# Sacked Australian reporter continues to challenge Anzac myths

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Sacked Special Broadcasting Services (SBS) sports journalist Scott McIntyre has again chosen the annual Anzac Day holiday to post a series of tweets opposing Australian nationalism and militarism. The well-known international football reporter was politically victimised and dismissed without notice last year by SBS after he published tweets critical of the Anzac Day commemorations.

Held on April 25, Anzac Day is the anniversary of the World War I landing at Gallipoli in Turkey, 1915, by Australian and New Zealand (Anzac) troops as part of an Anglo-French invasion force. Last year's centenary was the occasion for wall-to-wall government and media promotion of militarism and the century-old myths concocted to whitewash this disastrous event.

McIntyre tweeted last year that Anzac Day was "the cultification of an imperialist invasion of a foreign country." He described the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan during World War II as the "largest single-day terrorist attacks in history" and referred to executions, rapes and theft committed by Anzac troops in Egypt, Palestine and Japan.

The sports journalist was dismissed in less than 24 hours, after SBS managing director Michael Ebeid was contacted by federal communications minister Malcolm Turnbull. Turnbull, who is now prime minister, condemned the sports journalist's tweets as "offensive," "inappropriate" and "despicable."

McIntyre launched legal action over his sacking and last October was granted the right to sue the SBS network for unfair dismissal. The dispute was finalised in a confidential out-of-court settlement earlier this month.

Last Monday, this year's Anzac Day, McIntyre published four tweets, again pointing to the involvement of Australian soldiers in criminal activities during World War I and II.

The first declared, "Heroism on command, senseless violence, all the loathsome nonsense that goes by the name patriotism," and included a satirical cartoon of the indoctrination of soldiers.

Another tweet said "Brave Anzacs rioting, pillaging and murdering in Egypt, 1915" and included text and a picture from the Australian War Memorial of a brothel that had been burnt down by 2,500 rioting Anzac soldiers in Cairo. The infamous incident is known as the Battle of Wazir.

McIntyre's next tweet dealt with the Surafend Massacre, the murder by Anzac troops of up to 120 Bedouins and the destruction of their village in Palestine during WWI.

The final posting referred to gang rapes of women by Australian soldiers during the occupation of post-WWII Japan. The tweet included a screen shot from a chapter of *Time of Fallen Blossom,* a book about the occupation by an Australian interpreter. It details the alleged rape of one Japanese girl by 20 Australian soldiers.

These crimes have been confirmed and documented by Australian historians, but are airbrushed out of the official government and media narratives on the Australian military.

While Fairfax Media and the *Guardian* referred to McIntyre's tweets in their publications, none of them provided significant information about the incidents mentioned in them.

The state-funded SBS and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation failed to even report McIntyre's latest twitter messages, continuing their policy last year of censoring comments critical of the militarist myths of Anzac Day.

Nevertheless the responses by *Guardian* readers to McIntyre's posts give a small indication of the level of anti-war opposition among broad layers of the population. Many congratulated the former SBS journalist for opposing militarism and war.

One praised McIntyre for his "persistence" and said, "I hope he does it again next year, and the year after that. In

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the Vietnam War our brave Aussies killed twelve young men from a Vietnamese village and hung them up by their heels in a tree. To discourage the others. At that time the per capita income of Australia was probably 30 to 50 times that of a Vietnamese villager. The rich slaughtering the poor."

Another reader angrily denounced the playing of military music at Anzac Day sporting events where the atmosphere "inevitably descends into nationalism, chest beating and glorification."

A former serviceman said, "Anzac Day. I can't identify with, I'm sorry. When I served I was victim to skulduggery and racism in the Service. All this gets brushed under the carpet… We are free to make all sorts of statements about what great warriors Australian soldiers were, but when someone finds some facts that we don't like about the same men, we want him sacked to shut him up."

Another wrote that WWI was "purely an imperialist war, it was all about trade, commodities, money and power… It was not a war about justice or 'democracy.' It should be seen for what it was. A war for the benefit of the ruling/moneyed classes."

As the Socialist Equality Party commented at the time, McIntyre's sacking was "a transparent act of politically motivated persecution," part of an escalating assault on democratic rights and in line with the escalating ideological preparations for new imperialist wars.

The sensitivity of the political and media establishment to anti-war sentiment was expressed, above all, in the decisions by Burwood Council and the University of Sydney to ban the SEP's public meeting—"Anzac Day, the glorification of militarism and the drive to World War III"—held on last year's centenary weekend. Eventually held at the Hurstville Entertainment Centre, the meeting was the only one that exposed the official lies about Anzac Day and provided a socialist alternative to the renewed danger of war.

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