

## Report from the Program Chairs

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With the 31st International Congress of LASA just days away, we are pleased to provide a final preview of the program that awaits your arrival in Washington, DC. Our conference theme, “Latin America: Towards a New Social Contract?,” encourages scholarly reflection on the public policy dimensions of social, economic, and cultural relationships and highlights the entry of new social actors and new configurations of influence in Latin America. We have worked closely with LASA President Evelyne Huber, the LASA Secretariat in Pittsburgh, and 47 track chairs to organize a program that encourages in-depth analysis of policy questions, while still reflecting the multidisciplinary richness of scholarship and artistic production in the Latin American field.

As noted in our last report, we received a strong response to the call for papers for the Washington Congress, despite LASA’s shift from an 18-month to a 12-month cycle. As expected, this shorter conference cycle led to a drop in the total number of proposals, from 2,382 last year in San Francisco to 1,524 proposals for 2013 in Washington. This latter figure, however, still is higher than the 1,407 proposals received for the Toronto Congress in 2010. Proposals this year were submitted across 33 different program tracks, and nearly 40 percent of them were for completed panels rather than individual paper submissions. We are confident that this healthy number of complete panel proposals will enhance the intellectual coherence and coordination of panel presentations. We are also pleased that we were able to accept a higher percentage of paper and panel proposals than in other recent LASA congresses, due to the decline in the number of proposals and our relatively large number of meeting spaces in our host hotel, the Washington Marriott Wardman Park.

We are deeply grateful to those 47 track chairs and co-chairs, who read, evaluated, and ranked over 1,500 separate proposals. The track chairs came from the United States, Canada, and numerous countries in Europe and Latin America; we were very fortunate to have such a diverse, distinguished, and conscientious group of reviewers. Although we regret that the final program could not include everyone who submitted a paper proposal, we are confident that the program incorporates a wide and pluralistic range of voices from diverse countries and different fields of scholarship.

We would like to thank the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and the Center for Latin American Studies at Georgetown University for helping to organize the Welcoming Reception on Wednesday evening, May 29, on the beautiful campus of Georgetown University. Prior to the Welcoming Reception, we will continue the LASA tradition of sponsoring pre-Congress workshops on Wednesday afternoon. These workshops are designed to enhance the professional development of the LASA membership, particularly young scholars, and they typically generate an enthusiastic response. Back by popular demand, *LARR* editor Philip Oxhorn will once again lead two workshops titled “Exploring the Ins and Outs of Academic Publishing” for journals and monographs. A third workshop on databases on Latin American political institutions will be led by Michael Coppedge and Gerardo Munck. The fourth workshop will explore Latin American resources on-site at the Library of Congress, and led by Georgette Dorn, Director of the Library’s Hispanic Division.

An impressive range of presidential panels, special theme-related panels, and special invitation panels is also scheduled for the three main days of the Congress from Thursday through Saturday. LASA President Evelyne Huber teamed up with Cynthia Arnson, Director of the Latin American Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, to organize a presidential panel on “U.S.-Latin American Relations.” This panel will feature the Honorable José Miguel Insulza, Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, along with other ambassadors from the region. Other presidential panels include “Basic Universalism—the Way Forward or a Dead End? Or, What Kind of Social Policy in the New Social Contract?,” and “Parties and the New Social Contract—Creators or Followers?”

Special theme-related panels will include “Social Movements and the New Social Contract,” “The Future of Studies of Latin American Political Economy” (organized by Juan Pablo Luna and Andrew Schrank), and a two-part session on the Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA), led by Edward Telles. Special-invitation panels and events will include an address by Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of CEPAL, “Structural Change for Equality in Latin America and the Caribbean”; “Contemporary Latin American Literature,” led by the distinguished Mexican writer Jorge Volpi; a panel titled “How to Write an Application for a Research Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities,” led by Mark Silver of the National Endowment for the Humanities; and a three-panel series titled “The Economy and the Social Contract,” organized by Augusto de la Torre, Chief Economist for Latin America and the Caribbean of the World Bank.

## LASA2013 Film Festival

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No LASA Congress could be complete without the Gran Baile, to be held on Friday night starting at 10:00 pm in the Marriott; nor without the Film Festival, directed by Claudia Ferman, which will be ongoing throughout the Congress dates.

Thanks to the generosity of LASA, its members, the Open Society Institute, the Tinker Foundation, and the Inter-American Foundation, we have been able to offer 278 travel grants to members residing in Latin America and the Caribbean and three to members in China, including 52 grants to graduate students. LASA is deeply committed to broad participation by its membership in international meetings, and we express our gratitude to the organizations and individuals that have helped us provide financial assistance to scholars from the Latin American region.

Last year the introduction of the app for the electronic program was a resounding success, and it will be offered again this year with the same provider, ATIV.

This LASA Congress continues a long tradition of personal interaction among scholars and actors of Latin America who are energized by these experiences. It will certainly be a site of dialogue, learning, meeting new colleagues, and renewing friendships from years past. We anticipate that this Congress, "Latin America: Towards a New Social Contract?," will open new areas of inquiry, foment dialogue, and provide inspiration for individual and collaborative projects. We look forward to joining the discussion with you in Washington, DC. ■

El Festival de LASA se propone como un foro más dentro del Congreso, es decir, un espacio de actualización de debates, de presentación de materiales de investigación en estadio avanzado, pero también como un espacio en el que se exploran nuevas ideas y nuevas formas de expresión de esas ideas. Se propone también como una fuente de recursos, es decir, como un inventario al que los miembros de LASA pueden acudir en busca de materiales tanto para su investigación como para sus clases. Por ello, el festival busca atender distintos intereses en relación con las distintas áreas de trabajo de los miembros de LASA. Esto constituye un enorme desafío para un festival de cine, y redefine indudablemente la naturaleza misma de lo que se entiende por un festival. El festival de LASA es un festival de cine, pero también se ocupa de cuestiones que no son el cine, porque interpreta que el cine es un lenguaje privilegiado en el que la complejidad cultural e histórica de comunidades, naciones, individuos y sociedades encuentra expresión. Y si esto fue cierto desde el propio inicio del cine, hoy la revolución digital obliga a revalorar e interpretar la producción en este lenguaje. Los objetivos expuestos exigen que la selección de materiales se realice más allá de los acotados y poco académicos catálogos de los distribuidores de los EEUU y Europa, y obligan a un verdadero rastreo para encontrar los materiales audiovisuales que se están produciendo en Latinoamérica y el mundo que constituyan voces poderosas que interese escuchar.

LASA2013 pone el énfasis en el tema EDUCACION; en la producción cinematográfica de MÉXICO; y en la región del CARIBE ANTILLANO, tanto en cuanto a su producción cinematográfica como en cuanto a los debates de la región.

La educación constituye hoy un área de intenso debate en todos sus niveles, y es, por supuesto una cuestión que involucra directamente a los miembros de LASA. Las películas que hemos seleccionado presentan algunas temáticas medulares más allá de las cuestiones presupuestarias que sin duda también se reflejan en estos filmes: las abundantes conexiones entre las formas de participación estudiantil y los espacios políticos tradicionales del ámbito latinoamericano, en *El estudiante* (ficción) y *Escuela Normal*; la multiculturalidad, el plurilingüismo y la familia como sitios de formación educativa, en *El Etnógrafo*; el peligro de la marginación educativa que sufren los latinos, desplazados y jóvenes madres, en EEUU, en contraste con la educación por el arte como una herramienta liberadora (en el sentido "Freireano"), en *Baby Mama High e Inocente*; la colosal tergiversación de valores y contenidos en la educación bajo gobiernos militares, en *El premio* (ficción); y por último, los inmensos desafíos que se presentan en el cuidado y la educación de niños en situaciones de crisis sociales y familiares en *Journey to Hope*, una película que también pertenece al grupo de películas sobre Las Antillas que describimos a continuación.

La repetida ausencia del registro cinematográfico del Caribe Antillano (salvo, claro está, en el caso de Cuba) nos llevó a trabajar con el Festival de Trinidad y Tobago para presentar un grupo de películas de y sobre la región. La muestra incursiona en la gastrocrítica (historia y análisis del alimento humano), la preservación del ambiente, y el comercio justo, en *Nothing Like Chocolate*; presenta el DanceHall jamaicano y la sociedad y la cultura con que esta música está asociada, en *Hit Me with Music*; investiga el duelo de los haitianos después del terremoto y del conocido fracaso de la ayuda a los