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## Letter from the Editor

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The decade of the 1960s was marked by what seemed to be a worldwide explosion of social and political consciousness, activism, unrest, and protest. While wars of national liberation and independence spread throughout most of the devel-

oping world, in the United States the struggles

for civil rights, equality, social justice, and anti-imperialism gained momentum and strength. Whether civil or military, all campaigns and struggles had one common denominator: the deep commitment of its participants to freedom and social justice.

In this issue of *Diálogo*, we focus on the lesser known, but equally important struggle for social justice and equality of a Chicago community that in 1966 erupted into one of the many urban riots of the times. The Division Street Riot, as it came to be known, alerted the United States and the world to the police brutality, political repression, and economic exploitation Puerto Ricans in Chicago were subjected to during a period of intense social mobilization in favor of equality and justice. *Diálogo* is privileged and honored to publish interviews with several men and women who were witnesses to the events of that fateful summer. Commemorating the Division Street Riot is important to us for many reasons, but chief among them are: 1) Providing a forum for our community, and preserving their voices for posterity is central to our mission of rescuing and documenting Latino community histories. 2) A better understanding of the riots and the

political organizations that developed in their aftermath can teach us important lessons today as our communities struggle against the anti-immigrant campaigns that have been sweeping the nation in recent years.

Unfortunately, police brutality, political repression, and economic exploitation are as real in our communities today as

they were thirty years ago. The savage beating of Mexican undocumented immigrants at the hands of the U.S. Border Patrol, the murder of Jorge Guillén by the Chicago Police, and the torture of Abner Louima by the New York City Police are just a few reminders of the current violence against our communities. Equally violent is the exploitation and abuse of Latino farm workers, whose tireless struggle for decent wages and safe working conditions continues today, more than thirty years after the creation of the United Farm Workers Union.

As if violence, repression and exploitation were not enough, our communities are currently fighting against racist policies like California's Propositions 187 and 209 that deny Latinos—including legal immigrants and naturalized citizens—the right to participate fully and equally in American society.

It is not surprising then, that community organizations, usually against great odds, constantly remind us and make us aware of the fact that the struggle is far from over, and that it has a long history. A poignant example of the community's incessant consciousness building mission is evidenced in Clara López's article on the Latin American Defense

Organization (LADO). LADO was one of the key political organizations that emerged and developed after the riots, and Clara is the daughter of Obed López, one of LADO's founders and a participant in the riot.

The significance of the Division Street Riot was eloquently narrated in Simón Gomez's recorded décima "Los Motines de Chicago", which was banned in Chicago. To supplement the eye-witness accounts, we are delighted to reprint excerpts from Félix Padilla's *Puerto Rican Chicago*. Published in 1987, *Puerto Rican Chicago* provides one of the most insightful analysis of the riot to date.

In addition to focusing on the Division Street Riot, this issue also opens dialogues on other important issues affecting Latino communities. José Soltero and Sonia White-Soltero engage us in a debate over the intentions and effects of the current anti-immigrant campaign as manifested through the U.S. English movement. We also focus on the status of Latinas in Chicago and their efforts to build safer, healthier, and more prosperous communities. Last, but certainly not least, we focus on the arts by bringing you the creative works of Latinas and Latinos. We are specially proud to feature the poetry and photography of four DePaul University students, Kristy Zalazar, Adrián Aragonés, María de los Angeles Corral, and Amor Montes de Oca. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Diálogo*, and thanks again for the enthusiastic support you gave *Diálogo's* premier issue.

**Félix Masud-Piloto**

*DePaul University,*

*Center for Latino Research*

The logo for the journal "Diálogo" is presented in a white, stylized, cursive font. It is centered within a solid black rectangular background.

## **Diálogo:**

I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE the editorial team of *Diálogo* on the very successful premiere issue! The accessibility of the material to non-specialists and your attempt to establish an on-going conversation among Latinos and other interested individuals about significant community issues is to be commended. I also look forward to the continuation of the bilingual format. Thank you again for a wonderful publication.

*Robert C. Dash*  
Associate Professor,  
Willamette University

FELICIDADES POR *Diálogo*. ¡Formidable! He recomendado a la Biblioteca de la SI y el Museo Nacional de Historia Americana que se suscriban, y he circulado un memo acerca de la revista a un grupo clave de colegas aquí. Me interesa aydar en lo que pueda. Esta es una importante iniciativa, muy bien enfocada y, sin duda, bien llamada. Me gusta el concepto de "Diálogo". Suerte.

*Miguel A. Bretos*  
Counselor to the Secretary for  
Latino Affairs,  
Smithsonian Institute

I FINALLY DUG THROUGH the piles of mail and memos that have accumulated during my frequent trips out of town, and I saw one bright spot in it all: Your premier issue of *Diálogo*. It looks beautiful, and a quick look at the stories of real people and their histories in Chicago and around the country look great! The photos are an evocative complement to the text. I know your staff has worked very hard on this, and has set a very high standard for future issues and for all the other DePaul centers out there. Congratulations on a fine blend of art, scholarship, culture and politics!

*Rod Watts*  
DePaul University,  
Psychology Department

DIÁLOGO IS A HIT! An excellent way to link faculty to community. Congratualtions to the staff and faculty who developed this publication. We will advertise this revista in our NEXO.

*Refugio I. Rochin*  
Professor and Director,  
Julian Samora Research Institute

*Diálogo* would like to hear from you. Please direct your comments, suggestions or contributions to our editorial office.