

# The Washington Times

## Censored 'Case for Colonialism' article republished in new journal

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June 21, 2018

A controversial academic article arguing in favor of colonialism has been republished in a new journal after it was withdrawn by its original publisher.

The National Association of Scholars announced it would publish Bruce Gilley's "The Case for Colonialism" in the summer issue of Academic Questions, the quarterly journal of the higher education think tank.

NAS President Peter Wood said the group is "pleased to restore this important article to its legitimate place in the academic debate."

"The efforts to censor Bruce Gilley's article and the attacks on him personally were outrageous," Mr. Wood said in a statement. "Gilley published a well-reasoned and humane perspective on the political and economic challenges that face many Third World nations. Anyone who actually reads the article will see his thoughtful tone and good will."

Third World Quarterly withdrew Mr. Gilley's article in October, citing "serious and credible threats of personal violence" against the author and journal editor.

The journal's publisher, Taylor & Francis, maintained that the article had undergone a double-blind peer review process and met the journal's editorial standards for publication. But it was pulled at the request of the editor, and with the assent of the author, due to the threats of violence.

"Whilst this clearly demonstrated the essay had undergone double-blind peer review, in line with the journal's editorial policy, the journal editor has subsequently received serious and credible threats of personal violence," the publisher said in its withdrawal notice. "These threats are linked to the publication of this essay. As the publisher, we must take this seriously."

Mr. Gilley, an associate professor of political science at Portland State University, argued in the article that colonialism was a force for good in the developing world.

"For the last 100 years, Western colonialism has had a bad name," he wrote in the abstract. "It is high time to question this orthodoxy. Western colonialism was, as a general rule, both

objectively beneficial and subjectively legitimate in most of the places where it was found, using realistic measures of those concepts.”

There was an immediate backlash against the article once it appeared online.

A Change.org petition calling for the article’s retraction garnered more than 11,000 signatures, and 15 members of the Third World Quarterly editorial board resigned amid the controversy.

Other members of the academic community wrote rebuttals.

Sahar Khan, a visiting research fellow at the libertarian Cato Institute, argued the article was not only “offensive,” but “empirically and historically inaccurate.”

“Aside from being wrong on the facts, articles like these merely perpetuate dubious justifications for U.S. military interventionism and long-term nation-building projects in distant lands with populations that resent foreign occupation,” Ms. Khan wrote. “We should expect more from scholarly journals.”

Yet the death threats were ultimately what led to the article’s withdrawal.

Writing about the ordeal a few months later in Standpoint magazine, Mr. Gilley said the threats came from “Indian anti-colonial fanatics.” But the “Pravda-like” reaction from within the walls of academia also revealed a “worrying loss of faith in the liberal and pluralistic norms that made the West.”

“In a strange way, then, ‘The Case for Colonialism’ has unintentionally become a case for the recolonisation of the West by its own liberal traditions,” Mr. Gilley wrote. “The pluralism, free inquiry and reasoned debate on which Western civilisation is built face fanaticisms from both the Left and Right. The non-totalitarian centre is shrinking. A very dark place indeed.”