



Wales moves to decolonise its museums, and GB News is losing it

Description

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Wales is decolonising its museums

Right-wingers are in [moral panic](#) over government plans in Wales to promote the Welsh language, culture, and history across publicly funded museums.

In characteristic fashion, the dog-whistling *GB News* outlet [published an article](#) titled:

Plaid Cymru accused of “cultural extremism” and “attempting to rewrite Welsh history” amid plan to decolonise museums.

This unsurprisingly frames the progressive initiative in dramatic terms. At the same time, it fails to engage seriously with the issues Plaid seeks to address.

Decolonising Wales

The newly-formed, [Welsh nationalist government](#) said the initiative aims to deliver the [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#) (ARWAP). This will include the “decolonisation of museum collections to rebalance perspectives.” Formulated in 2024, ARWAP [aims to](#) establish Wales as an anti-racist nation by 2030, and promises:

an inclusive and equitable society for all our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic [BAME] people and communities in Wales.

It promises a [rights-based](#) approach to equality and inclusivity, which inevitably includes museums as centre-piece cultural institutions.

The [GB News article](#) focused its backlash on Cabinet Minister for Culture and Sport Heledd Fychan. She said that Plaid expects:

museums to use guidance such as the Museums Association's Support Decolonisation in Museums when undertaking this work.

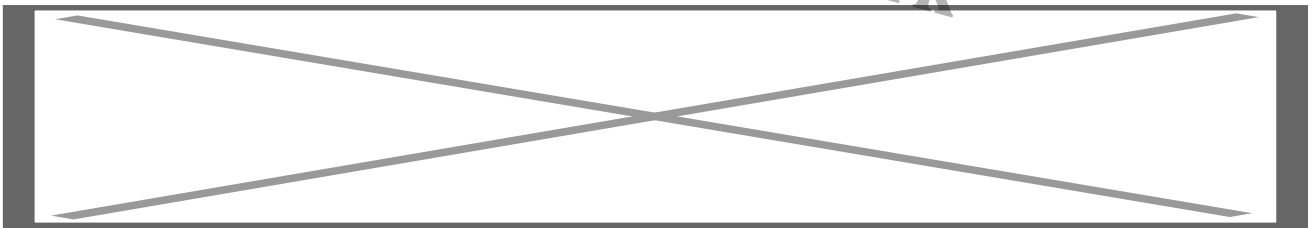
Plaid added that Welsh museum bodies should:

reflect the full breadth of Welsh history and culture rather than narrow or exclusionary narratives.

Plaid Cymru separatists are continuing to "decolonise" our museums.

Nothing has changed pic.twitter.com/nbrCM0SIPJ

Andrew RT Davies (@AndrewRTDavies) May 30, 2026



The right-wing backlash

The [GeeBeebies article](#) also quotes former Welsh Conservatives leader Alex RT Davies, who labelled Plaid Cymru's plans as "cultural extremism" and "far-left".

Having long advocated the party [primarily responsible](#) for endless [NHS crises](#), Tory Davies went on to say:

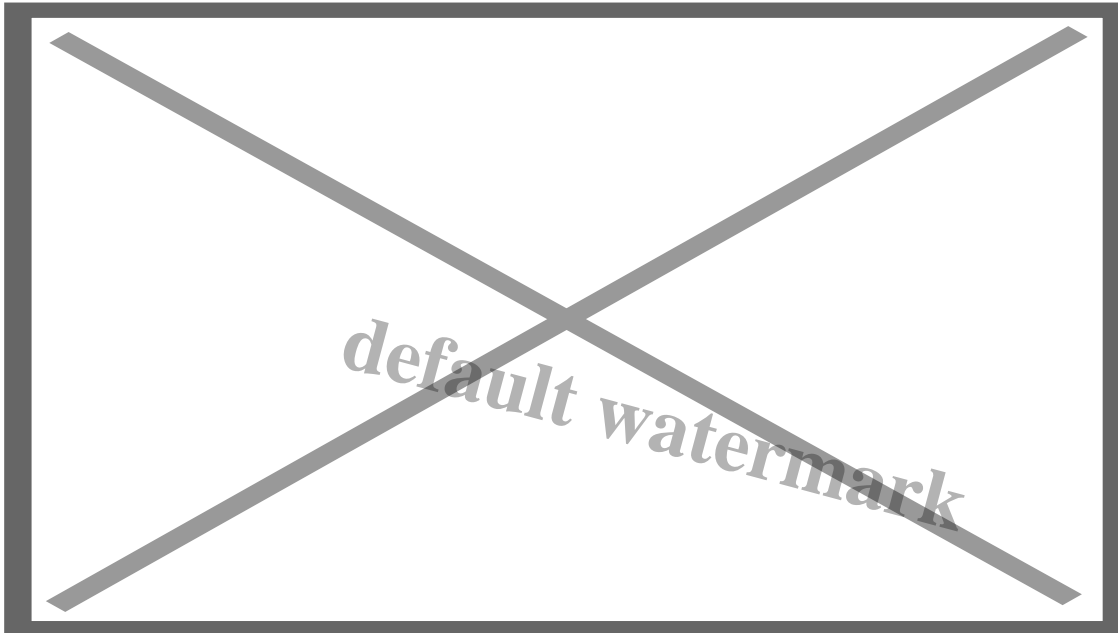
The people of Wales don't want our museums decolonised, they want a functioning NHS.

If another failed Tory begins lecturing on NHS dysfunction, feel free to tune out. They recently dropped from [first to last place](#) in a Welsh council by-election.

The backlash comes after a [written exchange](#) in which Davies asked culture minister Fychan about Plaid's 2026 manifesto commitments to decolonisation across Welsh museums. Fychan responded with:

Equality of access to the arts, culture and sport for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities will be a priority and our museum sector is integral to the success of this.

Seems like a reasonable, principled approach, no? Not for these reactionaries. Yet even one paying *GB News* [member pointed out](#) that, under English law, it was once legal to shoot arrows at a Welshman!



Collage showing a map of Welsh collieries and a Welsh railway lines via the Canary

Why Wales?

If in doubt that the UK is bordering on reactionary on this matter, consider France's recent reversal. For example, French MPs [voted unanimously](#) to return colonial-era artefacts to the countries from which they were looted.

As the law was passed, [one lawmaker](#) referenced Victor Hugo's [famous](#) 19th-century parable about France's [looting](#) of China's palaces:

One day, two bandits entered the Summer Palace. One looted, the other burned. [â?¦] We Europeans are civilized, and for us, the Chinese are barbarians. This is what civilization has done to barbarism.

The two bandits are said to represent French and English imperial armies. The Welsh were [part of Britain's imperial project](#) but were also [conquered subjects](#) and, some argue, still are.

[Some online responses link](#) Wales's poverty and health outcomes to English-dominated rule. [Poverty data supports this](#) in the Valleys and West Wales. Moreover, [health data](#) broadly reflects the same pattern.

Walter Rodney [famously argued](#) in [How Europe Underdeveloped Africa](#) that colonial railways served resource extraction rather than social need. [Walesa?? railways](#) similarly reflect historic coal transport to English industry.

English assimilation efforts have also noticeably impacted spoken Welsh. While it stands at a meagre 27 %, that is still far above [Scottish Gaelic](#) at 2.5%. There, assimilation was more fatal. Meanwhile, [French regional languages](#) faced similar linguicide.

And despite devolution, Wales has no constitutional right to a vote on secession, unlike Northern Ireland.

not enough people are aware of the theft of land and language and autonomy wales has endured. wales is the poorest and sickest region of Western Europe because of English rule, Welsh is only spoken by 20% of us because of English assimilation efforts

<https://t.co/retg1GAKKV> pic.twitter.com/21WVEoVvHm

á?? á??á?•á??á??á?  (@fearaidfangs) [May 30, 2026](#)

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Crucial colonial context

Whatever they say, this is not an uncommon framework for museums. In Britain, these institutions are [stacked with looted artefacts](#). Any attempt to [justify](#) keeping them tends to rely on the [same imperial logic](#) and systems that enabled their theft.

This was evident when the righteous British Museum caved to [Zionist lobby lawyersâ?? pressure](#) to erase all [references to Palestine](#) from exhibitions. In fact, the British Museum is now planning to host a [revisionist history exhibition](#) in conjunction with the [Board of Deputies, a pro-Israel lobby group](#)

Launched earlier this year, the UKâ??s [Jewish Cultural Month](#) â?? backed by the [genocide-denying Board of Deputies â??](#) was briefly postponed amid â?? [protest concerns](#) â?? amplified by [centrist](#) and right-wing media. Its backers are known for promoting narratives of â??Ancient Israel and Judah,â?? used by Israel to justify its unlawful occupation.

An anti-Zionist artistic collective, Jewish Artists for Palestine, [said](#) that treating fair debate as:

a security concern points to the event as a pro-Zionist propaganda exercise.

Like Black History Month or Queer Pride Month, thereâ??s nothing inherently wrong with celebrating Jewish history. Whatâ??s wrong is rogue [Lawyers for Israel](#) intervening to [wipe the name Palestine](#) from displays and pro-Zionist lobby groups engaging in genocide denial.

The Tate, Victoria and Albert Museum and Museum of the Home are all [institutional participants](#) in the new [pro-apartheid Board of Deputies](#) led Jewish Culture Month. Inevitably, more flashpoints are expected as narratives are legitimised and backlash follows.

Featured image via [Matthew Horwood / Getty Images](#)

By [Cameron Baillie](#)

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