

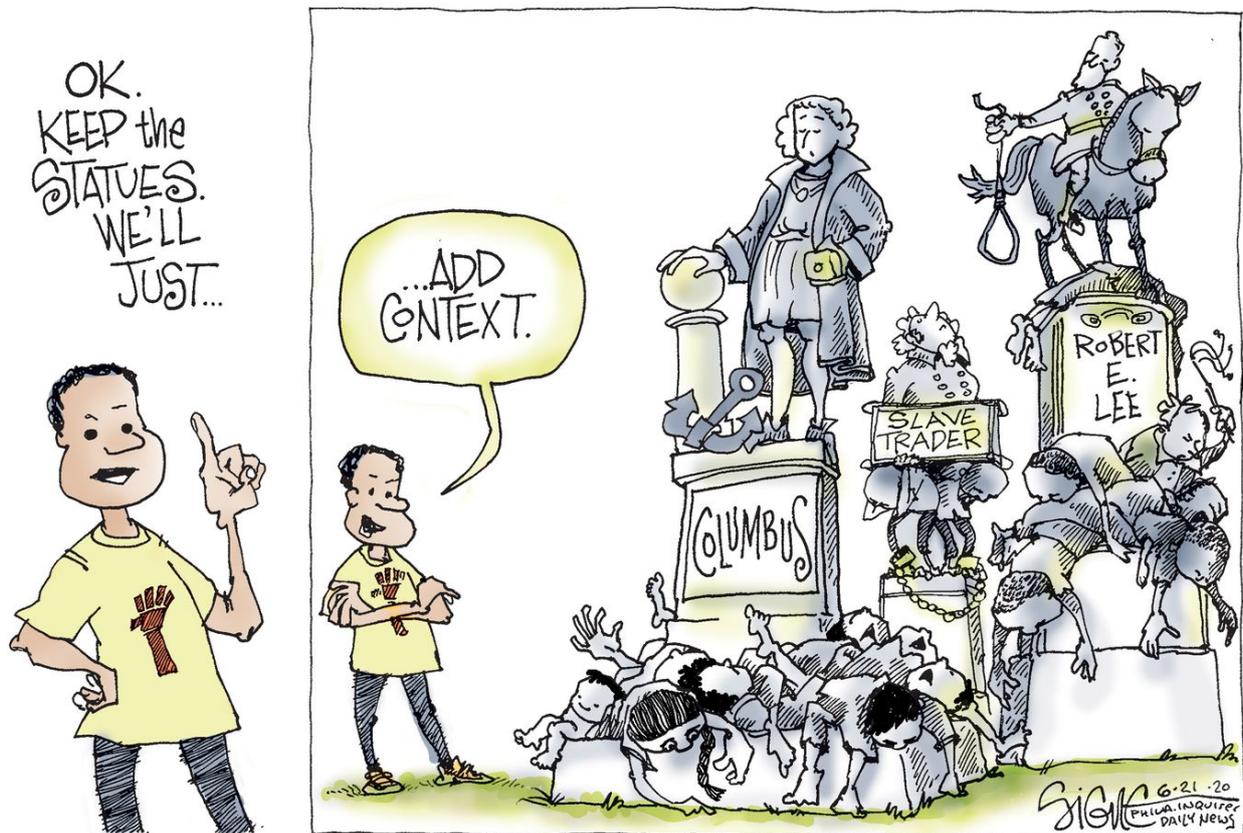
*L'usage de tout système électronique ou informatique est interdit dans cette épreuve.*

*Rédiger en anglais et en 500 mots (plus ou moins 10 %) une synthèse des documents proposés, qui devra obligatoirement comporter un titre. Indiquer avec précision, à la fin du travail, le nombre de mots utilisés (titre inclus).*

Ce sujet comporte les quatre documents suivants :

- un dessin de Signe WILKINSON paru dans *The Philadelphia Inquirer* le 21 juin 2020 ;
- un éditorial publié dans *The Economist* le 11 juin 2020 ;
- un article de Mitch LANDRIEU, publié dans *The Washington Post* le 11 mai 2017 ;
- un extrait d'un article de Melody BARNES, publié dans *The Washington Post*, le 6 juillet 2020.

*L'ordre dans lequel se présentent les documents est arbitraire et ne revêt aucune signification.*



### Statues in context

by Signe WILKINSON, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

### Should they stay or should they go?

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020

In 1895 the burghers of Bristol in south-west England, swept up by the Victorian fervour for celebrating city fathers, were casting about for a big historical cheese<sup>1</sup> of their own. They settled on Edward Colston, a 17th-century merchant who had endowed charities that have lifted innumerable indigent Bristolians out of poverty and educated hordes of its young citizens over the centuries. But, by modern standards, they picked the wrong guy: Colston made his money largely through the Royal African Company, which shipped slaves from Africa to the West Indies. On June 7th protesters chucked his statue into the city's harbour.

Statues become flashpoints at times of social change because they honour the values, and reflect the hierarchies, of the times in which they were erected. What some in one era celebrate, others then and later often reject—hence the battles over statues of Confederate heroes in the southern United States, many of which were put up long after the civil war to defend white supremacy. Yet statues also provide a record of a country's past, and the desire to respect and understand that history of commemoration argues against dismantling them. It is these conflicting urges that make this area so tricky.

It would be foolish to throw overboard all those figures who have in any way offended modern morality, just as it would be to preserve every bronze villain just because he's ancient. Great figures should have a place in public spaces, even when their record is tarnished. As a rule, someone whose failings were subordinate to their claim to greatness should stay, whereas someone whose main contribution to history was baleful should go.

These guidelines would allow most of those about whom Britain is now arguing to cling to their plinths<sup>2</sup>. Colston has no claim to remain. Oliver Cromwell, by contrast, caused terrible suffering in Ireland, but his role in democracy's development justifies his presence in Parliament Square. Cecil Rhodes is a harder case. He was not the worst imperialist, but he drove many black people off their land. He left a huge,

grubby fortune to charity. His statue is on private property, so the choice rests with Oriel College, Oxford. It ought to put him in a museum.

America honours many people who happened to be slave owners—and so it should, in the case of such as Washington and Jefferson, known chiefly for their contribution to their country. But the pressure for change is forcing America to reassess its statuary. Many Confederate leaders have been removed in the past few years, and more should go, including Ben Tillman, a white supremacist still honoured outside South Carolina's state house; and Nathan Bedford Forrest, a slave trader and Klansman whose bust is in the state capital in Tennessee.

In the Netherlands Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who massacred thousands of Indonesians, does not deserve his plinth, any more than Stepan Bandera, murderer of many Jews, should be honoured in Lviv and other Ukrainian cities.

Yet it matters not just that the undeserving are taken off their pedestals, but also how they go. The indignation of those who brought down Colston may have been righteous, but they were wrong to topple him themselves. Statues should be taken down, just as they ought to be put up, by social consensus; and even if the authorities dither for years—as Bristol's council has done over the erection of a plaque explaining Colston's sins—that is no excuse for the mob to take charge.

Prosecuting the topplers would not, however, be a good use of the state's resources; nor should Colston be reinstated. He has now been dredged out of the river, and the council is planning to put him in a museum. Other countries with difficult histories have found more imaginative solutions. Hungary put its collection of communist-era statues in the rather weird Memento Park, for day-trippers to wonder at. Paraguay crushed Alfredo Stroessner with a vast block of concrete. And Mumbai, with a pleasing touch, consigned Edward VII to the zoo.

<sup>1</sup> big cheese: a very important person.

<sup>2</sup> plinth: a block of stone at the base of a statue.

**We must remember this history, and learn from it, but we shouldn't celebrate it.**

By Mitch LANDRIEU<sup>3</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Last month, New Orleans began the long-overdue process of removing four statues honoring the lost, and immoral, Confederate cause. This week, we continue the job.

Getting here wasn't easy. It took a two-year review process, a City Council vote and victories over multiple legal challenges. The original contractor we'd hired to remove the monuments backed out after receiving death threats and having one of his cars set ablaze. Nearly every heavy-crane company in southern Louisiana has received threats from opponents. Some have likened these monuments to other monuments around the world from bygone eras, and have argued that civic resources would be better spent trying to educate the public about the history they embody. Respectfully, that's not the point. As mayor, I must consider their impact on our entire city. It's my job to chart the course ahead, not simply to venerate the past.

More than almost any other city in the world, New Orleans is truly a city of many nations. Between the native Choctaw, Houma Nation and Chitimacha tribes, the colonial explorers de Soto and de La Salle, the Acadians, the Haitians, the Senegambians and other African nations, the imperial powers of France and Spain, and ultimately the United States, our city is a cross-section of humanity in all its colors and cultures. In recent decades, our Vietnamese and Latino communities have flourished. We are a melting pot, a gumbo. That is our strength.

But New Orleans was also America's largest slave market: a port where hundreds of thousands of souls were brought, sold and shipped up the Mississippi River to lives of misery and torture. Our history is forever intertwined with that of our great nation — including its most terrible sins. We must always remember our history and learn from it. But that doesn't mean we must valorize the ugliest chapters, as we do when we put the Confederacy on a pedestal — literally — in our most prominent public places.

The record is clear: New Orleans's Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis and P.G.T. Beauregard statues were erected with the goal of rewriting history to glorify the Confederacy and perpetuate the idea of white supremacy. These monuments stand not as mournful markers of our legacy of slavery and segregation, but in reverence of it. They are an inaccurate recitation of our past, an affront to our present and a poor prescription for our future.

The right course, then, is to excise these symbols of injustice. The Battle of Liberty Place monument was not built to commemorate the fallen law enforcement officers of the racially integrated New Orleans police and state militia. It was meant to honor members of the Crescent City White League, the people who killed them. That kind of "honor" has no place in an American city. So, last month, we took the monument down.

This week, we began the removal of a statue honoring Davis, and soon thereafter Lee and Beauregard. It won't erase history. But we can begin a new chapter of New Orleans's history by placing these monuments, and the legacy of oppression they represent, in museums and other spaces where they can be viewed in an appropriate educational setting as examples of our capacity to change.

After we're done moving these monuments, we'll face an even greater task: coming together to decide who we are as a city — and as a nation. Over the past few years, before the monument removal effort, we began Welcome Table New Orleans, which facilitates tough conversations about race and brings various communities together on projects in their neighborhoods. As part of our work, residents have discussed and designed reconciliation projects, such as a mural and oral history project on what was once part of a plantation, as monuments to the future, not the past.

History, unfortunately, has seen great nations become lost, isolated and ultimately extinct by refusing to confront the sins of the past and evolve to meet the demands of a changing world. If we don't want to be forever held back by our crushing history of institutional racism, it's time to relegate these monuments to their proper place.

Last year, when President Barack Obama opened the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, he spoke of the need to contextualize our history through one of the museum's most telling artifacts: a slave auction block with a marker noting that Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay had once spoken from atop it. "For a long time the only thing we considered important, the singular thing we once chose to commemorate as history, with a plaque," Obama said, "were the unmemorable speeches of two powerful men" — not the families "sold and bid like cattle" on that same spot.

Just like the decision to publicly recognize the tragic significance of that stone, removing New Orleans's Confederate monuments from places of prominence is an acknowledgment that it is time to take stock of, and then move past, a painful part of our history. Anything less would render generations of courageous struggle and soul-searching a truly lost cause.

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<sup>3</sup> Mitch LANDRIEU was the mayor of New Orleans from 2010 to 2018.

## Richmond's Monument Avenue must be for everyone

I live on Richmond's Monument Avenue, but Monument Avenue wasn't meant for me.

My grandmother was born in this city and so was my father, when Jim Crow was king. Reminded of the laws and customs of his youth, my father recounted his personal acts of protest. When working, he wouldn't enter homes in the tonier sections of the city through the back door, nor would he stand in the "colored only" lines to pick up lunch. "I understood the rules," he told me. "I just didn't internalize them." To do so would have meant embracing a caricature of himself crafted by those who couldn't imagine him as five-fifths of a person.

I was born in 1964, the year Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. My parents brought me home to the house they purchased in a part of the city newly available to African Americans. They saved and sacrificed for my opportunities, including an assumption about college and graduate school that never was up for discussion.

[...]

Much of my youth unfolded less than two miles from Monument Avenue, which for many in Richmond is more than a street. It's the place where Easter is "on parade," where residents host porch parties and even dogs wear hats. Elaborate Christmas decorations begin to appear before Thanksgiving — ropes of lights, multiple holiday trees and life-size Santa Clauses sitting in convertibles or zip-lining between houses. Year-round, tourists would drive up and down the avenue — in admiration or shock — viewing the mammoth statues of Confederate generals.

The monuments along Monument Avenue — to Robert E. Lee and other Confederate heroes — were added in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries as the South started to conjure<sup>5</sup> a gilded new memory of its past, filled with pure motives and righteousness. They were part of a massive propaganda effort to spin a sanitized story about slavery while institutionalized Jim Crow segregation took hold alongside the annihilation of African Americans' Reconstruction gains.

But places change when people change them, and Richmond is being transformed. Today, the Lee statue — covered in paint and profanity, and surrounded by makeshift memorials to those lost to racial and police violence — is soon to be the last general standing. An empowered community — and an African American mayor — is removing the iconography of white supremacy from the public square and hoping to attack historic inequities as well. I've witnessed this firsthand, sometimes joining — at a virus-induced distance — large, diverse crowds protesting in front of the statue.

It's been invigorating and infuriating. The Lee statue's fate is mired in litigation brought by those who want it to remain. I've heard arguments about diminished property values, but I wish there were greater concern about celebrating a cause that considered some of our ancestors as property. I've also heard concerns about an erased history. The last thing I want is history erased. Our history must be studied, absorbed and addressed if reconciliation and progress are in our future. That's a far cry from a public celebration of a mythical past that imagines white Americans as the protagonists of the entire American story.

I see a path forward in Richmond. Recent elections led to an overdue revision in Virginia law that long protected Confederate monuments, and community protests connected the monuments to historic inequity and a sense of urgency. That's power, and when aligned with expertise and commitment from every sector, Richmond and other communities across the country can fuel a community wealth-building strategy that begins to dismantle the systems that perpetuated poverty and privilege. It's 400 years overdue.

My husband and I live on Monument Avenue, near the Lee statue, though some of our friends wonder why. We didn't move here to be close to the statues but despite them — and the racial covenants that once would have prevented us from doing so. We just liked the house, and it felt like home the moment we walked through the (front) door. A Confederate general would have nothing to say about that decision. For too long, black bodies have been controlled; we weren't going to let men set in stone and dead for over a century make our choices. Monument Avenue must be for everyone.

<sup>4</sup> Melody BARNES, co-director of the Democracy Initiative at the University of Virginia, was director of the White House Domestic Policy Council under President Barack Obama.

<sup>5</sup> to conjure: to make something appear or disappear as if by magic.