

## ‘Gandhi had views worse than Rhodes. So did Churchill’



The statue of Cecil Rhodes continues to attract controversy Reuters

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Statues of Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln should also be pulled down if Cecil Rhodes is removed from Oxford University, a senior academic said last night.

Addressing a packed debate at the Oxford Union, Nigel Biggar, a theology professor, said that Mahatma Gandhi held worse views than Rhodes. Mr Biggar said: “If we insist on our heroes being pure, then we aren’t going to have any. Last year the shine on Mahatma Gandhi’s halo came off, when we learnt of his view that Indians were culturally superior to black Africans. Should this blot out all his remarkable achievements? I think not.

“Claims that Rhodes was South Africa’s Hitler and carried out genocide lack any historical foundation.

“Rhodes was not racist. He didn’t hold black Africans in general contempt. He stipulated his scholarships be awarded regardless of race.

“If Rhodes must fall, so must Churchill, whose views on empire and race were similar. And so probably must Abraham Lincoln.”

Ntokozo Qwabe, the South African student and leader of the Rhodes Must Fall movement, was due to speak in favour of the statue's removal from Oriel College at last night's debate. Louise Richardson, the university's new vice-chancellor, said at the weekend that the statue should remain.

- Some events involving Cage, the human rights group, should be barred from campuses, the education secretary said. Nicky Morgan said students must be able to distinguish between extremist groups and speakers such as Germaine Greer, who students in Cardiff tried to bar. The research director of Cage provoked fury by describing Mohammed Emwazi, the British terrorist who featured in Isis propaganda videos, as “an extremely kind and gentle man”.

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