



Text 1

A statue of a politician considered to be one of the main instigators of the man-made famine that killed millions of Ukrainians in the early 1930s, has been demolished.

The authorities tore down the statue of the Communist leader of Ukraine when it was part of the former Soviet Union, Hryhoriy Petrovsky.

It was carried out just days before Ukraine **commemorates** the victims of the famine, known as the Holodomor, or genocide.

President Viktor Yushchenko issued a decree ordering the removal of monuments to Soviet leaders, "in memory of the victims of the Holodomor".

The statue stood in Kiev's Europe Square - one of the capital's most prestigious locations. Between seven and ten million people died in what officials say was a deliberate policy pursued by the former Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin, to destroy the Ukrainian peasantry who were opposed to the collectivisation of farming.

Close ally

Hryhoriy Petrovsky was an ethnic Ukrainian and a committed member of the Bolsheviks - the movement of professional revolutionaries led by Vladimir Lenin, who seized power in 1917 and went on to found the Soviet Union.

Petrovsky saw himself as an internationalist, and **rejected** Ukrainian nationalism.

He fought against the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic (1917-1919), which was crushed by the Bolsheviks.

Petrovsky became the interior minister of the Russian Soviet Republic before returning to Ukraine in 1919, where he served as prime minister until 1938.

He was thought to be a close ally of Stalin, whose purges led to the deaths of thousands of Ukrainian communists.

Local historians think he and the Ukrainian Soviet Communist leader, Lazar Kaganovich, were the main executors of Stalin's policies in Ukraine.

Other historians, like Vasyl Marochko, a member of an official commission which investigated the Holodomor, say that when Petrovsky realised the extent of the famine he pleaded twice with Stalin to provide Ukrainians with more food.

His requests, they say, went unheeded.

Increasingly unpopular

Last year, the statue to Petrovsky was defaced by young Ukrainian nationalists who threw paint over it, and wrote in graffiti: "To Petrovsky, the executioner of the Ukrainian people". Earlier this year, the still-standing Lenin monument on Kiev's main street, Khreshchatyk, was also damaged by the same group.

In that incident, Lenin's nose and one of his hands were broken off with a hammer.

Less prominent statues to Ukrainian Soviet communist leaders have been removed before. But Petrovsky, whose body is interred near the Kremlin wall in Moscow, is perhaps the highest profile figure to have his statue demolished.

His legacy has not completely **vanished**, because the central industrial city of Dnipropetrovsk still carries his name, much to the annoyance of some Ukrainians.

"The city should have been renamed when Ukraine gained its independence," says Vadym Skurativsky, a leading Ukrainian writer.

Erasing the past

Ukraine has been slow to remove historical monuments to Soviet leaders, despite the country's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, issuing orders aimed at "de-sovietisation" in the early 1990s.

The process has gone much further in the Ukrainian-speaking western regions than in the industrialised, largely Russian-speaking eastern regions.

The Holodomor has emerged as a contentious issue in Ukraine's relations with Russia.

Moscow insists that other republics, particularly southern Russia and Kazakhstan, also suffered from famine during the 1930s.

It rejects the assertion from Ukraine's leadership that there was a deliberate policy of anti-Ukrainian "genocide".

But Ukrainian historians point to the widespread use of Soviet interior ministry troops to requisition desperately needed food, as well as the ban imposed on the movement of peasants to the cities.

The commemorations on Saturday will be marked by church services all over Ukraine, the laying of wreaths, and a gathering of Ukraine's leaders at a recently completed monument to the victims on a hillside location in Kiev.

(taken from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8380433.stm>)

Text 2

In the wake of Charlottesville, a chorus of media outlets, political activists, and random people on the Internet have called for the removal or destruction of Confederate statues in cities across the country. They say we shouldn't honor a bunch of racists who fought to preserve slavery, and that it's long past time for these painful reminders of our past to come down—stow them away in a museum or smash them to pieces, just get them off the streets.

This iconoclastic impulse is a mistake, even after the harrowing events in Charlottesville last weekend. It's a mistake not because there was anything noble about the Confederacy or its *raison d'être*, which was slavery, but because there is something noble—and, for a free people, necessary—about preserving our history so we can understand who we are and how we should live.

For all the tough talk this week about the problems with these historical monuments, there hasn't been nearly enough discussion of their history. Most of them were built a half-century after the war, as the Civil War generation was beginning to die off. Before the turn of the century, Confederate graves had for the most part not been cared for in federal cemeteries, and erecting a Confederate monument was considered treasonous.

But as the veterans of the war began to die, there was a renewed push for reconciliation between North and South, and with it an outpouring of filial piety. Of course, the monument boom across the South during the first two decades of the twentieth century came at a time of terrible race relations, mass immigration, and the pernicious influence of the Lost Cause mythos, which poisoned the South.

So the monuments reflect more than one current of early twentieth-century America. They served to venerate Confederate heroes like Robert E. Lee, thereby cementing the narrative of the Lost Cause and all its misty-eyed nostalgia about the South. But they were also an outpouring of grief and remembrance for the hundreds of thousands who had died in the war. Nearly a quarter of Southern white men in their twenties were killed or died from disease. Is it any wonder that decades later, as families began to bury Confederate veterans in greater numbers, there would be a push to erect memorials to that generation?

And for as much as Lost Cause mythology adorns so many of these monuments, their purpose was also to convey to future generations why so many people kept fighting, for years and in the face of staggering casualties. For the ordinary soldiers who fought and died, devotion to the Confederate army did not arise primarily from a devotion to the institution of slavery (just as most Union soldiers were not fighting primarily to end slavery) but from a devotion to their home states and a sense of honor and duty to defend them from what they considered to be an invading army.

That they were wrong about slavery does not excuse us today from the burden of trying to understand what motivated them to fight—and what motivated them and their families to undertake a flurry of monument-building decades later as the surviving veterans began to die off.

Speaking on Memorial Day in 1884, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., a Union veteran who saw a great deal of action, talked about the importance of transmitting the emotional weight of the war from one generation to the next, and he specifically mentions the role of monuments: "I believe from the bottom of my heart that our memorial halls and statues and tablets, the tattered flags of our regiments gathered in the Statehouses, are worth more to our young men

by way of chastening and inspiration than the monuments of another hundred years of peaceful life could be.”

For Holmes, it was also the duty of Civil War veterans themselves to convey the significance of the war to posterity. He said, “the generation that carried on the war has been set apart by its experience. Through our great good fortune, in our youth our hearts were touched with fire... we have seen with our own eyes, beyond and above the gold fields, the snowy heights of honor, and it is for us to bear the report to those who come after.”

This Isn't Really About Confederate Monuments

Nevertheless, a common objection to these statues today is that because they occupy public spaces, they serve to venerate their subjects, who were of course racists and fought to preserve slavery. But if we know the history, why can't we see them in a different light? Why shouldn't we view them as we should, as a haunting and cautionary tale?

Certainly, the statues were not originally meant to educate future generations about the evils of slavery and secession, but that doesn't mean that we can't take them as such today. Indeed, the fact that these statues were erected in prominent public places is itself a powerful lesson in American history—a testament to our turbulent past that would be diminished if they were removed to a sanitized display in a museum. Not every statue or piece of public art has to comfort and console us. Sometimes, they should oblige us to grapple with our nation's history and the vagaries of human nature.

Even so, some conservatives are willing to let the things go. Kevin Williamson at NRO urges conservatives to do nothing. “The Left's vandalism is intended mainly to get a rise out of the Right, in the hopes of getting some Republican to wrong-foot himself over a racial question,” he writes. Even if some conservatives sympathize with those who want to remove Confederate memorials—and plenty of prominent right-of-center writers clearly do—there's no need to join them because the iconoclasm sweeping the country, says Williamson, “mainly consists of local authorities making democratic decisions about the disposition of public property,” and thus “there is a case for political quietism in this matter.”

That would be fine advice if it were true that this is really just about local authorities making democratic decisions about statues. It would even be fine if it were just about the moral preening of Democratic politicians and activists, seizing on an opportunity to shame and embarrass Southerners for gradually abandoning their party in favor of the GOP.

But the iconoclasm on display now is about more than anathematizing the Confederacy or scoring cheap political points against hapless Republicans. It's part of the Left's overarching critique of American constitutionalism, the goal of which is to overthrow that order.

The Real Reason The Left Wants To Forget The Past

President Trump was mocked for suggesting that if we tear down statues of Lee then activists would demand the removal of George Washington or Thomas Jefferson next. But sure enough, later in the week the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC was vandalized with spray paint. A Lincoln statue in Chicago was burned. Al Sharpton said the Jefferson Memorial should be abandoned. A pastor in Chicago asked the mayor to remove the names of Washington and Andrew Jackson from city parks because they owned slaves. A writer at Vice News called for Mount Rushmore to be blown up. One columnist in Philly even argued for tearing down a statue of Frank Rizzo, who served as police commissioner and mayor in the late 1960s and '70s. In some cases, any monument would do.

All this sounds crazy, but jumping from Confederate statues to Lincoln to Rizzo follows a certain logic. For the Left, the Confederacy is just a small part of a much larger problem, which is the past. Iconoclasm of the kind we've seen this week is native to the Left, because the entire point is to liberate society from the strictures of tradition and history in order to secure a glorious new future. That's why Mao's Cultural Revolution in China torched temples and dug up ancient graves, why the Soviets sacked Orthodox churches and confiscated church property, and why various governments of France went about de-Christianizing the country during the French Revolution.

The modern-day American Left isn't as bad as all that, but its ideology about the past is more or less the same. Hence the statement issued Thursday by Seattle Mayor Ed Murray calling for the removal of all "symbols of hate, racism and violence that exist in our city." Murray is at least consistent, as he includes not just Confederate symbols but also a well-known statue of Vladimir Lenin. These symbols, Murray says, represent "historic injustices," and "their existence causes pain among those who themselves or whose family members have been impacted by these atrocities."

He is not interested in the history of the statues themselves, the people or events they depict, or "what political affiliation may have been assigned to them in the decades since they were erected." Don't be fooled by the therapeutic language about causing pain. The statues must go because they remind us constantly of a past that needs only to be overcome and forgotten.

A more mature society would recognize that the past is always with you and must always be kept in mind. There's a reason Christians in Rome didn't topple all the pagan statues and buildings in the city, or raze the Colosseum. Edmund Burke had strong words for the French during their revolution, while they were doing their best to destroy a rich past and slaughter one another in the process:

You had all these advantages in your ancient states; but you chose to act as if you had never been molded into civil society, and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you... If the last generations of your country appeared without much luster in your eyes, you might have passed them by, and derived your claims from a more early race of ancestors. Under a pious predilection for those ancestors, your imaginations would have realized in them a standard of virtue and wisdom, beyond the vulgar practice of the hour: and you would have risen with the example to whose imitation you aspired. Respecting your forefathers, you would have been taught to respect yourself. You would not have chosen to consider the French as a people of yesterday, as a nation of low-born servile wretches until the emancipating year of 1789.

That is part of why these memorials and statues are important. Perhaps not all of them need be preserved, but giving into the iconoclasm of the Left, with temperatures running high, will mean we lose far more than we gain by hiding these physical reminders of our nation's troubled past.

Let them stand as a memorial of our ancestors who died, a challenge to understand their time and its troubles, and a warning for the present day.

(taken from <https://thefederalist.com/>)