

Mayor and Members of Council
 City of Hamilton,
 71 Main Street West,
 1st Floor,
 Hamilton, Ontario
 L8P 4Y5.

RE: If Hamilton Preserves our statue of John A MacDonald, we'll help build a statue of an Indigenous Figure

It is with much grief and disappointment that SWC has learned of the Hamilton City Council's proposal to remove a statue in Gore Park of Sir John A. MacDonald—an eminent symbol of Scottish-Canadian heritage, European-Canadian heritage, and of the very establishment of Canada as a modern state.

The removal of MacDonald's statue is consistent with a pattern across North America of destroying the cultural symbols of European-descended peoples through both legal and criminal means. We are not persuaded that these removals are entirely motivated by the sincere pursuit of "justice" or "reconciliation", or even by the desire to condemn the behaviour of the individual figures in question. Rather, we see these removals as attacks on our ethnic identity and as expressions of resentment for European-descended people and our history.

We believe this for three reasons:

First, the destruction of our statues is often accompanied by explicit and hostile references to our ethnicity. For example, in Portland, Oregon, an American Founding Father, George Washington, was torn down and vandalized with the words "damn white men" and "white fragility". In Toronto, Black Lives Matter-activists were charged with vandalizing statues of MacDonald, Egerton Ryerson and King Edward VII, which they rationalized by arguing that our cultural heroes are "symbols of white supremacy". Crimes like these, which are motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, are classified as "hate crimes" as per section 718.2 of the criminal code.

Second, not only are our cultural symbols being removed, but often they are replaced with non-white figures specifically chosen for their non-whiteness. This is the case, for example, of Robert Borden, our 8th prime minister, who was removed from our currency and replaced by Viola Desmond. Or, in the United States, Andrew Jackson is being removed from its currency and replaced by Harriet Tubman. Currently, the Peel District Schoolboard is debating removing Benjamin Vaughan's name from a local school and replacing it specifically with that of either a Black person, or a Jewish person—Vaughan was born into a slave owning family and at one point defended the institution, but later in life he became a dedicated abolitionist.

Third, we don't perceive that there are equivalent calls to remove the cultural symbols of other peoples, despite their equally unfashionable behaviour as individuals. For example, in 2018, while several statues of European-descended people were getting torn down across Canada, a new statue was erected in Ottawa of the Algonquin leader, Chief Tessouat, *despite the fact that Tessouat was a slave owner*. In Toronto, there are two statues of Sun Yat Sen. Sen was the founder of Taiwan, and is an important cultural figure for Chinese-Canadians. But he also believed that black people were "feeble and stupid".

These destructive gestures towards our cultural identity are seriously undermining our trust and faith in official multiculturalism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act affirms "the freedom of all members of Canadian society to *preserve, enhance and share* their cultural heritage", but with each new statue removal, we are seeing this commitment undermined.

Here is our proposal: rather than undermine the Multiculturalism Act by failing to preserve the heritage of European-descended peoples, why not enhance the culture of other peoples? In the spirit of multiculturalism, and diplomacy between our peoples, if the Hamilton City Council chooses to keep and respect our statue of John A. MacDonald, then SWC will donate \$1,000 to the erection of a statue of an Indigenous cultural hero of the same height and dimensions of that of our MacDonald statue. We can also help raise more funds through our 25k social media followers.

We feel that this solution would be far more in line with the spirit of multiculturalism and the Multicultural Act's promise that Canadian institutions respect the "freedom of all Canadians to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage".

About Us

SWC is an organization composed of undergraduates, graduates and alumni from universities across Ontario. We advocate for the preservation of European-Canadian heritage and against anti-white hate-speech.