

Statue of Belgian King taken down after protests

12th June, 2020



A statue of a former Belgian king was covered in paint and then pulled down by anti-racism protestors. The statue was of King Leopold II, who was King of the Belgians from 1865 to 1909. He was also ruler of the Congo Free State in Africa from 1885 to 1908. A statue of him in the Belgian city of Antwerp was attacked by

protestors over the weekend. It was removed from its pedestal on Tuesday. Hundreds of protestors cheered as the statue came down. City officials say they will probably put the statue in a city museum. A city official said: "The square where the statue stood will be redesigned in 2023. There will be no room for it there afterwards. It will remain part of the museum's collection."

Over 64,000 people signed an online petition against the memory of Leopold on Tuesday. They want more people to know about what he did in the Congo. Historians say he was responsible for the deaths of more than 10 million Congolese people during his 23-year reign. A newspaper said these deaths led to the first use of the term, "crime against humanity". The petition said: "In the space of 23 years, this man killed more than 10 million Congolese without ever having set foot in the Congo." He made a huge personal fortune from the rubber plantations he owned. Another petition was signed by 8,000 people. They believe he was not a "slave king" and that the people who ran the Congo led to the millions of deaths.

Sources: dw.com / aljazeera.com / okayafrica.com

Writing

All colonial era statues should be removed. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

statue / king / anti-racism / ruler / protestor / cheered / museum / square / collection online / petition / memory / responsible / crime / space / fortune / plantations / slave

True / False

- a) Someone put paint over a statue of a former king of Belgium. T / F
- b) King Leopold II ruled Belgium in the 19th and 20th centuries. T / F
- c) Many people booed when the statue of King Leopold II came down. T / F
- d) The statue will probably be put in a museum. T / F
- e) Over half a million people signed an online petition. T / F
- f) Historians say King Leopold II was responsible for 10 million deaths. T / F
- g) King Leopold II only visited the Congo once. T / F
- h) King Leopold II made a lot of money from rubber plantations. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. former | a. rule |
| 2. protestors | b. stay |
| 3. removed | c. to blame |
| 4. ruler | d. governed |
| 5. remain | e. demonstrators |
| 6. responsible | f. riches |
| 7. reign | g. taken away |
| 8. term | h. ex- |
| 9. fortune | i. phrase |
| 10. ran | j. leader |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Have you ever signed a petition?
- c) How much did you know about the deaths of the 10 million Congolese?
- d) What should happen to those guilty of crimes against humanity?
- e) What should happen to the fortunes made from enslaved people?
- f) What do you know about black history?
- g) What three adjectives best describe this story?
- h) What questions would you like to ask Belgium's king?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. A statue of a former | a. fortune |
| 2. pulled down by anti-racism | b. museum's collection |
| 3. It was removed from its | c. for the deaths |
| 4. protestors cheered as the | d. an online petition |
| 5. It will remain part of the | e. protestors |
| 6. 64,000 people signed | f. pedestal |
| 7. he was responsible | g. humanity |
| 8. crime against | h. Belgian king |
| 9. He made a huge personal | i. ran the Congo |
| 10. the people who | j. statue came down |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about the history of Congo?
- What kinds of statues do you like?
- Why do people create statues?
- Why do towns put statues in their streets?
- Are there any statues you dislike?
- Should statues of slavers be pulled down?
- Should there be statues of those with racist, sexist or homophobic views?
- What should happen to the statue of King Leopold II?

Spelling

- anti-casrim protestors
- It was vromeed from its pedestal
- Hundreds of protestors deheecr
- put the tautes in a city museum
- no room for it there fwaderrtas
- part of the museum's eilocltcno
- people signed an online nitpeito
- he was bpeisesnorl for the deaths
- crime against taiyhmn
- He made a huge personal noufetr
- the rubber itsolanpatn he owned
- They believe he was not a "alsev king"

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. g	4. j	5. b
6. c	7. a	8. i	9. f	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Statue of Liberty

You think the Statue of Liberty is the world's greatest statue. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their statues. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): the Easter Island Moai, the Venus de Milo or the Sphinx.

Role B – Easter Island Moai

You think the Easter Island Moai is the world's greatest statue. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their statues. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): Statue of Liberty, the Venus de Milo or the Sphinx.

Role C – The Venus de Milo

You think the Venus de Milo is the world's greatest statue. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their statues. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): the Easter Island Moai, Statue of Liberty or the Sphinx.

Role D – The Sphinx

You think the Sphinx is the world's greatest statue. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their statues. Also, tell the others which is the least impressive of these (and why): the Easter Island Moai, the Venus de Milo or Statue of Liberty.

Speaking – Statue

Rank these with your partner. Put the best statue at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| • Venus de Milo | • Statue of Liberty |
| • The Thinker | • Easter Island Moai |
| • Discobolus | • Christ the Redeemer |
| • Sphinx | • Buddha of Bamyan |

Answers – True False

a	T	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.