

Edward Colston: Bristol slave trader statue 'was an affront'

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Protesters in Bristol pull down a statue of slave trader Edward Colston

A statue of a slave trader which was torn down during an anti-racism protest in Bristol was "an affront", the city's mayor has said.

Mayor Marvin Rees said he felt no "sense of loss" after the controversial bronze statue of Edward Colston was pulled down and thrown into the harbour by protesters on Sunday. But Prime Minister Boris Johnson described it as a "criminal act".

Interpretation 1-The Government's view

Mr Johnson's official spokesman said:

"The PM's view is that in this country, where there is strong opinion, there is a democratic process which should be followed. People can campaign for the removal of a statue but what happened yesterday was a criminal act and when the criminal law is broken that is unacceptable and the police will want to hold to account those responsible."

Home Secretary Priti Patel said the incident was "utterly disgraceful" and "it's not for mobs to tear down statues".

Interpretation 2 -The Bristol Mayor's view

Mr Rees (The Mayor of Bristol) said those comments showed an "absolute lack of understanding". He added the statue would be retrieved from the harbour "at some point" and it was likely to end up in a city museum.

"I think circumstances came to a head and people felt the need to take the statue down," Mr Rees said.

"I can't and won't pretend the statue of a slave trader in a city I was born and grew up in wasn't an affront to me and people like me. (Mr Rees is black)

Background information

Colston was a member of the Royal African Company, which transported about 80,000 men, women and children from Africa to the Americas. On his death in 1721, he bequeathed his wealth to charities and his legacy can still be seen on Bristol's streets, memorials and buildings.

This information was taken from the BBC website



Lesson 6-Empire and Slavery PINs Assessment





Watch the BBC news clip from June 2020

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-52962356>

What was this event and where did it happen?

Who was Edward Colston?

Question 1- Five minutes -Use examples from this interpretation to explain what the government's opinion was.



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Home Secretary Priti Patel said the incident was "utterly disgraceful" and "it's not for mobs to tear down statues".

Question 2- Five minutes -Use examples from this interpretation to explain what the Mayor of Bristol's opinion was.



Interpretation 2 -The Bristol Mayor's view

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Question 3- Thirty minutes -Use examples from what you have learnt about slavery and about Edward Colston to explain why people like Marvin Rees didn't like Colston's statue.



Challenge Zone Activity On your own and in silence please

You could start like this:

Many people believed that it wasn't wrong to pull Edward Colston's statue down because.....

We are looking for: Factual examples about Colston and about slavery
Carefully written sentences/paragraphs
thoughtful ideas

