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e dedicate this, our third issue of *Islas*, to one of the most notable figures of the modern-day civil rights movement in the United States, Rosa Parks. Her life story and passionate struggle alone justify giving her this simple honor. She initiated one of the most powerful, well-known campaigns against racial discrimination when she defied federal and local laws in 1955 by refusing to give up her seat to a White passenger on a public bus. Her life and work are inspirations to all people around the world who face acts of racism that corrupt humanity to this day.

A special space is reserved for **Gustavo E. Urrutia**, a black Cuban who, twenty



years before the events surrounding Rosa Parks, initiated an important campaign to educate others about the disparaging treatment and evils that affected the black population in Cuba. Urrutia accomplished this by delivering talks on Cuban radio and writing articles that were published in *Diario de La Marina*, one of the main Cuban

newspapers at that time, through which he was able to reach very broad sections of the community. On one hand, Urrutia's work is proof of Cuba's longtime struggle against racial discrimination and yet, on the other hand, it brings forth examples of claims of discrimination that have been lost over time.

In today's Cuba, black people do not have an opportunity to express their ideas, demands and aspirations through the mass media. At the same time, however, the comparative readings of Urrutia's fundamental ideas and the story of Rosa Parks' life can provide an understanding of the many specific characteristics that historically have distinguished racial relations in Cuba and the United States.

The article **Black Identity in Cuba and the United States: Nicolás Guillén and Langston Hughes**, not only familiarizes you with the works of two great poets, but also provides insight about the perceptions associated with belonging to a racial group and its social implications in different cultural and historic scenes. Guillén and Hughes had different racial identities which were reflected in their poetic work, political and social paths and how they viewed situations that affected black people.

**Chano Pozo** and **Esteban Luis Cárdenas** complete the list of black personalities receiving dedications in this issue of *Islas*. Chano, also called "Cuba's Drum," was a young black man who, coming from a lower social level and a street environment,

became one of the most prominent figures in Cuban music. He became a success in his own country and later became an idol in New York City in the United States. Esteban Luis, a poet, used his mighty pen and elegant words to leave an indelible print of poetic riches and social wealth.

Our interest in bringing to light any expressions of racism, regardless of where they are manifested, led us to include the article, **Racism and Football in Great Britain**. The author points out how segregation and discrimination have historically darkened this sport in Europe and, at the same time, proves how racist and neo-fascist ideas continue to develop within some ultra-conservative groups of the old continent.

Further, the articles, **The Black and Mass Media Equality** written by Armando Añel and **The Colors of Statistics** written by Miguel Fernandez, focus on racism and racial discrimination in today's Cuba. Generally, these authors highlight the lack of blacks and mixed people in Cuba's most diverse spheres of political, social and cultural life. Miguel Fernandez compares this reality with the high proportion of blacks in the Cuban penitentiaries. The group of articles dedicated to this theme is completed with **Where are the Black People?**

Cuba is one of the countries where the African culture and influences are most strongly preserved. An important part of that African legacy is expressed in religion. The article, **The Cuban Religions of African Origin: Santeria**, was included in order to take into account the social forces represented by African belief systems and the clout that they have in broad sections of the Cuban population.

As a reader of **Islas**, you will observe that we try to include a broad array of themes related to the life and work of African descendants throughout the world. In this issue, we also introduce a new section, **News Briefs**, which provides a brief synopsis of prominent events that recently occurred around the world. We hope that all of this will inspire others to share their experiences with our staff and readers through the pages of our journal.

We are encouraged to know that **Islas** has been accepted by numerous diverse social, cultural and academic sectors. In fact, various centers of higher education in the United States have decided to use our journal as reference material.

As we have stated many times, this publication is not only a necessity but a challenge. Not surprisingly, while we have received many compliments, we have also received a few adverse comments from people who want only to discuss topics superficially, i.e. without revealing their real objections or concrete opinions. Such comments generally are a response to the philosophy of a problem that has been around

for too long without anyone ever going beyond the surface. At other times, these people try to maintain obsolete political paradigms.

Racism and its most diverse expressions in contemporary multi-racial societies are based on a set of ideas, concepts, prejudices and stereotypes that are deeply rooted in social conscience and with great resistance to change. Occasionally, this resistance is manifested consciously, most of all, by those who benefit from the status quo and who have no interest in change. Others, as a result of being surrounded for a long time by racist models of thought and action, tend to interpret reality as something absolute.

It is clear to those who promote **Islas** that the works published in this journal, regardless of the perspective contribute greatly to clarifying the phenomenon of racism. It is essential to recognize the problem in order to face it. Racism is an objective reality in its most diverse expressions. However, it possesses a strong subjective component that is in need of change. As a result, we urge all individuals interested in this topic, regardless of their racial background, to contribute reports, articles and analyses that emphasize the life and work of the black population in their respective countries.

Dr. Juan Antonio Alvarado  
Editor in Chief