

Interview with Dr. Tim Anderson*



Tim Anderson in Damascus, september 2019-09-08, photo gftu

In the marge of the 3rd international Trade Union Forum « Solidarity with Syrian Workers and People to Confront the Economic Sanctions Imperialistic Interventions, and Terrorism » in Damascus, September 8-9 2019

Conducted by Andrea Duffour**

Why did you come here to Damascus and what is the main message you would like to give back in your country to your people?

TA: This is my ninth visit to Syria during the war. I am very happy to be able to participate in a trade union solidarity conference, especially with so many delegates from other countries, including north America and Europe. The event marked a breakthrough, I think, in solidarity with the Syrian people, a retreat from the fake 'humanitarian war' and opposition to the economic war waged against the entire population. The message it conveys to western audiences, I hope, is that there is no

need to fear the abuse of western war trolls, and there is an urgent need to review and oppose the participation of western governments in a genocidal economic war designed to starve, cripple and destroy the entire nation. The WHO told us last year that these vicious 'sanctions' are threatening lives, every day. UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Idriss Jazairy, told the UN last year: "There is a pressing need to lift all sanctions which have a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights of Syrians. Unilateral coercive measures on agricultural inputs and products, medicines, on many dual use items

related to water and sanitation, public electricity and transportation, and eventually on rebuilding schools, hospitals and other public buildings and services, are increasingly difficult to justify, if they ever were justifiable" (Jazairy 2018).

Western audiences eventually learned their lesson over the 1990s economic war against Iraq but seem not yet to have learned it about the dirty war on Syria.

What can you say about "the terrorists" / about the fake news/lies we hear in respect to Syria and their democratically elected president, Bashar al-Assad ?

TA: 'Humanitarian war' propaganda has turned reality on its head and made western audiences stupid. Those of us from western cultures discussed this

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question at the conference, and the reason for this western stupidity (believing an almost endless series of false pretexts for war) is only partly to do with the heavy disinformation campaigns. There seems some predisposition amongst western liberals (in particular) to fall for a 'saviour' role in these humanitarian wars, the idea that western liberals can 'save' unknown peoples from their supposedly 'brutal dictators' who are for some unknown reason 'killing their own people'. Even after the pretexts were exposed over Libya, Iraq, Nicaragua, Syria and Venezuela, the romantic neo-colonial myth maintains some appeal. Well after most of the Syrian government's

enemies (the sectarian 'jihadists' themselves in Aleppo, Qatar and al Jazeera, NATO consultants) admitted that President Assad maintained very high popularity in Syria, western governments and media persisted with a ridiculous demonisation ('killing his own people', etc) of the Syrian leader. In chapter 5 of *The Dirty War on Syria* I documented the various polls on the Syrian President and government, during the early years of this long war.

Could you just add some more examples as to the « war of language" and explain, why people here do not (want to) understand ?

TA: Western / imperial liberalism, and in particular the north American notion of 'smart power', has colonised our language with distorted terms such as 'revolution' (for reactionary, sectarian violence), 'rebels' (for western-backed fanatics and mercenaries) and activists (for propagandists paid by western governments). International law, with its presumptions against war, has been dismantled with pseudo-legal doctrines such 'the responsibility to protect' and the ultimate monstrous invention of 'humanitarian war', promoted by corporate-NGOs such as Human Rights Watch, The White Helmets and Amnesty International. We have to admit that they have been quite successful in western cultures. It follows that those who oppose wars of aggression, and who support the right to self-determination of peoples, should try to decolonise our language and restore the substance of those decent post-colonial achievements in international law.

Please give us some hints how to resist !

TA : We have a responsibility, I believe, in popular education. We should use reason and evidence to wean western populations off this hallucinogenic 'kool aid' that has made them so stupid. How, for example, can western media sustain this myth of a 'civil war' in Syria, when Israel and two NATO members militarily occupy large sections of Syria? How can they get away with repeating the fake 'chemical weapons' stories, which have been repeatedly discredited by every independent expert? The roots of such western stupidity must be addressed.

Which are your preferred 3-5 (internet) sources from/about Syria ?

TA: First, I suggest that honest and curious people periodically review the readily available Russian, Iranian and Syrian media (e.g. Sputnik, RT, Press TV, FARS News and SANA) on war matters. Add Telesur to that list.

« Just look who is being abused by the corporate media and you might be on the right track! »

Despite consistent western attempts to block and prohibit - which now include exclusions by the new media monopolies of Google, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook and even many ISPs - these sources are still readily available on the

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internet. These days you might need a

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Virtual Private Network (VPN) to avoid some of the attempts to block and censor. Listening to the proverbial 'other side' used to be a key principle of fair discussion.

Second, there are some new media channels in north America which provide critical content, often very well researched, on the various new wars. These include MINTPRESS, American Herald Tribune, the Greenville Post, Black Agenda Report and Global Research. A number of the older 'left' sites (Counter Punch, Jacobin, Common Dreams) have been co-opted by the western liberal disease, and produce much more 'uneven' content.

Third, on the war against Syria, and on the entire Middle East region, readers can read my books: *The Dirty War on Syria* (2016, Global Research) and *Axis of Resistance* 2019, Clarity press. There are a number of other critical writers on the war. There were few of us in the first years of the war but our numbers have expanded in recent years. Just look who is being abused by the corporate media and you might be on the right track!