

## Editorial

Thinking about agrarian conflicts, especially in South America, their relationship with land and agrarian history, in a local, regional and global perspective, is urgent and necessary to understand the increase in hunger and malnutrition in different societies. Currently, hunger affects 820 million people, according to the UN report published in 2019. Of those millions of hungry people, 513.9 million are in Asia (11.3% of the region's population), 256 million in Africa (19.9%) and 42.5 million (6.5%) in Latin America and the Caribbean, thus becoming the great challenge to achieve one of the goals of Sustainable Development (SDG), which provides zero hunger until 2030<sup>i</sup>

This problem runs through reflections and historical, sociological, anthropological studies, among others, around the structural and symbolic processes of social exclusion, the result of the history of spatial occupation through possession, expansion, expropriation and domination which, in turn, they processed synchronously to the “civilizing” and “modernizing” projects of economic rationalization, as well as the relationship between access to land, development and agricultural revolutions.

Therefore, the socioeconomic, cultural and legal appropriation of land is contradictory and polysemic since the first agricultural revolution to the contemporary one, thus generating concentration of land ownership, effects of structural adjustment policies, corruption, concentration of income and social inequality. On the one hand, the appropriation of land was effected through the hegemony of regional and global political and economic powers from the colonization, public and private, of territories, especially Latin American ones, to neocolonialism, promoting multiple dimensions of structural violence (ADORNO, 2002) and symbolic violence (BOURDIEU, 2012). On the other hand, we have the social and academic clarity that the problem of hunger and social inequality permeates several socioeconomic, cultural and political variables, in addition to those indicated here.

In this sense, any discussion and intention to democratize land and agricultural production as a possibility of development implies discussing, in addition to mere growth, the land structure, that is, the agrarian heritage, the theory of historical and socio-

environmental transformations of agriculture and the access to its product, the need for national and regional policies to protect and develop the poor peasant economy and agrarian reform in the face of agribusiness.

All these themes, which are hot and current, masterfully demonstrate the centrality of agrarian conflicts, of the land and agrarian structure in Latin America, especially in South America, show their essential intertwining with the very social history of agriculture, land ownership and, mainly, of its protagonists and challenges.

Taking these questions as an object of study, the texts that make up this dossier, *Agrarian conflicts in South America: land and agrarian history*, result from investigations, mostly by historians, anthropologists and sociologists that are based on critical analyzes from primary sources and secondary, written on a consistent theoretical-conceptual basis, with a combined methodological approach and qualitative and quantitative analysis. Thus, the authors offer final results of completed or ongoing research. Here is the presentation of the outstanding academic productions.

Hunger and agriculture, seen from an innovative perspective, are in the study *The menu of agribusiness: monoculture and malnutrition from producer to consumer (1996-2019)*, by Luis Ernesto Blacha. The debate focuses on the agribusiness, monoculture and malnutrition categories. In this one, the problem of nutritional inequalities and the diet typology of the 21st century are treated. Therefore, reflections on malnutrition are based on the propositions that this is the result of the consolidation of agribusiness, of monoculture as a productive model and, consequently, the increased influence of large transnational companies that sell food through specialized knowledge, thus allowing to simplify ecosystems and promote the standardization of all components of the agrifood chains that reduce the omnivorous nature of the diet. The approach is a consistent and explanatory criticism of the use of the territory as a construct to the degradation of the diet of the Argentine population since the mid-1990s.

Following this problem, José Pierri, in *Agribusiness in grain production, its economic results and its relationship with public policies in a dependent country*, also focuses the discussion on the model of monoculture grain agribusiness in Argentina. He addresses the issue of economic convenience of adopting the model over time and the influence of public policies on profitability, and he does so through the consistent construction of statistical series on production and marketing costs of wheat and soybeans, showing the evolution over the three economic steps that affected the sector between 1900 and 2017. The study highlights the central assumptions of agribusiness and the influence of public policies in the sector, it complicates the analysis of grain export policies and the world market and the structurally dependent nature of the Argentine economy.

In the article *Argentine Ervateira Agroindustry: Agro, conflicts and public policies on the margins of Misiones (1953-2013)* Lisandro Rodrigues problematizes the social and historical construction of the Argentine Ervateira Region. He carefully analyzes the transformations of the economic model and its repercussions on agro-industry. The study is based on original primary sources such as official bulletins from the Yerba Mate Regulatory Commission (CRYM), data from the National Herbal Mate Institute (INYM), original documents from the herbaceous cooperatives (memoirs and balance sheets), periodical publications from the Agrarian Missionary Movement and interviews with historical protagonists.

Shifting the territorial boundary in relation to previous works, Catullo, in *Comparative analysis of mandatory rural and urban relocations: Itá dam (Alto Uruguai, Brazil) (1979-2001)*, presents results of research related to the modernization and compulsory displacement of populations; brings analyzes on the effects of the construction of the Itá (Brazil) dam located on the Uruguay River between the municipalities of Itá (State of Santa Catarina) and Aratiba (State of Rio Grande do Sul), forming a lake with an altitude of 370 m and total volume 5.1 billion cubic meters, occupying a total area of 141 km<sup>2</sup>, has an installed potential of 1,620 MW that affected mainly rural areas, partly the municipality of Marcelino Ramos (RS) and the entire headquarters of the municipality of Itá (SC). The analysis compares the strategies and responses of the rural population that organized itself in the Regional Commission of People Affected by Dams (CRAB), resisting the construction of the dam, in contrast to the population of the city of Itá, which was “mostly” in favor.

At work *The paradoxes of tobacco agribusiness among small farmerholders in western Santa Catarina*, researchers Arlene Renk, Silvana Winckler and Jane Basso discuss the “mismatches” of Brazilian policies in relation to the Framework Convention for Tobacco Control (CQCT), under the auspices of the World Health Organization, ratified by Brazil in 2005. One of the points of contention is the reduction / eradication of tobacco cultivation. The Brazilian government, in a politically correct posture, bans smoking in public spaces, reduces the number of smokers, but officially encourages the cultivation of tobacco to increase the trade balance. The study, based on documentary sources, statistics and data obtained in the field and in interviews, is under development and, as preliminary results, highlights that the cultivation of tobacco is not an option for small farmers, but one of the only ways out to stay in the farming; cultivation is carried out on the small property, the result of family work, with a high load of pesticides, in integration with the tobacco agribusiness.

Entirely different in the theme and research questions from previous works, but

similar in essence, the text *Historical experience, Catholicism and indigenous peasant resistance: analysis of the process of constitution of neo-Zapatismo in Chiapas* deals with one of the most important events in Latin American social history relevant in the constitution of rural social movements, which dialogue with the most striking contradictions in Latin America, such as, for example, the struggle for agrarian reform. The (neo)zapatists were the most influential social movement in the West for the past two decades. But, certainly, its narratives, both in content and form, were immeasurably important. In fact, focusing on the aforementioned social movement, several researches and publications were carried out in this universe, highlighting the unique and very recent study by Émerson Neves da Silva, which examines the process of the formation of neozapatism from a common denominator: relationship of this movement with the Catholic Church. Despite the existence of other churches also involved in the constitution of this social actor, the analysis is restricted to the Catholic Church due to the intensity, or better, the degree of influence and approximation of sectors with the process of constitution of the neozapatist movement.

Among the protagonists of rural work, women stand out. They play a significant role in food production worldwide. In this context, rural women are those who most live in situations of social, political and economic inequality. Discussing this issue, Uruguayan researcher Silvana Maubrigades, in *Gender disparities in the rural labor market in Uruguay, 1990-2010*, discusses gender differences in rural Uruguay and frames them in the changes that occurred in Latin America in the same period. She provides evidences on the process of incorporating women into the rural labor market in the context of the second globalization and the persistent segregation of rural women in the less qualified activities of that context. The study is based on a solid body of documents and quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Thematized by means of other reading keys, the contemporary agricultural revolution / Green Revolution, therefore, the matrix of grain monoculture on a large scale, is analyzed from the perspective of regional history and environmental history in the text *The Agricultural Station of Ijuí and the modernization of agriculture*. Researchers Paulo Afonso Zarth and Marcos Gerhardt discuss the promotion of agricultural modernization in the northwest region of Rio Grande do Sul, which stood out in the history of agriculture due to the development of wheat and soybean crops, based on the study of the implantation of the Agricultural Station in Ijuí by the Ministry of Agriculture. The study is based on primary documentation produced by the director of the Agricultural Post and articles published in the newspaper *Correio Serrano*. The emphasis given to the issue focuses on the role of the State as an agent for the diffusion of new technologies and on the socio-environmental impacts resulting from the modernization process of agriculture in the period from 1940 to

1976.

In this reading key, on the themes of this dossier, we rely on the words of the historian Paulo Pinheiro Machado, in an interview granted on November 13, 2019, about agrarian conflicts in South America, specifically, under the bias of productive inequalities, of investment, agro-industrial and social development of the "rural world" and, in this historical movement, the strangeness of the land and the expropriation of traditional, peasant and indigenous peoples.

And yet, we present the review *The Price of Freedom: servitude, subjection and reform in Prussia, 1648-1848*, where Eduardo Relly critically and synthetically analyzes the work *Freedom's Price: Serfdom, subjection and reform in Prussia, 1648-1848*, Oxford University Press, 2013, by Sean Eddie, in which issues related to land, the rural world are discussed under variables that helped shape different degrees of serfdom and Prussian land reform, as well as the reception, reevaluations and social meaning and weight of interpretations of German agrarian history.

The issues addressed in this Dossier explain the heterogeneity of the rural world, its complexity and the various experiences and the possibility of (inter) disciplinary approaches based on which analyzes and interpretations of agricultural production and its inequalities in South America are made, in particular, in the Southern Cone. It is a history marked by inequalities in production, investment, agro-industrial and social development. This dossier fulfills the objective of studying agricultural imbalances in the long term, considering the transition from agriculture to agribusiness in close relationship with the existing economic models and their transformations, analyzing the social construction of the territory associated with power, public policies and effects they have on these economies dependent on the foreign market. Finally, the case studies published here allow us to account for these statements and open up a range of options for current and future research, considering the micro and macro analysis of the territory, its policies, power, use of natural resources, environment and its social, economic and cultural actors.

We wish a fruitful reading to those interested in the history of the rural world and agrarian conflicts!

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<sup>i</sup> The State of food security and nutrition in the world 2019. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Rome, 2019. FAO, IFAD, WHO, WFP and UNICEF. 2019. <https://nacoesunidas.org/>. Accessed on 10/01/2020.