

“LIGHT AND STRENGTH” IN NORTHERN JUAZEIRO’S DAILY (1945-1960)¹

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ABSTRACT: In this article, we seek to analyze the Juazeirense urban space from the perspective of the process and clashes to improve the city's infrastructure. For this, we seek to verify the discourses built on the electricity service provided by Padre Cicero Company, the conflicts and clashes in urban daily life with its consumers.

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And if the case is related to a city that is already impregnated in other sectors with a sharp surge of progress, greater importance should be given to them, because in addition to what it represents, it has raised other achievements, leading to the

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development of industry, trade and other sources of production. The idea of the current mayor of the city to provide the municipal headquarters with a more powerful lighting service and sufficient electricity to meet our initial needs, little by little, despite the crisis, has a favorable effect on the population. (CARIRI NEWSPAPER, year I, n.33, Juazeiro do Norte, Sunday, March 4, 1951, p.01).

This article produced in 1951 by Jornal do Cariri had been done in order to move the readers' understanding about the problems related to the electric power supply in Juazeiro do Norte. Emphasizing, for this, that it was not enough to buy the Electric Company of Juazeiro - a private institution responsible for supplying this input to the city - but to give possibilities of growth in its performance and power production in order to reach the goal called by the columnist of a “Surge of progress”.

Such changes, mainly seen in their material aspect, allowed the defense of municipal campaigns to acquire funds that aimed to modernize it. This “powerful electricity” should be produced through motors that the city should buy in order to expand the areas of its operation and expand the hours put for its

use in the service sectors (domestic, commercial and industrial). How did the public authorities build speeches to intervene in this sector? What gave it substance?

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With the lack of private investments in the maintenance and modernization of the equipment responsible for producing and expanding the electric power of Juazeiro do Norte, its public powers being involved by the political scenario - in which the government was responsible for the strengthening of these companies aiming at the modernization and expansion. industrialization of their post-1945 spaces - stood as their guardian and protector.

At that time, the Juazeiro Electric Company no longer belonged to Beata Mocinha, it was now part of the Pita family's heritage, specifically that of Expedito Pita. However, who assumed the conflicts with the city hall in 1949 was his brother

Antonio Pita. This clash was a measure of political and economic strength between the municipality, in the person of its executive, Antonio Conserva Feitosa, and Antonio Pita, one of the most powerful businessmen of the locality. This situation was strengthened by the municipality's connection with the company through its hiring to provide light services for public facilities and spaces within its urban perimeter, such as its squares.

Its executive and legislature received several complaints from consumers of its service, as well as the damage caused by blackouts in public spaces illuminated by it. For Councilman Luiz Matos Franca, darkness still raged “the streets of the city” (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, May 5, 1958, p.6b). When the mayor considered the possibility of buying this company for the city, this climate of tension intensified. We can verify this by following the descriptions made in the Minutes of the City Council, looking at the speeches of the councilors who were for or against this project.

This, however, triggered a political and economic conflict with one of the city's main businessmen, his family, his networks of relationships and support that moved beyond Cariri Ceará. The Juazeiro do Norte City Council in its ordinary sessions became the scene of this dispute, with each party having its defenders and accusers. In 1948 these people's representatives discussed such a problem. For Councilman Luiz Matos Franca, "Colonel Antonio Pita as a wealthy capitalist and had an obligation to do something good for this land, saying that it was a shame for the people to live under the caprice of that capitalist"(ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, April 26, 1948, p.2b).

Aiming to strengthen his speech, the executive sought to affirm the purchasing power of the municipality, detailing its financial movement in order to destroy with the speculation raised of its possible inability to maintain such a large company. The defense of Mayor Conserves Feitosa was made by reinforcing the "progress of the earth". To this end, it provided financial

accounts of municipal expenditures and profits, placed at the end of this report a call and call in defense of its project, placing it as a fundamental element for its elevation. For Correio de Juazeiro, he "made a comparative statistical exposition of the financial movement of the years 1947 and 1948, thus showing an extraordinary and surprising difference of Cr \$ 546,738.90 more than the previous year" (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, year I, n.12, Juazeiro do Norte, April 3, 1949, p.01).

Using the strategy of convincing, through quantitative and statistical data, the juazeirense councilors and public opinion sought to link their claims to an idea of integrating Juazeiro with the national dream. Thus, this land would walk with the nation in its aspiration for modernization and industrialization. Therefore, for him, "the issue of light and electricity has always been one of the most urgent problems that I considered for Juazeiro do Norte" (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, year I, n.12, Juazeiro do Norte, April 3, 1949, p.01).

To justify this statement and build his image as a progressive mayor, he emphasized his sign as leader of the Republican Party, as well as outlined two reasons that motivated the construction of such a plan: 1- “the welfare of our people”; 2- “benefit our electrification plan of our industry, which will be a step of unparalleled progress for Ceará and Brazil”. (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, year I, n.12, Juazeiro do Norte, April 3, 1949, p.01).

In 1948, Councilman Luiz Matos Franca defended in plenary the lifting of 2 million cruises for the city to buy it and solve the problems with lighting and strength in this city. The climate of discussion has strengthened the division between the family traditions of the earth and the Adventists. Frankly in his speeches he called himself “son of Juazeiro”, this quality legitimized his position, defended as being important for the industrial progress of his land. According to him, “as Juazeiro's son, he intended to wrest from the clutches of a Jew who for so many years has been massacring the rights of the people”, for

example, through this electric company. Councilman and doctor Mozart Cardozo de Alencar stated that he was also fighting for his progress, but “as a foster child of this land,” he said that Pita had promised an oil factory in addition to those he owned. Such companies, according to Alencar, would favor the employability of a good part of juazeirenses, because as said their territory did not favor an agricultural production for exportation.

The sessions of the City Council became increasingly heated, the legislature played the role of intermediary between Pita and the mayor of Juazeiro do Norte. Each one sought to handle his letters to achieve his goals, but the executive using the current speeches of the Union and from the complaints that came not only from the lack of compliance with the public lighting contract, but from their private consumers - embezzlement and damage to power and light in their establishments and homes.

This spurred a support movement that strengthened Mayor Conserva Feitosa's plan to acquire this press. Therefore,

such a project, both for the speech of the councilors, and for their small economic and political elite was not well accepted - since they did not commune with the power / domination games linked to the Pita family and its allies, for example, the Bezerra family.

The councilors approved the request for credit opening for the purchase of the company made by the municipal mayor. This decision, in turn, provoked a reaction from its administrators, such as the power cut of public spaces and establishments. According to Councilman José Rodrigues Soares, Mayor Antonio Conserva Feitosa before going to Rio de Janeiro had already said that this would happen, that is, “the case of cutting off the public light, saying that we were going to work in the dark” (ACT OF THE CAMERA NORTHERN JUAZEIRO COUNCIL, October 21, 1948, p.65b).

On November 4, 1948 Antônio Pita agreed to sell the company to the city, but placed some charges and the price, ie, would sell the facilities for 90 thousand cruises, and the payment

should be in cash and with a deadline of 8 days In the meantime, he promoted the affirmation of his entrepreneurial image that aimed at the progress of the “land of Father Cicero”, placing himself as “an assiduous cooperador of the progress of this good land” (ACTS OF THE JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, 4 November 1948, p.80a).

In July of 1948 was created the Electric Company of the municipality. Law No. 14 summarizes, therefore, why his name changed from Juazeiro Electric Company to Padre Cícero Electric Company: “The Company took the name Fr. Cícero in honor of the founder of the Municipality” (CORREIO DE JUAZEIRO, year I, No. 25, Juazeiro do Norte, July 3, 1949, p.03). In its regulation it defined what the duties and what could be done in it. Firstly, it aimed to provide “Electricity and Light” to the municipality of Juazeiro do Norte, according to which only the city government had the right to exploit it privately, that is, this service would only be done by the municipal company and the supply would be prohibited. of light and strength by other entities.

The hours of its operation were delimited as follows: “the light will be provided from 17 hours and 30 minutes until 24 hours of the day” (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, year I, n.25, Juazeiro do Norte, July 3, 1949, p.03). The regulation, voted and implemented by the Juazeirense executive and legislature, aimed to strengthen the company and sought to place it within the municipality's heritage. To this end, they created laws aimed at guiding its operation and the desire to control its uses and abuses, the transgressions outside its technical capacity and distribution, as well as based on the expectation of progress demanded by its acquisition.

For some, from that moment on, the services provided at all levels and levels of consumption would expand and improve. However, this control has also opened a field of suspicion regarding agreements between the company and private consumers, whose deficiencies in service could occur due to overloading of turbines with illegal connections.

For example, the regulation of this municipal company outlined how to punish its cases of transgression to normalization. Among them was the installation of the “cats” that compromised the houses, the network system and the supply of power and light. Article 9 stated that the connection of electrical networks without the permission of its administrator and electricians was prohibited - if this law were breached, it would pay the “Cr \$ 100.00 fine and double the recidivism” (ACTS OF JUAZEIRO DO NORTE MUNICIPAL CHAMBER, year I, No. 25, Juazeiro do Norte, July 3, 1949, p.03).

After this purchase, normalization / creation of positions in the company and its link to municipal goods, the executive began to detect its real difficulties and problems. Thus, his discourse on progress with this purchase should be endorsed by other means, namely, private sector actions, donations of funds to help him resolve the company's technical deadlocks. For the local speeches, their electrification was striving for its

industrialization, with the force of such desire the executive moved campaigns aimed at modernizing their equipment.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, we try to think about some of the faces of Juazeiro do Norte. The construction of political speeches sought to promote a basis of legitimation for the intervention of the public power in the electricity sector in Juazeiro do Norte, in the reorganization of its urban perimeter, for example. For this, we seek to verify the discourses produced by intellectuals, politicians and religious by looking at them as a documentary monument (LE GOFF, 1990).

We can see that the struggle between the private and public sector was not only aimed at the public good, the modernization of the Cariri region and the maintenance of its image as Vale - that is, in the face of the desire for the modernization of the land of Father Cicero. had the political

conflict between the families that dominated their economic landscape. We have seen that to hold the power company in the hands of the private sector, efforts have been made to convince and support local and national politicians. Thus, we saw how in the daily plot, bodies, spaces and power relations moved in their private and public life in Juazeiro do Norte.

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