establish a large migratory flow.

¹⁰⁸ Coleção das Leis e Decretos do Estado de São Paulo (1899-1915). São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, p. 206-212.

¹⁰⁹ Decree number 1.247 of 17 of December of 1904. Coleção das Leis e Decretos do Estado de São Paulo (1899-1915). São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, p. 137-140.

Some studies state that the viability of immigration, when compared to the profit of slave trade, did not present economic interest to private individuals, which is why it was delegated to the State.¹¹⁰ In this paper, the presented hypothesis however is that it was not the absence of economic interest that drove off landowners, but the magnitude of the business and the actors that played parts in it. The issues regarding emigration/immigration gained international magnitude and demanded the participation of the States. The freedom to emigrate was considered an individual right, but it was also a point of national interest. Besides, given the large volume of demand and offer, it would not be viable for any landowner individually to travel to Europe to hire immigrants and bring them at his own expense to work in the plantations.

Brazil, as well as other countries in the New World, needed labor power and created a structure to receive it. São Paulo did more than that: organized a structure to meet the specific needs of the coffee plantations, channeling public resources into recruiting, transporting and receiving immigrants. The landowners, supported by the State, were able to find satisfactory solutions to their immediate demands. Those were solutions that put public money at their service, but that they claimed to be of interest to the national wealth – in much the same way as slavery was considered “a necessary evil” to national wealth.

The immigration policies in São Paulo of bringing families as labor power met the needs of coffee plantation owners. Subsidized fares and propaganda acted in specific rural areas in Europe where the impoverished peasant chose to emigrate with his family. Initially, the fields of Italy, later, the ones in Portugal and Spain, were the main targets of the recruiting. It was a successful enterprise, as the quantity and specificity of the movement of these families to São Paulo show, different from the profile that dominated international migration, of individual character, known as *new immigration*.¹¹¹ It was not only different, but also

¹¹⁰ VANGELISTA, Chiara. Op. Cit., p. 55.

¹¹¹ About *new immigration*, Baines points out that the migration of families connected to settlement, agriculture and originating from the north of Europe gave room to the individual migrations,

had an altered result of demographic pattern in the moments when the flow of families to Brazil, or more specifically to the lands in São Paulo, was larger, as observed by Ercole Sori for the Italian case: “The extreme case was Veneto, that had access to transoceanic expatriation *en masse* only in the high peaks of subsidized emigration in 1888, 1891 and 1895-1896” to Brazil – intervals in which the rate of emigration of single individuals was the lowest, in contrast with the increase in the participation of families.¹¹²

During the second half of the 1800s, another component of immigration policy became strong: its “racist sense,” which valued the white European to the detriment of slaves, freemen and free poor in the work market, as well as its importance in the “civilizing process” of the Brazilian people. This line of thought based on scientific theories about race, called at the time in Brazil “whitening”,¹¹³ predominated among the members of the political and intellectual national elite.

In 1875, Menezes e Souza, imperial counsellor, presented a report to the ministry of Agriculture, with the title *Theses about settling in Brazil*, in which he analyzed the relation between immigration and settling with the progress and wealth of the country - an illustrative example of the impact of these racial theories. Defending gradual abolition of

destined to the work in the industry, whose main characteristic was the highest rate of return or of the shipment of money to family members in the countries of origin. For the author, Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese constitute representative examples of this “new emigration” that landed in the United States from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the First World War. BAINES, Dudley. *Emigration from Europe, 1815-1930*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1991.

¹¹² SORI, Ercole. Op. Cit., p. 30-32 e 63.

¹¹³ According to Skidmore, the theory of “whitening” was peculiar to Brazil and was never adopted in Europe and the United States. The thesis was based on the presumption that the white race was superior; with that, the black population was believed would be decreased progressively when compared to the white due to the higher number of diseases and social disorganization, and that miscegenation would lead to a whiter population, partly because the “white gene” would be stronger, partly because people prefer partners that have lighter skin than themselves. From there, the defense of the European immigration to trigger the “improvement” of the Brazilian population in biological and cultural terms. SKIDMORE, Thomas E. *Preto no Branco: raça e nacionalidade no pensamento brasileiro*. 2ª. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1976.

slavery in the frame of the *Ventre Livre* Law, because he feared the immediate disorganization of production, he admonished the State to take on the role of encouraging immigration through the formation of settling centers to attract Europeans as landowners. As to the ideal immigrant, his study intended to answer two questions: (1) “Which European nation can offer us more able immigrants and in higher numbers?”; (2) “Which settlers have better populated Brazil?” A hierarchic description of some of the “peoples of the Old World” follows – Germans, Belgians, Swiss, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians and Britons.¹¹⁴ A parade of scientificism, classificatory racial theories about the ability of assimilation of each people, besides the observations about the experiences that took place in each country resulted in the option by the counsellor for the Germans and the characterization of Germany as the “nursery for Brazilian immigration” – hopes that would not come to practice.

It will not possible to treat the theme in depth within this paper, but it is valuable to remember Célia Marinho de Azevedo’s study on the different positions in the debate on the importation of Europeans to substitute slave work. There were those that, in light of sociocultural explanations, considered the difficulties of dealing with black and mixed raced individuals in terms of juridical equality within a liberal set of ideas; and the immigrantists, who found support in racial theories to pave the defense of their project favorable to immigration¹¹⁵. In the case of São Paulo, as Irace Salles ponders, it was the case of elaborating a set of ideas that made the notion of work a positive one, detaching it from the slavehouse, to dignify it as the builder of national wealth.¹¹⁶ And the European worker was the option in the face of the

¹¹⁴ MENEZES E SOUZA, João Cardoso de. *Theses sobre a colonização do Brasil. Projecto de solução ás questões sociaes, que se prendem a este difícil problema.* Rio de Janeiro: Typographia Nacional, 1875, p. 403 e ss.

¹¹⁵ AZEVEDO, Célia Maria Marinho de. *Onda negra, medo branco: o negro no imaginário das elites século XIX.* 3ª ed. São Paulo: Annablume, 2004, p. 120-121.

¹¹⁶ SALLES, Iraci Galvão. *Trabalho, progresso e a sociedade civilizada: o Partido Republicano Paulista e a política de mão de obra (1870-1889).* São Paulo: Hucitec, 1986.

immigrant project of quantitative and qualitative formation of a free labor market.

The contingencies did not become obstacles, in the incessant search for a plentiful cheap workforce, when the coffee plantation owners of São Paulo had to sometimes resort to the national worker, as the landowners of regions where European immigration was scarce or non-existent, had to do.¹¹⁷ To that, the proposal of the introduction of Chinese immigrants, considered by many the necessary workers in the process of transition from slave to free labor, could be added.¹¹⁸

The specificities of the expansion of the coffee economy in the Brazilian Center-South – lands, hands and capital – should be understood within a global plan. From the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century, new patterns of production and accumulation, and its geographical specializations, amplified by the revolution in transports and communication, demanded a large quantity of labor power. In the factories of the European centers, as well as in the United States, the population expelled from the fields came in large numbers to take on this role. In the areas that exported commodities and foodstuffs, demographically lacking hands, the solutions found varied in place and time: intensification of slave trade and work, indentured labor, spontaneous European immigration. If the enterprises were modern, the old demand did not only persist, it was intensified.

The availability of labor power is paramount for the transformation of natural resources in good, because these are produced by the incorporation of work which gives them value of use. Work itself took on the role of a “resource”. Thus, the “appropriation of men” at low cost

¹¹⁷ For the Center-South see GONÇALVES, Paulo Cesar. *Migração e mão de obra*. Op. Cit.; For the North see EISENBERG, Peter L. *Modernização sem mudança: a indústria açucareira em Pernambuco, 1840-1910*. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra; Campinas/SP: Unicamp. 1977.

¹¹⁸ About the debates over the use of Chinese labour power in Brazil, see AZEVEDO, Célia Maria Marinho de. Op. Cit. and LAMOUNIER, Maria Lúcia. Op. Cit.

became a goal, as important as the appropriation of any other physical resource.¹¹⁹ Slavery and economic migrations are examples that allow us to clearly observe the importance of this process that, by the mid-1800's, had already started to design the international labor market.

In Brazil, in the 1800's, there was the understanding that Europeans would contribute to the process of civilizing the country and the appreciation of labor, stained by slavery. The subsidizing of fares for immigrants to work in exporting coffee plantations was coated as a "modernizing" policy, for presenting free work as an alternative to slave labor power, considered a symbol of backwardness. Actually, more than a modernizing break, such policy could be considered as a continuity of practices of the great landowners, which put the State at the service of their interests. If there was any break in the transition from unfree to free labor - or "from the slavehouse to the settlement", in the apt title of Emília Viotti Costa's book -, this was not in regards to backwardness/modernization, but in the realm of the disputes for the organization and control of efficiency at labour: in slavery, in private; in the contractual relation of free work, in public.

406

Continuities and breaks were intrinsic to the capital-work relation in unfree and free labor. Analyzing them comparatively is the purpose of the last part of this paper, as a conclusion. Some questions, therefore, should be recapitulated here. How did the landowners deal with slavery and free work? What is the level of participation of the State in supplying and controlling labor power for the owners of the large exporting plantations?

In the case of Brazil, the importing of labor power in the 1800's was associated with long historical processes and the scenes of a global economy to which slavery in the Americas and European emigration to the New World belong. From the second quarter of the century, the demand for slaves of the coffee economy from the Vale to Paraíba

¹¹⁹ SÁNCHEZ, Joan-Eugeni. Espacio, economía y sociedad. Madri: Siglo Veintiuno Ediciones, 1991, p. 138.

demanded the State support the illegal slave trade, but in the aspect of the coercion and control of labor, an increasing demand for the intensification of the mechanisms of exploitation of slave labor power; almost nothing was required, because it was considered a private ascription of the slave owner within the borders of his productive unit; only in extreme cases, such as during rebellions, was the strong hand of the State required.

In regards to the free labor of the immigrant, the demands were more complex. In spite of the persistence of the slave mentality, paternalism and use of private violence were unjustifiable in the treatment of the immigrant in the free labor relationships, beyond the negative echoes on the other side of the Atlantic. It was necessary, thus, to resort to legislation to try to control the efficiency and discipline of the work force within the expectations of the landowners in regards to the production and the systematic standards of work associated with slavery. Just like the slaves, that developed several forms of resistance, the immigrants reacted to this attempt at personal control, leaving the property or not renewing the contract – a possibility beyond the means of slaves.

The second half of the 19th century was marked by tensions that, if not dissolved, were at least minimized by the subsidized mass immigration to São Paulo in the last two decades – a project of the coffee plantation owners of the west. And here one finds the fundamental contribution of the State in the providing of labor power for the coffee economy, subsidizing fares for the families of immigrants in such a quantity that it allowed, on one hand, direct interference in flow of emigration of populations in Italy, later in Portugal and Spain; on the other, a certain level of mobility for the settlers in the farms without compromising the low cost production of the main commodity, responsible for the country's presence in the international division of labor.

Slave trading, even when a metropolitan monopoly, was a private enterprise, whose business network was developed through almost four centuries with the help of the State (colonial and national), as in the case of its illegality between 1831-1850. As to immigration, transformed into a mass phenomenon during the 1800's, the novelty of the

subsidized fares with the funding of the State, that was an incentive even to clandestine immigration, gave competitiveness to Brazil, mainly São Paulo, to put the coffee lands in the horizon of potential emigrants from southern Europe, whose preference for the United States and Argentina was becoming clear.

The plantation owners, during part of the slave years of the 19th century, as well as in the last decades of the same century, in regard to recruiting immigrants, did not hesitate to trample the law to muster the labor power necessary for their exporting enterprise. They bought slaves when trade was considered illegal and, in the case in São Paulo, they created strategies to attract immigrant families with subsidized fares, persevering, even in face of the prohibition by the Italian and Spanish governments that attempted to restrict the recruitment of their populations by the offering of free transoceanic transportation. Illegality was, therefore, the characteristic trait of the plantation owners' action and of the State's condescension in obtaining hands to supply the plantations, because that was what mattered, be it with slaves or with immigrants.

Bringing back van der Linden's concept of *subaltern workers*, it is possible to establish that coercion, on many levels, was the common practice of the plantation owners, whose political power was reflected in the support of the State, with regards to slavery, in the safeguarding of property and in the confirmation of the use of private violence to coerce to work, and, as to the so-called "free work", repressive legislation, such as the practice of political coercion, and economic coercion, through low salaries resulting from the huge flow of immigrants financed by public funds. In both cases, the State, when interfering in the obtaining and controlling of labor power, or even when ignoring the illegal slave trade, created conditions for the coercion of *subaltern workers* to systematic and disciplined work.

The actions of the State, of slave traders and landowners with the goal of obtaining and controlling the labor power necessary for their interests seem to draw a complete circuit that this article aimed at discussing. In other words, the various forms of coercion as a catalyst of

the connection between restriction and freedom in the organization of labor, of the unstable borders between private and public referring to labor and, chiefly, of the limits imposed by the so-called “free labor”, to which the slave trade and, later, the massive recruiting of subsidized European immigrants were fundamental.

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