

Racism and the Statue Removal Debate

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It's hard arguing against the removal of Confederacy statues. In their Declaration of Causes, secessionist states said the following:

"We hold as undeniable truths that the governments of the various States, and of the confederacy itself, were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependent race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable."

"That in this free government all white men are and of right ought to be entitled to equal civil and political rights; that the servitude of the African race, as existing in these States, is mutually beneficial to both bond and free, and is abundantly authorized and justified by the experience of mankind, and the revealed will of the Almighty Creator, as recognized by all Christian nations; while the destruction of the existing relations between the two races, as advocated by our sectional enemies, would bring inevitable calamities upon both and desolation upon the fifteen slave-holding States."

Abhorrent stuff, unacceptable then and now. While a case can be made for preserving US history, honoring figures supporting racism, bigotry, white supremacy and chattel slavery is disgraceful everywhere.

Confederate monuments honor figures involved in waging war to preserve an abhorrent system, Black human beings considered property, not people.

When Civil War began in 1861, they were considered aliens, according to Supreme Court **Chief Justice Roger Taney** in his infamous 1857 Dred Scott decision.

We've come a long way from then in some respects, far from it in disturbing other ways - one step forward, two backward given deplorable US policies at home and abroad.

If Confederate statues warrant removal, should others of slaveholding presidents come down? Twelve owned them: Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Jackson, Van Buren, WH Harrison, Tyler, Polk, Taylor, A Johnson and Grant.

Should George Washington University change its name? Should the University of Virginia

disavow its founder Thomas Jefferson? Should Chicago's Washington Park be renamed?

What about Jefferson Colleges in various cities, several Andrew Jackson high schools, others bearing James Madison's name, some named after James Monroe, other presidents honored the same way?

Slave ownership was abhorrent. **Benjamin Franklin** called it "an atrocious debasement of human nature." **John Adams** said it's a "foul contagion in the human character."

What about the nation's warrior presidents, the lot of them war criminals, including Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt! TR lusted for war, saying "I should welcome almost any war for I think this country needs one" - referring to war as "spiritual renewal."

FDR goaded Japan into attacking America to get the war he wanted. All US presidents involved in exterminating Native Americans were war criminals, including Washington.

Lincoln was a war criminal. He suspended the Constitution and habeas corpus, forcefully closed courts, arbitrarily ordered arrests, conscripted US citizens without congressional consent, and closed newspapers opposing his policies.

General Sherman's march to the sea involved rape, pillaging and mass murder. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation didn't free a single slave. He wanted them deported at war's end to maintain America as a white supremacist society.

Glorifying him as one of the nation's greatest presidents ignores the horrors defining his tenure.

History the way it's taught in America conceals its dark side - uglier today than ever, a nation exclusively beholden to privileged interests, waging war on humanity at home and abroad.

Whether Confederate statues stay up or come down is inconsequential compared to vital issues left out of public debate.

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