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USA and racism

White Supremacy Symbols Falling

- IV Online magazine - 2020 - IV546 - July 2020 -

Publication date: Friday 10 July 2020

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WITHIN A FEW days in early June, Confederate monuments began to tumble. Ostensibly memorials honoring southern Civil War fighters, these statues were erected decades later, to announce that white supremacy remained alive and well.

A Senate committee is reviewing if Confederate statues at the U.S. Capitol should be removed. Previous attempts have failed. Activists and some city governments aren't waiting for official action.

A statue of Confederate President Jefferson Davis along Richmond, Virginia's famed Monument Avenue was torn down by activists. Demonstrators beheaded four Confederate statues before pulling one down using a tow rope at the Portsmouth, Virginia Confederate monument as police watched.

Alabama's flagship state university took down memorials to Confederate soldiers. The University of Alabama removed plaques honoring students who served in the Confederate Army and student cadet corps.

Two of Alabama's largest cities — Birmingham and Mobile — took down Confederate monuments that were focal points for civil unrest. Defying a state law intended to protect such memorials, Birmingham dismantled a massive obelisk dedicated to Confederate soldiers and sailors in a downtown park.

Mobile took down a statue of a Confederate naval officer that had been vandalized. Mobile Mayor Sandy Stimpson said on Twitter the move was not an attempt to rewrite history but intended to remove "a potential distraction" in order to focus on the future of the Gulf coast city.

Pressure is mounting in Mississippi over the state flag. Adopted in 1894, the design incorporates the Confederate battle flag — a red background with a blue X lined with white stars. In 2001, Mississippi voted to keep it. Now Republican Governor Tate Reeves says it is not up to elected leaders to change it.

Jefferson Davis and his legacy departed Kentucky's Capitol Rotunda after a 12-foot marble statue commemorating the lone president of the Confederate States of America was removed June 12.

Ten military bases are named after Confederate generals who are properly seen as traitors by African Americans and many whites. Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Hood in Texas are two examples.

These bases are in former slave states in the South. They were all named some 50 to 80 years after the Civil War. Why then? It represented the emphatic victory of white nationalism over Black civil rights.

Donald Trump, the white nationalist-in-chief says not on his watch. "These Monumental and very Powerful Bases have become part of a Great American Heritage, and a history of Winning, Victory and Freedom."

Like other defenders of these dishonorable men, he argues that it reflects "Southern heritage and culture." They mean white culture even though the wealth of the southern economy was built by slave labor.

Blacks ask: Where are the monuments to former slaves who fought in the army and militias for freedom?

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The Marine Corps recently banned displays of the Confederate flag (with an exception for Mississippi's contested flag). So has NASCAR! Amid the rising anti-racist groundswell in the country, the times are changing.

July-August 2020, [ATC 207](#).

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