

UWI to change hall name

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After more than seven decades, the University of the West Indies' Milner Hall, St Augustine, is expected to be renamed, according to a release issued by the revisionist group the Cross Rhodes Freedom Project yesterday.

The release said the decision to change the name came from **UWI** principal Prof Brian Copeland and Vice Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles after they consulted with the project and students on the campus. Milner Hall was named after 19th-century British statesman and proponent of the slave trade Viscount Alfred Milner. The main case for the name change, as put forward by the project, was that the hall's name perpetuates TT's colonial history and an insult to students of African descent.

Newsday contacted Milner Hall chairman Dayteon Mitchell for confirmation of the name change and his thoughts on the decision, but he declined comment and asked not to be contacted again on the matter.

Newsday also spoke to head and co-ordinator of the Cross Rhodes Freedom Project Shabaka Kambon, who said while he was pleased at **UWI's** stance, he was disheart-



Founder and Coordinator of the Cross Rhodes Freedom Project delivering a speech on Milner Hall at the Central Bank Auditorium earlier this year. **PHOTO BY SHANE SUPERVILLE**

ened that students still defended the use of the name, and lamented their lack of knowledge on Caribbean intellectuals and scholars.

"While we're very happy with the campus decision, it was a tragedy that several students during our discussions continued to defend Milner and even so far as colonialism.

"We also proposed that the hall be named after Trinidadian-born attorney and pan-Africanist Henry Sylvester Williams, but students did not know who he was and that was indeed very disappointing."

Newsday also spoke to president of the Student Guild Jonathan St Louis-Nahous, who said while the decision had been made, a series of

forums and discussions must be held between campus officials and students. He said while there was no official date for the name change, it was expected to happen early next year.

Asked the reactions of students on hall to the decision, St Louis-Nahous said, "The reasons for the name change as put forward by the project are appreciated and were listened to. However, some students, while not opposed to it, tend to be somewhat more apprehensive simply because of how long the building has been named Milner Hall.

"Aside and apart from the historical legacy of the name, it's been embedded in the hall culture, so the change will take some time."