Workers and unions in the sugar industry of Tucumán (Argentina).
First half of XX century.

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Abstract: The sugar industry in the province of Tucumán, northern Argentina, always had an inordinate appetite for getting labor force in order to guarantee the manual harvest cycles. With an average of 28 mills and thousands of sugar cane plantations, the formation of a labor market that would enable the operation of the industry was an issue of vital centrality in the province. This was based on two pillars, on the one hand the implementation of coercive methods to ensure and monitor the provision of labor and, secondly, the consolidation of a cultural, social and political hegemony, aiming to transform ingrained refractory habits in workers and to disarm practices that dwindle work capacity. However, against these forms of domination workers resisted with contradictions and nonlinear trajectories, looking for the limits of the system. A centerpiece of that fight against power was the dispute over the unionization. Therefore, based on this scenario, the objective of this work is to analyze the trajectory of unionization of the sugar workers until the formation of the powerful Federación Obrera Tucumana de la Industria Azucarera (FOTIA) in 1944, which had its high point with Peronism. In this analysis we want to go unraveling the complex process of struggle to control the hegemonic cultural terms on which the world of sugar was ordered and legitimized the role of the state in the sugar workplace and power struggles that were shaping the trajectory union workers.