

Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy

Newsletter Fall 1999

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MEMORANDUM

TO: ASCE Members

FROM: Sergio Díaz-Briquets

The last few months since ASCE's Ninth Annual Meeting in Miami last August have been busy for the Board of Directors. Our attention has been focused on organizational matters regarding several new activities on which the Association is embarking, as well as on preparations for the forthcoming biannual election for President and members of the Board. The 2000 Annual Meeting, our tenth, also marks the tenth anniversary of the Cuban government's announcement establishing the "Special Period in Time of Peace." What has transpired in Cuba over the last decade, and how Cuba and other countries have fared since the momentous historical events that accompanied the global collapse of Communism, will be the unifying theme for the Tenth Annual Meeting, scheduled for August 3-5, 2000, at the Biltmore Hotel, in Coral Gables, Florida. A call for papers for the Tenth Annual Meeting can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

I am delighted to report that ASCE's organizational health is excellent, with the current roll of nearly 270 members representing an all time high. Our financial situation, as detailed in the attached report by Enrique Pumar, ASCE's Treasurer, is highly satisfactory for a professional organization that mostly relies on membership contributions. A report presented at our Annual Meeting in August by Steven Escobar, ASCE's Secretary, summarizing ASCE's activities over the past year is reproduced in this Newsletter.

We are also continuing to work hard to make ASCE a more vital and forward looking analytical and policy-relevant organization. Toward that end, the Board is establishing several standing committees. These committees will be responsible for designing and implementing procedures to improve the dissemination of ASCE publications (Chair: José Alonso); engaging in promotional and fundraising activities (Chair: María Werlau); increasing the number of current members (Chair: Oscar Echevarría); organizing the Annual Meeting (Chair: Juan Carlos Espinosa); assuming responsibility for the Annual Meeting program (Jorge Pérez-López); and managing the awarding of various ASCE prizes (Chair: Matias Travieso-Díaz). I encourage members wishing to support these efforts to contact the various committee Chairs to volunteer their services.

Volume 9 of *Cuba in Transition*, our annual volume of conference proceedings, will be in the hands of the U.S. Postal Service in short order, thanks to the indefatigable efforts of Jorge Pérez-López together with José F. Alonso. The proceedings will soon be available as well on ASCE's new Webpage, located at www.ASCECuba.org, as well as at UTLANIC's website, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/asce>.

Finally, I would like to announce that ASCE has established a new award to encourage economic research by Cubans residing on the island. A three member Award Committee, Chaired by Roger Betancourt and with the participation of Joe Perry and Jorge Sanguinety, will be responsible for reviewing submissions and selecting the winner. The terms of reference for the award are set forth below. On behalf of ASCE, I thank the committee composed of Jorge Pérez-López (Chair), Ernesto Betancourt and Steven Escobar for their input and deliberations when designing these terms of reference.

As always, I encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments or suggestions regarding ASCE's activities. I can be reached at (703) 920-1234 or, via e-mail, at sdiazbriquets@casals.com.

ASCE 2000 ELECTIONS -- NOMINATIONS INVITED

ASCE will hold elections in the Spring of 2000 for the eleven elected positions on the ASCE Board of Directors. A Nominating Committee has been appointed by the Board pursuant to ASCE's Bylaws to receive the nominations. The members of the Nominating Committee are:

Carlos Montoulieu, Chair
Carlos Quijano
Ricardo Donate
Maria Dolores Espino
Jose de la Hoz
Olga Nazario
Sergio Diaz-Briquets, ex- officio
Steven Escobar, ex-officio

Nominations are currently being accepted for President, as well as for the ten other Board positions that will become open in 2000. The new Secretary and Treasurer will be selected from among the newly elected members by the new Board upon its taking office. The twelfth Board member shall be the Association's immediate past President

Under the rules set forth in ASCE's Bylaws, in order for candidates to be duly nominated, their nomination must be submitted to the Nominating Committee by no less than fifteen voting Members in good standing. The Nominating Committee is charged with verifying that at least fifteen members in good standing have submitted nominations, and that the proposed nominee is also a member in good standing.

Please submit your nominations to the Nominating Committee, **prior to March 15, 2000**, at the address below:

ASCE Nominating Committee
c/o Carlos Montoulieu, Chair
3305 Turner Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

TELLERS' COMMITTEE

In accordance with ASCE's Bylaws, the Board has also appointed a Tellers' Committee to oversee the counting of the ballots in the ASCE 2000 elections. The members of the Tellers' Committee are:
Armando Lago, Chair; Beatriz Casals; Roger Betancourt; Sergio Diaz-Briquets, ex- officio; Steven Escobar, ex-officio.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The state of our finances for the First Quarter of FY 2000 (July-November) continues to be sound. After clearing all expenses associated with our annual meeting, ASCE financial balance follows:

Total Membership	256	
Regular members	202	
Students	6	
Sponsors	48	
	Current Revenues	\$ 39,445.57

Beginning Balance for FY 2000

Checking \$ 26,991.26

Current Balance

 Checking \$ 31,127.94

 Savings \$ 8,317.63

Total Expenses \$ 1,488.40

 Telephone 105.79

 Postage & Mailing 191.14

 Storage Rental 262.50

 Internet Domain 119.00

 Internet Hosting 410.00

 New Printer 399.97

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Report of the Secretary Given at the Ninth Annual Meeting in Miami, Florida, August 13, 1999

Organization of Meetings

Over the past year, the Board of Directors has held Regular Meetings monthly, as well as Special Meetings, to organize special events or address time-sensitive issues. Because a number of members of the Board reside outside of Washington, all Board Meetings are held via conference call, to ensure the full participation of all members.

Update on Activities

As in the past, the main project undertaken over the past year by the Board has been the organization of this Annual Meeting. To prepare for this Meeting, two subcommittees were created. The Program Subcommittee was responsible for organizing the topics, panels, presentations and the review of the papers. The Program Subcommittee includes Jorge Perez-Lopez (Chair), Roger Betancourt, Sergio Diaz-Briquets, Antonio Gayoso and Lorenzo Perez. The Organization Subcommittee undertook all the logistical arrangements for the conference, including determining the location for the conference, making all necessary reservations for meeting rooms, lodging, and food/reception activities, and organizing the staffing for the conference. The Organization Subcommittee includes Juan Carlos Espinosa (Chair), Maida Donate, Enrique Pumar, Ivette Barbeite, and Luis Locay.

We were very pleased that, again this year, a significant portion of the costs associated with this Annual Meeting were provided through the generous sponsorship of several institutions and individuals, including the University of Miami's School of International Studies and Cuban Studies Association -- which is the official co-sponsor of this Annual Meeting -- and the University of Miami School of Business, which sponsored the opening night's reception.

Besides the Annual Meeting, our next most significant project was the publishing of Volume 8 of *Cuba in Transition*. As usual, this project was spearheaded by Jorge Perez-Lopez with Jose Alonso, to whom we express our deep appreciation.

Other projects undertaken by the Board last year include the following:

- In September of last year, the Board voted to award honorary membership in ASCE to Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Felix Bonne Carcasses, Rene Gomez-Manzano and Vladimiro Roca, in recognition of their past

participation in and association with ASCE. In addition, the Board formally condemned the conviction in Cuba of these four individuals on charges of sedition. The Board also created a committee, composed of Antonio Gayoso (Chair), Ernesto Betancourt and Lorenzo Perez to review the status of professional economists in Cuba to determine whether any should be recommended to honorary membership in ASCE.

- In January of this year, despite a severe winter storm, ASCE sponsored a session on Cuban economic issues at the Annual Meetings of the Allied Social Sciences Associations in New York. Participants in the session included Luis Locay, who chaired the panel, as well as Lorenzo Perez, Nicolas Sanchez, Jorge Sanguinety, Maria Werlau, Jose Alonso, and Carlos Seigle. We also held our biannual Carlos Diaz-Alejandro luncheon lecture, at which Professor Jagdish Bhagwati, Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics at Columbia University, gave a presentation entitled “Free Trade and Social Programs: Complements or Substitutes?” In spite of the weather, a number of ASCE members were in attendance. We are actively planning ASCE’s participation at the next Annual Meetings, where ASCE will again sponsor a panel. Next year the meetings will be held in Boston, from January 7th to 9th, and we hope the weather will behave and allow a much larger group of ASCE members to participate.
- In March, ASCE co-sponsored a workshop with the law firm of ShawPittman in Washington on “Internal and External Factors in Cuba’s Economic Transition.” This workshop was organized by Board member Matias Travieso-Diaz, and several ASCE members made presentations in the sessions.
- ASCE began a process of establishing contacts with professional and other associations in Latin America, Europe and elsewhere to disseminate the work of ASCE and promote coordination between ASCE and other organizations in furtherance of ASCE’s purposes. Ernesto Betancourt and Lorenzo Perez headed this effort.
- The Board undertook a series of fundraising initiatives to streamline the process of obtaining support for ASCE’s activities. As part of these initiatives, a summary of ASCE’s current and past activities was prepared, in a format that could be used for grant applications. We are also in the process of assessing improvements to our budget process that would support further fundraising activities. Maria Werlau was the principle organizer of these fundraising efforts.
- Another significant achievement this year was the creation of ASCE’s first formal web site, located at the University of Texas Latin American Information Service. Although portions of *Cuba in Transition* have been available on the University of Texas’ site for some time now, ASCE had never had its own web page with original content such as the membership information, calls for papers, newsletters, even the Association’s Bylaws. All of these will now be included, along with links to the updated *Cuba in Transition* sites. Several Board members were involved in this effort, including Jose Alonso, Jorge Perez-Lopez, Matias-Travieso-Diaz and Maria Werlau.
- Also this year, the Board was required to fill two vacancies that occurred in the Board: the first, sadly, when Board member Pepucho Acosta passed away, and the second when Lorenzo Perez was made the resident representative of the IMF in Brazil. Luckily for the Board and the Association, two excellent members of ASCE agreed to be appointed by the Board to these positions: Maida Donate, who fills the vacancy left by Pepucho, and Jorge Perez-Lopez, to take the place of Lorenzo Perez. Sergio Diaz-Briquets, who was already a member of the Board, was selected by the Board to fulfill Lorenzo’s term as President of ASCE. We are enormously grateful to Maida, Jorge and Sergio for accepting these positions and for their invaluable contributions to the work of the Board.
- Finally, as I reported here last year, the Board intends to institute a transition from paper-based to electronic communication with members. Part of this effort involves collecting and organizing all our members’ e-mails, and for this we need your help. In the Spring Newsletter, we sent out a Membership Information Form along with the registration materials for this year’s Annual Meeting. And, while some of you have responded, we have yet to hear from many of you. This information is important not only for our transition to electronic communications, but is also essential if we are to prepare our membership directory before the end of the year, as we have planned. So, I urge you to fill out a Membership Information Form while you’re here. Forms will be available at the registration desk throughout the Annual Meeting.

Thank you.

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE NOMINATION

Several academicians from the United States have nominated the four leaders of Cuba's Internal Dissidence Working Group for the Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded in December of the year 2000. Independently, the Swedish International Liberal Center and the Swedish Liberal Party have also submitted the same nomination.

All four nominees, Félix Bonne Carcasé, René Gómez Manzano, Vladimiro Roca and Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, are honorary members of ASCE. They have been in prison since July 16, 1997, after publishing "*La Patria es de Todos*" ("The Fatherland Belongs to Us All"), a document critical of the Cuban government. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Pax Christi and other international human rights organizations have declared them prisoners of conscience.

The group from the U.S. that made the nomination includes three ASCE members -Professors Mario Rivera, from University of New Mexico, Juan J. López, from University of Illinois, and Juan Carlos Espinosa, from the University of Miami. Armando Lago, past president of ASCE, has spearheaded this effort, which already received media coverage in the United States.

The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each September by the Norwegian Parliament, which already passed a resolution condemning the Cuban government for imprisoning the four nominees. The effort supporting the nomination provides valuable moral support to them and to others who make up Cuba's peaceful dissidence movement. In addition, it may afford the nominees, as well as other dissidents, some degree of protection from further abuse.

Support from legislators and parliamentarians, as well as professors of Political Science, History and Philosophy, from all over the world is required. Letters endorsing the nomination should be sent before January 31, 2000 to:

Dr. Francis Sejerstead, Chairperson
Norwegian Nobel Committee
The Storting
Karl Johan Gate 22, N-0159
Oslo, Norway

Please contact Maria Werlau (<XORBISX@AOL.COM> / tel. (973)701-0520) if you would like any additional information on the nominees or the nomination process.

**Call for Papers
Tenth Annual Meeting
Miami, August 3-5, 2000**

Ten Years of the Special Period: Retrospective and Perspectives

It has been a decade since the former Soviet Bloc began its rapid unraveling and the Cuban authorities formally proclaimed the beginning of the "Special Period in Time of Peace." The Program Committee for ASCE's Tenth Annual Meeting, which will be held in Miami, Florida, August 3-5, 2000, invites papers that analyze developments in Cuba during the last decade and future prospects for the Cuban economy and society at large. Particularly welcome will be papers that address developments in a comparative framework, for example comparing policies and developments in Cuba with those in the countries of Latin America, the former Soviet Bloc, China or Vietnam. Among the topics for sessions might be macroeconomic and sectoral issues, developments in social sectors, international relations, civil society, legal issues, environmental matters, gender issues, governance, infrastructure and civil-military relations. Brief paper proposals should be forwarded to Jorge Pérez-López, Chair, Program Committee, 5881 6th Street, Falls Church, VA 22041, perezlop@erols.com by February 15, 2000.