

# Revista de Ciencias Sociales

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Vol. IV

Marzo, 1960

Núm. 1

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## FOREWORD

THIS special Caribbean number of *Ciencias Sociales* is the first publishing venture of the Institute of Caribbean Studies, established at the University of Puerto Rico in 1958. The editors of the journal have not merely opened its pages to a collection of articles gathered by the Institute, but have also sanctioned three departures from their usual editorial policy. First, this issue of *Ciencias Sociales* is twice the customary length; second, it contains articles in three languages rather than exclusively in Spanish; and third, its subject matter extends beyond the social sciences to social and institutional history, linguistics and even geology. For the free hand which has been given us, and for the help and counsel of the editors of *Ciencias Sociales*, we express appreciation. We also acknowledge our gratitude to the Ford Foundation for assistance which has made it possible, among many other things, to cover the extra expenses of this expanded issue.

Unless a magazine is well endowed to commission articles—which academic journals notoriously are not—the editing of any number is attended by uncertainties and surprises. In our case, the net was flung out to catch a wide representation of authors, themes and geographic regions. Inevitably, some of the fish eluded capture. As the reader inspects those that did not, however, he will perceive certain unpremeditated groupings of the articles, and certain typically Caribbean themes which echo and re-echo on many levels of specificity and with many modulations. Underlying these themes he will sense the overwhelming presence of the land—source of fortune for the few, scene of grinding labor for the many. There are descriptions of the land itself and of its crops, of methods of farming it and of marketing its produce, of social organizations and hierarchies to which it gives rise,

and of schemes of redistributing it, for using it more efficiently or for making it a more attractive setting in which to live.

The essay by Dr. Weaver stands alone in reminding us of a pre-historic geological unity to the Caribbean, a unity more definitive than any that has characterized the human order during the flicker of time in which the region has been a home for American Indians and later for people from all corners of the earth. Indeed, what marks the Caribbean in the social, historical realm is precisely its lack of unity. This may grieve the economic planner or political federationist, of course, but not the scholar. What makes the Caribbean region attractive to him, what makes it in fact a *region*, is not a supposed unity, but the parallel patterns and lines of development which it exhibits. As a differentiated continuum of contrast and similarity, the Caribbean was rightly called, in an essay published in 1923, a "sociological laboratory."

If we proceed with our rough grouping of the articles, this "laboratory" characteristic of the region becomes clear. After the essay on geology, the four historical pieces would seem to fall together. Dr. Hoetink discusses current notions of the segmented or plural society in the context of the Caribbean, then, in a vertical slice through time, shows his hypothesis helps to establish a social trajectory for the multiethnic community of the little island of Curaçao. Dr. Goveia, cutting horizontally, offers a comparative analysis of the slave laws of the chief colonizing powers. In so doing, she prepares us to consider more dispassionately the controversial question as to the ways in which the constitutional and legal traditions of a given European nation served to mollify or harshen the institution of slavery. Professor Teychenié presents a near-exhaustive inventory of an eighteenth-century plantation, to sharpen our vision of the plantation system at the point of day-to-day operation. In his study of the Moret Law, Dr. Smith shows how an event so decisive for Caribbean society as the abolition of slavery can be determined by international power factors quite extraneous to the tensions of the local scene. One might include Dr. Alvarez Nazario's piece as a fifth in the historical group, for it points to Africanisms in language as a mark of the lasting and complexly interwoven heritage of the Dark Continent in Caribbean cultures.

Although the remaining six articles have contemporary reference, all of them describe situations or address problems which issue from the historical context mentioned. The essay by Dr. Thorne generalizes about economic tendencies common to the Caribbean and other underdeveloped areas. The specific case of Haiti is taken up by Dr. Mintz and M. Laroche—one an anthropologist who has done intensive field

work in that country and the other a Haitian agronomist who manages an experimental farm. The sweep of detail which they provide on the contemporary peasant economy, virtually unique in the hemisphere, is in striking contrast to the picture of Haitian plantation life of less than two centuries ago which we derive from the study by Professor Teychenié. In his essay on planning Mr. Knight points out the critical lag between social need and political understanding in the fast-changing Caribbean of today. Dr. Mathews takes a look at a particular type of planning, land reform, comparing an advanced stage in Puerto Rico with an incipient and explosive one in Cuba and drawing the morals in each case. His historical introduction shows the inevitability of such reforms in modern times where, as in the Caribbean, land monopoly, population pressure and rural poverty have gone hand in hand. Finally, Drs. Rogler and Hollingshead direct our attention to the mushrooming urban population and to the need not merely for new physical and institutional arrangements but also for an understanding of the anxieties and hallucinations which, in a time of change, represent a blind groping for old ways to elude the confusions of the new.

Some of the articles are works of scholarship that rest upon thorough field work or archival research. Others are heuristic attempts to frame hypotheses for future study. Still others are tracts for the times, addressed to specific current problems. This balance of speculation, "pure" research and applied knowledge is one which we shall maintain as our plans for training, research and publication materialize. So far as the social sciences are concerned, the point of departure for these plans is the Inter-American Program for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences in the Caribbean Area, to be established within the Institute of Caribbean Studies in January, 1961, in cooperation with the Organization of American States. The person responsible for organizing this Program will be the distinguished Mexican anthropologist, Angel Palerm. The agreement which brings the Program into being and describes its nature is printed following this Foreword.

This introduction should not close without a tribute to the many scholars and institutions that have been working in all phases of Caribbean studies. In the field of social sciences, the impressive and groundbreaking research that has been carried on at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University College of the West Indies, Jamaica, deserves particular notice. It is our desire to collaborate in every way possible with those who have blazed the trail.

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