

UWI to remove name of 'racist' former British governor on residence hall

PORT OF SPAIN

NEARLY a century after being named in honour of a former British governor, Milner Hall, a co-ed hall of residence at the St Augustine campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI), is to be renamed.

In a statement yesterday, UWI said the decision to re-name the hall comes after months of internal discussion, some of it divisive and at times emotionally charged.

The UWI Finance and General Purposes Committee, comprising all stakeholders, from governments to graduates, unanimously accepted the recommendation from the university's senior executive management on October 30, and the name change will be done in accordance with the recommendations of the report by Pro Vice-Chancellor Alan Copley.

Copley, a professor of South African history, had been asked by UWI Vice-Chancellor Sir Hilary Beckles to investigate the life and times of

Lord Alfred Milner and to make recommendations with respect to Milner's fitness to be celebrated as an icon within the 70-year-old regional institution.

Milner was a British colonial governor in South Africa at the turn of the 20th century.

Self-proclaimed race supremacist

UWI said the Copley report sets out, among other things, Lord Milner's political identity as a self-proclaimed "British race supremacist"; his role as a formulator of British racial theory in which he described Africans as "savages", and the part he played as a founder of the criminal system of racial apartheid which was institutionalised in South Africa in 1948.

UWI also noted the principal part he played as an architect of brutal Indian indentured servitude in the colony; his role as a proponent of military colonialism in Africa and Asia as the God-given right of

the English; and his function as an aggressive imperialist who is known for his part in the crimes against humanity committed in Africa.

The hall of residence took the name of Milner in 1927 when he contributed to the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture established in Trinidad, to train white colonialists, with a view to creating a pool of frontier farmers to settle on lands in the Empire taken from natives.

Milner saw this strategy as necessary to secure the long-term future of British rule in Africa, Asia and Australia.

Milner's active political hostility to the human and civil rights of Africans, Asians and devastated indigenous people, propelled his anger toward the early Pan-Africanists such as Sylvester Williams and Marcus Garvey, as well as Indian nationalists such as Mahatma Gandhi.

He was a vehement opposer of Independence movements and saw nationalists as criminal and dangerous subverters of empire, UWI said.

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