


## The Brazilian agrarian question (1900- 2018)

1) Agrarian question  General objectives:

1) The way as the industrial capitalism (then financial capitalism)



Changed the production relations in the countryside



The production relations between individuals in productive activity =)  
**marked by the forms of appropriation of the MEANS OF PRODUCTION**

(given period + given stage of development of the productive forces)

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1900- 2018)

- **ASSUMPTIONS:**

- **All the production relations:**

- = socio-economic structure of society

- = (basis through which)

- LEGAL AND POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS are created → (correspond) ways social consciousness

- = materialize in clear differences in the social conditions of life of individuals →

- **strong antagonisms**



(consequence)

**development of the productive forces vs production relations**  
**(productive forces + production relations = mode of production)**



(consequence)

**Strong contradictions:**

**Those who own the means of production vs those who don't have it**

# The Brazilian agrarian question(1900- 2018)

- INEQUALITY + EXPLORATION :

- Small farmers with land
- Farmers without land
- agricultural workers



- survival

- dependents:

a) Favourable climacteric conditions to the agricultural production

b) sale of products produced

c) Workforce sell



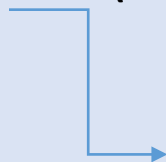
*to a price that optimizes*

*the added value of big farm owners*

- Productive forces + Production relations *connected* **Mode of production**



(this work) Mode of Capitalist Production in the countryside



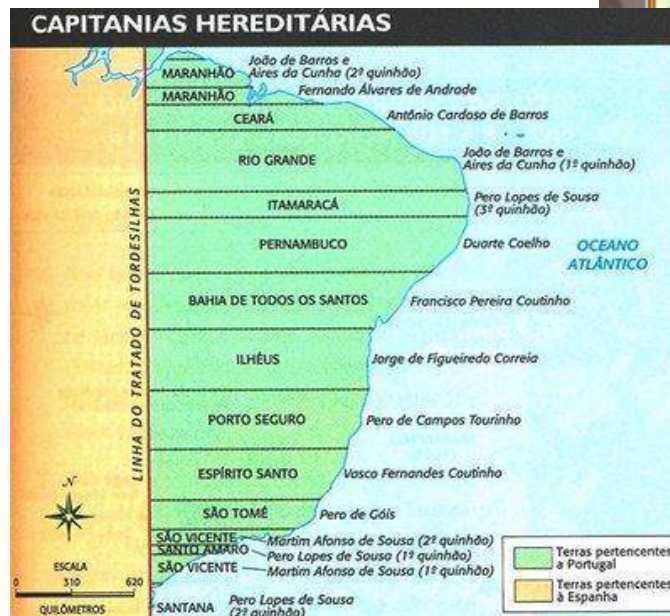
QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

- 1) Which are the dominant production relations in the Brazilian and Colombian countryside?

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1530-1822)

## As Sesmarias e as Capitanias Hereditárias

- A partir do momento em que chegam ao Brasil os capitães-donatários, titulares das capitanias hereditárias, a distribuição de terras a sesmeiros (em Portugal era o nome dado ao funcionário real responsável pela distribuição de sesmarias, no Brasil, o sesmeiro era o titular da sesmaria) passa a ser uma prioridade, pois é a sesmaria que vai garantir a instalação da *plantation* açucareira na colônia.



**COLONIAL BRAZIL-  
1530 - 1822**

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1530-1822)

## COLONIAL BRAZIL- 1530 - 1822

After the failed attempt to establish hereditary captaincies, the Portuguese crown established the **GENERAL GOVERNMENT** in Brazil.

This was a form of centralization and control by Portuguese royal power.

**The basis of the colonial economy was then the Sugar Mill.**

As plantações ocorriam no **SISTEMA DE PLANTATION**, ou seja, eram **GRANDES FAZENDAS PRODUTORAS** de um **ÚNICO PRODUTO**, utilizando **MÃO-DE-OBRA ESCRAVA** e visando o comércio exterior.



- *Plantation*: grande lavoura caracterizada pelo latifúndio, monocultura, mão-de-obra escrava e produção voltada para o mercado externo.
- Tráfico Negroiro.

### A SOCIEDADE DO AÇÚCAR





# The Brazilian agrarian question (1530-1822)

## COLONIAL BRAZIL- 1530 - 1822

### Indústria Açucareira



### Structure of the sugar industry:

- *Latifundio*
- Dutch capital
- Slave labor
- Large scale production
- Rigid inspection
- Controlled commerce

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1530-1822)

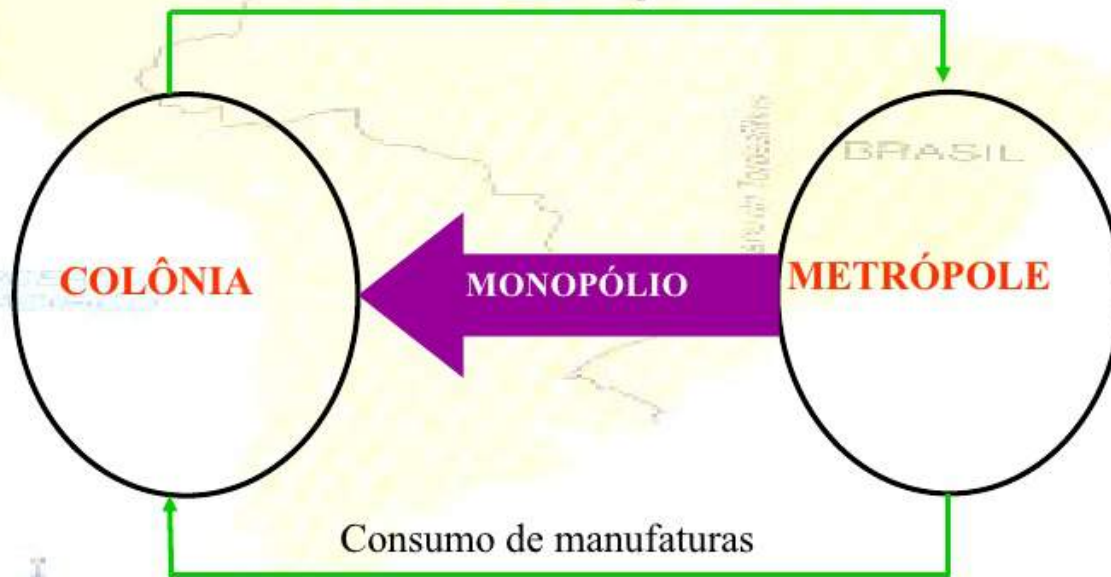
## COLONIAL BRAZIL - 1530 - 1822

### BRASIL COLÔNIA (1500 – 1822)

#### MONTAGEM DO SISTEMA COLONIAL

#### O PACTO COLONIAL

Envio de matéria-prima



In Brazil, colonization served the interests of the Portuguese crown and its aristocratic-mercantile stratum.

The colonization is thus carried out through the large **slave-owning monoculture property**, with the **production aimed at export to Portugal**.

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1530-1822)

## 1822: INDEPENDANCE from Portugal

- **1850:** The Brazilian Empire, strongly dependent on the image of the former metropolis, of British capital, **preparing for the end of slavery**, decides to **promulgate**, for the first time in Brazil, by the hand of D. Pedro II, a **Land Law**.
- This law emerged in 1850 as a "**legal framework for the adequacy of the economic system and preparation for the crisis of slave labor**" (Stédile, 2011, 22).
- **The land ceases from then on to constitute a good of nature to become a commodity:** "*The acquisition of vacant land is prohibited by a title other than that of purchase*" (Land Law No. 601, art. °).
- **The possibility of acquiring land by the most disadvantaged classes, including those working in the countryside, was permanently banned, while the preservation of the Brazilian landed structure was perpetuated**



# The Brazilian agrarian question (end of the 19th century)

## 1889: REPUBLIC is proclaimed



a) Strong influence of big landowners

=

“Coffee with milk” Republic (1889-1930)



- Strong *material contradictions*:

LAND OWNERS VS LANDLESS WORKERS



b) *Strengthening of economically dominant groups based in São Paulo* (and consequently strengthening of coffee production)



Boris Fausto (1994) = about this period:

*political and economical association* = mostly with the **big foreign financial groups** =  
*Rothschild Family* is one of the big financiers of the Brazilian Republic

Domination of Brazilian politics under the **Old Republic** (1889–1930) by the **landed gentries of São Paulo** (dominated by the **coffee industry**) and **Minas Gerais** (dominated by **dairy interests**).

São Paulo's coffee interests were by far the stronger of the pair.



**São Paulo becomes, then, in the paradigm of the capitalist agricultural model**

# The Brazilian agrarian question (end of the 19th century)

c) Lots of **revolts** and **social conflicts**

Ex: **Canudos war** (1896-1897)

(“Os Sertões”, Euclides da Cunha)



d) In the **late 1920s** – **coffee** :

= 72% *exportations*

= 3.8 millions of immigrants  
(Europe and Asia)



**Guerra de Canudos, 1997, de Sérgio Resende**

**Canudos WAR, 1997 (Sérgio Resende)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4OYhj7lo0E>

***Music: Edu Lobo***

(15 minutes)

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1922- 1930)

## LATE 1920'S

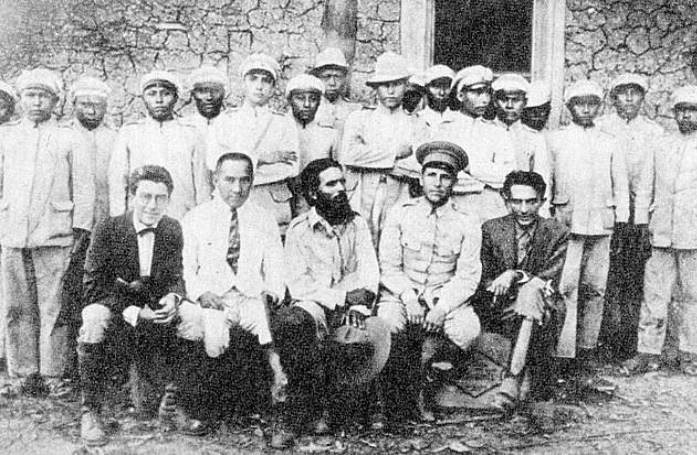
### Socio-political Context:

- a) « coffee and milk » Republic goes on
- b) **Luís Carlos Prestes Column (1925-1927)**

insurrectionist  
movement (Prestes'  
Column) on a  
**25,000 km**  
(15,534 mi) **march**  
**through the**  
**Brazilian**  
**countryside**







**“For the first time in the history of Brazil, a movement with popular participation, directed against the power of the State, was not defeated. This culminating moment of tenentism, whose program of liberal reforms (secret ballot, representation and justice, public freedoms, etc.) was adopted, the Prestes Column, during its 25,000-kilometer march, lasting 2 years and 3 months, through 13 Brazilian states, by defeating 18 government generals and attempting to overthrow President Artur Bernardes, contributed significantly to weakening the power of agrarian oligarchies - the system of oligarchic domination - then in force in the country” (Anita PRESTES)**



## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

- In 1930, in order to impose an economic model based on greater industrialization, **the industrial bourgeoisie removes from power the agro-export (rural) oligarchy.**
- Under the political leadership of Getúlio Vargas, industry will subordinate agriculture, and the city will hegemonize rural areas: **a new model of dependency will be maintained, this time through industrialization**

### 1930-1945

#### Socio-political context:

- a) 1930-1945: **Getúlio Vargas Presidency** (after 4 decades “Coffee with milk” policy) (*creation of the Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce, to satisfy the industrial elite*)
- c) 1930-1940 : industrial capitalist accumulation =) (consequence) *crises of coffee with milk politics*



c.1) **STRONG CONTRADICTIONS**

c.2) changes in urban territory: ↑ number working class

## INTERNATIONAL Context (1930-1945)

1. confrontation between **different ideologies** and the **ascension to power** of Nazi-fascists tendencies

*maximum exponents*

*Mussolini (Italy) + Hitler (Germany)*

2. In the **cultural plan**

=) **popularization of radio and cinema**

=) in the **cinema**, the **foreign productions** arrived in Brazil

(*MODERN TIMES* (1936) and *THE GREAT DICTATOR* (1940), Charles Chaplin)



Cândido Portinari, *The coffee*. 1935.

*Coffee with milk Republic representation (1894-1930).*



#### END OF A CYCLE

FIRST PAGE OF **GLOBO** newspaper, October 24 1930,  
with news about Washington Luís deposition

- **Collapse of the international coffee market in 1930 => (consequence) an industrial era**
- Foreign trade contraction following the crack of 1929 => partially controlled by the purchase of coffee stocks by the Government

*import difficulties*

**=> stimulated industrial investments**

**+**

**sustained the economy**

**=**

- total product fell less than 10% in the early years of depression
- Favourable internal economic policies reinforced the **internal factors of development**
- Industry gradually takes on the role of leader in this process**  
(**the domestic market becomes more attractive than the external market**) (Celso Furtado, 1968)

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

After the economic crisis of the **New York Stock Exchange (1929)**



**US capital overseas were repatriated + imports decreased**



This situation reached economies based on the export of raw materials + agricultural products – Ex: **Brazil**

(the coffee represented 70% of the Brazilian exports, and the United States was the main recipient country of these exports)



**Coffee prices plummet**

*Coffee = coffee was the biggest generator of foreign exchange for the country until then*

## Getulio Vargas POLITICS:

- a) He tries to finance stocks through loans contracted abroad
- b) He exchanges part of the surplus coffee for US wheat

**BUT**

**He had to burn a large quantity of coffee to ensure its price on the world market**

## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

- The **Constitution of 1934** brought advances:
  - a) the guarantee of land repossession for public need or use, through prior and fair compensation;
  - b) determining that agricultural labour be regulated, seeking to connect man to the land;
  - c) allowing for the organisation of agricultural colonies;
  - d) legalising the right of Adverse Possession;
  - e) making it obligatory for agricultural businesses located far from educational centres to maintain schools.

This did not, however, produce the intended effects. **It was replaced by the more conservative Constitution of 1937, directed more towards urban issues than the agricultural sector**



## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

- 1937: in a political context of **strong popular movement**



- a) Vargas assumes full **dictatorial powers**
- b) The **authoritarian and centralized tendencies** = *(will be transformed in)* strong political-administrative structures

=

- 1) urban bourgeoisie + rural oligarchy alliance = *will be consolidated*

*“the government can not ignore the interests of the sector, since coffee, even in crisis, remains the fundamental nucleus of the economy” (Boris Fausto)*

**BUT**

- 3) **Industrial bourgeoisie** = most influential class in the government

- 4) **control of economic processes by the Executive**

=

During *Estado Novo*, several state economic agencies were created **with the power to formulate and implement sectoral policies**

*(the new Constitution of 1946 did not change this administrative structure)*

- beginning of **industrial development** = favored by **the crisis of industrialized economies** in the 1930s + **World War II**

**BUT**

**from 1945 the international competition increases**

## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

- Although political power is held by the new elite, who owns the industry, **land ownership does not change hands, so the traditional rural oligarchy still wants to own its vast vast agricultural properties, and to produce for export.**
- We thus see a necessary **conciliation of interests that will be materialized in a class pact** between the **industrial bourgeoisie** and the **rural oligarchy**, both working for the implementation of a **dependent industrial model**, only possible by the continuity of agricultural exports.
- In this way, dependent capitalism is deepened, **linked to the development of a new industrial sector: agro-industry.**

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

## 1930's and 1940's

- a) decay of the traditional Brazilian NE sugar mills



give way to **modern industry** [= modern capitalist accumulation]

### CONSEQUENCE:

- values and traditions of the Northeast are shaken:

A) DESTRUCTION OF THE ARISTOCRATIC, LATIFUNDARY AND SLAVER  
TRADITIONAL RURAL SOCIETY

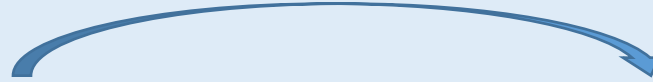
(with some similarities with **feudal mode of production** =) Society formed around *the Casa Grande* and the *Slaves area* – society stuck to the old patriarchal *latifundio*)



B) Imposition of a NEW MODEL within the same  
socioeconomic organization

# The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

## Contradictions created by capitalist accumulation



## Literature and Arts: Denunciation Narrative



**Cândido Portinari**  
« O menino morto » (1944)

**Carlos Drummond de Andrade**  
“A Rosa do Povo” (1945) (*excerto*)

Preso à minha classe e a algumas roupas,  
vou de branco pela rua cinzenta.  
Melancolias, mercadorias espreitam-me.  
Devo seguir até o enjão?  
Posso, sem armas, revoltar-me?  
Olhos sujos no relógio da torre:  
Não, o tempo não chegou de completa justiça.



**Cândido Portinari**  
« Retirantes » (1942)



The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)



C. Portinari, *Criança Morta*, 1944



C. Portinari, *Colheita de algodão*, 1948



C. Portinari, *Índia e Mulata*, 1934



C. Portinari, *Mulher Chorando*, 1944



C. Portinari, *Retirantes*, 1944



C. Portinari, *Paisagem de Brodowski*, 1940



## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

« **DRIED LIVES** », Nelson Pereira dos Santos (1963)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LoDP2Nivpg>

« **Vidas Secas** », Nelson Pereira dos Santos (1963)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4LoDP2Nivpg>

## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

« **Sugar mill child** », 1965, **Walter Lima Júnior**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4qJ6fM90DM>

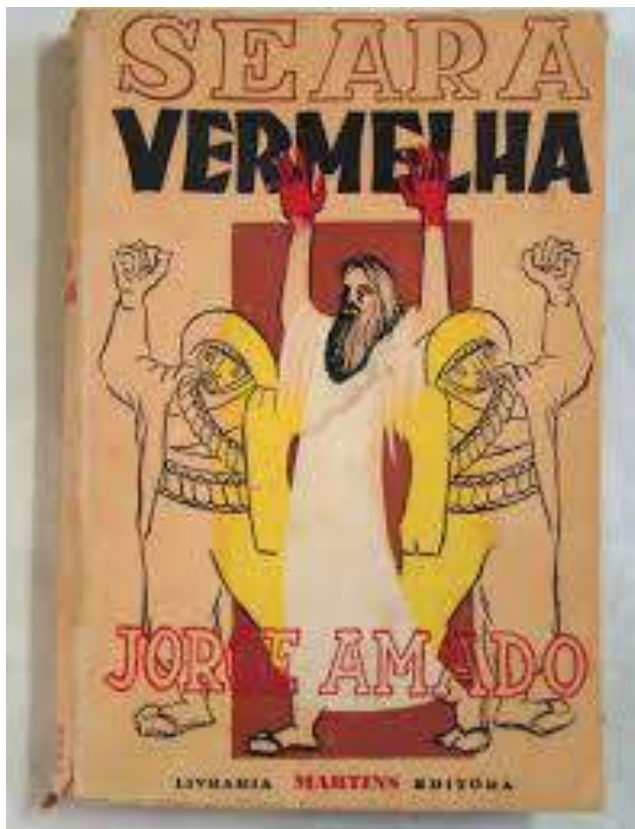
« **Menino do engenho** », 1965, dirigido por **Walter Lima Júnior**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4qJ6fM90DM>

## The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

### « Seara Vermelha », 1964, Alberto d'Aversa

*The difficult survival of the Northeastern, always suffering from the drought or in the hands of greedy landlords. Many, without knowing what to do, go through a hard journey, migrating to other regions in search of a better life.*



# The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

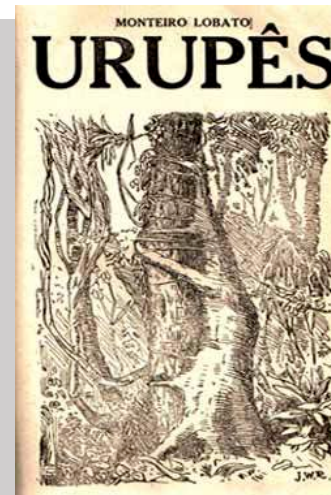
## 4. Jeca Tatu (1914, 1924, 1947), written by Monteiro Lobato

### a) “Urupês” (1914), when Jeca Tatu personage is born

a.1) caricature of the interior rural worker  
(lazy / ignorant / unambitious / not critical)



point of view: literate and urban class



### b) “Jeca Tatuzinho” (1924)

b.1) change of point of view:  
Brazilian reality (**HEALTH**) is the  
Responsible for the  
Jeca's retardation

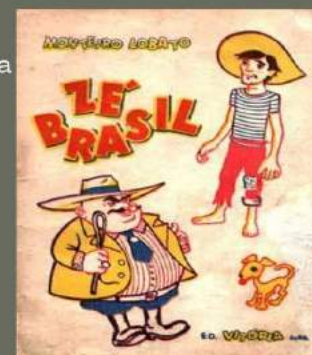


### c) “Zé Brasil” (1947)

c.1) Jeca Tatu retardation  
Is directly connected with  
**the dispossession of the land**



• Em 1947, com Zé Brasil, re-encarnação politizada do velho Jeca Tatu, Lobato faz sua auto crítica : atribui aqui a precária situação do camponês brasileiro à estrutura econômica brasileira e não mais à preguiça ou falta de saúde. Esta obra, censurada e apreendida, assim que foi publicada, é documento sugestivo de um temporário alinhamento de Monteiro Lobato com o Partido Comunista Brasileiro.





# The Brazilian agrarian question (1930- 1945)

## AUTOR's consciousness evolution

=

Evolution of his literary character:

FIRST: ignorant human being

SECOND: delay and ignorance = delay and ignorance are justified by the environment that surrounds him



1) Theory of race inequality and social degeneration (1914)

*that was considered to be a consequence of miscegenation*

2) Archetype of the exploited worker (1947)

*in a country also subjected to exploitation and dictates of foreign countries*

"Porque a verdade nua manda dizer que entre as raças de variado matiz, formadoras da nacionalidade e metidas entre o estrangeiro recente e o aborígene de tabuinha no beijo, uma existe a vegetar de cócoras, incapaz de evolução, impenetrável ao progresso. Feia e sorna, nada a põe de pé."



Jeca Tatu – lazy, ignorant

Victim of the reality

## Do Jeca Tatu ao Zé Brasil

• Nos anos 40, Monteiro Lobato constrói um outro Jeca, o Zé Brasil :

⇒ imagem do trabalhador rural explorado pelos grandes latifúndios  
⇒ Jeca agora é vítima não mais do amarelão, da falta de políticas públicas sanitárias, ou do descompasso do campo com o urbano-industrial  
⇒ Jeca é vítima das perversões do capitalismo  
⇒ O livro de 22 páginas denuncia o sistema de produção capitalista

• Marca a aproximação do escritor com o Partido Comunista

"Coitado desse Jeca! Dizia Zé Brasil olhando para aquelas figuras. Tal qual eu. Tudo o que ele tinha eu também tenho. A mesma opilação, a mesma maleita, a mesma miséria e até o mesmo cachorrinho"  
(trecho de Zé Brasil, 1947)



Jeca Tatu is now a landless worker



If the beginning of industrial development is favored by the crisis of the industrialized economies in the 1930s and the Second World War, this context changes as from 1945, when international competition increases.

## The Brazilian agrarian question (1945- 1964)

- 1953: extremely favorable measures to foreign capital



*this policy was reinforced by Kubitschek (1956-1961)*

**when the great modernization of agriculture takes place**

- a) preferential exchange rates for profit remittances
- b) favorable legislation for registration of capital
- d) credit and tax advantages

=

***extremely attractive investment conditions for external investors***

- Foreign direct investment was **concentrated in large industrial enterprises, especially in the following sectors:** automobile industry, shipyards, heavy mechanics, steel mills



- The **degree of monopoly in Brazilian industry was reinforced by direct foreign investments** (oligopoly structure)

(Small and medium industrials destruction = **concentration of capital**)

- From the 1960s the demographic development, the capitalist penetration of the countryside and the rising land prices will end with the Brazilian relative abundance of land
- This situation will lead to the emergence of landless settlers or settlers with insufficient land to support the family nucleus
- That's why in the 1960s, Rio Grande do Sul is confronted with a situation of almost 300 thousand families demanding land

***This decade will see the birth of the first landless peasants movement (whose method of struggle goes through occupation of the land claimed)***

- With the rise of the Peasant Leagues and rural unions, **the peasant movement was organised into a legal struggle**
- Opinion in favour of **agrarian reform** grew as a way to change the landownership system.
- The movements radicalised through strikes and invasions of disused properties, demanding reform through “law or any means”

The seriousness of the situation caused society to be more concerned with the issue and to discuss it.

- In 1963, the ***Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural*** (Rural Worker Statute) guaranteed for field workers the right to a minimum wage, annual leave, a paid day of rest per week, prior warning and compensation in the event of dismissal.





**Military coup: March 31, 1964 (with support from the US)**

- a) removal of the President of the Republic, João Goulart
- b) New President: **Marechal Castelo Branco**
- c) **END: 1985**



- In discursive terms:

- **anti-communist language**

*"Correio da Manhã", April 1, 1964:*

*"No matter how much Mr. João Goulart neglects, misrepresents and dissimulates, no one can deny - because it is public and ostensive - that the so-called "Marxist formation" elements have not only been able to infiltrate easily in all the posts, as well as they are preferred by the government to these posts. Nowadays, in the present government, which still calls itself a Democrat, Marxist ideology and even undisguised communist militancy are a special recommendation in the eyes of the government. As if we were already in a full "Marxist-Leninist" regime, with which those who wish to include their homeland in the great Soviet empire dream, under the orders of the Kremlin"*

- The military coup of **1964 will stop the rise of this struggle for land**
- In addition to violently repressing the movements of landless peasants who were putting pressure on the state, **the military dictatorship sought to direct that working mass (landless peasants) to Amazonia**
- It is in this context that the dictatorship itself promulgates the **Land Statute**, "*to this day the most effective instrument for the expropriation of land for the purposes of agrarian reform*" (Maestri, 2005, 273), defining the concept of the **social function of land**, **which persists in the current Brazilian Constitution**

## OBJECTIF:

process of colonization of the territory (INCRA (1964))

+

displacement of rural populations to depopulated areas

BUT

Till 80's: agriculture will be submitted to the industry

- The military dictatorship developed a **moderated project of agrarian reform**:



*From Law nº 4,504, on 30 November 1964, the Estatuto da Terra (Land Statute) was born, creating two organs: the Instituto Brasileiro de Reforma Agrária (Brazilian Institute of Agrarian Reform) (IBRA), to oversee the process of agrarian reform, and the Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento Agrícola (National Institute for Agricultural Development) (INDA) to administer the process of colonisation.*

**BUT**

- Studies conducted by IBRA and later by INCRA – **1967, 1972 and 1976** – showed a complete dominance of the **huge properties in Brazilian territory that were not properly cultivated**, preventing access to land and production for millions of rural workers
- The small properties, even though a large number, **occupied smaller areas and were responsible for the majority of food production in Brazil**

- The result of the agrarian policies of the military regime reinforced the power of traditional large property owners and developed the modern landlord system of large national and multinational companies
- Agricultural projects, **agro-industrials and cattle farmers** financed by the Government were transformed into **enormous property owners, taking possession of the lands of unauthorised settlers and Indians**
- With emphasis on **exportation policies**, the road network was improved with the construction of **highways**, increasing the size of **ports** and **modernisation of railways**
- There were incentives for **developing imported agricultural technology**, with a **growth in the production of raw materials and food** (sugar, cocoa, coffee and tobacco)




FIRST ½ XXth century

BRAZIL

- **till 1930:** agricultural model – agroexport model      BENEFICIARIES: large exporters and land owners

(majority of workers - economic activity: agriculture)

- monoculture
  - big property
  - External market
  - the labor force, until 1888 was enslaved, then highly precarious
- 
- **1930-1980:** new agricultural policy *(because)* *the industrialization of BRAZIL:*
    - **economic activity: industry**
- 
- The urban population rises
  - More food is needed
  - More raw materials are needed to the new industry

# Nowadays

- At present, and globally, agriculture is dominated by **financial capital**, now internationalized.
- However, in a financial economy, agriculture suffers from the imposition of **transgenic seeds** (most of which are destined to the cultivation of **soybeans, maize and cotton**), which are not an economic necessity, but rather represent **a response to the need of the market and exponential productivity**.
- This **transgenic technology** was developed mainly from the **1990s**, with the central objective of **implementing private seed ownership**:  
  
thus, if **industrial capitalism turned land into commodity**,  
**financial capitalism in the 20th century transformed the seeds in merchandise**

# Nowadays

- In order to enable this transformation of a property from nature into private property, norms ruled by patent laws *for living beings* were introduced.
- The seeds can now be handled in laboratory and be patented, **obliging the farmer who wants to use them to pay royalties** (whose value can vary between 2% and 8% of the value of the seeds).
- In this context, **the market for pesticides is being developed**, in order to adapt a **specific transgenic seed to a precise agrochemical**.
- This patenting of seeds, and consequent mercantilization of natural goods, constitutes a **process of accumulation of capital** concomitant to **the culture of monoculture**
- In the 20th century, monoculture established a novelty, with the introduction of *agrofuel* on a **large scale**, which produces crops for fuel, **and less food production**
- Now, after the mercantilization the land first, then the seeds, capitalism, in order not to allow its profit rate to be lowered, **seeks to impose private ownership of all natural resources** (*whose paroxysmal example is water*)

# Nowadays

- According to Marx, in industrial capitalism, the sum of **constant capital (cc)**, **variable capital (cv)** and **surplus value (mv)**, results in ***the value, the price***, of a product
- According to him, taking into account the competition among the companies, the capitalists could not exaggerate too much the desired profit rate
- In the case of **natural resources**, given their finitude, **their market price will always be higher than their value**
- In this sense, **the private appropriation of natural resources allows the obtaining of very high profits**, when compared with those that can be obtained through the industrial activity or the mining-agricultural activity
- All this evolution that has been taking **place within the capitalist mode of production has created a new paradigm of production whose maximum exponent is represented by agribusiness**