

## Kalman Silvert and LASA's Fiftieth Anniversary

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The Martin Scorsese movie *The Departed* opens with a monologue by the Irish mob boss played by Jack Nicholson who declares: "I do not want to be a product of my times. I want my times to be a product of me." Kalman Silvert rejected this braggadocio and false dichotomy in favor of a vision of the future: the future of teaching and policy making about Latin America in both the United States and the region; the future of U.S.-Latin American relations; and the future of democracy.

Silvert accomplished his vision through the creation or use of institutions such as LASA, where he served as the organization's first president; the Ford Foundation, where he was the program advisor for the social sciences in Latin America from 1967 until his untimely death in 1976; and the university—as teacher, mentor, and institution builder—in the United States and throughout Latin America. During the darkest days in Latin America in the late 1960s and early 1970s, accompanied by the tumult and constitutional crisis in the United States, he turned his energy, intellect, and his institutional position to saving lives and institutions in Latin America, and defending democracy and strengthening democratic theory and practice throughout the Americas.

The 50th Anniversary of LASA is an appropriate time to recall Silvert's extraordinary role and contribution.

Abe Lowenthal and I have been coordinating a project on Kal's many roles and contributions. We have collected, with the help of others, some two dozen reminiscences about Kal from former students and colleagues. We invite you to read the essay below by Louis Goodman and, if the spirit moves you, add some thoughts of your own or submit your own reminiscence/vignettes to the email above. All of the material will be published on the LASA website in the Fiftieth year.

Respectfully submitted. ■