

IDEAS

Black Lives Matter Misses the Point About Cuba

The country is not an empty canvas onto which Americans can project their political ideas.

By Jorge Felipe-Gonzalez



Protesters in Havana on July 11 (Yamil Late / AFP / Getty)

JULY 17, 2021

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Last Sunday, Cubans in a small town 16 miles from Havana filled the streets to demonstrate against the government. The unrest quickly spread on social media, igniting protests across the island, marking the first such nationwide wave of protest in the communist country in decades.

On Thursday, the Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation, the leading organization in the Black Lives Matter movement, issued a statement saying that the unrest resulted from the “U.S. federal government’s inhumane treatments of Cubans.” BLM called for lifting the American embargo, which, it says, undermines “Cubans’ right to choose their own government,” and is punishment for Cuba’s “commitment to sovereignty and self-determination.”

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At first glance, the statement might seem to signal solidarity with the protesters, but BLM is actually repeating Communist officials when it blames the uprising on the United States. And that misses the point of the protests. To the surprise of the Black community in Cuba and those in exile, the organization is overlooking what has triggered the events—Cuba’s systemic denial of rights to its people, poor material conditions, lack of social mobility, and the inequality that plagues all Cubans but disproportionately Afro-Cubans, who are at the forefront of the widespread demonstrations.

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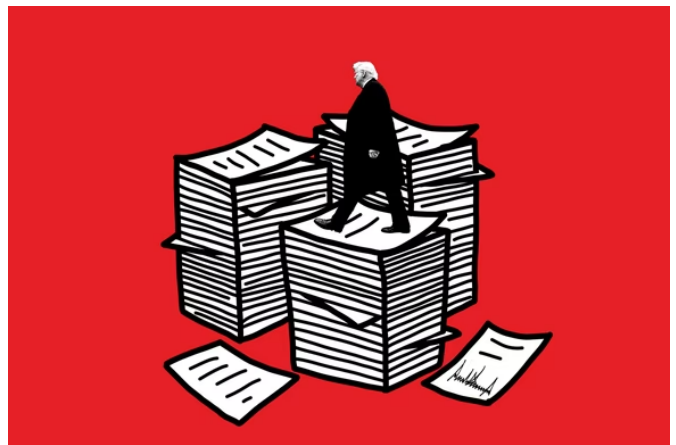


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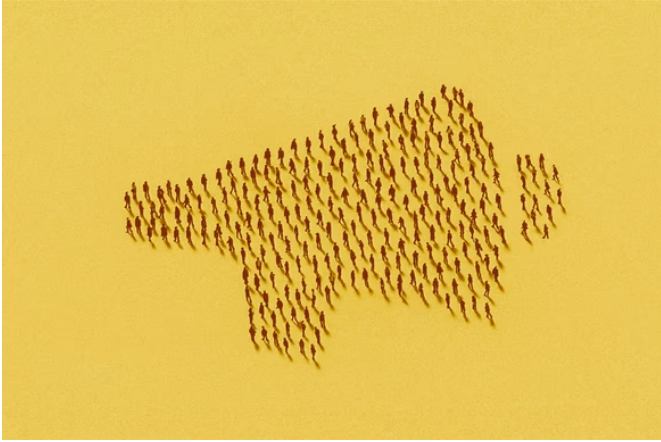


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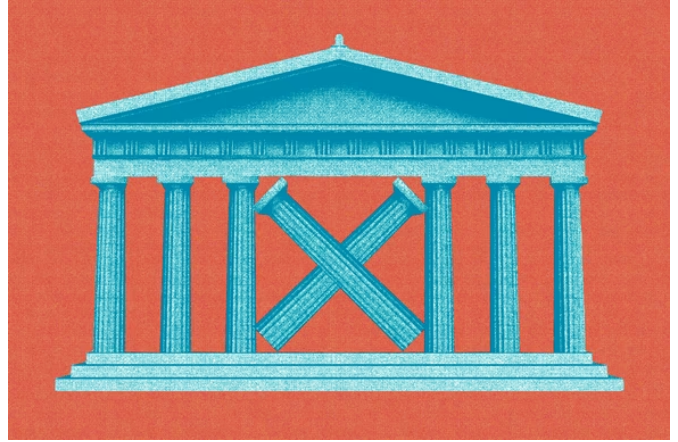


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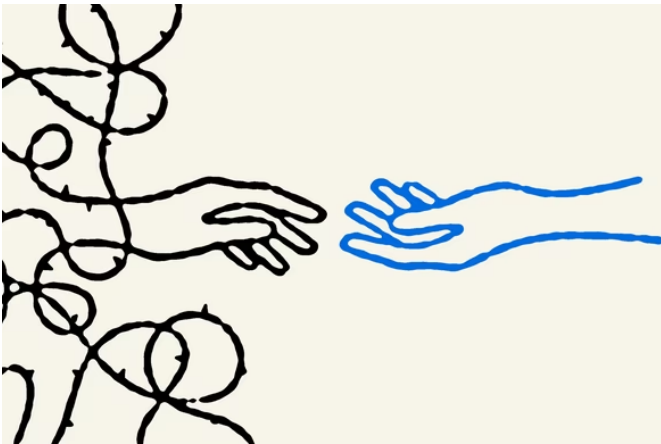


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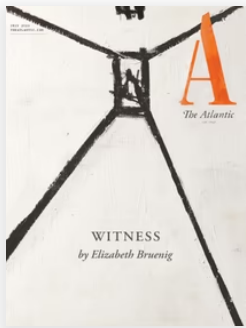
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