

# REVOLUTION IN THE REVOLUTION

## Recent Developments in the Cuban Economy

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**¿Quo vadis, Cuba? La incierta senda de las reformas.** Edited by José Antonio Alonso and Pavel Vidal. Madrid: Los Libros de la Catarata, 2013. Pp. 302. ISBN: 9788483198322.

**Cuban Economists on the Cuban Economy.** Edited by Al Campbell. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. Pp. xvii + 337. \$79.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780813044231.

**Cuban Economic and Social Development: Policy Reforms and Challenges in the 21st Century.** Edited by Jorge I. Domínguez, Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva, Mayra Espina Prieto, and Lorena Barberia. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Pp. iii + 333. \$24.99 paper. ISBN: 9780674062436.

**Cuba since the Revolution of 1959: A Critical Assessment.** By Samuel Farber. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011. Pp. ix + 369. \$24.00 paper. ISBN: 9781608461394.

**Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana.** By Marc Frank. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. Pp. iii + 327. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780813044651.

**Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms.** By Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013. Pp. xv + 295. \$65.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781588269041.

When President Fidel Castro experienced a medical emergency on July 31, 2006, First Vice President Raúl Castro assumed the role of acting president and was then declared president in February 2008 by the National Assembly. Hopes for change were high relative to the almost half century of Fidel's presidency, because Raúl was considered to be more pragmatic than Fidel. During the first years of Raúl's acting and then full presidency, policy changes were modest, uncertain, and hesitant. However, after deliberation and some policy experimentation, the pace of reform accelerated in 2010.

In his first major speech in July 2007, Raúl acknowledged the difficulties that the economy faced and the dimension of the reform effort that would be needed to overcome its problems. "To have more, we have to begin by producing more, with a sense of rationality and efficiency, so that we may reduce imports, especially of food products—that may be grown here—whose domestic production is still a long way away from meeting the needs of the population."<sup>1</sup> This contrasted with

1. Cuban Communist Party, "Speech by the First Vice-President of the Councils of State and Ministers, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, at the main celebration of the 54th Anniversary of the attack on *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 49, No. 3. © 2014 by the Latin American Studies Association.

the complacency of the last years of the Fidel era. Raúl emphasized the necessity of improving agriculture as well as industry and mentioned the possibility of increasing direct foreign investment. He discussed “social indiscipline” and the expansion of the underground economy. He assured citizens that the government was studying these issues and would soon introduce appropriate policies. In subsequent speeches—shorter and less frequent than those of his elder brother—Raúl demonstrated increased pragmatism and decreased ideological rigidity. He also has shown an awareness of the need to break with some traditional Cuban economic institutions and policies. Such change was ultimately necessary in his view for political reasons, to ensure the long-term viability of Cuba as an independent nation. He affirmed: “We are facing unpleasant realities, but we do not close our eyes to them. We are convinced that we need to break away from dogmas and assume firmly and confidently the ongoing upgrading of our economic model in order to set the foundations of the irreversibility of Cuban socialism and its development, which we know is the guarantee of our national sovereignty and independence.”<sup>2</sup>

He did not view such changes as adoption of any sort of capitalism but instead considered it an “updating” or “modernization” (*actualización*) of Cuban socialism. However, Raúl’s concept of socialism reflected a change from the *fidelist* view: it no longer implied an aspiration to equal outcomes. “Socialism means social justice and equality, but equality of rights and opportunities, not salaries. Equality does not mean egalitarianism. This is, in the end, another form of exploitation, that of the exploitation of the responsible worker by the one who is not, or even worse, by the slothful.”<sup>3</sup> Raúl also emphasized that policy changes were to be introduced with deliberativeness and caution. This was certainly the approach prior to mid-2010.

The major reforms of 2010 began with the proposal to downsize employment in the state sector by 500,000 presumably redundant state employees by the end of March 2011 and 1.5 million by the end of 2012 with the hope that they would somehow be absorbed productively by an invigorated small enterprise sector. Then came the publication in November 2010 of the ambitious and comprehensive “Draft Guide for Economic and Social Reform.” The guide was discussed broadly throughout Cuba, revised, and then approved at the Sixth Congress of Cuba’s Communist Party in April 2011. Since then, a steady series of economic reforms have been introduced that are transforming the economy increasingly into a “mixed” economy with significant state, private, cooperative, and joint venture sectors (the latter with foreign and state enterprises) together with a greater reliance on the market mechanism for the social control of economic activity.

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Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes Garrisons, at the Major General Ignacio Agramonte Loynaz Revolution Square in the city of Camagüey, July 26th, 2007, ‘Year 49 of the Revolution,’ *Diario Granma*, July 27, 2007.

2. “Key Address by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, President of the State Council and the Council of Ministers and Second Secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee,” *Yohandryweb’s Noticias*, April 4, 2010, <http://yohandryweb.wordpress.com/2010/04/04/300/>.

3. President Raúl Castro, speech at the close of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly, July 11, 2008.

Is this a “revolution in the revolution,” to hijack Régis Debray’s catchy book title?<sup>4</sup> The answer is probably yes. Raúl’s reforms amount to a repudiation of almost a half century of the institutions and policies mainly borrowed from and/or inspired by the countries of the Soviet bloc. The reforms also constitute a rejection of the impetuous and capricious policy experimentation of Fidel. Indeed, by 2014 Raúl already had been successful in forging his own legacy and emerging from the shadow of his elder brother.

Eight years after the accession of Raúl, it is time for an analysis and evaluation of his revised approach to economic management. Not surprisingly, a large number of books dedicated to this task have been published recently. The volumes reviewed here all focus directly on or include lengthy analyses of the *raulista* reforms.<sup>5</sup> The authors come from a variety of analytical traditions and disciplines. They include Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López as well as the Spanish authors of the volume edited by José Antonio Alonso and Pavel Vidal, whose approach is by and large mainstream economics. Also represented are the more radical economist Al Campbell and political scientists Samuel Farber and Jorge Domínguez. Other contributors are analysts from the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy (CEEC) and other institutes of the University of Havana (in the volumes edited by Alonso and Vidal and Domínguez et al.), many of whom have been moderate reformists since the early 1990s. About half of the analysts in Campbell’s volume have been working in Cuba’s National Institute for Economic Studies (INIE), the main governmental economic think tank, with the remainder from other branches of the government or its institutes. It is tempting to label these authors the “old guard,” but some, such as Miguel Figueras and José Luis Rodríguez, can be said to have been moderate reformists as well, and all profess to be supporters of Raúl’s reforms.

The most general volume reviewed here is that of Samuel Farber, which, as its title indicates, “attempts to present a historical analysis and evaluation of the Cuban Revolution since 1959.” He approaches his analysis from the left, but a democratic socialist left espousing genuine participatory democracy, with popular “self-mobilization fully respecting human and minority rights” (4).

Farber considers his work as “a form of advocacy and normative in its orientation . . . a political reflection on history and a search for a usable past which hopefully will support the new voices emerging in Cuba advocating a progressive transition toward a revolutionary and democratic form of socialism” (5). While Farber’s work of course is not totally comprehensive, he takes a broad view and discusses national sovereignty, nation building and democracy, economic growth and social welfare, foreign policy, race and gender issues, and the place of dissi-

4. Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1968).

5. Other books focusing on this theme include Mauricio A. Font and Carlos Riobó, eds., *Handbook of Contemporary Cuba: Economy, Politics, Civil Society, and Globalization* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2013); Claes Brundenius and Ricardo Torres Pérez, eds., *No More Free Lunch: Reflections on the Cuban Economic Reform Process and Challenges for Transformation* (New York: Springer, 2013); and Alberto Gabriele, ed., *The Economy of Cuba after the VI Party Congress* (New York: Nova Publishers, 2012).

dents and critics from left to right and within and outside Cuba. Although Farber analyzes the various issues over the life of the Revolution and also draws on pre-revolutionary experience regarding the various issue areas, he brings each area into the twenty-first century. He also updates his work with an epilogue on the Sixth Party Congress of April 2011 and comments on the reform process of the decade of 2010.

Farber's volume is thoroughly researched and documented. Indeed it includes fifty-three pages of notes that frequently contain important substantive insights. His work draws on his own research and deep knowledge acquired over many years of study, a comprehensive range of Cuban primary sources, and the work of other analysts inside and outside Cuba. Many observers and analysts of various aspects of Cuba's historical experience since 1959 will be to some extent familiar with much of what he writes about. However, it is enlightening and enjoyable to review in detail Farber's well-written and well-organized discussion of these central dimensions of Cuba's experience.

In view of Farber's somewhat iconoclastic approach to his work, which is unabashedly "in a classical Marxist tradition" but also social democratic—or as he would undoubtedly prefer, "socialist democratic"—one might expect that he may come under criticism from both the right and the left. But Farber's work in fact seems uncontroversial, rather mainstream and social democratic in character. His analyses and evaluations are well balanced, objective, and convincingly supported with painstaking and comprehensive presentation of evidence.

Al Campbell's collection of essays, *Cuban Economists on the Cuban Economy*, purposely includes well-established analysts, some of whom are less well known outside of Cuba because they write in Spanish mainly for domestic policy formulation and publication. It is pleasing to see some new work by senior economists such as José Luis Rodríguez, the late Ángela Ferriol, and Miguel Alejandro Figueras. Generally, the volume strikes an *oficialista* tone and excludes those economists from the University of Havana Center for Studies on the Cuban Economy who have been analyzing the reform process for the last twenty years, as well as so-called dissident economists. The volume also seems to have passed its "best before" date as the essays were written in the first half of 2010 using data up to 2008. The authors were instructed to focus on the Special Period following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and consequent dramatic cuts in Soviet aid to Cuba; they "were specifically asked not to comment on the proposed reforms in their final chapter revisions" (7). Unfortunately this reduces the relevance of the book for assessing the economic experience and analyzing post-2010 policy reforms during Raúl's presidency. It would indeed be interesting to have frank evaluations of Raúl's reforms since 2011 from this group of analysts. The volume is nonetheless useful for understanding the economic challenges that Raúl inherited.

The Campbell collection includes twelve essays grouped in three sections. Section 1, "The Macroeconomy," includes a chapter by José Luis Rodríguez reviewing the general macroeconomic experience of the 1979–2009 period, a chapter by Oscar U-Echevarría Vallejo on changing development strategies, policy reforms, and sectorial changes in the whole 1959–2009 period; a chapter on Cuba's chang-

ing international economic relations during the Special Period by Nancy A. Quiñones Chang; and a description of the planning process prior to the expansion of the private sector after 2010 by Elena Álvarez González.

The second section focuses on socioeconomic issues. An essay by Rita Castiñeiras García on the human dimension constitutes an uncritical listing of the achievements of the Revolution. For example, she accepts as a significant advance the expansion of the university system to include over 700 centers (Campbell, 156). But in 2011 under Raúl, the huge expansion of the university system was reversed and reduced to 119 centers with a large cut in enrollments (Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López, 144). The essay by Juan Carlos Alfonso Fraga on demography and the aging of the population is useful, with its focus on the aging process, its consequences, and relevant public policies. Some analysis of Cuba's fertility rate, its determinants, and relevant public policies would also have been welcome. The fertility rate is now 1.4 children per woman, the lowest in the hemisphere, among the lowest in the world, and well below the 2.2 level necessary for long-term sustainability.<sup>6</sup> Ángela Ferriol's essay on poverty acknowledges its existence in Cuba and outlines the programs designed to reduce it. A chapter on labor issues by Alfredo Morales Cartaya paints a Pollyannaish picture, ignoring the collapse of the real value of wages, salaries, pensions, and social security payments since 1990. Omitted as well is any consideration of the absence of meaningful collective bargaining, the right to strike, or independent labor unions. (See Farber, chapter 4, for an in-depth analysis of labor issues.)

The third section then includes two essays on tourism, one on agriculture, and one on knowledge-based industries. The latter two essays are particularly unhelpful and offer virtually no serious policy analysis or evaluation. (However, see Armando Nova González in Domínguez et al., chapters 3 and 4, and Mesa-Lago and Pérez-López, 43–51 and 58–68, for strong analyses of sugar and nonsugar agriculture.)

The objective of the coproduced University of Havana/Harvard volume edited by Domínguez, Omar Everleny Pérez Villanueva, Mayra Espina Prieto, and Lorena Barbería Pérez is to describe and diagnose some of the central economic and social challenges that Cuba faces and to analyze some policy alternatives for meeting these challenges. The analyses are written by University of Havana scholars who are among the strongest and most authoritative in their areas. These are accompanied by commentaries from professors at Harvard and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. The papers were prepared before the presentation of the government's preliminary reform program, as outlined in its November 2010 Guide, though Domínguez's introduction was written on the eve of the April 2011 Sixth Party Congress and draws on the authors' analyses as well as the government's proposals. Fortunately, the University of Havana authors present analyses of the key issue areas in an ambitious and long-term frame that goes beyond the discussion in the Guide and therefore does not read as dated.

6. United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report, 2013*, Statistical Annex, Table 14, p. 194.

The opening chapter by Pérez Villanueva presents a summary overview of Cuba's economic performance during the Special Period to 2010, leading to the conclusion that "economic reform should be seen as the first of the structural changes that the country requires. Cuba's economic problem is that the current economic system cannot serve as a starting point for the country's development" (Domínguez et al., 16). He then proposes a variety of policy changes, some of which have been incorporated into the government's policy reform program, for example ending rationing and state regulation rather than direct management of enterprises.

Two essays on Cuba's dual monetary and exchange rate system are included by Pavel Vidal Alejandro, formerly with the Banco Central de Cuba. The first focuses on the sources, character, and cure of the monetary/exchange rate duality. Of special interest is the section proposing a set of policy reforms that provide a strategic approach for the establishment of a single currency. Vidal Alejandro's second essay is a more technical analysis of the international economic crisis of 2008–2009 and its repercussions for Cuban monetary policy.

Armando Nova González, who by now must be considered the dean of agricultural analysts in Cuba, has contributed two essays on Cuban agriculture. The first outlines the reforms of the early 1990s, analyzes and evaluates their impacts, and presents the range of policy changes required to resuscitate agricultural production, some of which have begun already. The second chapter then analyzes the impacts of the 2007–2010 reforms implemented after Raúl's assumption of the presidency. His central conclusion is that while the reforms of pricing, land redistribution, and institutional reorganization have been significant and positive, the reforms "lack a systemic focus" and require further deepening (91).

In chapter 6, Anicia García Álvarez provides a fifty-five-page analysis of agricultural production, food availability, and imports and exports of food and agricultural inputs. The sector has been severely damaged by its low policy priority over the last twenty-five years, low prices in the state marketing system, minimal investment, a perverse exchange rate, and the strength of foreign competition—notably from the United States since the opening of agricultural exports to Cuba by that country. This is an impressively detailed and comprehensive analysis, clearly the best to appear so far. Following this is a fine chapter by Pérez Villanueva on direct foreign investment extracting insights from the experience of China and Vietnam for Cuba.

Mayra Espina Prieto and Viviana Togores González contribute a valuable chapter analyzing Cuba's changing socioeconomic structures since the beginning of the Special Period in 1990, characterized by greater economic and social differentiation among sectors, regions, social groups, and individuals and some exacerbation of inequalities, all of which have been generated by enhanced social mobility for those riding high in emerging economic activities and sectors of the economy, notably the higher-end "self-employment" activities such as tourist-oriented restaurants and bed-and-breakfasts. New circumstances require new policy approaches, and the authors emphasize the importance of targeting social

programs, of focusing at the household level, of enhanced and sustained financial support for social policy, and of social program decentralization.

The last chapter, by Lucy Martín Posada and Lilia Núñez Moreno, examines the regional and housing dimensions of inequality in Cuba. Drawing on regional statistical information from the Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas, the work of other analysts, their own analyses, and a survey, they construct a clear portrait of regional, housing, and economic inequalities. They also present a range of specific policy recommendations for reducing these inequalities.

Marc Frank's *Cuban Revelations: Behind the Scenes in Havana* provides an excellent history of the unfolding of Raúl Castro's updating of the Revolution. Frank lived in Cuba from 1984 to 1991 and from 1994 to 2014. He is married to a Cuban and is embedded in her extensive and far-flung family. He has pursued the central economic and political issues and events for the Reuters News Agency and is one of the best of the foreign correspondents dedicated to following events in Cuba. He is a fine writer with an engaging style somewhat distinct from his excellent but terse news reports.

Frank begins with an analysis of the Special Period (1990–2008) under Fidel Castro and then examines the first years of the Raúl Castro era from 2008 to 2010, when only modest policy changes were introduced but when the later and more significant changes were being formulated. The central reform process initiated in 2010 and 2011 is then presented with the downsizing of the state sector and the publication of the draft Guide for reform, which was then widely discussed and approved at the 2011 Party Congress.

Frank has thirty years of firsthand knowledge of Cuba both from a grassroots perspective of the sentiments and popular reactions of the street and from the perspective of the central political events and personages. His analysis is balanced and objective. The volume is a fine source on Cuba's overall economic social and political experience of the raulista era.

*Cuba under Raúl Castro: Assessing the Reforms*, by Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Jorge Pérez-López, is to date the definitive general survey, analysis, and evaluation of Cuba's economic and social policies and of its development experience during Raúl's presidency. The authors have built on their approximate fifty- and forty-year records, respectively, of high-quality analyses of the economic strategies, policies, and economic performance of revolutionary Cuba, as well as numerous in-depth analyses of specific issue areas. Mesa-Lago is well known to all observers and analysts interested in Cuba in view of his prolific and outstanding work on Cuba. He is the author of numerous seminal volumes on Cuba beginning in 1962.<sup>7</sup> Pérez-López is currently the executive director of the Fair Labor Association in Washington, DC. He also has organized the conferences and publications of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy since its inception some twenty years ago.

This volume provides a detailed analysis of developments in the economy in the Raúl Castro era, including the domestic economy, social policy, and welfare;

7. Carmelo Mesa-Lago, *The Labor Sector and Socialist Distribution in Cuba* (New York: Praeger, 1968).

international economic relations; and an examination and evaluation of the debate and policy reforms since the Sixth Party Congress. It is constructed on a solid and broad foundation of statistical information and a deep knowledge of the meaning and limitations of that information. It utilizes virtually all possible source materials from inside and outside the island, including speeches, academic analyses, and innumerable articles from the Cuban and international press. The analysis is based on information up to November and in some cases to December 2012, representing a surprisingly rapid publication process. This study is comprehensive in scope, immensely detailed in its analysis, yet concise and focused. It is balanced and objective. It constitutes the best starting point for any observer, analyst, researcher, or scholar trying to understand and evaluate Cuba's economic experience during the Raúl era.

*Quo Vadis, Cuba?* edited by José Antonio Alonso and Pavel Vidal, is a coproduction of the Center for the Study of the Cuban Economy of the Universidad de la Habana (CEEC), and the Institute for International Studies at the Complutense University of Madrid (Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid).<sup>8</sup> The project was financed by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation. The volume does not attempt a comprehensive overview of the functioning of the economy or a complete set of prescriptions for economic reform. Instead, the objective of the volume is "to make a modest contribution to the search for useful paths for a 'renovated' Cuba" (Alonso and Vidal, 24); in this it succeeds. The Cuban-Spanish team has produced an outstanding set of analyses of a number of the central economic conundrums facing the Cuban economy.

The analysts at CEEC have been focusing on Cuba's economic situation now for some twenty years. They have steadily pushed the envelope, arguing forcefully and courageously from within Cuba regarding the need and possible shapes for reforms. They have also "stayed in the game"—in contrast to dissident analysts such as Miriam Celaya, Dimas Castellanos, and the late Oscar Espinosa Chepe, among others, who work outside the system. While the CEEC analysts have perhaps had only a limited direct role in decision making, they have been instrumental in moving the discussion forward and supporting the changing climate of opinion regarding economic institutions and policy.

The first chapter, by José Antonio Alfonso and Juan Triana Cordoví, focuses on the foundations of economic growth, beginning with some discussion of growth theorizing and possible insights from international experience for Cuba. It then analyzes Cuba's growth performance and discusses strategic options. The policy recommendations that it arrives at are fairly standard, namely promoting exports and solving the problem of the dual exchange rate and monetary system. The third recommendation, which calls for the *actualización* of policy regarding the promotion of direct foreign investment (to complement domestic savings lev-

8. Six of the seven Cuban authors were from CEEC and five of the Spanish authors are from the Universidad Complutense. The editor on the Cuban side, Pavel Vidal, was at CEEC but is currently at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana at Cali, Colombia.

els and stimulate technological transfer), is perhaps a bit surprising in view of Cuba's three decades of policy hostility and then another two decades of policy reticence.<sup>9</sup>

Isabel Álvarez and Ricardo Torres present a strong analysis of technical innovation, including a quick review of some theorizing, some comparative international experience, and an analysis of structural changes in industry, trade, and employment and their technological dimensions during the Special Period. They attribute the technological lag to low savings and investment levels, weak infrastructure, limited access to technology from abroad, and "the inertia and 'inmovilismo' of Cuba's managerial systems" (Alonso and Vidal, 129). Among their policy suggestions are higher levels of savings and investment to permit accelerated incorporation of new technologies and structural change and a broadening of the self-employment sector to permit professional activities that would utilize Cuba's well-educated labor force more effectively.

This volume also includes outstanding chapters on analyzing tax reform and enterprise by Carlos Garcimartín, Omar Everleny Pérez, and Saira Pons; on Cuba's social challenges and policy targeting by Anicia García, Susanne Gratius, and Luisa Íñiguez Rojas; and on the decentralization of state programs by Santiago Díaz de Sarralde and Julio César Guanche.

The concluding chapter by the editors entitled "Reglas, incentivos e instituciones" (Rules, Incentives, and Institutions) outlines the "required institutional transformation" that Cuba needs to undergo, namely "the readjustment of the rules, norms, values and organizations inherited from the past." The precise form of that readjustment is unstated, but "the framework of economic and social incentives within which Cubans functioned in the past is called upon to transform itself and must be progressively replaced by another that will be coherent with the objectives of the reform" (Alonso and Vidal, 257).

This challenging chapter discusses the place of institutions in the development process, institutional quality, and the process of institutional change in Cuban agriculture, the nonagricultural self-employment and microenterprise sector, the cooperative sector, and the direct foreign investment area. It emphasizes the prerequisites for the functioning of markets (secure property rights, security of contracts, and effective competition) and also market failure. It also includes brief analyses of the obstacles to current institutional reform (inertia and opposition to change, potential loss of position by vested interests and the social hierarchy, and impacts on income distribution). The authors conclude that while reformist gradualism has certain advantages, an activist prioritization of reforms is desirable, such that the first reforms generate clear benefits for broad sectors of the population, thereby building support for further reforms. All in all, this book makes valuable contributions to the understanding of the reformist challenges facing Cuba as it resolves some of its most pressing economic problems and moves toward a mixed but more market-oriented economy with major roles for the small enterprise and cooperative sectors.

9. The authors contrast the highly successful nickel sector, which has had a major role for foreign investment (in the form of Sherritt International) with the autarkic and disastrous sugar sector.

These volumes all make important contributions to the analysis and understanding of Cuba's overall economic situation. However, economic policies in a range of vital issue areas remain to be analyzed in greater depth as part of the process of the modernization of the Cuban economy. One hopes that the next round of major publications on the Cuban economy will investigate some of these specific policy areas more profoundly than was possible in any of the general volumes reviewed here. Of particular relevance would be analyses of the policies toward agriculture, industry, energy, infrastructure, the service sector, small enterprise and the private sector, cooperatives, state enterprise, foreign investment and joint ventures, exchange rate and monetary issues, trade policy, policy toward foreign investment, social policies, health and education, labor issues, pensions and demographic issues, cultural areas, and so on. The work ahead is daunting. What remains to be seen is how far economic reforms can proceed without any *actualización* of Cuba's political system.