AGROECOLOGY AND SOCIAL CLASSES, AN APPROACH BASED ON THE WORKS BY GYÖRGY LUKÁCS AND MICHEL CLOUSCARD

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Introduction

The term Agroecology has currently been used to designate a wide field of social practices comprehending academic activities, productive processes and actions of political demands (NORDER et. al., 2016; WEZEL et al., 2009). Despite its heterogeneity, a certain identity is observed in that "agroecological field" as from its antagonism to the technological standard currently hegemonic in agriculture, supported by organizations that produce inputs and equipments of industrial origin, major land owners, processing industries and large networks trading agricultural products, that is, the so-called Agribusiness[2]. In the agroecological field, great attention is thus devoted to peasantry, whose diversified agriculture, developed in limited scales and, therefore, less aggressive towards the environment and less dependent on external inputs, has been considered one of the bases of Agroecology (PETERSEN, 2009). Moreover, we highlight the importance of intellectual workers, such as researchers, lecturers and technicians, in the agroecological field (PETERSEN et al., 2009).

From the point of view of the social classes playing the leading role, therefore, Agroecology is far from being homogeneous. The present article, of exploratory character, aims mainly at indicating elements in György Lukács's and Michel Clouscard's works for analyzing the possible contradictions generated by this diversity, especially those regarding the class interests of the peasantry and of intellectual workers, the latter herein considered members of a "new middle class", (CLOUSCARD, 1996, p. 25-28). The importance of György Lukács's and Michel Clouscard's thought for analyzing this issue is due to the contribution of their work to understanding the political-ideological positioning of the social classes along the development of capitalism. As regards Agroecology, our hypotheses start from the premise that the new middle class interest in a new technological standard in agriculture is essentially restricted to its sanitary and ecological aspects. This limitation makes this class incapable of effectively collaborating to the elaboration of a global proposal for change in agriculture allowing the peasantry to become its major social base.

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2. The term Agribusiness is written in capital letter to emphasize its political and social meaning in relation to its common meaning of simple "businesses related to agriculture". The same procedure was adopted for the term Agroecology.

Conversely, the supremacy of the new middle class interests results in a trend of reducing Agroecology to a radical form of organic agriculture that, through a rigid control of work processes and being restricted to certain market niches, tends to integrate into the Agribusiness dynamic. We here seek to evidence that the lack of interest of intellectual workers in effectively contributing to elaborating a global project of change in agriculture lies in their class nature, which is analyzed herein as a historical product of capitalism.

The first part of the article brings a brief discussion on its theoretical framework. The second part synthesizes the historical background of social classes in capitalism, situating the new middle class in this process. The third part discusses the relations of the peasantry with Agroecology, seeking to identify their specific interests in this field. The fourth part analyzes the divergences of interest between the new middle class and the peasants in the agroecological field and the consequences of the relations of this field with Agribusiness. Lastly, the final considerations are presented.

Ideology, political and social classes according to György Lukács and Michel Clouscard

György Lukács is one of the thinkers that mostly influenced the historical materialism in the XX century. A major contribution provided by Lukács's work is his analysis of the process he denominated "ideological decline of bourgeoisie", along which the political-ideological ideology of this social class undergoes major transformations (LARA, 2013; LUKÁCS, 1961). Different aspects of this analysis are discussed in the next section, especially for the study on the new middle class.

Another important aspect in Lukács's work is the way in which he explains the origin of human subjectivity in his analysis of the ontology of the social being, performed in a massive set of works (LUKÁCS, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013). For Lukács, what distinguishes the social being (i.e., human beings in general) from the mere biological beings is the way in which their relationship with nature occurs, conducted by means of work, which combines two distinct processes. The first is the definition of a teleological position, that is, the conception of the product to be obtained by work. The second is the manipulation of the causal processes that allow the material achievement of the object formerly conceived. As from the material and historical work process, the human being is able to distinguish between the subject and the object. This work process is not mechanically determined by the existing material conditions. The more human beings master causal processes, the greater the diversity of objects that can be produced, as well as the causal processes that can be mobilized and, therefore, the greater the possibility for social beings to choose. The teleological positions thus start to encompass a certain degree of subjectivity. For LUKÁCS (2011, p. 205), the development of subjectivity is boosted by language and by the advancement of the social division of work, since they allow establishing teleological positions exerted on other teleological positions, which stresses the influence of subjectivity on the historical development of the social being.

The teleological position chain is closely related to the structure of power of a society (LUKÁCS, 2012, p. 328). In capitalism, those that take the fundamental deci-

sions governing the work process are those that own the means of production, that is, the capitalists. In the other extreme of the structure of power are the workers aiming at teleological positions from whose conception, they are typically excluded. In between these two extremes, is the social class herein denominated "new middle class", which is related to the definition of intermediary teleological positions, which go from research and the transfer of the necessary knowledge for controlling the causal production processes up to the ideological support to the social structure. This class, neither owning the means of production nor directly producing material wealth, is distinguished from the "traditional" middle class, formed by the small bourgeoisie owning the means of production and generally directly producing material wealth. By the privileged relationship of the new middle class with the definition of teleological positions, subjectivity acquires central relevance in the functions it performs.

Resulting from this complex subjectivity development process, the social being presents characteristics that Lukács analyzes by means of the categories of singularity, particularity and universality. For LUKÁCS (2013, p. 152), individuals are always a singularity, in the sense that they always present specificities belonging to them. When in a social framework a number of singularities converge "statistically", this results in a particularity (LUKÁCS, 2013, p. 78). It is worth observing the "statistical" characteristic of particularity, since, as Lukács highlights (2013, p. 78), the singularity of an individual can never be reduced to a particularity. In sum, the universality category is related to the fact that all individuals belong to the "human gender", of universal character. The primal manifestation of this universality is represented by the very human species. Still this universality "per se", biological, is not yet the fulfilment of human beings as universal social beings, "for themselves". It is from coexistence and concrete cooperation, in a historical process, that human beings can manifest as universal social beings (LUKÁCS, 2013, p. 278-279).

Michel Clouscard, in a set of works published as from the early 1970s, analyzes the formation and the consolidation of the new middle class, strongly emphasizing the ideological and political repercussions of this process (CLOUSCARD, 1981, 1996, 2003, 2017). In his works, the author establishes a close relationship between the political positioning of the new middle class and the consumption standards it adopted, as can be observed in the set of capitalist societies. Hence, despite centering his analyses in the French society, the author's works provide pertinent elements to explain the political-ideological behavior of the new middle class in the different realities present in the contemporary capitalism.

It can be stated that, in his works, Clouscard retakes and updates Lukács's analyses of the ideological decline of bourgeoisie, stressing its political repercussions. As Lukács, Clouscard also attributes central importance to praxis, that is, the conscious and reflexive actions of individuals in society; the former are conditioned, but not mechanically determined, by the latter's social class. What Clouscard clarifies and emphasizes, going beyond Lukács in this issue, are the unconscious motivations whereby the condition of class exerts its influence on individuals. For this author, therefore, praxis and psyche are indissociable (CLOUSCARD, 2003, p. 131). However, the psyche evoked by Clouscard is not that of Psychoanalysis (CLOUSCARD, 2003, p. 96). For Clouscard, the psyche is

also integrated into praxis by means of a collective unconscious determined by the individuals' social conditions. As from the integration of praxis and psyche, CLOUSCARD (1996) interprets categories of cultural anthropology,such as totem, taboo and potlatch, based on historical materialism. In this sense, the use of the potlatch category performs a central role in Clouscard's work. The term is used in ethnography to explain a ceremony held among certain Native American peoples in which products owned by one of the members are distributed or destroyed (MEILLASSOUX, 1980, p. 429). For Clouscard, there is a specific form of this phenomenon in contemporary capitalism, the "potlatch of surplus value". Therefore, after the appropriation of surplus value by capitalists directly from the relations of production kept with the workers, these surplus value are partly distributed to some social classes, which moreover allow strengthening the ideological hegemony of the bourgeoisie. Owing to this ideological function, CLOUSCARD (1981; 2003) denominates this distribution process "potlach of surplus value", showing that the new middle class is one of its main recipients. The different forms of this "potlatch of surplus value" and the functions it performs in contemporary capitalist societies are issues thoroughly analyzed by CLOUSCARD (1981; 2003).

In sum, according to CLOUSCAR (1996, 2003), the ambiguity of the relations of production of the new middle class, who does not even own the means of production, or is the direct producer of material wealth, is transferred to its political expression. Over the history of capitalism, some fractions of the new middle class are aligned to the capitalist interests, whereas others, to the class interests of proletariat. According to Clouscard, these alliances are, however, mutant and troublesome, especially as regards the alliances between fractions of the new middle class and the proletariat, which can be analyzed by the history of social democracy up to the moment when, as from the late 1960s, the new middle class consummates its subordination to the class interests of the capitalists, taking on a "social libertarian" character. This is the history we seek to synthetically analyze in the next section.

The social classes in capitalism and the new middle class

The 1789 French Revolution is usually considered one of the most representative events of the rise of bourgeoisie to political power. After a period of changes dating back to the European Renaissance of the XIV century, private ownership and the formation of a workforce likely to be employed by "free contract" are consolidated, celebrated between the owners of the means of production and the workers deprived of them. A new ethics arises in this process, based on the notion that work is the source of wealth, legitimating the access to it. Furthermore, according to the bourgeois ideology, ownership constitutes the fruit of work accumulated by its very owner, and unlike previously in feudalism, it can no longer be justified by divine right. Hence, in the new societies emerging with the bourgeois revolutions, the access to wealth would ethically be justified solely by ownership and by work (CLOUSCARD, 2003, p. 49).

The progressive character of the bourgeois revolutions was undeniable. They give birth to Modernity, having as a basis the distinction between the State and civil society,

by instituting a Rule of Law before which all citizens would be equal. This is how the fundamental values of modern societies are derived, such as "liberty, equality and fraternity", declared in the heat of the French Revolution. It is worth noting that the major creators of this ideology were mainly representatives of the new middle class (such as philosophers, lawyers, writers and scientists).

Over time, nevertheless, the contradictions of the capitalist societies with their own values became increasingly blatant. The pauperization of workers steadily grew. Peasants and artisans are deprived of their means of production originating a working class subject to extreme poverty. In 1848, due to the popular uprisings bursting in different European countries, there is a deviation in the bourgeois ideology (NETTO, 1978, p. 18). Already consolidated in power and before the frightening upheaval of proletariat in the European political scenario, the bourgeoisie becomes defensive, no longer coherently taking on the values considered by this very bourgeoisie fundamental to society. A process is thus started, which LUKÁCS (1961, p. 31) calls "ideological decline of the bourgeois society". Progressively, hegemonic lines of thought in the capitalist societies started to undergo a growing influence of the methodological individualism, according to which the functioning of societies is explained by their individuals' behavior. The fundamental values of Modernity, such as liberty, equality and fraternity, thus start to be promoted based on a non-historical conception of the individual, independent of his/her social context. Interestingly, mainly members of the new middle class, such as Karl Marx, who, in a reaction to this trend, provided the foundations to new ideologies, such as the institution of a socialist society by means of a proletarian revolution. In this sense, it is also worth highlighting that, as from Marx's thought, later a number of members of the new middle class, such as Lenin and Trotsky and several others, performed a decisive role in significant social transformations, such as the 1917 Russian Revolution, aiming to implement a socialist society.

As from 1870-1880, capitalism enters its imperialist stage. The nationalist ideology following the consolidation of the then most recent States of the European capitalist powers causes divisions in the proletarian movement, in which the internationalist positions had been largely hegemonic until then (LUXEMBURG, 1976). The relations of the new middle class with the social projects polarizing the capitalist societies become more complex. The possibility of immediate improvements in the workers condition by their adherence to a national project is alleged to justify a gradual and pacific healing from capitalism. A "third way" is thus started to be conceived, whereby the ideological decline of bourgeoisie is intensified and influences the very workers' movement (LUKÁCS, 1961, p. 45). At the end of the First World War, after decades of bitter disputes, this process reaches a critical point, causing a final splitting in the socialist movement (LUXEMBURG, 1976), the phrase "social democracy" starting to designate the Marxism reformist lines.

After the Second World War, an intensive accumulation process is established in the advanced capitalist countries, in which technological innovations in the key industry, by reducing the cost of the means of production, such as machinery and other equipment, allows a systematic redistribution of productivity gains by real increases in wages, however without causing a reduction in the rates of profit (HUSSON, 1981; LIPIETZ,

1985). Associated to the effects of the reconstruction of the countries hit by the war and to a marked development of public services, that "Fordist capitalism"[3] (HUSSON, 1981; LIPIETZ, 1985) ensured the combination of a steady expansion in the consumer market, great stability in the economy and a vigorous economic growth in the major capitalist countries over about thirty years.

An extraordinary expansion of the new middle class occurs in this period. The formation and expansion in education and in research services, as well as that of the State bureaucracy and of professionals performing intermediary functions in private companies, make the new middle class an ever increasingly important element for the reproduction of society. Concurrently, the traditional middle class, represented by peasants, artisans and other workers that keep the ownership of their means of production, undergoes a severe decline. However, if on the one hand there has been a significant decline in the number of farmers in all the advanced capitalist countries, on the other hand, the agriculture in those countries mostly kept its family base, especially in those that attained greater wealth accumulation and social welfare (ABRAMOVAY, 1992; VEIGA, 1991). It is worth highlighting the contrast of the situations of those countries with that of Brazil. The progressive character of the bourgeois revolutions witnessed in the wealthier capitalist countries ensured ample access of family farmers to land. In Brazil, in turn, its development strongly marked by the "plantation" slave system, from which a highly concentrated agrarian structure is consolidated, dramatically limited the peasants' access to land ownership (WANDERLEY, 2014).

Fordism and the way in which the non-capitalist societies were formed in the decades following World War II had major repercussions on the capitalist societies lines of thought. Among them, the ones CLOUSCARD (1981, p. 81) called "Freudian-Marxist" stand out, which, according to him, clearly express the ideology of certain fractions of the new middle class. According to CLOUSCARD (2007), the works by MARCUSE (1966, 2002) are among the most representative of the Freudian-Marxism. For MARCUSE (2002), the advanced industrial societies are characterized as "consumer societies", into which the very working class was integrated, thus losing its interest in a social revolution. Yet these societies do not cease to have as a principle human and nature exploitation, which can only be kept by an alienated and totalitarian social system, existing both in advanced capitalist countries and in the then so-called socialist countries. The difference between these two blocs, representative of advanced industrial societies, would be the fact that, whereas in the countries denominated socialist, totalitarianism was politically manifested clearly and openly, in capitalist countries, totalitarianism is exerted by an economic-technocratic reasoning that prevents any opposition to the social structure through their political institutions pretentiously democratic (MARCUSE, 2002). Nevertheless, in the repressive, alienating and totalitarian character of advanced industrial societies, the Freudian-Marxists envisioned the possibility of social revolution. For MARCUSE (1966), with the working class integrated to society, the only revolutionary power that could rebel against the totalitarian oppression of the advanced industrial societies was in the very

3. Or "State monopoly capitalism", phrase employed by Michel Clouscard in his works.

drive for life, whose ultimate origins can be found in sexual desire. That is why young people that, according to Freudian-Marxism, more intensely feel the repression to their desires, would be the forefront of this revolutionary movement (MARCUSE, 1966). The beatnik movement which emerged in the 1950s in the United States, the counter-culture as from the 1960s and mainly the great student protests occurring in different countries in the late 1960s, apparently confirmed the Freudian-Marxist theses.

However, CLOUSCARD (2017, p.128) states there was no revolution whatsoever. For him, in the youth movements occurring after WWII, including the French student protests in May 1968, there were no real intentions of revolutionizing capitalism. What actually occurred in this period were political expressions of the new middle class. According to CLOUSCARD (2017, p. 129), if, on the one hand, the student protests in the late 1960s symbolized the establishment of a specific political identity of the new middle class, on the other hand, that identity implied its full subordination to the capitalists' interests.

According to CLOUSCARD (2017), understand this phenomenon requires analyzing the relations between consumption and production in Fordist capitalism. Hence, even if the mass production of durable goods was one of the main characteristics of Fordist capitalism, it did not generate a "consumer society", as stated by Freudian-Marxism (CLOUSCARD, 2017, p. 50). Conversely, the durable assets that workers, direct producers of material wealth, had access to solely allowed keeping the conditions of social reproduction compatible with the accelerated growth pace of accumulation of capital. The diversification in consumption observed along the development of Fordist capitalism was largely reserved to the new middle class and to the bourgeoisie, since only the latter presented a solvable demand capable of ensuring the achievement of the generated surplus value (CLOUSCARD, 2017, p. 71).

Yet one difficulty remained. How to stimulate a significant increase in the consumption of classes that already enjoyed a relatively high consumption? As CLOUSCARD (1981) analyzes, the answer to this question can be found by observing the relations between production and consumption, as they are studied by cultural anthropology. In this sense, for the new middle class to be able to increase and to diversify its consumption, it had to overcome the "old" capitalist culture that subordinated consumption to ownership and to work, replacing it with a new culture, by the way, no less capitalist, in which the principle of reality, corresponding to the fact that it is only possible to consume what has been produced by work, had to be replaced by the principle of desire, which "liberates" consumption, subjectively unbinding it from work (CLOUSCARD, 1981, p. 18).

The constitution of this new culture required an intense conditioning of individuals. It is interesting to highlight the way in which CLOUSCARD (1981) analyzes this issue, which shows the importance of its anthropological approach. According to the author, children are the prime non-producing consumers, their behavior being governed by the principle of pleasure and desire. That is why, traditionally, only adults, if considered productive, are fully accepted as members of society. Thus the existence of rites of passage by which teenagers or young adults have to demonstrate, even if symbolically, the skill of being productive, subordinating the principle of desire to that of reality (CLOUSCARD, 1981, p. 20). Rewards derived from success are important. This passage to adult life is often

what fosters marriage (and sexual pleasure) to a young person and, therefore, access to the power and to the respect that only those bringing up a family can have. Only then is the socialization of the individual entirely fulfilled. In Fordist capitalism, the characteristics of young people as non-producing consumers make them the major social foundation for elaborating an "ideology of desire" (CLOUSCARD, 2017). Generated in Fordist capitalism, this ideology progressively becomes hegemonic in the set of capitalist societies. Being young thus becomes the ideal of a whole civilization (CLOUSCARD, 1981). Being young in contemporary capitalism is (to a certain extent) being transgressive, irresponsible, boasting and permissive to consume "freely", according to desires and not according to needs. Transgression is fashion, and the other way around and, since fashion utmostly serves to turn useful objects into "obsolete", increase in consumption and contestation to the "consumer society" start to have a common foundation, supported by the same ideology. For example, the young man in his new car that does not miss nightlife and the hippie exerting marginal activities for not being inserted in the "consumer society" are just different signals derived by the same ideology of desire, which is supported by a privileged access to the product of social work, denominated by Clouscard (1996, p. 24; 2017) as "potlatch of surplus value".

Yet a difficulty still remained. The ideology of desire was contradictory to the repressive character of capitalist institutions, such as schools (including universities), political parties, unions and the very family. This contradiction is what causes the French student protests in May 1968, considered by CLOUSCARD (2017) as a symbolic "political emancipation" of the new middle class. However, stresses the author, student protests were not the only important event in 1968. In that year, France faced the largest workers' strike in its history. The workers' motivations, nonetheless, were distinct from those of the students' movement. The workers' strike was mainly motivated by the imposition of increasingly harsher work conditions by the dissemination of Taylorist methods (whereby the worker is merely a link in the supply chain, performing operations mechanically and fast) which made workers a mere appendage to the machines. In this context, Clouscard's theory (2017) is that students' protests, rather than constituting a movement allied to that of the workers (as it is usually considered), was a true counter-revolution. Conversely, note that the defeat of the workers' movement that occurred at the time was due to the reaction of the conservative forces, rather than to the students' movement. On the contrary, both the students' and the workers' movement opposed the capitalist domination, despite their different goals. Anyway, whereas the workers' movement was practically forgotten in the following years, the new middle class takes on its own political identity; CLOUSCARD (1981) calls it "libertarian social democracy". From then onwards, the new middle class expresses its revolt against repressive institutions, despite doing so to the detriment of the social framework revolution, thus starting to advocate the particularities of certain social groups to the detriment of a universal emancipatory project (CLOUSCARD, 2017).

This process, however, will only later become clearer, with Freudian-Marxism turning increasingly more "Freudian" and increasingly less "Marxist", up to the point at which Marxism is fully discarded in favor of the so-called "post-modernist" approaches, strongly influenced by Psychoanalysis (CLOUSCARD, 1981, p. 176). According to CLOUSCARD

(1996, p. 70), there is the consolidation of the final abandonment on the part of the dominating new middle class lines of thought of any reference allowing it to analyze the class conflicts; this makes that class incapable of contradicting the neoliberal hegemony, thus leading it to objectively (and sometimes deliberately) adhere to neoliberalism.

Peasantry and Agroecology

From its "community form", as LINARES (2009a, 2009b) theorizes certain forms of peasants' organization existing in the Andean Altiplano since the time of its colonization by Europeans, up to the unions composing the Peasants' Confederation of France (Confédération Paysanne, 2017), keeping a certain autonomy in decision-making stands out as an essential characteristic of the peasants. The relations of production based on kinship, resulting from the exclusive employment of the workforce available in the family, are not thus enough to characterize a family agricultural production unit as peasant. For this, certain conditions are also necessary for the farmer to be able to allocate the resources available, choosing the techniques deemed more adequate as from his own assessment of the conditions of the production unit.

This autonomy, exactly, is what makes peasants adopt production systems more compatible with the dynamic of natural systems, insofar as it makes peasants tend to diversify their production according to the very diversity of the resources available (SILVA NETO, 2017). This peasants' production logic is directly opposed to the dynamic of agriculture determined by Agribusiness, which promotes the concentration of production in a few productive units specialized by an extreme artificialization of agroecosystems. However, this concentration presents few economic advantages to society, at the same time as it causes severe damages to the environment and to human health (SILVA NETO, 2017, p. 122-145).

Class interests in the agroecological field

In Brazil, the term Agroecology started to be disseminated in the 1980s as an approach that seeks to provide scientific foundations to alternative agriculture, thus providing a certain conceptual unity to its different lines (ALTIERI, 1983). Yet only in the year 2000, in its IV National Congress did the Landless Rural Workers Movement (MST, in Portuguese) adopt Agroecology to advocate. After a period of intense debate over its policy for fostering the collectivization of production in the agrarian reform settlements, with full adherence to the dominant technological standard, the MST decided to explicitly take on a peasant identity, as well as Agroecology for developing a new technological standard in the settlements (LUZZI, 2007, p. 125). Also at that time, the MST started to participate in the Via Campesina, consolidating its identity as a peasant movement (LUZZI, 2007, p. 124). It is worth highlighting that the adherence to Agroecology and to the peasant identity was integrated into the MST quest for an ample agrarian reform, having as a condition a structural change in the existing social order, considered possible only by the implementation of a socialist society. Hence, the quest for socialism was taken on by the MST from its early years (FERNANDES, 2008). This MST positioning, by the

way, is corroborated by the fact that, despite the central importance of family agriculture in the development of European countries, this did not prevent the European agrarian issue from adopting a progressive agrarian concentration dynamic, strongly intensified in recent years by the "land grabbing" phenomenon, that is, purchasing extensive tracts of land, especially financed by foreign pension funds, a phenomenon also affecting countries in Africa and Latin America (PLOEG et al., 2015). For the MST, therefore, Agroecology is a component of the peasant class quest for the transformation of society towards socialism, which irreducibly opposes it to Agribusiness.

As regards the new middle class, it is firstly worth stressing that, objectively, there are several points of convergence of its interests with those of the peasantry, especially concerning the agrarian issue. For example, the close relation that has been established between the agrarian and environmental issues attributes to fractions of the new middle class (represented by researchers and technicians) the responsibility of creating and transferring knowledge to foster alternatives that allow for sustainable solutions. These solutions may be useful to a wide social sensitization favoring the agrarian reform that concurrently promotes the peasants' access to the land and to overcoming the technological standard currently hegemonic in agriculture (SILVA NETO, 2017, p. 204-205). Yet important fractions of the new middle class (especially those connected to the universities), over the last decades, have contributed to creating a political environment of obscuring the peasantry claim agenda, as analyzed by PORTO (2015). As the author highlights, whereas an academic production is observed to have impelled the institution of public policies that, for the first time in Brazil, favor the reproduction of certain layers of peasantry, these policies are inserted into a neoliberal hegemony context conferring them a compensatory character, relegating agrarian reform to a secondary level and without ever threatening the economic and political power of Agribusiness. Moreover, as evidenced by FAVARETO (2006), this movement for obscuring the agrarian issue also exerts a strong influence on rural workers unions.

In this ideological context, Agroecology is observed to present a marked trend of the new middle class to primarily consider it as a kind of access to healthy food and environmental preservation or recovery. From this perspective, peasants are considered more as social groups whose particularities related to their "way of life" and traditional "knowledge" should be preserved, rather than a social class conflicting with Agribusiness. This position is evidence by the scant interest of the new middle class representatives in accurately and objectively analyzing the material conditions of the peasantry social reproduction faced with the Agribusiness domination in different concrete situations of agriculture development. As SILVA NETO (2014) points out, this would imply considering the agroecological transition as a true social process, so as to overcome the hegemonic methodological individualism in the capitalist society. Nevertheless, the agroecological transition is generally considered only in the ambit of the production unit (ALTIERI; NICHOLS, 2007; GLIESSMAN; ROSEMAYER, 2010), which prevents the analysis of the class conflicts implied by this process.

This results in a strong trend of Agroecology to be reduced to a sort of organic agriculture, restricted to certain market niches, with productive processes strictly con-

trolled by an intricate certification process. Even if the participative certification system, at times employed in the Agroecology field (whereby the very group of farmers involved conduct the inspection of the productive processes), represents an undeniable advancement in relation to the certification systems controlled by private companies, the real control of the productive process is exerted by the technicians that must necessarily follow the groups of farmers. Anyway, the loss of control over the productive process by the farmers occurring in organic production contradicts the logic of peasant agriculture. Therefore, notwithstanding the reiterated claims of indivisibility between Agroecology and peasantry, the consumption of organic products being restricted to market niches and the adoption of the necessary forms of control to its certification impose major restrictions on the farmers autonomy, turning them into mere family farmers. By being turned into a form of organic agriculture, Agroecology hence tends to merely occupy a niche within the very Agribusiness.

Let us highlight, however, that from a strictly technical viewpoint, the importance of organic agriculture as a way to generate technical knowledge for developing Agroecology is undeniable. Yet we reiterate that, for a real change in the technological standard currently hegemonic, it is vital for the agroecological transition to be conceived as a social process, rather than merely individual. In this sense, the generalization of Agroecology can hardly occur without there being a social project that allows establishing clear and coherent strategies for promoting a transition in the whole of agriculture. The construction of such a project undergoes the acknowledgement of the agroecological field as a whole of the centrality of the peasant class quest faced with Agribusiness.

Final Considerations

Essentially based on the thought of György Lukács and Michel Clouscard, the discussion held herein evidenced that the divergences between the existing class interests within the agroecological field can be of great importance for understanding its real relations with Agribusiness. It is worth pointing out that it mainly aims to clarify the non-intentional, tacit relations, manifested more by their consequences than by the intentions explicitly declared. These relations result from objective social processes, which cannot be understood simply as from the discourse of those participating in them. Therefore, despite the reiterated criticisms formulated in the ambit of the agroecological field to Agribusiness, there is a clear trend in Agroecology of integrating into the logic of the former. In fact, the contradiction between an opposing discourse and a conservative practice, evidenced by a libertarian attitude in the promotion of certain particularities, but which, in practice, is unaware of the class struggles, are characteristic of the new middle class we verified in the agroecological field, which were widely analyzed by Michel Clouscard, who furthered the conceptions developed by György Lukács.

By explicitly adopting a peasant identity, occurring together with its adherence to the agroecological field, the MST takes on the peasantry fight for its autonomy, which comes to complement its claim for an ample agrarian reform, as a central element to its social emancipation (LUZZI, 2007, p. 108; FERNANDES, 2008, p. 146). As from

the discussion in the article, we can indicate that it may be at this point that the major contradiction lies between the peasants' class interests and those of the new middle class within the agroecological field. The fact is that for the peasants, as expressed by the MST, the emancipation of all human beings by means of a deep transformation of the existing social order seems to be far more clearly shown than for the new middle class as a necessary condition for its own emancipation.

As analyzed by HUSSON (1996, p. 41), the answer that has been privileged by capitalists after the depletion of the neoliberal proposal for the present crisis is the use of its economic and political power to expand its participation in the distribution of social wealth, which has largely occurred (and shall increasingly occur) to the detriment of the new middle class. The social polarization thus tends to sharpen. Therefore, the question to be posed in the agroecological field is if the representatives of the new middle class will be able to objectively change their position towards the bourgeoisie and join the peasants for building a true alternative to Agribusiness. Due to the crisis, even though the objective conditions impel it even more in this direction, the huge difficulties presented by the subjective conditions of the representatives of the new middle class for a convergence of interests with the working classes should not be underestimated. Firstly, because this convergence primarily depends on having the representatives recognize the consequences, to its full extent, of the class character of the capitalist societies. Secondly, the convergence of interests between the peasantry and the new middle class within the agroecological field requires the latter to consider itself a member of what CLOUSCARD (1996, p. 95; 2003, p. 131) denominates "collective worker", that is, that it clearly and coherently admits the social character of its work and its identity as a working class faced with capital. According to the discussion conducted herein, both conditions have as a presupposition the reversal of practically a century of growing political-ideological subordination of the new middle class to the interests of capitalists. The fact that this subordination is often unconscious makes this reversal even more difficult and complex.

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Original Article

AGROECOLOGY AND SOCIAL CLASSES, AN APPROACH BASED ON THE WORKS BY GYÖRGY LUKÁCS AND MICHEL CLOUSCARD

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AGROECOLOGY AND SOCIAL CLASSES, AN APPROACH BASED ON THE WORKS BY GYÖRGY LUKÁCS AND MICHEL CLOUSCARD

***Abstract*:** The article proposes an approach based on György Lukács's and Michel Clouscard´s works for analyzing class interests within the agroecological field, especially those involving the peasantry and intellectual workers, such as researchers, lecturers and technicians, intellectuals being designated as part of the 'new middle class'. The divergences between the interests of these existing classes in the agroecological field are evidenced to be fundamental for understanding its true relations with Agribusiness. The hegemony of the political-ideological positions of the new middle class has generated a tendency of Agroecology to integrate into Agribusiness, to the detriment of the class interests of the peasantry. A change in the position of the new middle class would require the reversal of its trajectory, summarized in the article, of more than a century of growing political-ideological subordination to the capitalists' interests.

***Key words*:** agroecological field, class struggle, peasantry.

AGROECOLOGIA E CLASSES SOCIAIS, UMA ABORDAGEM BASEADA NAS OBRAS DE GYÖRGY LUKÁCS E MICHEL CLOUSCARD

***Resumo*:** No artigo é proposta uma abordagem baseada nas obras de György Lukács e Michel Clouscard para a análise dos interesses de classe no interior do campo agroecológico, especialmente os que envolvem o campesinato e trabalhadores intelectuais tais como pesquisadores, professores e técnicos, sendo estes últimos designados como parte da "nova classe média". A abordagem permitiu evidenciar que as divergências entre os interesses dessas classes existentes no campo agroecológico são fundamentais para a compreensão das suas verdadeiras relações com o Agronegócio. A hegemonia das posições político-ideológicas da nova classe média tem gerado uma tendência da Agroecologia a se integrar ao Agronegócio, em detrimento dos interesses do campesinato. Uma mudança de posição

da nova classe média exigiria a reversão da sua trajetória, sintetizada no artigo, de mais de um século de crescente subordinação politico-ideológica aos interesses dos capitalistas.

***Palavras-chave*:** campo agroecológico, luta de classes, campesinato.

AGROECOLOGÍA Y CLASES SOCIALES, UN ENFOQUE BASADO EN LOS TRABAJOS DE GYÖRGY LUKÁCS Y MICHEL CLOUSCARD

Resumen: En el artículo se propone un enfoque basado en las obras de György Lukács y Michel Clouscard para el análisis de los intereses de clase dentro del campo agroecológico, especialmente los que involucra al campesinado y trabajadores intelectuales tales como investigadores, profesores y técnicos, siendo estos últimos designados como parte de la 'nueva clase media'. El enfoque permitió evidenciar que las divergencias entre los intereses de esas clases existentes en el campo agroecológico son fundamentales para la comprensión de sus verdaderas relaciones con el Agronegocio. La hegemonía de las posiciones político-ideológicas de la nueva clase media ha generado una tendencia de la Agroecología a integrarse al Agronegocio, en detrimento de los intereses del campesinado. Un cambio de posición de la nueva clase media requeriría la reversión de su trayectoria, sintetizada en el artículo, de más de un siglo de creciente subordinación político-ideológica a los intereses de los capitalistas.

***Palabras clave*:** campo agroecológico, lucha de clases, campesinado.