



*Jaqueline H. Arroyo*  
*CEO and Founder*  
*Afro-Cuban Alliance, Inc*

*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.*  
*We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.*  
*Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.*  
*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

One individual can begin a movement that turns the tide of history. The leaders portrayed on Islas' cover imagined a better world for their people and their country.<sup>1</sup> Guided by hope and not by fear, they weathered battles and challenges in order to bring about harmony and racial reconciliation. All of them embraced the non-violence legacy of Gandhi to achieve their destiny.

*Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind.*  
*It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.*  
*Mahatma Gandhi*

Their strength and vision inspired others to join them as they worked to create a world ruled by the tenets of freedom, equality, and justice. Draw inspiration from their lives! Study their strategies as well as learn from their successes and failures.

*We draw our strength from the very despair in which we have been forced to live. We shall endure.*  
*Cesar Chavez*

There are many people and groups in Cuba fighting for its soul; waging a battle for freedom and racial equality. Many of them are ardent writers and supporters of Islas. Over the last 8 years, Islas joined these freedom fighters by providing them with a forum to share and a vehicle to communicate their crusade for equality.

Regrettably, our journey with these freedom fighters has come to an end. This Islas issue (#25) will be the last publication for a time. We will use this time to revamp and restructure our publication so that we can come back to the African Diaspora community stronger and better.

We thank the writers and readers for allowing us to travel this journey with them. Words cannot adequately express our appreciation to the writers who shared their stories and concerns and the readers who welcomed us into their homes. We also thank Islas' team--editors, designer, translator, and publisher --for their outstanding work. In addition, we offer a special thank you to all of the Islas collaborators in the U.S.; especially, Carnegie Mellon University, Laurence Glasco, Shawn Alfonso Wells, and James Hill. Of course, special appreciation goes to our Editor-in-Chief, Juan Antonio Alvarado, who worked tirelessly alongside the writers and team members to pull together each issue. Moreover, we thank the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for their financial support over the last 8 years. Finally, we would like to pay homage to the organizations and collaborators in Cuba who are fighting day-after-day for basic human rights, freedom, and equality.

*"I am fundamentally an optimist. Whether that comes from nature or nurture, I cannot say. Part of being optimistic is keeping one's head pointed toward the sun, one's feet moving forward. There were many dark moments when my faith in humanity was sorely tested, but I would not and could not give myself up to despair. That way lays defeat and death."*  
*Nelson Mandela*

1-On the Cover: *Rosa Parks*, was an African-American civil rights activist, whom the United States Congress called "the first lady of civil rights" and "the mother of the freedom movement" (February 4, 1913 – October 24, 2005). *Nelson Mandela*, was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary, politician, and philanthropist who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. *Cesar Chavez*, was an American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist, who, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (1927-1993). *Mohandas Gandhi* was the preeminent leader and freedom fighter of Indian nationalism in British-ruled India (1869 to 1948). *Martin Luther King, Jr.*, was an American clergyman, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience (1929 – 1968). *Jawaharlal Nehru*, was the first Prime Minister of India and a central figure in Indian politics for much of the 20th century. He emerged as the paramount leader of the Indian Independence Movement under the tutelage of Mahatma Gandhi and ruled India from its establishment as an independent nation in 1947 until his death in office in 1964.