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THE RURAL-URBAN DICHOTOMY IN THE FORMATION OF PUERTO RICO'S CULTURAL IDENTITY

"Voy a cantar la vida campesina,
ser jíbaro es orgullo de Borinquen,
ver crecer el ganao en la colina,
y que el cadillo y el moriviví me hinquen¹."
Haciendo punto en otro son, 1974

"... el zum zum de los mosquitos
y el pío pío de los pollitos
no me dejan descansar²."
La sonora ponceña, 1976

Like most contemporary Caribbean societies, Puerto Rico is now overwhelmingly urban. The 1980 Population Census classifies as urban nearly 70% of inhabitants (and this, obviously, does not include the hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans living in urban areas of the United States and maintaining important ties with "the Island"). For that same year the agricultural work-force was only 4.9% of total employment, and agriculture contributed less than 4% of the total gross national product.

Puerto Rico's rural-agricultural world is practically dead. Nevertheless, in the 70s, songs like "La vida campesina", from which the first quotation above is taken, received considerable popular acclaim. Why does singing to an almost non-existent world gets to be so popular? How can we explain the idealized persistence of a world which is no longer lived?... or does it live in some ways?³

This paper tries to outline, through preliminary notes, the changing meanings of the urban-rural dichotomy in Puerto Rico and the cultural significance of the relationship between country and city.

THE FORTIFICATION CITY AND THE RUNAWAYS

It is common in Puerto Rico to refer to "the Island" as the opposite of San Juan. In colloquial language "the Island" is simply the rest of the country. One is either from San Juan or from "the Island." If one is in San Juan and going to any other part of the country, one says that one is going "to the Island."

The "Island" is also usually identified with the mountains, while coastal plains and valleys form a considerable part of the country. A few years ago, I participated in the funeral of the nationalist hero Andrés Figueroa-Cordero in his hometown of Aguada, a municipality on the west coast. All the eulogies referred to this "jíbaro de la montaña" (mountain peasant), yet in Aguada there are no mountains. How did the mountains come to represent the "Island", and the "Island", the country, in contradistinction to the city? How did a type of rural land become the symbol of national identity? Faced with an overwhelming contrasting reality, which classes have tried to maintain this symbol and which have challenged it?

The cultural significance of the rural-urban dichotomy is at the core of the formation process of our national cultural identity. The first important distinction between the rural and urban worlds emerged in the first three centuries of European colonization of the Caribbean.

Both the descriptions of our first chroniclers and the information gathered by archaeologists point to the fact that the Indians in the Caribbean lived in communities ("Yucayekes") (Colón Vázquez 1974; Morison, 1963). For the communitarian mode of production on which this social formation was based, the isolated peasant dwelling made no sense. European colonization (through Spanish *encomiendas* and British and French plantations) destroyed this social formation, and with it the significance of villages. Defeated by the Europeans and faced not only by forced labor, but also by the destruction of their society, many Amerindians tried to run away, hiding in the islands' interior.

The rich material attraction of other Spanish areas in America did not foster the economic colonization of Puerto Rico. The island's economy, in contrast to British and French Caribbean colonies, was thus very weak during its first three centuries of settlement. The military-strategic importance of Puerto Rico for the Spanish empire turned San Juan, nonetheless, into an extremely well-kept fortification city. This garrison was subsidized by the metal-rich colonies, particularly México, as it was mainly a defense and drinking water supplier for vessels between Spain and México.

Some social scientists have characterized Caribbean societies as plantation societies and have argued that the basic common cultural feature in our

fundamental first centuries of existence is black slavery. They are correct, but only partially so. Rather one should see plantation slavery from the perspective of the dialectical contradictions it contained within it: plantation and counter-plantation; slavery and *cimarronería* (marronage). Our truly common cultural backbone is this dialectical tension. Due to our position within European expansion, the tension between plantation and counter-plantation was always present throughout the Caribbean. Some societies, like Cuba, encompassed both types of these counter social formations within itself; others, like Barbados, were mainly plantation islands, and others, counter-plantation societies, which is what I would like to argue for Puerto Rico (outside San Juan) until the 18th century. This brings us back to the main theme of this essay.

The urban-rural dichotomy is intertwined with the plantation-counter-plantation tension in Caribbean cultural history. The *cimarrón* or runaway social formation involved two related aspects: the (economic) opposition to slave work and the (political) opposition to State rule.⁴ And in colonial Latin America the State was mostly represented by the city.

With the exception of San Juan in the northeast and the village of San Germán in the southwest, the rest of the island of Puerto Rico was, for decades, populated by people that were escaping for some reason: by runaways, in the ample sense used, for example, by the great Cuban novelist Carpentier (1957: 69). Some of these runaways were Indians, fleeing from the serfdom of the *encomiendas* to the point that in the 18th century to live isolated in the mountains and hills was said to be "living like indians" (e.g. Iñigo 1959: 185), when, as mentioned earlier, the settlement pattern of the Taino social formation was absolutely opposite to this. Other runaways might have been slaves, fleeing the plantations of the neighboring British or French islands. But the runaways could also have been Spaniards, who for different reasons were aiming to live outside the jurisdiction of the State.

It should not be forgotten that the Spanish colonization of America was beginning just at the time when Jews and Moors were being expelled from the Iberian peninsula. There existed great State hostility and repression against them, which was manifested in the Inquisition and the "limpieza de sangre" procedure (racial analysis of ancestors) before appointment to government posts, participation in municipal governing boards and many other instances of State action. After so many centuries of a large Jewish and Moorish presence in Spain, 'racial' intermixture was considerable, and faced with such an official climate of repression, it is natural to assume that many Spaniards, having some Jewish or Moorish ancestry, would be fearful of the Spanish State and would try to emigrate to America in order to seek a less oppressive presence of the State.⁵ Puerto Rico was the first port of call. The

Arab background of an important segment of our *cimarronería* is evident in the music that this social formation produced (Alvarez, 1979), a point to which we shall return later. Eighteenth century documents stress also the incorporation of Spanish stowaways and deserters into this rural world (e.g. Iñigo 1959: 133; O'Reilly, 1965.⁶

Counter-plantation cultures in the Caribbean vary in terms of the nature of the presence of their opposite. In countries with strong slave plantation economies, the counter-plantation is a menace, because it becomes attractive as an alternative for working slaves. For that reason runaways are fiercely pursued, and runaway societies attacked. The runaways form villages (*palenques*) for mutual defense and for the organization of an alternative, but besieged, existence. In societies of weak plantation economies, but with a strong garrison city, marronage is the opposite of retreating in active opposition. The urban military will not perceive the rural world as a menace but as a world of primitive indolence. The runaways do not feel a need to organize, and their anti-urban nature hampers the formation of *palenques*. This type of counterplantation society is characterized by isolated family dwellings based on a family-based petty mode of production in subsistence agriculture. Shifting cultivation gave this form of life a seminomadic nature. The runaways shared this type of economy and sought a retreat from the sphere of State jurisdiction or influence. It was, basically, a natural economy, the opposite of the plantation commercialism. It developed, nonetheless, in an epoch and region of growing international trade. Marronage commerce was channeled, outside State jurisdiction, through smuggling, whose importance is emphasized over and over again in reports and descriptions of the period.

For this rural world, the city represented the State: it represented that which one had to retreat from. The city was the garrison, the world of officialdom, which in Puerto Rico meant mainly the military. But the city had, of course, also dwellers with other occupations. Among these the artisans were important. The artisans formed a social class, and acted as such, by the late nineteenth century; we will come back to them later. Here it is useful to mention that these artisans, mostly mulattos and tawny moors,⁷ provide the only bridges of social communication between the distinct worlds of the fortification city and the *cimarronería*. In 1728 and 1729, urban officialdom was shaken by the growing power of tawny-moor Miguel Enriquez, the son of a shoemaker from a village adjacent to San Juan. As a corsair and privateer, he held control over the non-urban force, facilitating smuggling, through which he became one of the richest persons in the Caribbean. With fear, jealousy and distrust, the "Dones" of the fortification city launched the juridical force of the State against this threat to their power,

in order (a chronicle says) "that he will end his life in the low fortune of its birth bed" (Miyares, 1775: 17).

THE "ESTANCIEROS" TOWNS

By the beginning of the 18th century Puerto Rico had only three towns. By mid-century there were nine, but in the second half of the century twenty-six new towns were founded, and twenty-six more emerged in the first half of the 19th century.⁸ What was happening in Puerto Rico which can help us explain this sudden florescence of urban presence in the countryside? What effects did this have on the cultural significance of the urban-rural relationship?

The town-foundation boom of the second half of the 18th century coincides with changes in Spanish imperial policies intent on transforming Puerto Rico from a dependent colony to a productive one. This transformation became the more necessary when in the last decades of that century the Mexican subsidy came to an end and, even more so, with the end of the Empire through the Independence wars of the second and third decade of the 19th century. Commercial agriculture was fostered, along with greater institutional penetration that would facilitate the collection of taxes and guarantee the use of official channels for trade. European farmer immigration was stimulated and Crown land was offered for commercial agriculture. It was mainly these farmers ("*estancieros*"), who founded most of the new towns (Morales Muñoz 1944: 12–13; also 1943, 1946 and 1948).

These towns represented the State in the rural areas, with a church, a military post, and with a military official from among the residents, who also served as mayor and judge. He was also in charge of collecting taxes and of organizing the voluntary militia. Only ten propertied residents were needed to present a petition for the official establishment of a town.

The primary source documents quoted at length by Morales Muñoz (1948: 259; 1944: 193) refer to a preoccupation with possible opposition to these towns. But this opposition never materialized. The runaway world of Puerto Rico's first peasantry was extremely vulnerable and contradictory. Its challenge was that of escape, not of attack. It sought to live outside the State's jurisdiction, not because of active opposition to the State, but because it did not wish to be subordinated to it.

Eighteenth century descriptions (Iñigo, Miyares, Ledrú), all emphasize the peasant's love of freedom, but it was the freedom of retreat. Retreat expressed a feeling of inferiority. For a Christian with some Moorish ancestry in Cadiz in 1492 there was nothing worse than his Moorish ancestry; the Spaniards were the conquerors and the Indians the defeated; black was

identified with the slave plantation, the opposite of marronage. Therefore, the State, the world from which one is retreating, not because it is bad, but because it has beaten you, acquired clear racial overtones and a evident "racial" identification. At the same time, there was a contradictory attempt at a non-Statist Hispanization, through the development of popular religious practices and "the betterment of race" (*mejorar la raza*) i.e. trying to get whiter offspring. (See Quintero Rivera 1987). An eighteenth century chronicle describes the ease with which hinterland peasants gave their daughters in marriage to poor white stowaways and deserters, so as to get a white family. Iñigo adds that though most creoles are tawny-moors, "they show pride in their Spanish origin" (Iñigo 1959: 182; see also Moralex Muñoz 1946: 116–117). The foundation of a town was then seen as an advance for this rural world, because the sacraments would "hispanicize" you. To die as an infidel was at least an indiscretion in this contradictory social formation.

In spite of the foundings of a growing number of Spanish churches, work and daily life remained basically rural. Towns were very small and during the day they were usually empty (Iñigo 1959: 122; Miyares 1951: 88). The sort of urban life of the small town became associated with the special occasion: a wedding, baptism, patron Saint holidays, some important economic transaction. In this way, small town life became idealized. People lived in the country, but if possible had also a town house for these special celebrations (Picó 1986: 112). The best clothing was set aside for going to town.

This positive evaluation of small-town life persisted in areas of independent small-holder agricultural production even during the first half of the 20th century. (Meléndez Muñoz 1936).

PONCE, THE SEIGNEURIAL CITY

The nineteenth century was characterized in Puerto Rico by the emergence of commercial agriculture, as the moving force of the island's economy. This type of agriculture reached its maximum development with the capitalist plantation in the early twentieth century, but its foundations were laid in the nineteenth. The percentage of cultivated acres dedicated to commercial crops increased from 30% in 1827 to 65% in 1899 (in 1920 it was to reach 80%). Cultivated land increased from 5.8% to 14.3% in this period (in 1920 it would surpass 30%). A strong process of primitive accumulation was also under way and the proportion of landowners' families was reduced by half from 1830 to 1899 (from 46.6% of families to less than 25%).

In other writings I have tried to explain this process and the contradictory *hacienda* seigneurial economy that it fostered, inserted in world capitalist

trade, but based on servile relations of production. Here, I will mention only its implications for the urban-rural dichotomy.

The development of an export economy, fostered by the colonial metropolis, implied further regulation of commercial activity, and thus a war against smuggling. Trade was concentrated in some coastal towns where custom houses were established. In 1861 only six towns, as well as San Juan, had custom houses for both imports and exports. The three more important cities administered 50% of exports and 75% of imports (Vizcarrondo in Ledrú 1863: 69).

A smugglers' trade, scattered along the coast, was replaced by official commerce, centralized basically in the three principal ports. The dying world of marronage was incapable of articulating an opposition. Opposition was expressed only in typically individualistic terms through the social bandit,⁹ the pirate, the corsair, not under orders of a foreign country, but supported by his own intrepid courage, and protected against officialdom by the rural *cimarronería*. It is very significant that it was in 1825, when a mercantile official economy was beginning to take form, when the runaway world was moribund in the *estanciero* transition, that Cofresí the Pirate was captured. Cofresí is the social bandit *par excellence* in Puerto Rican history, still remembered as a popular hero. He was the last Caribbean pirate and was captured by U.S. military forces, when the United States was one of the countries most interested in regulating Caribbean trade (Santana 1957; Geigel 1946). The capture of Cofresí represents the last fatal blow to the dying world of marronage, of our first peasantry. The tradition of *cimarrón* independence in a world of growing personal seigneurial dependence, will manifest itself in a deferent distrust of authority that persists to this day.

The trade data of 1861 cited earlier are also illustrative in other ways. San Juan dominated imports, but Mayagüez and Ponce surpassed San Juan in exports. Ponce was the only one of these three cities where exports were more important than imports. While San Juan was representing mainly Spanish officialdom (military and bureaucratic, but with a growing importance of import merchants linked with these),¹⁰ Ponce and Mayagüez developed as cities of the agro-export classes.¹¹ Since they were cities linked to the agrarian economy, the urban-rural distinction was less evident than in San Juan. In a certain sense, they were centers of an agrarian world and not their antonym.

The heterogeneity and hierarchical structure of the *hacienda* world was reflected in their urban pattern. In Ponce there was great differentiation in dwellings: from seigneurial palaces to shanty towns (Gandía Córdova 1899). Ponce's stratification was even sharper, due to its links to slavery.¹² Nevertheless, the *hacendados* developed a national class ideology that permitted them to justify culturally this existing inequality. The seigneurial

mode of production on which this ideology was based, fostered a paternalistic conception of the fatherland (*patria*) as an all embracing family: a stratified family under the control of the "*padre de agregó*"-the *hacendado*-, but a family nonetheless.

Ponce was, then, the seigneurial city, with roots in the countryside (the *hacienda*) and national hegemonic aspirations: the Island against San Juan, but an Island under the leadership of Ponce, like the leadership the *hacendado* exercised in the rural, all-embracing, family.¹³

It is no coincidence that it was in Ponce in the second half of the nineteenth century that the Puerto Rican *danza* was born. The *danza* is considered by most Puerto Rican musicologists as our first *national* music (Rosado 1946). It is a music that transforms elements of the *cimarrón seis* and the slave plantation *bomba* with new sophistication, turning it into "cultured" music comparable with the best European dancing music of the time. The best innovative composers and musicians, tired of the military or church music of San Juan, moved to Ponce. And in the 1880s, at the same time as the consolidation of the political expression of the *hacendados* was taking place (in the Liberal Reformist Party, later named Autonomist Party) the *danzas* of Juan Morell Campos, its foremost composer, bloomed in Ponce.¹⁴

It is no coincidence, either, that it was in Ponce that the most important political meetings of the liberal autonomist movement took place, and the newspaper of this movement was published, *La Democracia*, one of the most important newspapers of the day. The seigneurial city of Ponce was the stronghold of a class in historical ascendancy and culturally, economically, politically and socially, the alternative capital of the country.

THE RURAL PROLETARIAT OF THE CAPITALIST PLANTATION

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, and in a more decisive and accelerated way during the first decade of the twentieth, the *hacienda* seigneurial economy was transformed into a capitalist economy under the hegemony of the sugar plantation industry. The change of metropolis, with the U.S. invasion of 1898, represented a change from a mercantile colonialism interested in the benefits that accrued from control of trade, to an imperialist colonialism, directed towards direct investment in production. This gave capitalist development a special character.

The early twentieth century plantation was based on wage labor. It broke the pre-capitalist petty mode of production; it transformed the former individual productive activity into a collective one. Work was carried out together: laborers went in groups to cut cane or to plough the land or to fill

the lorries with the cut cane; they left their homes together at the same hour in the mornings and usually returned together; they were paid at the same time and together they queued up for their wages every week. Besides the physical togetherness of their work, the collective nature of the productive activity was also a necessary result of the division of labor at the plantation. The product was not the result of an individual's work, but of the work of persons in interaction. In contrast to the individualistic ideology of the petty producer – of an isolated and family-based vision of life (Marx 1958: 334) – this transformation in productive activity generated a collective *weltanschauung*.

The collective nature of production also generated differences in settlement patterns. In the sugarcane-producing areas the population began to concentrate in the small urban centers of the municipalities, in marked contrast to the other agricultural areas during the first decades of the present century. But more important yet was the settlement pattern developed in the rural areas. On the *haciendas* and the areas of predominantly small-holder farms the general rural settlement pattern was one of dispersion-scattered, isolated homes surrounded by land under cultivation – since production was usually carried out on an individual or family basis. (Dispersion was greater on the *haciendas*, compared to the small-holder areas, due to the larger proportion of land under commercial cultivation). Daily life was, therefore, isolated. Productive relations were mainly family-based, or directly between each individual *agregado* or small producer, and the *hacendado*. Events beyond daily life-celebrations, religious feasts, services, extra-subsistence purchases – were centered around the *hacienda* house or in the urban center of the municipality, the small town (*el pueblo*), where the different social strata were interwoven.

The capitalist plantation generated a totally different rural settlement pattern: clusters of houses in small villages exclusively for plantation workers. (Compare map 1 with map 2, 3 and 4).¹⁵ Scattered housing made no sense when productive activity was collective; day after day the workers had to go to the same field, and work together section by section as the overseer would determine. Payment was per day of work – 12 to 14 hours, including Saturdays.¹⁶ No time was left during the harvest (*zafra*) for cultivation for their own consumption. Moreover, the companies strove for a maximum commercial use of the land; “sugar cane came to cover everything.” Isolated or dispersed housing made even less sense if there was no possibility for the worker to cultivate the land surrounding his house. Some companies even built villages for their workers.¹⁷ Within the rural settlement pattern of the plantation area, daily interaction took place among members of the same class. Thus, it did not only break social isolation, but also limited shared life to members of the same social position; it created a situation of social homogeneity.

The capitalist plantation generated a type of 'urban-rural' relationship among its workers that can be called, following Mintz (Mintz 1953) "rural proletarian", where the agrarian world is not what is traditionally considered rural. In the proletarian villages of the plantations and the workers' neighborhoods in sugar cane towns, daily life was semi-urban. The rural world was that of work: cane-cutting hell.

A similar proletarianization process was taking place among urban artisans, with the development of tobacco processing (by 1910 this was the second industry of the country). Proletarianized artisans and plantation proletariats developed common interests and a shared vision. The distinction between manufacturing and agricultural workers was, in a sense, being erased by a common position within the relations of production (wage earners) and by the communal or "urban semi-urban" daily existence. Together they formed (though under the leadership of cigarmakers) the Free Federation of Workers (FLT) and the Socialist Party. The FLT was founded in 1899 but its years of greatest activity and impact in the labor struggle were between 1913 and 1924. The Socialist Party was founded in 1915 as the political arm of the FLT, and the more glorious years of the latter were also those of the greatest growth and power of the Party (García and Quintero 1982).

For these workers, the traditional rural world of the pauperized small-holder peasant or exploited *hacienda* laborer was an impediment to a better society. It was a world that produced strike-breakers, blind followers of the traditional party-bosses, religious fanaticism. The FLT understood that this was so because of ignorance, and the major cause of ignorance was, they thought, social isolation. In meetings, manifestos and even concrete legislative proposals, the FLT and the Socialist Party encouraged the urbanization of the rural world. Community life, solidarity, sharing, was the image of the type of society for which they aimed and which they fought for.

THE CITY OF DEPENDENT UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND THE CONTRADICTIONARY FEELINGS TOWARDS THE COUNTRYSIDE

Of course, the pro-urban politics of the labor movement did not imply a defense of actual urban life. In workers' literature of the first decades of the twentieth century, in addition to the critique and denunciation of exploitative urban economic activities, there are numerous references to overcrowding, abusive rents, and bad odors that characterized workers quarters in cities and towns. Yet, the proposed alternative was not the return to an imaginary pastoral *cimarronería*, a possibility that, in any case, the development of *haciendas* had practically eliminated (Picó 1979). There was no alternative but the transformation of the urban ambience itself.

Map 1
Sugar Cane Area in Guayama

Caña azúcar
Frutos menores

Casa
Tienda rural
Granero
Cobertizo de equipo
Grúa para cargar el ferrocarril
Tanque de riego
Carretera principal
Carretera secundaria

Map 2
Coffee Area in Maricao

Café
Pastos
Frutos menores
Maleza

Casa
Granero de café
Clacil

Map 3
Minor Crops in Aguada

Frutos menores
Pastos (rotación de cultivos)
Café
Maleza

Casa
Tienda rural
Glacil

Map 4
Tobacco Area in San Lorenzo

Tabaco
Frutos menores
Pastos rotación de cultivos
Maleza

Casa
Tienda rural
Ranchón de tabaco

With the capitalist transformation, accelerated by the imperialist take-over, urban power and growth began to concentrate again in San Juan. Compared with the *hacienda* formation, capitalism implied greater integration of the economy, and San Juan, seat of colonial political power, would turn itself also into the center of the economic transformation of the countryside. The new corporations, legally established in San Juan, would centralize in that city the type of decisions formerly taken in the *haciendas*. An illuminating document of the second decade of this century (Porto Rico Mercantile Ass. 1916) shows how the economic importance of the corporations had rapidly surpassed that of the individual or family firm, and how most of the larger corporations, those with a capital of more than \$50,000, had their main offices in San Juan (29 in total and only 4 in the second city of Ponce).

Port activity began to concentrate also in San Juan. By 1920, 36.8% of the total trade tonnage of the Island went through San Juan and less than half (16.4%) through Ponce (Porto Rico 1921: 381–390).

The concentration of both economic and political power in the capital city, turned San Juan into the main attraction point for those interested in finding a place in the power structure or striving to develop the basis of some new hegemony; for example, the newspaper *La Democracia*, mentioned before, founded in Ponce in 1890, moved to San Juan in 1904. The 1935 Puerto Rico's *Who's Who* (Asenjo 1934) is very illustrative in this respect. It includes information on 434 persons; of these, 67 had been born in San Juan, but 281 were living there. On the other hand, 28 had been born in Ponce and only 26 were living in this second city.

After Ponce's spectacular growth in the nineteenth century, the capitalist transformation of the early twentieth century left this seigneurial city with little importance, and urban life began to be identified with San Juan, the traditional opposite pole to the "Island's" cultural values.

Capitalist transformation nurtured the emergence of a proletariat, with its anti-rural stance and pro-urbanization politics described in the previous section of this essay. But it also engendered the seeds of its organizational disintegration. During the first decade of the century, employment in the main industries of capitalist development, sugar cane and tobacco-processing, grew enormously, concomitant with the extension of proletarianization. But by the second decade these industries had found ways of increasing production without an increase in labor. From 1910 to 1934 sugar production increased more than three times, from 347,000 tons to 1,114,000, while total agricultural employment in the industry increased only from 87,643 workers to 92,398. This means that while in 1910 25.3 agricultural laborers were needed to produce 100 tons of sugar, in 1934 only 8.3 were used.

There are no reliable figures for tobacco-processing in the early 1930s, but between 1910 and 1920 the same process was evident: a 12 percent increase in production with a 26 percent reduction in employment.

Declining employment in sugar-cane and tobacco-manufacturing brought the proletarianization process to a standstill. It was precisely the transformation in these industries that had provided a material base for the formation of a Puerto Rican proletariat at the beginning of the century, and cigar makers and sugar-cane workers had been the most important sectors in its organizations. The Puerto Rican working class, formed in the initial stage of capitalist development of these industries – when employment was on the increase – was born believing that proletarianization would cover the entire country. As the life patterns of the seigneurial world began to disintegrate, workers, through labor education and trade union action, would take off the blinkers of deference (and religion) which held them back from the ideological struggle; the victory of socialism, the 1919 programme of the Socialist party suggested, was certain and inevitable. (*Partido Socialista*, 1919).

From the mid-1920s, however, the working class faced a situation in which, even though the seigneurial world continued to disintegrate, the proletariat no longer grew. *Hacienda* laborers were transformed not in proletarians but in marginal poor. There was a tremendous growth of unemployment, of underemployment in the service sector, of individual petty trading and *chiripeo* (unstable and sporadic jobs) mainly, as is common in these situations, in the principal city, whose economic activity created expectations of finding some job. In 1899 the cities of Ponce and San Juan had almost the same size in terms of population, each representing around 3.4% of the total population of the country. By 1930 the population of San Juan was four times what it had been in 1899 and twice the size of Ponce, representing more than 8% of the country's total. In 1960 it represented 18.3% and Ponce only 4.8%. A basic factor in this growth was the proliferation of shanty towns in San Juan. (Stevens 1985 and Safa 1974).

This process weakened the labor movement in various ways. The *marginados* were very difficult to organize in the trade union structure of the FLT. Besides, the increase in the industrial reserve army represented a threat to the trade union struggle. There is evidence of stagnation in gross wages in the 1920s and '30s and of a proportional reduction in the value of labor in the productive sector. There is also evidence that many strikes ended in failure during this period. But most important of all, the paralysis in the proletarianization process and the growth of *marginados* shattered the faith of the working-class in the certainty of its future victory.

The pro-urbanization politics of working-class organizations collapsed

with working-class struggles themselves, and with the distressing realities of urban marginality. The migrations to New York City in the late 1940s and in the 50s deepened this collapse.

Puerto Ricans turned into urban people while rejecting both rural plantation hell and new urban marginality. With the long historical marronage tradition, this situation has nurtured the contradictory feelings towards the urban-rural dichotomy so vividly portrayed in the songs with which this essay began.

NOTES

1. "I will sing a song to country-life, being a peasant is a national pride, to see the cattle grow in the hills and to feel some wild plants pick me."
2. ...the "zum zum" of the mosquitos and the "pío pío" of the chickens leave me with no rest."
3. This is not an original situation nor an original concern. One of the most profound analysts of British culture, stated recently:
 "For it is a critical fact that in and through these transforming experiences [urban industrialization] English attitudes to the country, and to ideas of rural life, persisted with extraordinary power, so that even after the society was predominantly urban its literature, for a generation, was still predominantly rural; and even in the twentieth century, in an urban and industrial land, forms of the older ideas and experiences still remarkably persist" (Williams 1975: 10-11).
4. Very correctly the Velázquez Spanish-English Dictionary defines *cimarrón* as wild and unruly besides maroon and runaway. (Chicago Pollet Pub. Co., 1964: p. 162).
5. Novelist Possé (1983) through fiction gives an extraordinary picture of this climate. Historian Puigross (1965: 102) analyses the predominance of Castille, and hence of seigneurialism, in Spanish colonization but adds "la estricta prohibición a judíos, moros y conversos de viajar a las Indias occidentales y radicarse en ellos, *lo que no evitó que muchos de estos últimos lo hicieran clandestinamente*". (my emphasis).
6. See also the vivid description of Morales Muñoz (1944: 12).
7. I use tawny-moor as a translation of "pardo", referring to dark skinned persons with white or white-like physiognomy. In Puerto Rico the tawny-moors were varied intermixtures of indian, arab, black and white ancestries.
8. This analysis is based on the information on founding date included in the 1867 Census (*La Gaceta*, 17/9/68). From 1850 to 1980 only sixteen towns were founded and two of the previous lost their town status and became areas of San Juan.
9. Hobsbawm (1959 and 1969) analyses how the social bandits emerge mainly in peasant economies threatened by commercialization or mercantile development.

10. On this alliance see Quiñones (1888 and 1889). I presented a preliminary analysis in Quintero (1977).
11. Lee (1963: 11, 67, 68) has excellent descriptions contrasting Ponce and San Juan: Ponce as modern, liberal, cosmopolitan, free-thinking and San Juan as Spanish, conservative, Catholic.
12. Ponce was probably the municipality that had the greatest development of the slave economy in the country. See Scarano (1981, 1984) and Curet (1979).
13. It is analogous to Bloch's reference to the feudal lord in medieval France as "le premier habitant" (Bloch 1941).
14. Veray (1977) explicitly identifies this political movement with the *danza*, and the latter with national identity. The foremost leader of this political movement, Luis Muñoz Rivera, referred to Ponce as "the most Puerto Rican of Puerto Rican cities." See also Quintero Rivera (1986).
15. These maps are taken from Northwestern University, (1952: 247, 251–253). Each represents one square mile. See also Jones and Picó (1955).
16. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives 1913: 2, (reproduced in Quintero 1976). Twenty-two years later – in 1935 – after a continuous struggle by working class organizations and even after legislation for eight hours of work a day, the working day in the sugar industry fluctuated between 8.8 and 13.9 hours (Gayer 1939: table 71).
17. Description and photographs in Mintz 1960; Steward 1956: ch. 9; Clark et al, 1930: 18. Data regarding its quantitative scope in Gayer 1939: table 100.

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