



DISARMING **Pax Christi** TIMES

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SUPERPOWER INTERRUPTED, CHINA AND THE WORLD.

Brian Johnstone.

Michael Schuman: The Chinese History of the World. New York: Public Affairs, 2020.

This essay comes from one of the small discussion groups in Pax Christi Victoria. It offers readers information that may assist them to understand contemporary Chinese policies in relation to Australia. The tensions that are described here arise from wars in the past and are of vital concern to those who are seeking to preserve peace in the present. Thus, the issues that will be treated here are of particular interest to members of Pax Christi. The main source is the recent book by Michael Schuman cited above. Drawing on this book, the essay will provide an outline of certain key developments in recent Chinese history as they affect Australia. . The piece does not claim to be a scholarly review of Schuman's book. It seeks to provide information and analysis that can assist the reader to reach an informed view on these matters. As the title of the book indicates the author aims to deal with a very broad topic: an account of a Chinese view of history of the world. This article will focus in particular on the closing chapter entitled "Making China Great Again." This indicates the author's interpretation of the central aim of contemporary Chinese politics.

Schuman writes of "the epic course of Chinese history" which extends over more than

three thousand years. This history has fostered in the Chinese a firm belief in the role China should play in today's world and into the future. The belief has support from history. For much of that history China was the most advanced civilization in East Asia. The Chinese were aware of other civilizations, but these were too distant to challenge Chinese belief in their own primacy. Chinese belief in their primacy was supported by their history. Chinese superiority over others was primarily cultural. But for long periods China was the leading economic and military power. China has been subjected to many invasions and disrupted by internal turmoil. But it has repeatedly been able to revive and resume its dominating position. According to the Chinese belief-system, other nations ought to recognize Chinese dominance. They may seek relationships with China, and enter into political and economic agreements, but only as tributaries, not as equals. However, the Chinese Communists deny any desire to recreate the old imperial world order. They distinguish their policies from those of the European and American imperialists; they claim that they do not seek the kind of hegemony that these powers pursued. In their stated positions they profess to seek relationships based on friendship, sincerity, reciprocity and inclusiveness. But, as Schuman writes: "The reality on the ground is that Xi's govern-

ment often deals with other countries as the emperors did their tributaries." A example is the way the Chinese government responded to Australia's lobbying for an independent inquiry into the source of the coronavirus. The lack of prior consultation with China on Australia's part was interpreted as an affront, contrary to the kind of friendship that China desired and expected on the part of Australia. China responded by imposing economic sanctions on Australia. The "tributary" pattern of thinking would seem to be clear. On the other hand, the lack of consultation of China on Australia's part, and the implied assumption that China should subject itself to an external authority might well have seemed to the Chinese to hark back to the imperialist mentality exhibited by the European powers in the nineteenth century. To

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DISARMING TIMES

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understand this reaction we will do well to take into account the past experience of China in its relationship with external powers and their claims to superior legitimacy. This calls for an account of Chinese experience in the period of what is called the time of "unequal treaties."

China has obviously learned from history. One example from the past can inform us of one of the major lessons that China has learned. On August 29, 1842 the first so called "Opium War" ended. The immediate issue was the freedom claimed by the British to import opium into China. British merchants exported tea in great quantities from China. But they had been unable to find a product they could sell in China to balance what they paid for the tea. They discovered that opium would fill the bill. The problem was that the Chinese at the time wanted to end the trade in opium that was causing great harm to Chinese people. Lin Zexu was appointed by the Qing Emperor to end the foreign trade in opium and began to try to implement this policy. The British resisted with canon. What brought the war to a close was the British threat to shell Nanking. The treaty of Nanking ended the war. The British got what they wanted. In particular the Qing rulers ceded the Island of Hong Kong. This island became a British colony for the next 150 years. The lesson learned by Lin was that more advanced gun-ships and canon would be needed to defend the empire. China has learned that lesson well.

In addition, the Chinese government agreed to pay \$20 million in "reparations." This sum greatly burdened the regime's resources. A second opium war began in 1856 and ended in 1860. This caused greater loss of life and was more damaging for China than the first. British and French forces finally marched on China's capital. As a result China lost its standing as the most powerful force in Asia, and also lost its economic wealth. China was virtually carved up by

foreign powers. Furthermore, the Opium trafficking produced social devastation throughout China. The results of the wars were long periods of unrest, famines, revolts and further armed conflicts. It is difficult to assess the number of deaths, and human suffering was widespread. It has been claimed that enforced opium trafficking to China prepared the way to modern, world-wide drug crime. There was a further significant result. The defeat of the Qing Empire in the Opium Wars was a key factor in their downfall, and the rise of the Communist Party. The British decision to go to war had unforeseen, fateful consequences.

What is the ethical validity of the arguments that were used by the British traders and the British parliament leading up to the opium wars? Schuman does not deal with this question and provides an historical account. However, there is a valuable article that provides an analysis by Christine Su of Stanford University entitled: "Justifiers of the British Opium Trade: Arguments by Parliament, Traders and the Times Leading Up to the Opium War." There is little evidence of substantive ethical thinking; what we find is, in the main, a collation of self-justifying rhetoric.

In the British Parliament one of the most eloquent speakers was William Gladstone, the future prime minister. He proclaimed that, "A more unjust war in its origins, a war more calculated in its progress to cover the country with a permanent disgrace, I do not know. . ." He even called the British flag "A pirate flag, to protect infamous traffic." However, in Su's judgment, Gladstone's main concern would seem to have been Britain's "national honour." The reputation of Britain and the offended dignity of British subjects weighed more for him than Chinese lives or legal authority. This opened the way for the supporters of the war to win the argument. After the Opium wars, the Western nations wrote the rules for East Asia and detached it from Chinese influence.

The memories of the opium wars continue to shape contemporary Chinese thinking and policies. "That page of Chinese history was one of humiliation and sorrow," China's president Xi Jinping said in 2017. "China has stood up. It will never again be bullied by any nation."

After the opening up of China in the twentieth century, attributed, in particular, to Deng Xiaoping, the situation changed profoundly. Deng stood before the party's top members in 1978 and called for a sharp change of course. The partnership that Deng developed with the United States altered Chinese history, and indeed, as Schuman writes: "the *entire* history of the world." By 2010 the Chinese economy reached \$6.1 trillion; the world's second largest, behind only the United States.

According to Schuman there has been a recurring cycle in Chinese history. The Chinese have never been content to live under other people's rules or culture. There have been times when they reluctantly accepted the inevitable and appeared to submit. But they remained convinced that their civilization was central to everything and set the rules for their engagement with the rest of the world. They bided their time and when conditions became favourable again, they rose to a central place on the world stage as they had done so many times before. With the arrival of Xi Jinping on the scene, the Chinese now believe that the moment has come to retake their former position. The indignities that were imposed on them during the period of "unequal treaties" by the Western powers can now be avenged and the Chinese world order restored.

What is the role of Communism in this scheme of things? In the past, communist officials vilified what they called the "olds," which included Confucianism. But the Party, in the twenty first century, has taken up again the traditional Chinese culture and governing principles. Xi now adopts the forms of Confucian ideology and fills his speeches with Confucian sayings and moral precepts. Xi has claimed that,

"Chinese Communists have always been faithful successors and promoters of China's excellent traditional culture." He added: "We all pay attention to absorbing its active nutrients, from Confucius to Sun Yat Sen."

Schuman sees Xi, in the mould of the Ming emperor Hongwu, as a fierce nationalist, who equates his endeavours at imperial restoration with the Chinese triumph over the barbarians. Interestingly, it was the Ming emperors who built the great wall to keep out the barbarians; Xi has built the Great Firewall to block foreign interference on the Internet. Like past dynasties, especially the Song, Xi and his supporters are, to use Schuman's term "rabid" about reclaiming territory that they consider the rightful possession of the Han people. Hong Kong is regarded as property stolen by the Western barbarians. The president, at the time of the return of Hong Kong to China, claimed this was the return of the island to Chinese compatriots, who have now become true masters of this Chinese land. Schuman's book must have been written before the recent protests in favour of democracy in Hong Kong; he does not seek to explain how these are to be interpreted. However, the forceful suppression of these protests clearly indicates the determination of the regime to take back territory stolen by the barbarians. Peking still claims Taiwan as part of China and refuses all claims that it is an independent country. More recently, China has pressed its claims in the South China Sea and has fortified the area by constructing man-made islands to assert Chinese sovereignty. When an international tribunal came out against Beijing's claims, the state media likened the verdict to the humiliations suffered by China in the period of "unequal treaties" in the nineteenth century.

Some of the events of the past may help us to interpret the recent conflict between China and Australia. Xi's government often deals with other countries in the way the emperors of old dealt with their tributaries. Those who accept and submit to Chinese "benevolent" order and demonstrate due deference, will be allowed to share in China's

largesse and benevolence. Such are the states who join in China's Belt and Road system. But those who resist must be prepared for unpleasant consequences. In 2016 South Korea agreed to install an American defence system. The Chinese claimed to see this as a threat to their own security. When South Korea refused to submit, China imposed sanctions. China, in fact, treated Korea as a disobedient vassal. The government of China supported the boycotting of Korea owned stores in China. Sales of Korean cars and cosmetics fell.

The similarity of these events to those that occurred when Australia called for an impartial investigation of the causes of the Corona Virus pandemic is clear. China accused Australia of failing to show due respect and threatened to impose sanctions on Australia's exports to China. The objections were cast in the language of friendship rather than tutelage. Mr. Wang Xining, deputy head of mission at China's embassy in Australia, complained that all of a sudden there was this shocking proposal from Australia, supposed to be a good friend of China. Xining then invoked Roman history to illustrate his interpretation of the intentions that guided Australia's intervention. "It is approximately identical to Julius Caesar in his final date when he saw Brutus approaching him." We may speculate whether Mr. Wang Xining is aware of Brutus's motive for approaching Caesar. His stabbing of Caesar was, of course, motivated by the determination to prevent Caesar making himself emperor.

Does China under Xi Jinping harbour imperial ambitions? The Chinese Communists routinely insist that they have no desire to recreate the imperial world order that China forged in past centuries. China, they proclaim, will never imitate the behaviour of the big powers who seek hegemony when they grow strong. The relationships between China and other nations, they insist, would be based on friendship, sincerity, reciprocity and inclusiveness. What are we to think of this? The Chinese cannot be expected to forget the behaviour of the "great powers" in the nineteenth century and the

century that followed. The invasions of China in the nineteenth century were acts of aggression motivated principally by overweening lust for commercial profit and sustained by concern for imperial prestige. The success of these attacks was made possible by Chinese weakness. This, and more recent experience, would surely justify a degree of scepticism on the part of China with regard to the contemporary moral protests by Western nations.

However, Schuman's concrete, specific conclusion seems convincing. "The reality on the ground is that Xi's government often deals with other countries as the emperors did their tributaries." Those who follow China's rule and show the required deference are permitted to taste China's riches and be-

nevolence. Such are the nations who join in China's "Belt and Road" programs. But those who defy the Chinese and their edicts will be duly denied magnanimity and punished. Australian policy has been somewhat ambiguous; one state at least, Victoria, signed up the Belt and Road program. However, at present there are strong calls for the country to move towards a policy of resistance. What will be the consequences? China, true to form, is threatening trade sanctions.

However, Schuman's second conclusion also deserves attention. China may indeed be seeking to introduce its new world order; but it does not yet have the power to impose that order, The Korean missile defence system, to which China so strongly objected, is still in place. China has been in-

involved in "nasty" disputes with many of its neighbours; Indonesia, India, the Philippines, Japan and Vietnam. Countries in Asia have not been ready to *kowtow* to China and some have committed to their alliance with the United States.

In Australia, reports of new trade sanctions imposed by China continue to appear. Victoria's Belt and Road Initiative deal with China remains a contentious issue between the Federal Government and the Victorian premier.

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AUSTRALIAN MILITARISM: Historical Perspective in the Context of the Asia-Pacific Caesar D'Mello

COVID-19 and the earlier massive bushfires have, understandably, kept Australia immensely preoccupied with those challenges. During the same time, however, tension has been brewing in the Asia-Pacific, or Indo-Pacific, as it is increasingly known, a significant region for our economic, political and security interests. The Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, announcing the allocation of AUD \$270 billion for a larger military in early July this year warned of "a poorer, more dangerous" future.

Absent full disclosure of the reasoning and analysis underlying sensitive official statements, we are generally left with "parsing" them in light of known history and judgments made before. They provide a window into foreign and defence policies of most countries. The axiom "to understand the present, know the past" applies to Australia, and it would be a mistake not to keep it in mind when figuring out current thinking.

Australia's colonial/neo-colonial relationships

Australia's colonial/neo-colonial relationships are an important force

in shaping Australia's militarisation. The United Kingdom and its sense of Empire greatly influenced how Australia conducted itself militarily till World War II having been incorporated, along with New Zealand, in some sectors by the British to assist their war effort. In effect, as historians have noted, Australian forces were seen to have become expendable, given the number of the dead and wounded in various World War I and II theatres, and the huge psychological, social and economic costs borne by their families and Australia at large, painfully commemorated every year on ANZAC Day.

After World War II, the major influence has come from the United States, a country driven by a belief in their "exceptionalism" and "manifest destiny" to promote "freedom and democracy" in the world. We have joined US-led wars, whether justifiable or not, including Vietnam, Iraq, the "War on Terror", and Afghanistan. In designated areas our military forces aim to become progressively more "interoperable" with the US military. Having provided a base in Alice Springs

for Pine Gap and in Darwin for US marines, both reinforcing US global military strategy, Australia has also been prominently involved in US and British-designed alliances, ranging from the defunct SEATO to ANZUS, QUAD and 'Five Eyes'.

As far back as the 1950s US President Eisenhower warned of a powerful convergence of interests between the corporate world and the military establishment he called 'a military-industrial complex', pushing for a particular slant in the US economic, foreign and defence outlook. Allied as we are with the US it should make us ponder how Australia's own foreign and military outlook could also have been so impacted, even if indirectly, especially since some of our military priorities seem to dovetail with those of the US. As we share the US *weltanschauung*, their reading of who their adversaries are would form a pertinent backdrop for our own process of decision-making, and hence, in some cases, it would be surprising if we did not maintain variations of political distancing towards them. Correspondingly, it would also be surprising if they, in

turn, did not react to us in a similar fashion. China, for example, appears to be a striking case in point. As a support partner in an alliance with the US, assumed in its military and defence overview, our decisions on military acquisitions, modernisation, training, upskilling, strategies and forward defence preparedness to an extent would inevitably be geared towards becoming an effective companion force to the superpower. Nevertheless, and importantly, Australia absorbs the costs of such militarisation from our own limited resources, the "opportunity costs" denied to major dimensions of Australian society, such as health, education, etc. Furthermore, in the geopolitical arena, including in settings such as G20 and ASEAN and others, our association with the US often telegraphs our stance on consequential conflicts and issues of the day critical to the world and our region. The financial and reputational costs of such partnerships are traditionally justified on grounds that it will "protect us and our way of life".

Australia and Anglo-Saxon Solidarity

A hallmark of Australia's foreign and defence policies historically has been its instinctive affinity with the grouping of Anglo-Saxon countries. At a global level, the Anglo-Saxon imprint on world affairs has been demonstrated time and again through the 20th and 21st Centuries - through World War I, the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919, WWII, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and much else.

It is instructive to recall that in 1919 Japan's bid to include a Racial Equality clause in the Covenant of the League of Nations was defeated by an alliance of Britain, the US, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada. Prime Minister William Hughes was reported to have publicly humiliated the Japanese and Chinese delegations with his hostility towards them. Alongside Australians and New Zealanders, South Asian soldiers were co-opted, too, to assist the British forces but were treated as inferior to white personnel, and were assigned to lower ranks, often regarded as servants and coolies. The

Anglo-Saxon mindset has been one of superiority and domination.

The White Australia Policy vigorously enforced in the earlier decades of the 20th century was offensive, and the sentiments and remarks of Australian leaders then towards Asia are well known. The Colombo Plan initiative of Prime Minister Robert Menzies was a welcome contribution to good relations in Asia, but it was also a sign of changing times. Designed to maintain an Australia without the threat of Asians 'swamping' this country, the White Australia Policy was repealed only in 1973 by the Whitlam Government to the relief of many.

China is now particularly exercising our minds on defence and trade issues, but a historical context sheds light. Apart from establishing Marxism, the Chinese Communist Party has been conscious of their "historical obligation" of recovering China's standing in the world after its "Age of Humiliation" at the hands of Western powers, especially Anglo-Saxon powers, over nearly two centuries. The reinstatement of Deng Xiaoping in 1978 as Senior Counsellor provided a new impetus to China towards this goal. Deng's interpretation of Marxism permitting the coexistence of "personal enrichment" with state control and social equality, and his advocacy of an "Open Door" policy, set China on a path to its present-day economic success and towards regaining its pre-eminence. It would be naive to expect that a resurgent China emerging from such a history would not push back against actions and decisions by Anglo-Saxon powers viewed as reminiscent of their behaviour during its Age of Humiliation. This is not to suggest that China should not be held accountable for some of its own actions with regard to Human Rights violations, the Uyghurs, Tibet, Hong Kong and so on, or a call to kowtow to China, but to be more sophisticated in the response regime we should construct to prevent a build-up of tension in the future. Actions or statements by Australia that appear to echo those by the US will obviously be unhelpful in our discourse with China. (See Fr Brian Johnstone's article on p. 1.)

The future

Despite the dynamic and changing character of international relations with Asia, long and unhappy memories of Australia's disparaging attitudes towards its people in previous decades cannot be erased. Their appreciation of Australia is growing, but it was not too long ago that Australia was mockingly called "deputy sheriff" of the US in Asia-Pacific ! It is encouraging, then, that the Foreign Minister, Marise Payne, just some three and a half weeks after Prime Minister Scott Morrison's warning referred to at the beginning of this article, should declare after the AUSMIN talks in Washington that "we make our own decisions in our own national interests." While this appears to contrast with the usual "Australia joined at the hip with the US" statements, Australia also signed a secret 10-year defence cooperation agreement with the US during the same talks. Our times call for a "nuanced policy" integrating more strands than effectively just the one, more joint positioning and collaboration with other like-minded countries on common concerns, more investment in our foreign service to build better and lasting relationships, and more attention to "soft diplomacy" through people-to-people and community initiatives. While these will be elaborated in later writing, the consistent determination and hard work required to develop such a multi-faceted approach may well result in decreased militarisation over time and being spared wars not in our interest. This is in line with the Pax Christi Nonviolence Initiative's urging of nonviolent pathways for transforming conflict to achieve integral and sustained peace in the world as, in Pope Francis' words, "military responses to conflict only breed more violence." *Caesar D'Mello a member of Pax Christi Australia, was formerly national director of Christian World Service, the aid and development agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. He is a Consultant on justice and peace, ecology and "development" concerns in the Third World.*

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POLITICIANS, WAKE UP!

DANISH YOUTH SHOUT OUT ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Sasha Sondergaard Hearn

Sasha Sondergaard Hearn is a high school student in Copenhagen, active in the School Strike 4 Climate movement in Denmark. This is a speech she made to an assembly of politicians at the Danish Parliament House.

What's the point? I ask this on behalf of an entire generation. A generation of young people who repeatedly walk the streets shouting for climate action, yet we are repeatedly met with empty words that never turn into action. We find it difficult to find meaning in what you - politicians say - because none of what we are told leads to the action on the climate crisis that we demand, on the contrary, it only makes our future even more uncertain.

In December 2019, we got a climate law for the first time. Presented as ambitious and binding - a climate law that will make Denmark a green pioneer - the most ambitious pioneer in the world.

When this happened, we felt young, in a small moment, hope and that we could breathe. After walking the streets and fighting with all our might for so long, we finally felt that our demands were being listened to and, for once, given priority.

But as time went on, we became increasingly disappointed as these many promises have not yet been put into action. The climate action plans have been postponed and the negotiations that have been made do not appear to be in a position to meet the objectives of the Climate Act or the Paris Agreement.

Again, we lack action from the politicians in Christiansborg, those who have the power and thus the opportunities to act here and now.

And again, we see how our demands for a future are deselected and how our globe is not prioritized - as always due to unilateral focus on economic growth and profit.

As a young climate activist, it was

incredibly scary to acknowledge that we are all facing a huge crisis. But it has been even more shocking to see that they are responsible for the climate crisis; those who have the opportunity to do something - do not act on the climate crisis and would not actually take responsibility.

Of course, the only thing I and other young climate activists could do was take action because it was clear that nothing was being done about it. We began to strike and mobilize, and we found meaning in our common struggle: to stand with the same concerns and with the same hopes and dreams of a future where our beautiful earth is always given high of a future where our beautiful earth is always given high priority. We discovered that we could use our voice and directly demand the change needed. Through a historical mass mobilization of young people across continents, we put pressure on politicians and other rulers.

And we are still standing here because we will not accept that the promises made by the politicians have not turned into the major structural changes of society that we demand.

It is perfectly clear that the climate and biodiversity crisis is an emergency and our action cannot wait. The crisis has enormous consequences for our land - even in its unfairness. The climate crisis affects the people who have done the least to create the most and benefits those who have created it. It highlights the inequalities present in the world at the same time that it creates further inequality. Therefore, the countries with the opportunity to act have a responsibility to remedy the looming crisis that we are facing.

Here, Denmark has the opportunity to be a truly green and ambitious leader.

The re-opening of Denmark after the corona should be seen as an

opportunity to lead the fight away from the unambitious climate policy that we knew from before the society closed down. Right now, we have a unique opportunity to build our society in a way that leads to the necessary climate policy. During the corona crisis, we have clearly seen a fortunately strong power of politicians, a driving force that we used to long for. This necessary force must also apply to the climate crisis. We demand that politicians begin to treat all crises as a crisis, regardless of who is affected by them.

We want a green reboot of the community. A green reboot means that we set some requirements for how the reopening of Denmark should take place and requirements for how Denmark should follow the climate goals going forward.

We require that, as a premise for receiving support packages, you as a body are committed to maintaining a sustainable profile going forward.

We require that a climate tax be imposed on goods depending on how climate friendly they are. This must be combined with a green check to ensure social equality.

We need a transformation of the economy - a transition to circular economy, as a linear economy is not an option. It is necessary that we think planetary purposes into our economy.

In the end, we demand that green investments not black investments be made, as our future is green and not black.

We want and believe in a future where all our actions express love for the earth and each other.

We will continue the struggle to fight for our future, and no one has to decide what our future will look like. I know that we can act in solidarity and together create a better society.

THANK YOU

ACTION AND REFLECTION ON ECOLOGY

Geoff Lacey

Jn our work for justice, peace and ecology there is an intimate relationship between action and reflection. Each enhances the other.

With ecology, this connection is of central importance. This is because at the very heart of the ecological crisis there is a clash of values and ideas—two radically different ways of understanding the natural world. Ecological issues are not only scientific and political, they are also deeply spiritual.

The present economy of global capitalism demands ever increasing economic growth. In this perspective, the natural world, with its plants, animals and ecosystems, is of no intrinsic value. These are reduced to resources for development through technology.

This kind of globalisation has led not only to global warming but has been a key factor in the rapid global spread of the Coronavirus.

In contrast we have local and international movements struggling to protect the biosphere in various ways—including coal mine protests, urban permaculture, hands-on conservation, art and writing. Given the character of the struggle, it is important that these groups develop deep cultural and spiritual roots.

What we now call eco-spirituality is not new. During the long human history in Australia the Indigenous people developed a deep appreciation of Country. They understand this term in a special way, in which land, nature and culture are all linked. Everything in Country is full of meaning, originating in the Dreaming, and all places are connected through Songlines.

Let us examine some of the other themes that underlie the commitments of various movements today.

1) **Localising.** Many households and community groups are trying to break away from the ties of global capital. They are growing food for local use and also reducing their consumption of fossil fuels. They are reaching towards ecological sustain-

ability, while strengthening the local community.

Other groups are working to strengthen or restore the natural ecosystems, for example along the creeks and river. The overall thrust of these movements is an economy grounded in ecology and community.

The following themes have a theological character.

2) **An ecological age.** Thomas Berry, in *The dream of the earth* (1988), argues that we are moving into another historical period, 'the ecological age'—indicating the interdependence of all the living and nonliving systems of the earth. The human at the species level needs to fulfil its role within the broader life community:

'It is a radical change in our mode of consciousness. Our challenge is to create a new language, even a new sense of what it is to be human... The ecological age fosters a deep awareness of the sacred presence within each reality of the universe.'

I suggest that the new language is the language of the land itself. We need to read the land, listen to it, engage with it in creative and healing ways. This would be in tune with the sense of Country of the Indigenous people.

In an interview with *The Tablet* (11 April) Pope Francis said: 'We have to slow down the rate of production and consumption and learn to understand and contemplate the natural world. We need to reconnect with our real surroundings. This is the opportunity for conversion.'

3) **Creation.** This is a central theme in eco-theology. Elizabeth Johnson, in *Ask the beasts* (2014), says that 'creation' signifies that this finite world is pervaded with the presence of God who empowers it. This awareness enhances the importance of the land and all its creatures. It has indeed its own intrinsic value.

4) **Deep incarnation.** A number of contemporary theologians, including Johnson, speak of 'deep incarna-

tion'. Denis Edwards, in *Partaking of God*, says:

'God in Christ enters into biological life to be with the evolving creation in a radically new way... Wisdom's embrace of flesh involves not just the humanity of Jesus... but the whole natural world in its evolution and its groaning...'

'The concept of deep incarnation proposes that, in the unique incarnation of the Word in Jesus of Nazareth, God embraces our wider humanity, and the wider community of life on Earth, and the whole evolutionary universe of which we are part... In the Word made Flesh, God embraces the whole of finite creaturely existence from within.'

The perspective of deep incarnation further enhances the importance of our engagement with nature. To experience the present moment at our local site is profoundly spiritual. We do not have to look elsewhere. It is sufficient to occupy the place we are in—simply to be present.

Among Christians we find a diversity of traditions and insights. Now is the time to develop an articulate network among people engaged with or interested in eco-theology. And we should take every opportunity for dialogue with people of other faiths. Such a network should combine insight and action.

You are invited to join the Pax Christi study and networking group on Ecological Spirituality which is studying *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* by Elizabeth Johnstone, a fascinating book which challenges us to reinvent our images of God and evolution, THE GROUP MEETS ON THE 4TH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH VIA ZOOM AT 2 P.M

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Dr Geoff Lacey began his working life as a civil engineer. He has been active in many environmental issues and was a pioneer teacher of environmental engineering in Australia.

CAMPAIGN TO STOP KILLER ROBOT ACTIVITIES

Matilda Byrne

It has been an unprecedented and tough year for many. The COVID 19 pandemic has dramatically changed people's lives and it too has changed the nature of our work. The Campaign has sustained its effort and this update gives the latest on campaign activities and fully autonomous weapons in Australia broadly.

While planned diplomatic talks have been disrupted, defence has kept developing, all to say we, along with the 160+ member organisations of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots across the world, we have kept on working.

Most significantly SafeGround, leader of the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots effort in Australia, released its new report '**Australia Out of the Loop: why we must not delegate decision making in warfare from man to machine.**' The report delves into fully autonomous weapons across many aspects; moral, ethical, legal, security and policy. It is the first of its kind to comprehensively place this issue in the Australian context. Its inclusion of diverse sectors of society; government, defence force, university, arms manufacturers, tech industry and civil society provide a complete picture of the issue.

The report illustrates how Australia is "out of the loop" on this issue of keeping humans "in the loop" and maintaining meaningful human control over the use of lethal force. It advocates for policy change in Australia, to see our country support the calls to ban these abhorrent weapons, complementing our other activities.

To kick off the year, in Canberra the Campaign held a roundtable with different organisations and groups. We held an action outside Parliament, asking politicians to take a stand against killer robots. We briefed MPs and Senators and delivered a mass letter writing initiative to spread awareness of the issue among our politicians.

In February, Campaigners from

around the world headed to Buenos Aires for the Global Campaign Meeting. In attendance from Australia was Campaign Coordinator Matilda Byrne and Data Scientist and ban champion Dr Lizzie Silver.

This was followed by a great panel discussion at University of Adelaide's ThinLab with Matilda Byrne joined by Nick Lothian CEO of tech company TytoAI and Peri Coleman, Quaker and observer of the so-called 'defence state'. This event was our last in-person event before COVID 19 and unfortunately our Public Forum in Melbourne has been postponed.

We are currently working to engage, inform and raise awareness among university students of the involvement in defence research by their university. Specifically, research being conducted in autonomy, AI and robotics that could be used to develop fully autonomous weapons. The potential contribution of university to research to fully autonomous weapons is incredibly concerning, especially given the defence industry partnerships that are widespread throughout the country. We launched a website with information for students, a survey, mapping of university involvement in autonomy with defence and ways to get involved. We also held an IntaLive QandA session.

It is uncertain when/if/how diplomatic talks scheduled at the United Nations to discuss 'lethal autonomous weapons systems' will be held this year. We will be watching any meetings closely, encouraging decisive action toward a ban.

The United Nations Protection of Civilians Week shone some much-needed attention on the issue with Secretary General Antonio Guterres asserting the need to reach agreements about limitations on autonomy and weapons as well as reiterating the moral and ethical concerns.

As COVID has slowed much of the world's activities, development of autonomous weapons has not stopped. The Royal Australian Air Force announced the 'Loyal Wing-

man' project, to develop autonomous combat aircraft. The first of three prototypes was unveiled in May. The government awarded \$40mil to this initiative which sees Australia skirting closer and closer to the red line which must never be crossed.

The intended investment in autonomous capabilities was again made clear in the Defence Strategic Update. It stated in Australia's changing strategic environment, "emerging and disruptive technologies will be rapidly translated into weapons systems, including autonomous systems...reducing decision times and improving weapon precision and lethality."

The Update identifies a range of autonomous systems which will be developed amongst Australia's capabilities; autonomous air vehicles and aerial systems, un-crewed surface and underwater systems, investments up to 11 billion in autonomous land vehicles with a "coordination office for the implementation of robotics and autonomous systems across the land force" to be established.

The other key area appears to be the air domain, where "new and existing aircraft will combine with remotely piloted and autonomous systems to provide increased lethality and survivability"

A new, dedicated chapter of the Australian military doctrine on the ethics of AI uses in defence is to be released later this year. Whilst this is a welcome initiative, Defence routinely avoids acknowledging the need to retain human control - which is incredibly concerning.

At the Defence Sector Workshop, part of the Robotics Road-map for Australia initiative, in April earlier this year, Australian defence again demonstrated their interest in increasing autonomy. Royal Australian Navy Commander and Lead for Autonomous Warfare Systems Paul Hornsby stated "there were times when things are so busy that it is beyond human endurance or human response time, and you really want to

crank up the robotics, and crank up the AI and there are other times where you would draw it back."

The stance of the Department of Defence and Defence Force on human control gives no assurance that Australia will rule out developing fully autonomous weapons. Rather their view that "there is not one answer, now and there is not going to be one answer in the future with

regards to where is the human in this system" as stated by Chief of Defence Force Angus J Campbell, demonstrates how they shirk the notion. The Department of Defence and the Australian

government must commit to maintaining meaningful human control over the use of lethal force, they must denounce the development or use of fully autonomous weapons and support calls for a ban.

For the report, access to recordings of all of our digital events including the Report Launch and the webpage for university students visit:

safeground.org.au/what-we-do/campaign-to-stop-killer-robots/

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STORY OF THE UNIVERSE – A COSMIC WALK

By Margaret Hill Reviewed by Brendan James

"The beginning of the Universe was the beginning of the Earth story, as well as the beginning of the personal story of each one of us"
Geologist Thomas Berry.

Unlike the popular TV series, "Who Do You Think You Are?", this Story reaches much further back to the very beginning of time in tracing our identity. It was made possible by the invention of the Hubble telescope, now launched into a low Earth orbit. We are, therefore, the first generation to benefit from the resulting Scientific account of our Creation Story. We are now indebted to the Australian author and artist, Margaret Hill, for doing the research, recording the facts and presenting them to us in such an accessible and delightful format.

Our Story begins with the Big Bang or Flaring Forth, estimated to be 13.7 billion years ago. In 31 distinct episodes, the author records in simple language the drama at play, as our Universe slowly evolved to the

point where conditions were ready to accommodate our species, Homo Sapiens Sapiens. Each episode is twinned with her own stunning artwork. Together, this section forms the core of a Cosmic Walk, that she has separately designed for use as an ecological teaching tool in Schools, Retreat Centres and diverse gatherings. The Notes at the back of the book provide a more detailed account of this epic adventure, for readers seeking further information.

At this point, the author quotes David Attenborough's provocative comment, "Like it or not, what happens next is up to us". The rest of the book of 53 pages then goes on to list some eleven transforming developments that followed – our human footprint. These might prompt us to pause and take stock of where we're are and where we want to go. Included in this list are the following:

- * The ancient civilisations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India & China
- * The appearance of Jesus and his

subsequent influence on the world

- * Copernicus' radical discovery that Planet Earth revolves around the Sun
- * The Industrial Revolution of the 18th Century
 - * The Hubble Telescope
 - * and Space Exploration
- * The 1969 Mission to the Moon
- * The impact of Urbanisation
- * The resulting population explosion
- * The Rise of Global Temperatures
 - * And more....

This beautifully bound book, a work of art in itself, provides us with more than just information. While informing the intellect, it engages our imagination and invites us to reflect on the awe and wonder of our unfolding Story. It is a timely companion to accompany us into lockdown while this pandemic persists.

The book may be purchased directly from the author, whose contact is mhill44@bigpond.com

DOROTHY DAY IN AUSTRALIA,

by Val Noone, 2020.

Reviewed by Heather Weedon

Val Noone, Melbourne born and bred, has had a range of jobs in the church, the community sector, publishing and academia, and is a social activist. He has published on twentieth-century Catholicism and the Irish in Victoria; and is a fellow of the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. (*From the back cover of the book*).

This very interesting account of Dorothy Day and her time in Australia in 1970 is well worth the read and study.

Val Noone, a long-time member of Pax Christi, recounts the meetings he had with Dorothy Day, here in Australia and at her home in the USA, and thus has personal memories of her and team's efforts for justice for the workers, especially the poor. Dorothy was a tireless advocate for the worker, for unions, for peace and for social justice. She edited the monthly newspaper *The Catholic Worker* which was first published in 1933, a paper of the Catholic Worker Movement.

The book has a reference section which includes - besides works by Dorothy herself - articles, interviews and talks about her and the Movement, and there is a list of books about Dorothy on page 13.

A comprehensive index of the per-

sons named in the book is included; this assists in the study of Dorothy's influence and that of the Movement over time.

The book begins with a short background to Dorothy and her activism for women's rights and for peace.

Chapter One gives an insight into her passion for others; this involved political conduct which resulted at times in abuse and beatings by the government officials of the day.

Chapter Two gives an outline of Dorothy's links to Australia between 1933-1970, before her visit here. This begins with the way in which copies of the newspaper found their way to Australia and the impact their message had here. It was a welcome addition to the voices for peace, as opposed to an anti-communist paper issued by Bob Santamaria, *Catholic Worker*, which supported the war in Spain. By contrast, Dorothy pointed out that "support for Fascists as a way of opposing communists was a mistake." (p.28). History certainly proved her right.

"Visiting Australia" is the title for **Chapter Three**. It recounts Dorothy's time here, accompanied by Eileen Egan, the secretary of the American Pax group.

This trip was part of visits to Tanzania, India, Rome and London to

meet with various persons working for peace. There are photos of some people she met, which adds to the understanding of her visit. There are also copies of Dorothy's letters during this time, which give an insight into her responses to meeting many Australians.

Chapter Four, "Continuing Influence" tells of the ongoing effect of Dorothy on the Catholic Social Justice scene and peace movements. Dorothy has been proposed for sainthood, and once having read this volume, you will understand why she has been named. In fact, for years Dorothy has been considered a saint, even before any formal recognition from the Vatican.

I highly recommend this book, as it gives a well-rounded understanding of Dorothy Day and her life of total commitment to others, for peace, justice and especially for the wellbeing of workers.

The book is published by Mary Doyle and Vale Noone and may be obtained from GoodReads,

<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/54676619-dorothy-day-in-australia>

Dr. Heather Weedon is a member of the of Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, a missiologist and member of Pax Christi

Open Letter from Bethlehem Christian Clergy

Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed." (Jeremiah 22:3)

"We are writing this letter in our capacity as spiritual leaders of various Christian communities in the Bethlehem Area. The Israeli Government is planning to annex more occupied Palestinian land. According to the information they have released, this process could begin on July 1st. For Palestine, Bethlehem and particularly for its Christian population, this new process of annexation will be particularly catastrophic.

Soon after the occupation of 1967 Israel annexed over 20,000 dunums

of land in the northern parts of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, for the construction of illegal colonial settlements. This severely hindered our capacity to grow as communities. They have already annexed one of the most important Christian religious sites of Bethlehem, the Mar Elias Monastery, and separated Bethlehem from Jerusalem for the first time in the two-thousand years of Christian history in Holy Land.

One of the only areas left for our expansion, as well as for agriculture and simply for families to enjoy nature, are the valleys of Cremisan and Makhrou, both located to the

west of our urban areas and are under the current threat of annexation by Israeli authorities. This will affect the private property of hundreds of our parishioners. In the Cremisan Valley we also conduct spiritual activities. There is a school run by Salesian Nuns in addition to a historic monastery. The western Bethlehem countryside is also in danger, where some of our parishioners have been farming for generations, and this includes the Tent of Nations in Nahhalin. At the same time, and in accordance to the original maps of the US Plan, there are threats against the eastern part of Bethlehem, including the Ush

Ughrab area of Beit Sahour, where there has been plans for years to build a children hospital to serve the local community.

Our biggest concern is that the annexation of those areas will push more people to emigrate. Bethlehem, surrounded by walls and settlements, already feels like an open prison. Annexation means the prison becomes even smaller, with no hopes for a better future.

This is land theft! We are talking about land that is largely privately owned and that our families have owned, inherited and farmed for hundreds of years.

Most of our parishioners have lost hope in earthly powers. They feel hopeless and helpless, evident in the words a parishioner this month as he watched his land devoured by Israeli bulldozers preparing the way for more wall expansion: "It is devastating. You see bulldozers destroying your land and you can do nothing. No one is stopping them."

Our parishioners no longer believe that anyone will stand courageously for justice and peace and stop this tremendous injustice that is taking place in front of your eyes. The human rights of Palestinians have been violated for decades. Hope is a pillar of our faith, yet is being challenged due to the actions of those who claim to care about the Christians in the Middle East. In practice, annexation could be the final straw when it comes to a viable Christian presence in Palestine, as well as the national aspirations to live in freedom, independence, dignity and equality in our homeland in accordance with international law.

Nobody can claim that they did not know the consequences of annexation for Palestine in general and Bethlehem in particular. We feel the burden of history upon our shoulders to keep the Christian presence in the land where it all started. As we continue to put our hope and trust in God, we call upon the lead-

ers of this world to stop this severe injustice. We remain committed to peace with justice, and find strength in the support of many around the world, specially the support of many churches. We hope that the world takes decisive and concrete actions to stop this injustice and provide the conditions to restore hope for a future of justice and peace that this land deserves.

Fr. Yacoub Abu Sada – 'The Theotokos' Melkite Church Bethlehem

Fr. Issa Musleh – Forefathers Greek Orthodox Church Beit Sahour

Fr. Hanna Salem – Catholic Church of the Annunciation Beit Jala

Fr. Bolous Al Alam – St. Mary Greek Orthodox Church Beit Jala

Rev. Ashraf Tannous – The Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation Beit Jala

Fr. Suheil Fakhouri – Our Lady of the Shepherds Melkite Church Beit Sahour

Open letter in support of self-determination for all Kashmiris

We the undersigned representatives of a range of civil society, union and faith organisations have signed this statement to demonstrate our support for the struggle of the people of Kashmir to be granted the right of self-determination.

We oppose the occupation of Kashmir by foreign troops.

We demand an end to Indian impunity, demilitarisation, an Independent International Commission of Inquiry, and self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

We are aware that Kashmir has been disputed territory since 1947. Kashmiris have consistently resisted Indian occupation, demanding their right to self-determination. Multiple United Nations resolutions over the years have recognised this right.

We call on the Australian government to:

1. Advocate to members of the Security Council to support resolutions that would facilitate self-determination for the people of Kashmir;

2. Renegotiate trade agreements between Australia and India so that they include a human rights clause;

3. Adopt travel sanctions against Indian army officers involved in human rights abuses in Kashmir; and

4. Strongly urge the Indian Government to:

- Restore the human rights of Kashmiris including the freedom of speech and assembly, the right to communicate and to access education and health services;

- Remove military and paramilitary forces from where the civilian population lives;

- Withdraw its draconian emergency laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and Public Safety Act that provide impunity to security forces;

- Release wrongfully detained Kashmiri children in distant jails of



India;

- Stop any move to change the demographic structure of Kashmir;
- Engage in credible dialogue with Kashmiris and other related parties, in line with UN resolutions to bring the 73 year old issue to a peaceful settlement;
- Provide immediate, unimpeded access to Kashmir for local and international journalists, the United Nations, and other humanitarian actors; and
- To engage with the international community and introduce sustained dialogue with Kashmiris and other related parties, in line with the UN resolutions, to arrive at a mutually acceptable resolution for all inhabitants of the region.

Pax Christi has signed this statement.

To sign the statement, contact

Stand with Kashmir Australia

Ph:+ 61 403 022 786 | e-mail:

StandWithKashmir.au@gmail.com,

Website:

www.standwithkashmir.org.au

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm.

Contact: Claude Mostowik
(02) 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953

The venue: 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

QUEENSLAND

Pax Christi Meetings

Pax Christi Queensland

Contact: Pancras Jordan OP
0415 461 620

pancrasjordan@gmail.com

World Week of Peace for Palestine and Israel

September 13-21

Creative Solidarity in Common Fragility

help us to have a visible focus on Palestine and Israel and raise awareness to your in own churches networks during this week of action.

See Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network www.pien.org.au

We cry for hope.

*God calls us not to remain
silent on the oppression of the
Palestinians*

VICTORIA

Agapes and Public Forums

Pax Christi Victoria

Invites you

To a Zoom Forum

Sunday 18 October 2020

2 p.m.

Dr Chandra Muzaffar

President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), a human rights advocacy organization in Malaysia that works to implement global justice will speak to us

on

LAND RIGHTS FOR PALESTINIANS

and introduce an international project to advocate for the recognition of the Palestinian People's rights to occupy their own lands.

To register please send your name and phone number to Joe Camilleri, j.camilleri@latrobe.edu.au 03 9379 9889 by October 16th

International Day of Peace

21st September 2020

Between war and peace

*Australia's past
and future*

*A conversation
we need to have*

Join us on Zoom

Monday 21 September 2020

7.30 pm -9.15 pm

Speakers:

Prof Allan Patience,

honorary Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne

Former Professor of Politics and Asian studies

Dr Sue Wareham

President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War -

To register send your name and

Email address to

j.camilleri@latrobe.edu.au

An initiative of the recently established Conversation Project

[On September 25th, school students are stepping up again and joining with First Nations communities to say NO to the government's gas plans. Click here to join us.](#)

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia.

(Membership is from January to December)

(Please tick box if you wish to receive your copy of Disarming Times by e-mail)

New South Wales Members please return your membership application/renewal to PO Box A 681 Sydney South 1235 NSW

All others: please return your membership application/ renewal to 13 Mascoma St, Strathmore, Vic 3041 . Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc **BSB 063-161 Account number 00900935**

Please Advise Ally Pender penderally@gmail.com

Name..... Address.....

.....P'code.....Phone.....

Email..... Mobile.....

ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)