

STATEMENT ON THE REMOVAL AND PLANNED RELOCATION OF THE RACIST, IMPERIAL THEODORE ROOSEVELT EQUESTRIAN MONUMENT IN FRONT OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY:

New York City has a long-standing waste disposal problem—what to do with the trash it generates. Most of it is shipped, at the right price, to landfills in other states. The latest example of garbage transfer involves the equestrian statue of Teddy Roosevelt that stands outside the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH).

A year and a half after the mayor conceded that this monument to white supremacy was no longer welcome, the city finally found a place to dump it. The North Dakota-based Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation has agreed to take it on a “long term loan.” Having waged a multi-year campaign against the statue, which featured prominently in our annual Anti-Columbus Day tours of the museum, we take pride (and some credit) in seeing the back of it.

But the city is doing a NIMBY number here, outsourcing a toxic object to a faraway location. And, long before it is carted away, the statue has already provoked anger and resistance in North Dakota, where it will sit on stolen land in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. No one thought it worthwhile to consult with the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (MHA) people, whose lands were seized in 1851 and are now occupied by the park, and they are rightfully outraged. There is still time to melt down the monument and recycle the bronze for a much better purpose. Spare the people of North Dakota.

Even without the statue, the AMNH will still have its Teddy Roosevelt problem to deal with, since much of the museum is itself a monument to his imperial presidency.

So, too, the museum has done little to address the other demands that we brought to its doors—a complete overhaul of its cultural halls, a respectful settlement regarding its display and holding of Indigenous artifacts, and the setting up of a decolonization commission to reconceive the original colonial purpose of the museum. Enough already. Time’s up!

— DECOLONIZE THIS PLACE 

* This statement was first published in [Hyperallergic: *Activists Speak Out Against Plan to Relocate NYC’s Controversial Roosevelt Statue to North Dakota*](#)