

President's Report

by JOHN COATSWORTH | Columbia University | jhc2125@columbia.edu

KALMAN SILVERT AWARD *continued...*

Desde que llegué a Chile a mediados de los sesenta del siglo XX para obtener la Maestría en Sociología (FLACSO) y hasta el día de hoy, lo único que he intentado es ofrecer algunas respuestas a los muchos interrogantes que han planteado y siguen planteando nuestras sociedades centroamericanas.

La presentación del Profesor Torres-Rivas tendrá lugar el día viernes 8 de octubre a las 10:00 am en la sala Essex del hotel Sheraton Centre Toronto. ■

As LASA members have already learned from the Secretariat, LASA has succeeded in reducing room rates at the LASA2010 Congress hotels in Toronto from 205 Canadian dollars (US\$195) to 195 (US \$188) for single and double rooms. Members who have already reserved rooms will pay the new, lower rates. Rooms were still available at both of the Congress hotels as this issue of the *LASA Forum* went to press. For those who have not yet reserved space, rooms may be reserved on line at <<http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/eng/congress/accommodations.asp>>. The deadline for reserving at the new rates is September 11, 2010.

In other LASA news, our 2012 Congress will take us back to the United States for the first time since LASA2007 moved from Boston to Montreal. We will meet in San Francisco on May 24-26, 2012. LASA's Executive Council (EC) decided in 2007 to move LASA's Congresses outside the United States until U.S. visa policy changed. As I reported last year in this column, the United States resumed issuing visas to Cuban scholars and scientists shortly after the Obama administration took office. It has since continued to do so. Many Cuban colleagues were routinely denied U.S. visas starting in October 2004 when the Bush administration refused to grant visas to 64 Cuban scholars who had planned to attend the LASA Congress in Las Vegas.

It is good news that the policy of blanket denials has ended. Since at least *that* policy has changed, albeit without fanfare, LASA will resume meeting in the United States. Holding LASA2012 in San Francisco will allow us to welcome our Cuban colleagues back to the United States. The Association, of course, will continue to look for opportunities to hold its Congresses elsewhere, especially in Latin America—maybe even in Havana.



Another change in U.S. policy has also proved helpful to ensuring Cuban participation in LASA Congresses. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Treasury Department issued licenses to LASA that allowed the Association to provide travel grants for Cubans to attend each of the last two LASA Congresses (in Montreal and Rio de Janeiro).

By the time this *LASA Forum* is mailed in August, other changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba may also be underway. Since Washington welcomed the release of Cuban prisoners in July, ending restrictions on travel to Cuba and easing restrictions on trade should now be in prospect—assuming, of course, that U.S. policymakers and members of Congress actually mean what they say. ■