

# Standing with the Cuban People

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*The current Black-centered Cuban protest operation is very well orchestrated and if Black people in this country are not careful, they will end up amplifying the dictates of U.S. imperialism.*

The Movement for Black Lives has an interesting and sometimes contradictory political history. Popularly known as Black Lives Matter (BLM), they gave birth to a now international rallying cry against anti-Black racism. They are identified with the issue of police violence so much that any protest involving Black people is dubbed Black Lives Matter whether there is any connection with that group or not.

But BLM has also been problematic. Its founders have close ties to the Democratic party and its funding apparatus. Its membership has always been more radical than its leadership, who disclosed that they raised \$90 million dollars in 2020 alone. The public accountability came about because their local chapters demanded more transparency and accountability.

Sometimes though they get things right, as happened when [BLM released a statement](#) demanding an end to the 60-year long sanctions imposed by the U.S. against the Cuban government and its people. The impetus for their statement came after a well orchestrated psy-op was carried out against the Cuban government.

“BLM’s founders raised \$90 million dollars in 2020 alone.”

In early July there was a sudden burst of twitter posts using [#SOSCuba](#). There were more than 1,000 posts over two days, with five retweets per second. These automated tweets originated in Spain and were connected with Agustin Antonetti, a right wing Argentinian who used the same methods of subterfuge against Evo Morales in Bolivia and president Lopez Obrador in Mexico. A total of two million #SOSCuba tweets were sent in July.

The online bot attack succeeded and there were protests in Cuban cities on July 11. They were immediately amplified by corporate media around the world. They were modest in size but they were described as being spontaneous and of historic proportions. The media even posted photos of pro-government actions or those which took place outside of the country and represented them as home grown anti-government protests.

“The online bot attack was were immediately amplified by corporate media around the world.”

The manipulation added a new wrinkle which makes this campaign quite insidious. Suddenly Black Cubans were made the focus of commentary. The right wing Cuban exile community and their allies could not get buy-in for their old regime change argument if people like Alejandro Mayorkas, the Secretary of Homeland Security, were the face of Cuban discontent. The Mayorkas family were wealthy business owners in Cuba and when they left ended up living in Beverly Hills. That is not a good look when a high level propaganda operation is needed.

Now a new crop of Black faces have appeared on the [Black News Channel](#) on [Questlove’s Instagram page](#), and in popular culture. The #SOSCuba tweets were directed to performing artists, some of whom like Yotuel Romero have recorded songs opposing the government. Romero now lives in Miami and the title of his song Patria Y Vida is the slogan used for 60 years by Cubans who are the staunchest opponents of the revolution. This operation is very well orchestrated and if Black people in this country are not careful, they will end up amplifying the dictates of U.S. imperialism.

It is important to clarify what sanctions are and how they are used against Cuba and 38 other countries around the world. Sanctions do more than prevent U.S. individuals, banks, and businesses from doing business with the target nation. The U.S. also targets any nation that dares to defy its edict. Any country considering breaking a U.S. embargo suffers the same fate as the target.

“The U.S. targets any nation that dares to defy its edict.”

Cubans, Syrians, Venezuelans, Iranians, Nicaraguans and others cannot conduct the international financial transactions that any nation needs in order to survive. Nor are food and medicine exempt from these restrictions. The same people who claim concern for the Cuban people are also in favor of continuing their suffering.

The plight of the Cuban people cannot be separated from Washington’s sanctions. Cuban scientists developed their own Covid vaccine, Soberana, which has a high rate of efficacy. But sanctions have left them without enough syringes and they cannot provide their own people with protection from Covid.

The BLM statement was clear and principled. The ongoing blockade is causing great suffering and any critique of BLM in this instance supports U.S. imperialism, whether that is the intention of commentary or not.

“Sanctions have left Cuba without enough syringes.”

The only way to show solidarity with Black Cubans is to expose U.S. aggressions which create misery for them and their fellow citizens. Any claim of concern for their lives which does not include an unequivocal demand for ending sanctions is dishonest and does Washington’s bidding.

After releasing their statement BLM was under immediate attack from the self-declared right wing and from liberals who in fact have the same tendencies. The liberals are worse, as they make the case for imperialism under a variety of guises, in this case a desire to help Black people. A new trope appeared overnight, which alleged that the Cuban government is more

racist than the one we live under, and that Black Cubans are supportive of the 60-year old war which has devastated their country and their lives.

The latest propaganda campaign against Cuba is well orchestrated and it must not be allowed to succeed. That is why BLM's statement must be defended. They are to be commended for stepping up at a critical moment and exposing an ongoing crime against another nation. That is the responsibility of everyone who claims to care about Cuba or about humanity anywhere in the world.

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**Margaret Kimberley's Freedom Rider column appears weekly in BAR, and is widely reprinted elsewhere. She maintains a frequently updated blog as well at <http://freedomrider.blogspot.com> . Ms. Kimberley lives in New York City, and can be reached via e-Mail at [Margaret.Kimberley\(at\)BlackAgendaReport.com](mailto:Margaret.Kimberley(at)BlackAgendaReport.com).**

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