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University of Sydney Unwilling to Tolerate Freedom of Political Expression



Australian professor, Dr. Tim Anderson (/author.html?id=970), was suspended from the University of Sydney after showing his students during a lecture a picture of an Israeli flag partially covered by a swastika accompanied by a text, which compared Israeli and Palestinian attacks and deaths.

Tim Anderson, a senior lecturer in the department of political economy, replied to the suspension saying the university has violated his right to “intellectual freedom”.

The decision by the University’s Provost Stephen Garton was without any doubt essentially motivated by Professor Anderson’s research and public statements on Syria, Iraq, and Palestine including Anderson’s carefully documented book entitled “*The Dirty War on Syria*”. In his book, Dr. Anderson reveals the “unspoken truth” through careful analysis concluding that the “war on terrorism” is fake and that the United States is a “state sponsor of terrorism” involved in a criminal undertaking.

The provost also reprimanded Anderson for sharing the same image online from his personal Twitter and Facebook accounts, and for making it available for download on the online learning platform Canvas. As per, he proposed that the professor’s employment be terminated.

Sydney University academics had a different opinion than that of the university’s provost though. By the afternoon of Friday, December 7, 30 academics, including several emeritus professors, had signed an open letter (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdkejNiWkhvtN8xVn3ZZTZNLThn9XiLXnbOIooQ6LR8XPERA/viewform>) arguing that academic freedom was "meaningless if it is suspended when its exercise is deemed offensive."

MORE...

THE (ATTEMPTED) SILENCING
OF TIM ANDERSON

(/WORLD/ASIA-PACIFIC/2691-
SILENCING-TIM-
ANDERSON.HTML)

The university academics criticized the suspension of an academic who merely showed students material featuring the Nazi swastika imposed over Israel's flag, saying it was a body blow to academic freedom.

It was not the first time that Dr. Tim Anderson's solidarity with anti-imperialist states was causing controversy. Federal ministers also criticized Dr. Anderson for [visiting Syria \(/world/north-africa-south-west-asia/syria-crisis/2492-east-ghouta-schools.html\)](/world/north-africa-south-west-asia/syria-crisis/2492-east-ghouta-schools.html) and [North Korea \(/world/asia-pacific/1883-north-korea-washington.html\)](/world/asia-pacific/1883-north-korea-washington.html), where he expressed solidarity with their incumbent leaders and operating governments. Amid a media barrage to try to drum up public support for US-led military attacks on Syria and [North Korea, \(/world/asia-pacific/2457-jay-tharappel.html\)](/world/asia-pacific/2457-jay-tharappel.html) the corporate media launched an extraordinary vilification campaign against academics seeking to expose the lies behind the US cruise missile strike on Syria in the 1st week of April 2017.

When asked about the reasons behind the University of Sydney's decision, Dr. Anderson implied that it was because of his criticism of the war propaganda in the western media including the lies that the corporate media has told at different times. There are also some Zionist lobbyists, who have also pushed to get him suspended, according to Dr. Anderson.

On his Facebook page, Dr. Tim Anderson wrote a text explaining that his suspension is the "culmination of a series of failed attempts by management to restrict" his public comments. Dr. Anderson then explained that these "petty and absurd" complaints have been ongoing for the last 18 months. Concluding that in his view, they represent an unusually aggressive regime of political censorship, in which no decent university should be involved.

What has been happening with Dr. Tim Anderson is clearly a witch-hunt and an open attack on basic democratic rights, above all free speech.

The clear logic of this suspension is that anyone who questions any aspect of the colonial states' foreign and military policy is guilty of challenging the western mainstream narrative and should therefore be sacked.

However, academics like Dr. Tim Anderson have a responsibility to educate the public, especially in face of the constant misinformation from the West's corporate and state media. Likewise, it is our duty as academics, journalists, and students to unconditionally defend his right, and the right of all academics, political activists, workers, and students, to oppose the drive to war and to exercise freedom of political expression whether we agree with their political views or not.

And as Dr. Anderson asked of us all in his Facebook post I ask you all again, examine the graphic below and decide for yourself whether or how this infographic might be 'offensive'.

Look for independent evidence and/or admissions to **test** assumptions / qualifiers

Israeli assault on Gaza: 'precision attacks'	Palestinian attacks on Israelis: 'indiscriminate'
Palestinian civilian deaths: > 75% of 1,088	Israeli civilian deaths: 6% of 51

The story: Palestinian attacks on Israel are often criticised as being 'indiscriminate'. However independent data from the Israel's 2014 attack on Gaza (Operation Protective Edge) provides a better perspective

Palestinian casualties: 'three-fourths of the Palestinians killed in more than two weeks of Israel-Hamas fighting were civilians' (UN)

Israeli casualties: 'total number of IDF casualties during Operation Protective Edge to 48' (United with Israel); 'Two Israeli civilians and a Thai agricultural worker have also died' (SMH, 28/7)

The **European Union** condemned 'the *indiscriminate* firing of rockets into Israel by Hamas and militant groups in the Gaza Strip, directly harming *civilians*'; **Ban Ki Moon:** 'Hamas rockets have *randomly* struck Israel'; **NYT:** 'Hamas is committing a war crime by firing rockets *indiscriminately*'

Palestinian casualties: 'Gaza Ministry of Health Spokesman said over the last 21 days, a total of 1,088 Palestinians have been killed and 6,470 have been injured. Of the dead, 251 were children and 50 elderly, while 1,980 children and 259 elderly have been wounded.' (+972)

Method lessons:
 1. Identify independent evidence
 2. Be wary of moral equivalence claims, carrying in-built assumptions
 3. Both the **objectives** and the **actions** of the parties are important.

Tag: [Dr. Tim Anderson \(/component/tags/tag/517-dr-tim-anderson.html\)](/component/tags/tag/517-dr-tim-anderson.html)



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