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HISTORY IS REPEATING ITSELF: BILLY HUGHES ON JAPAN AND NOW SCOTT MORRISON ON CHINA

Allan Patience

In today's Australia, our leaders are uneducated on the history of Australia's foreign and defence policies. They're repeating mistakes that had catastrophic consequences for Australia in the Pacific in the 20th century.

In 1919, at the Paris Peace Conference, one of Australia's most lamentable prime ministers, Billy Hughes, went out of his way to revile the Japanese for proposing that Germany's colonial territories in the Pacific should be encouraged to become independent.

Subsequently, as one of the architects of the white Australia policy, Hughes unleashed a tirade against the Japanese for proposing that an anti-racism clause be inserted into the League of Nations charter. Japan was deeply offended by Hughes' interventions and on leaving the conference, declined membership of the League of Nations. This was an important historical lesson on how enmity can result from the short-sighted actions of blundering politicians.

From that moment, Japan began preparing for war. And while it viewed the United States as its primary contender in the Pacific, its humiliation at the Paris conference, largely led by Hughes, led the Japanese to conclude that Australia was a hostile presence in the region. And while it regarded



Australia as a regional minnow, cravenly attached to the British Empire at that time, Australia's overtures to America during the Pacific War amplified Japanese contempt for this country.

If Hughes had kept his mouth shut at the Paris conference, the Japanese would not have had reason to despise Australia as much as it did. And they saw clearly what Hughes was way too stupid to realise, that he was being cynically manipulated by the gang of four who were effectively running the show in Paris (British prime minister Lloyd George, US president Woodrow Wilson, French prime minister Georges Clemenceau and Italian prime minister Vittorio Orland). Hughes did their dirty work designed to exclude the Japanese from the gang of four's white man's international politics club.

What too many of today's Australian politicians and bureaucrats fail

to understand is that Hughes was a major player in provoking the Japanese into its horrific warfare in the Pacific theatre of World War II. In short, he (and therefore Australia) was one of the causes of the Pacific War.

Just over a century later, Hughes is being reincarnated in the guise of Scott Morrison. The parallels between Hughes and Morrison are almost spooky. Under Morrison's leadership Australia has gone out in front, internationally, to claim that China was the likely cause of the COVID-19 pandemic, implying that it originated in a laboratory or wet markets in Wuhan. It led the world in banning the Chinese IT company Huawei from operating in this country. It has been vociferous in claims that Chinese spies are infiltrating Australian businesses, media, universities, and political organisations, legislating some of the world's harshest (and

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DISARMING TIMES

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(and probably counterproductive) measures to curb these alleged activities.

The Morrison government has been eagerly complying with provocative American strategies to circle and contain China — for example, by talking up the so-called Quad alliance (the US, Japan, India, and Australia). Under Peter Dutton's malign leadership, and with Marise Payne's jejune compliance, Australia defence spending is being scaled up to war-time levels. Talk of war ("the drums of war") is becoming a crescendo in the inner circles of politics and the bureaucracy in Canberra. The Murdoch media is happily joining in this frenzied blustering and warmongering.

And now we have the bumbling nuclear-powered submarine saga. Morrison has ditched the faltering contract with the French who had promised to build us some sort of submarine fleet, sometime in the future, at quite some cost (a cool \$90 billion at last counting). We have now entered an extraordinarily vague agreement with the UK and the USA for a different and smaller number of submarines, of unknown design, and of unknown cost (but probably more than the French were charging), to be delivered at some time in the future, if all goes well. Meanwhile we have to indemnify the French to the tune of possibly \$4 billion for welching on their contract.

The similarities between what is happening now and what happened in Paris in 1919 are alarming. Hughes was happy to provoke the Japanese, clumsily and insultingly, because he believed the British, and perhaps the Americans, had his back. He also loved being in the company of the "great leaders" at the conference. He was sure he

was one of them, crowing to his supporters back home about his achievements. He was the runt in a house of fighting cocks.

Morrison displays the very same faults. He is already crowing about his achievement in forging a so-called "new" alliance with his "forever friends". He is stupidly blind to the fact that for the past few years he (and therefore Australia) has been manipulated by the Americans, and now the British, into being their Billy Hughes front man in thumbing their collective noses at China. AUKUS is simply the white man's burden writ large in the Asia-Pacific and Australia is its silly little cheerleader. And all this will achieve is China's increasing hostility. Why, oh why, is the Australian public so gullible to believe that an arrangement like AUKUS can ensure its security? It will ensure the very opposite.

The dramatic downturn in relations between Australia and China during the Turnbull and Morrison governments, from a robust trading partnership and benign diplomacy to one of hostility, is an almost exact replica of the souring of relations between Japan and Australia at the end of World War I. Heeding the lessons of history is a mark of true statesmanship. The tragedy is that Australia's current political leadership, on all sides of politics, appears to have no historical understanding of our past and present foreign relations, especially in the Asia Pacific.

This means we are likely to be heading into a war we could never possibly hope to win. History is about to repeat itself.

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*Strike against war, for without you no battles can be fought!
Strike against manufacturing shrapnel and gas bombs
and all other tools of murder!
Strike against preparedness that means death and misery
to millions of human beings!
Be not dumb, obedient slaves in an army of destruction!
Be heroes in an army of construction!*

Helen Keller

QUAD & AUKUS: GEOPOLITICAL EARTHQUAKES INCREASE THE DANGER OF CATASTROPHIC WAR

Joseph Gerson

To state the obvious, even as Joe Biden will be meeting virtually with Xi Jinping by year's end, AUKUS and the QUAD are manifestations of U.S. efforts to retain its Asia-Pacific and global hegemony. As early as the 1850s, members of the U.S. elite advocated that in order for the U.S. to become the world's economically and militarily dominant power, it must first win control of Asia. Steppingstones to Asia were secured with the coup d'état in Hawaii and the imperial conquests of the Philippines, Guam and Samoa 125 years ago. With the U.S. military victory in the Pacific War, the ocean became an American Lake.

Among the sources of today's tensions in the South China/West Philippine Sea and over Taiwan are the vague references to sovereignty that Japan formally surrendered when the U.S.-Japan military alliance was secretly imposed on Tokyo in 1952 as a condition for ending the U.S. military occupation. More profoundly, the source of tensions is the rise of a regional economic, military and technological Asian superpower – China – which had little or no input in determining the so-called rules-based order that is now disturbing the hegemonic disorder. Predictably, China is pressing to re-write some of those rules. Might, of course, does not make right, and Southeast Asian nations too often pay the price for both China's and the United States expansive ambitions. That said, some of China's actions are defensive reactions to Beijing's near encirclement by hundreds of U.S. foreign military bases and the 7th fleet.

We face a classical Thucydides Trap between rising and declining powers that too many times in history has climaxed in catastrophic wars. But now the stakes are existential. And, while there are differences, the current moment has disturbing similarities to the years preceding World War I: tensions between rising and declining powers, complex alliance structures – now including the QUAD and AUKUS,



along with intense nationalism and its attendant hatreds, territorial disputes, and economic integration which a century ago people thought was too deep to allow for war. Finally there are arms races with new technologies, autocracies, and wild-card actors.

Although U.S. Big Business has growing concerns about its access to the China market, there is a powerful U.S. elite consensus that China must be contained and its rise managed to ensure U.S. supremacy. Peace advocates in Washington describe the political environment there as "radioactive" when it comes to questioning the need to bludgeon Beijing into compliance.

Even as the Pentagon recognizes that China's defining military doctrine is "strategic defence", Biden, Blinken, Sullivan, Austin, and Campbell (the author of the Obama pivot to Asia and lead figure in AUKUS negotiations) have been building on Trump's 2018 National Defence Strategy. That defining doctrine shifted the country's strategic priority from the "war on terrorism" to "great power competition," preparations for war against China and to a lesser degree with Russia.

In the wake of the Biden administration's refusal to consult its NATO allies before announcing the precipitous withdrawal from Afghanistan and the promulgation of the AUKUS alliance (with India and Japan also blindsided by AUKUS) Biden and company are now being rightly criticized as little different from Trump in pursuing "America First" ambitions and policies. Following Obama era courting of India as a strategic partner, Trump and his mandarins initiated formation of the QUAD bloc. Biden has since followed

this with stealthy, soft sell "non-traditional security" promises for the quasi-alliance, which in fact is designed to augment U.S. military, technological, economic and soft power across the region. Last month's QUAD summit concluded with a joint statement pledging health, climate, semiconductor, space and supply chain cooperation. Yet, as the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft reports "Under the rubric of the Malabar exercise, the QUAD nations are steadily building deep military interoperability, and conducting more sophisticated war-fighting exercises, most notably anti-submarine warfare." Even as India may ultimately prove to be the "weak link" in this incipient NATO-like alliance, there are ambitions of integrating South Korea and several ASEAN nations into the QUAD.

If anything, AUKUS is worse than the QUAD. It is a deeply destabilizing geopolitical earthquake. As our joint statement of October 1 explained, AUKUS dangerously intensifies competition with China, and like the QUAD, increases the dangers that accidents and miscalculation could trigger escalation to catastrophic wars. Consistent with warnings coming out of Europe over the past several years, the stealth negotiation and America First announcement of AUKUS not only fractured NATO (which would not be bad in and of itself) but adds political fuel to the drive to create an independent European military superpower.

More immediately, AUKUS in addition to QUAD, further undermines the possibility of U.S.-Chinese cooperation which is essential if the devastating threats posed by the climate emergency, nuclear weapons and pandemics are to be stanchied. The provision of nuclear-powered submarines and their nuclear weapons-grade highly enriched uranium to Australia further undermines the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. And in frightening intimations of what may lie ahead, AUKUS is leading militarists in Japan and Australia to ask why they can't have nuclear

submarines, HUE, and related technologies.

Finally, while not wanting to understate the dangers of the U.S. campaign to reinforce its hegemony in the South China/West Philippine Sea – the 21st century's geopolitical centre of the struggle for world power - or Biden's backing of Tokyo's claims to the Senkaku/Diaoyu islets, let me close with a few words about Taiwan, which is now the world's most dangerous military, potentially nuclear, flashpoint. The Biden administration began by putting its thumb in China's eye by inviting Taiwan's senior diplomatic representative in Washington to

attend the inauguration. It has since repeatedly dispatched warships to transit the Taiwan Strait, announced new arms sales to Taiwan, and declared its "rock solid" commitment to militarily defending Taiwan. In truth, Taiwan cannot be militarily defended. Instead, ignoring the omniscient danger that nuclear deterrence works only until it doesn't, as in the 1955 and 1958 Taiwan crises, the U.S. is relying on first strike nuclear threats to preserve the Taiwanese status quo. The U.S. peace movement is just now, belatedly, beginning to make the transition from its twenty years of resisting the forever wars in the

greater Middle East to the growing dangers of great power war. The movement that emerges will reflect a spectrum of commitments and actions. At the very least, I believe we must do all that we can to prevent a catastrophic war and to build the albeit limited common security diplomatic collaborations that are essential to reverse the climate, nuclear and pandemic threats that face all of humanity.

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WHERE DOES AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY LIE?

Pax Christi Conference on Australia's Perception of Security
in a Militarising Asia Pacific, 19 February 2022 on ZOOM
Caesar D'Mello

Where the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.....". These are the very first words of the Preamble of the UN Charter, a fruit of the efforts of visionaries. Australia's role was significant in the founding of the UN, in essence declaring the desire and hope of Australians to live with others in a peaceful world. However, since the end of the Cold War, violence and violent conflict have increased. According to the World Health Organisation 1.4 million people lose their lives globally to violence every year, and more than 2 billion live in countries mired in fragility and destructive conflict. Unless serious change takes place both in policies and our mindset, these numbers will only grow. This existential concern has been the subject of the Militarism focus of Pax Christi over the last year and half. Our webinars and written material have elaborated on the implications of geopolitical tensions, playing out especially in the Asia Pacific. They articulated whether a path of confrontation is the only one. We must ask if we are laying

the ground for deepening hostility and worse. This Conference is formulated with such a backdrop.

Setting the Context

AUKUS has raised much debate in Australia and beyond ever since it was announced on September 16th 2021. It is only the latest but probably the most significant pact Australia has entered into for over a century. While unprecedented in its scope and ramifications, it is one more manifestation of Australia's preoccupation with national security, that in recent years has grown in importance. Foreign relations, defence policy, trade, cyber challenges and other major facets of this area of national policy are increasingly viewed as linked through the security lens. The magnitude of financial outlays being committed to expanding and reinforcing defence preparedness is justified for the sake of security against an "uncertain future", with China stated or hinted as its reason. But underlying concerns remain that need to be examined in view of the present directions. It is assumed that defence alliances and greater investment in weapons will make us secure, while apparently ignoring whether the world has become safer with increased weaponry, es-

pecially its offensive components. With little investigation an instinctive notion has taken hold widely that national security is a military matter which, in turn, provides legitimacy to constraints on civil liberties. Part of such a landscape is also the widely held sanguine idea that the USA will always defend us in a military crisis.

Opportunity Costs of Military Expenditure

Unfortunately those escalating expenditures, watched, matched and often exceeded by other powers in a spiralling Arms Race, only help to fuel militarism that often is a precursor to actual conflict with devastating consequences for people and planet. Furthermore, given a finite pool of national resources, financing them encroaches on essential national, social and community services and programmes that are then forced to compete for funds. In other words, the 'opportunity costs' of military expenditure are remarkably high and bring into focus the tension between national security and human security. Basic human-centric securities ensure our human wellbeing, reflecting as they do the needs and legitimate aspirations of citizens in relation to areas

such as housing, health, education, environment, energy, justice, disability, Aged Care, structural inequality, 'closing the gap' for indigenous people, minorities and the disadvantaged, to name some.

The challenge for every state is to maintain national security and human security in a proper, ethical, healthy equilibrium for its people. Is Australia genuinely in such a balance? Military defence of the borders is accorded the status of an existential threat and a core priority, whereas gaps in respect of human insecurities are regarded as "problems to be solved" over time.

Examining National Security

If the level of resources allocated to national security detract from optimal human security, or quality of life, the rational course is to consider less costly options to protect the nation without endangering it. There is a need for an objective scrutiny of our understanding of national security. What are its priorities? How is the "enemy" defined against whom we are securing ourselves? Should we not meaningfully engage in serious relationship building with any prospective adversary to reduce bellicosity and preempt the financial, social and human costs? How does our politics influence defence priorities, sometimes through political manipulation of people's insecurity? How easily are we coopted to our alliance partners' priorities and perspectives? Is our outlook on security coloured by our history as a Western outpost in this region? Does the historical baggage of an Anglosphere mindset still weigh on us that we seek security from Asia Pacific and *not* in it? How does our view of national security influence the way we deal with our region today?

Security through Peace

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has stressed to Member States the centrality of conflict prevention, and the urgency of prioritising diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts within their foreign policies. In other words, forging positive, constructive and sustainable relations is the crying need. How robust is Australia's investment in "good diplomacy" as a means to defuse



tension, knowing that every improvement in relations enhances our own security? Despite assurances that such diplomatic efforts are undertaken, a crucial subject such as this should be discussed for our future's sake. Does Australia seriously believe in achieving security through peace and confidence building initiatives, rather than via military strength and alliances and the huge costs entailed? What is the cost for the country of *not* pursuing non-violent approaches and strategies for preventing or transforming conflict? These are relevant issues today.

If our goal is conflict prevention, a cost/benefit analysis points to active diplomacy as a preferable path to militarisation. Diplomacy, however, is painstaking, needs a commitment to relationship building behind the scenes, can be frustrating, demands a political will to eschew domestic self-images and myths of one's superiority, and usually denies the quick media bytes populist politicians seek. While not as media-genic as war and its actions are, quiet, steady diplomacy can help establish sustainable peace that can be fruitful for the long term on various interconnected fronts (trade, etc.), while diminishing disruption, tension, and destruction, and remaining far less expensive. When conflict threatens, it can provide a way forward to engage and negotiate over the real or assumed causes of conflict, and to possibly counter the stridency as the prospect of clearing the fog of misunderstanding, distrust, and suspicion grows. Those who prefer a muscular foreign policy may consider diplomacy as naïve, but deft, nuanced, sustained diplomacy is not, as it calls upon all our intellectual, psychologi-

cal and goodwill resources to succeed, and potentially obviate the greater human cost of actual conflict.

The Structure of the Conference

This Conference will introspect via four interlinking sessions what would make Australia truly secure, beyond the prescriptions by politicians and vested interests. It begins with a Keynote Session on *Peace vs Militarism the primary issue in the Australian Context*. It will set the backdrop for the day's deliberations in light of the earlier set of observations.

The present situation with China has implications for Australia's security and will be the subject of the second session. The growing conflict with this country that has boosted Australia's economy for three decades is seriously worrying. What has led to an impasse now feared as a threat to our security? *How Deft is Australia's Foreign Policy towards China?*

If good relations are an important key to our security, does our Overseas Aid help or hinder? Is our Aid framed with a quid pro quo calculation, increasingly associated with military considerations? Does it have genuine peacemaking at its core? The third session will discuss this.

The fourth session is on *Just Peace*. The latest encyclical of Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, addresses his Church and the world at large on the necessity of "Fraternity and Social Friendship" for individuals, societies and nations as a *sine qua non* for peace today. Even though a theologically framed statement, its enlightenment is relevant to today's world, and Australia should consider it as we navigate a challenging future.

The conference is planned for February 19th, 2022, and registration details are provided on p 12 of this issue.

Caesar D'Mello

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SEEING AUSTRALIA AS EMPIRE: A CALL TURN OUR GAZE ON TO OUR ONGOING COLONISATION

Dr David Tutty

There is no dispute that the nation state now called Australia was born of empire. While many may wish to downplay or push aside the immense violence involved in the colonial settling of this land, all can acknowledge that this modern state was born through the expansion of the British Empire in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. On independence, unlike places like India and Kenya, governance was not returned to those who lived here long before the British arrived but was retained by the descendants of the empire who had no intention of decolonising. In this process a new form of colonisation began and a new empire – called Australia – took its place on the international stage.

Of course, it is important to be clear what we mean by empire. There are many times in history where a political entity has been named as an empire. Whether we are talking of the Roman, the Ottoman, the Inca or the British Empires, all have the some key characteristics in common. Central to these is the imposition of power over territories and peoples without their consent. This imposition usually has occurred because of violent invasion and the ongoing maintenance of law and order through force.

Historian, Henry Reynolds (2021) speaks of the origins of British power here on this continent. Reynolds discusses James Cook's assertion of sovereignty without the 'consent of the Natives' (p.15), the British Colonial Office's 'extraordinary claim of half the continent' (p.24) and Governor Phillip's commission naming all areas where sovereignty was claimed to 'become the property of the Crown' (p.71). He concludes that this 'expropriation of about 400 million hectares of land over half a continent ... [was] an act of theft on a truly heroic scale' (p.49).

Yet Arthur Phillip and subsequent governors learned very quickly that there were no lands without people,

that tribal boundaries did exist and the local peoples 'stood their ground and resisted the invasion with every means available to them' (Reynolds, p.34). Reynolds records that First Nations' resistance 'was confronting from the start' and for some years from 1825, Aboriginal people were named as 'representatives of a foreign enemy'. But the Colonial Office, in 1837, overturned this view and named that 'all natives ... must be considered as subjects of the Queen' (p.72).

So the independent nation called Australia inherited the colonial claims over land and people and continued them. Megan Davis and George Williams (2021, pp.8-14) remind us of decades and decades of First Nations peoples' resistance, protests and petitions calling for a voice, representation, autonomy, self-determination, land rights and even independence. Sovereignty was never ceded and colonisation by the descendants of empire continue. Settler displacement of those indigenous to the many countries here and the appropriation of their lands continue.

This nation also inherited and continued the history of deliberate enslavement, the theft of wages, the taking of children, the disproportional incarceration rates, the much lower life expectancies and the distressing levels of poverty. Colonial behaviours continue with the majority of the recommendations of the 1991 *Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* and the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* Report not yet fully implemented. In fact, the numbers of First Nations children in out of home care now is double that when Kevin Rudd offered his 2008 apology in the Federal Parliament (Wahlquist, 2018).

Tunisian anti-colonial author, Albert Memmi (2021), argues that the core motivation of colonisation is 'economic and political exploitation' (p.215). Memmi talks of the illegitimate settler invader who usurps the original inhabitants

(p.75), falsifies history, rewrites laws, and extinguishes memories and maintains a racism that is con-substantial (p.140). The continued colonisation of First Nations peoples and their many countries of this land must also be seen in this light.

In fact, the origins of British colonial capitalism is shaped by the rise of Enlightenment thinking and the dominant theologies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries. South African economic historian, Sampie Terreblanche (2002), says that British expansion around the world was shaped by a 'racial capitalism' (p.182). Key to the new way of thinking that arose was a 'conviction that Europeans now knew the secret of knowledge and therefore the secret of mastery over the world' (Newbigin, 1986, p.23). This ideology legitimated covetousness and has contributed to modern western culture to become a profoundly 'economic culture' (Collier, 1992, p.103).

Dominant theological ideas have shaped the Empire's racial capitalism. Harvard professor Benjamin Friedman (2021) claims that even though Adam Smith was not religious, he was influenced by Calvinist thinking of his day. Friedman argues that Smith secularised this thinking and saw that the invisible hand provided a guide for the self-love, the individual pursuit of self-interest, which would lead to the benefit of all.

Dominant theology's hierarchical dualisms have also contributed to capitalism's racist assumptions and practices. New Testament scholar, Sharon H Ringe (1990), says that in the midst the divisions of spirit/flesh, mind/body, male/female, rich/poor, powerful/powerless, and perceived pure/impure and good/bad, those with the power determined 'not just who was *other*, but also who was *better*' (p.290). In the context of British colonial expansion the 'better' was the rational, wealthy English/British male.

The private-public dualism has been, and continues to be, a key contributor to maintaining injustice. Feminist theologian, Denise Ackermann (1993) argues that the maintenance of the personal-political dichotomy 'assists in perpetrating domination and control' through an 'excessive preoccupation with personal morality at the expense of a social conscience' (p.25). This private-public dualism relegates religion to be a private affair between the individual and God which effectively becomes, as Carter Heyward (1990) argues, 'the preoccupation with oneself, and one's god in one's image – or in the image of one's racial, gender, cultural, or religious roots' (p.197). This allows the reification of personal experiences and perspectives. This type of theological narcissism also contributes to the covetousness of capitalism and the inability to question the ongoing racist, colonial exploitation that is the basis of our economic system.

Lesslie Newbigin, (1992) argues that 'while the Catholic Church had attempted to erect barriers against the Enlightenment, the Protestant Churches had, in fact, surrendered the public field – politics, education, industry, economics – to the ideology of the Enlightenment and sought refuge in the private world of the home and the soul' (p.210). Indian Jesuit, Michael Amaladoss, (1996) goes further and claims that all European Christians largely accepted the modern scientific worldview and the Churches 'willingly believed in the myth of infinite progress' (p.71).

One of the features of culture and of being part of the dominant group is that our assumptions, our perceptions and our way of being – socially and politically – in this nation are seen as normal and unquestionable. We are often unaware of the way the social and political structures privilege us and give us disproportional power. We continue to legitimate our on-going presence on this continent and treasure the narratives that name Anglo-Celtic settlers as heroic and good. We continue to possess this land and speak of 'our indigenous people' as though we own them. We cannot imagine any

other way of structuring our way of being in this place.

Peggy McIntosh (1992) described U.S. white male privilege 'like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passport, codebooks, visa, clothes, tools and blank cheques' (p.71). Being invisible these privileges are unnamed and provide the basis for the social and political structures in the society.

In this context, to turn the gaze on ourselves is extremely difficult. We do not see the problem. What we do see is normal and judged to be good. So in order to turn the gaze on ourselves, we need to learn to listen, to deliberately and patiently listen to the voices of those who have been on the receiving end of our violent colonial invasion and theft of country. Aileen Moreton-Robinson, (2004) a Quandamooka academic, speaks of First Nations peoples' experience of colonisation as contributing to them being 'among the nation's most conscientious students of whiteness and racialisation' (p.85). Learning to listen to First Nations' voices helps us better see the history for what it is and to see how we have created and maintained our ongoing *whitefella* dominance in this land.

To turn and critically look at the past is one thing but more is required to see the ongoing implications of the past and the way it continues in the present. Why has the nation called Australia been so closed to the decades upon decades of First Nations resistance, protests and petitions? Why do we continue to think we know best what First Nations peoples need and should have? Why do we still think we are better and more civilised than those who have been caring for country for over 60,000 years? What in our culture and assumptions gives us the right to claim invasion and theft as a good and heroic basis for a nation?

I work as a Catholic social justice educator and advocate. The increasing depth of social teaching within the Christian Churches is reclaiming some of the space lost during the Enlightenment period. We no longer abdicate our role to speak to and witness amidst ongoing injustice.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has just endorsed the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. This is an important step as it is a commitment to listen to the voice of First Nations peoples and to support their aspirations. I would argue that we listen with the intent of turning the gaze on ourselves and on our role in the ongoing colonisation in this land. We need to see Australia as empire and we need to face this empire squarely and do our own work to decolonise ourselves.

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Book Reviews

TRUTH TELLING, HISTORY, SOVEREIGNTY AND THE ULURU STATEMENT

Henry Reynolds, New South Publishing, Sydney 2021

HEALING HAUNTED HISTORIES, A Settler Discipleship Of Decolonisation,

Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, Cascade Books, Eugene, Oregon, USA 2021

Reviewed by Harry Kerr

Earlier this year Sherry Balcombe, of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria spoke to Pax Christi Victoria on the significance to First Nations' peoples, and non-indigenous Australians of the Victorian Government's **Yoorrook Justice Commission on Truth Telling**. A few weeks later at the Pax Christi National Conference Dr. Anne Pattel-Gray reminded us that to better build peace we need a deeper spirituality of peace building to deepen our spirituality through listening to and learning from First Nations peoples. Both these books in different ways explore in depth the implications of Truth Telling. Professor Henry Reynolds who has studied First Nations/Settler relations for many years has written a book which in the words of Mick Dodson *will allow Australians a better, more truthful Australia*. Truth telling requires and understanding of how we came to be where we are: a mostly white settler community which identifies with Europe and the USA and which marginalises the peoples of the First Nations. It means understanding who we are and from where we have come before we can hear who the peoples of the First Nations are.

Dr Reynolds takes us through the legal and constitutional background to the settlement of white Australia. He begins with the initial white/First Nations contact, the voyage of Captain James Cook. Cook concluded on the basis of his very limited encounter with the Australian continent that this was an empty land, *terra nullius*, ripe for take over and development. Cook saw very few inhabitants who he reckoned would welcome settlers to the land. The arrival of the First

Fleet in 1788 and subsequent fleets raised two issues. The land was far from empty. It was already inhabited by the peoples of many nations. The second issue was the legal standing of the settler communities and the First Nations. It was generally held among colonist nations that they had a right to invade and take over the land but only with the consent of and by agreement with the people who were already there. The lands was seized in the name of the king but this did not permit the displacement of the original inhabitants. In other parts of the world, treaties were often entered into but this never happened in Australia. Settlers advanced into the continent and pushed First Nations aside. First Nations often resisted and were violently suppressed.

This led to another issue: *Are First Nations really coherent nations and societies and have they the ability to relate to settler society*. In 1973 before I came to Australia I applied for the ecumenical chaplaincy to the then Swinburne College of Technology. The chair of the Committee was a well known academic figure and leader in the Anglican Church. He arranged for me to meet with his son and his son's fiancée at Cambridge University. Over dinner we talked about the job and my coming to Australia. I asked about First Nations people and was told that they were fading away, and would probably disappear before long. While this was sad, there was nothing much could be done about it. This was from two highly educated and liberal minded young Australians.

Attitudes like this led to the 'stolen generations' which had the aim of totally assimilating First Nations chil-

dren into settler society with the longer term objective of breeding the Aboriginality out of them.

Settler society never comprehended the nature of First Nations culture and their close relationship to the land. They assumed entitlement to the lands and excluded any possibility or necessity of recognition or treaty. Settler Australia is challenged to hear to stories of first Nations people, to lament the violence which has been done to them and to listen and understand who they are. Token gestures such as the now fashionable recognition of local peoples and their elders and indentifying the lands we are standing on have no more than symbolic significance a will make little difference. Can we hear the Uluru Declaration and prepare for a genuine encounter?

This book throws down the challenge. It is confronting. It should be read by all Australians.

"Truth Telling" is available from www.booktopia.com.au for \$25.50. From Readings Bookshops for \$35 and from local libraries.

In **Healing Haunted Histories** Elaine Enns and Ched Myers open up the nature of settler society in relation to First Nations peoples in much greater depth. The focus is on North America but has direct application to Australia. Enns draws heavily on her own history. She grew up in a Mennonite community in Canada. The Mennonites are, like the Quakers, one of the "Historic Peace Churches, dedicated to non violence and simple communal living. They originated in Prussia where they were persecuted. Invited by Catherine the Great to settle in and develop central Russia, they prospered often at the expense

of local Russian peasants. They became targets of the Bolsheviks and many left and joined Mennonite communities in Saskatchewan where Enns grew up. She later moved to California where she met and married biblical scholar and activist Ched Myers who is of Mexican American descent.

Coming from a migrant and dispossessed culture, Enns analyses the different structural forces which motivate migrants. While some come seeking land and other opportunities for wealth creation, others come as a result of political and economic "push factors. Such as racial and religious persecution, land shortage, war and conflicts and environments factors such as drought and flood.

She looks at the trauma of disinheritance and expulsion for their native lands and cultures. Many suffer PTSD when can affect families over several generations. She suggests that people who are themselves disinherited are likely to systematically disinherit in indigenous peoples. Because traumatised immigrants are encouraged to deny their history, their ability to heal is compromised and they will inflict new traumas on others. This is the root of much of the failure to hear and engage with indigenous people. She offers us methodologies to look at our own family and community histories and identify the roots of trauma so we can be healed and move forward. We need to be able

to tell our own stories and share our inherited trauma before we can hear the stories of others and follow the part of reconciliation to which First Nations People invite us.

In a country where more than half so us were either born overseas or have at least one parent born overseas and yet which exhibits a paranoia towards asylum seekers the relevance of this to Australia is obvious. It helps us to understand our failure to hear the Uluru declaration and move forward in partnership.

This is an important and life changing book which should be widely read.

Healing Haunted Histories is available from www.booktopia.com.au for \$55.

A JOINT MESSAGE FOR THE PROTECTION OF CREATION

Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and
Justin, Archbishop of Canterbury

For more than a year, we have all experienced the devastating effects of a global pandemic—all of us, whether poor or wealthy, weak or strong. Some were more protected or vulnerable than others, but the rapidly-spreading infection meant that we have depended on each other in our efforts to stay safe. We realised that, in facing this worldwide calamity, no one is safe until everyone is safe, that our actions really do affect one another, and that what we do today affects what happens tomorrow.

These are not new lessons, but we have had to face them anew. May we not waste this moment. We must decide what kind of world we want to leave to future generations. God mandates: 'Choose life, so that you and your children might live' (Dt 30:19). We must choose to live differently; we must choose life. September is celebrated by many Christians as the Season of Creation, an opportunity to pray and care for God's creation. As world leaders prepare to meet in November at Glasgow to deliberate on the future of our planet, we pray for them and consider what the choices we must all make. Accordingly, as leaders of our Churches, we call on everyone, whatever their belief or

worldview, to endeavour to listen to the cry of the earth and of people who are poor, examining their behaviour and pledging meaningful sacrifices for the sake of the earth which God has given us.

The Importance of Sustainability

In our common Christian tradition, the Scriptures and the Saints provide illuminating perspectives for comprehending both the realities of the present and the promise of something larger than what we see in the moment. The concept of stewardship—of individual and collective responsibility for our God-given endowment—presents a vital starting-point for social, economic and environmental sustainability. In the New Testament, we read of the rich and foolish man who stores great wealth of grain while forgetting about his finite end (Lk 12.13–21). We learn of the prodigal son who takes his inheritance early, only to squander it and end up hungry (Lk 15.11–32). We are cautioned against adopting short term and seemingly inexpensive options of building on sand, instead of building on rock for our common home to withstand storms (Mt 7.24–27). These stories invite us to adopt a broader outlook and recognise our

place in the extended story of humanity.

But we have taken the opposite direction. We have maximised our own interest at the expense of future generations. By concentrating on our wealth, we find that long-term assets, including the bounty of nature, are depleted for short-term advantage. Technology has unfolded new possibilities for progress but also for accumulating unrestrained wealth, and many of us behave in ways which demonstrate little concern for other people or the limits of the planet. Nature is resilient, yet delicate. We are already witnessing the consequences of our refusal to protect and preserve it (Gn 2.15). Now, in this moment, we have an opportunity to repent, to turn around in resolve, to head in the opposite direction. We must pursue generosity and fairness in the ways that we live, work and use money, instead of selfish gain.

The Impact on People Living with Poverty

The current climate crisis speaks volumes about who we are and how we view and treat God's creation. We stand before a harsh justice: biodiversity loss, environmental degradation and climate change are the inevitable consequences of our

actions, since we have greedily consumed more of the earth's resources than the planet can endure. But we also face a profound injustice: the people bearing the most catastrophic consequences of these abuses are the poorest on the planet and have been the least responsible for causing them. We serve a God of justice, who delights in creation and creates every person in God's image, but also hears the cry of people who are poor. Accordingly, there is an innate call within us to respond with anguish when we see such devastating injustice.

Today, we are paying the price. The extreme weather and natural disasters of recent months reveal afresh to us with great force and at great human cost that climate change is not only a future challenge, but an immediate and urgent matter of survival. Widespread floods, fires and droughts threaten entire continents. Sea levels rise, forcing whole communities to relocate; cyclones devastate entire regions, ruining lives and livelihoods. Water has become scarce and food supplies insecure, causing conflict and displacement for millions of people. We have already seen this in places where people rely on small scale agricultural holdings. Today we see it in more industrialised countries where even sophisticated infrastructure cannot completely prevent extraordinary destruction.

Tomorrow could be worse. Today's children and teenagers will face catastrophic consequences unless we take responsibility now, as 'fellow workers with God' (Gn 2.4-7), to sustain our world. We frequently hear from young people who understand that their futures are under threat. For their sake, we must choose to eat, travel, spend,

invest and live differently, thinking not only of immediate interest and gains but also of future benefits. We repent of our generation's sins. We stand alongside our younger sisters and brothers throughout the world in committed prayer and dedicated action for a future which corresponds ever more to the promises of God.

The Imperative of Cooperation

Over the course of the pandemic, we have learned how vulnerable we are. Our social systems frayed, and we found that we cannot control everything. We must acknowledge that the ways we use money and organize our societies have not benefited everyone. We find ourselves weak and anxious, submerged in a series of crises; health, environmental, food, economic and social, which are all deeply interconnected.

These crises present us with a choice. We are in a unique position either to address them with shortsightedness and profiteering or seize this as an opportunity for conversion and transformation. If we think of humanity as a family and work together towards a future based on the common good, we could find ourselves living in a very different world. Together we can share a vision for life where everyone flourishes. Together we can choose to act with love, justice and mercy. Together we can walk towards a fairer and fulfilling society with those who are most vulnerable at the centre.

But this involves making changes. Each of us, individually, must take responsibility for the ways we use our resources. This path requires an ever-closer collaboration among all churches in their commitment to care for creation. Together, as com-

munities, churches, cities and nations, we must change route and discover new ways of working together to break down the traditional barriers between peoples, to stop competing for resources and start collaborating.

To those with more far-reaching responsibilities—heading administrations, running companies, employing people or investing funds—we say: choose people-centred profits; make short-term sacrifices to safeguard all our futures; become leaders in the transition to just and sustainable economies. 'To whom much is given, much is required.' (Lk 12:48) This is the first time that the three of us feel compelled to address together the urgency of environmental sustainability, its impact on persistent poverty, and the importance of global cooperation. Together, on behalf of our communities, we appeal to the heart and mind of every Christian, every believer and every person of good will. We pray for our leaders who will gather in Glasgow to decide the future of our planet and its people. Again, we recall Scripture: 'choose life, so that you and your children may live' (Dt 30:19). Choosing life means making sacrifices and exercising self-restraint.

All of us—whoever and wherever we are—can play a part in changing our collective response to the unprecedented threat of climate change and environmental degradation.

Caring for God's creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it.

1st September 2021

A Holy and Peaceful Christmas to all our readers

*The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.*

*The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.*

*The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,
and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.*

*They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain;
for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11 6-9*

HOHOURONGO: RECONCILIATION AND PEACEMAKING

Kevin McBride

The following is a contribution to our Peace Stories blog and to the Pax Christi International movement from our friends in



Aotearoa (New Zealand). This is a contextual theological contribution on peace making.

Led by Kevin McBride, our Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand section thinks it is important that we develop a spirituality of peace that is right for our part of the world and that there is much we can learn from Māori as the indigenous people of our country. To be in dialogue with Māori about these things is a way of addressing the harm and disrespect that was generated by colonisation. It is a dialogue that restores healing to all in our country.

At a recent study on Pax Christi and a Spirituality for Peace, Rangi Davis shared this lovely reflection on the Māori concept of Hohourongo. It is a model she uses in her teaching and counselling practice. Rangi explained that to move along the pathway to hohourongo, other important Māori principles are needed, namely, tika, pono, and aroha working alongside tapu, mana, noa and turanga (see explanations below). Rangi's understandings developed under the guidance of Pa Henare Tate (Rev. Dr. Henare Tate) who was a preeminent scholar and teacher of Māori theology and spirituality.

Hohourongo

The imagery is:

picking up the pieces, putting together again, binding the wounds, healing the wounds, mending the rifts, re-connecting the severed links,

replacing the lost, empowering, reclaiming wellness, reclaiming relationships, balancing the scales, casting off the rubbish, entering the house of Rongo (Peace)

Hohourongo indicates a violation has occurred to Atua, tangata and whenua (God, people and land) and there is need for restoring tapu and mana through reconciliation or settlement. Hohourongo heals and restores wellbeing to people. The restoring of spiritual wellbeing restores psychological wellness and physical health. Violation severs relationships. Hohourongo re-connects and strengthens the severed three-fold relationship with God, people and land.

Violation ignores and tramples upon tapu restrictions and weakens the power of that safety measure. Hohourongo restores to tapu boundaries the power to safeguard the tapu and mana of all things that exist.

Hohourongo and tika, pono and aroha

Violation is the result of failing to act according to tika, pono and aroha.

Tika is needed to re-establish and maintain right relationships to make right responses and for the right exercise of mana by following the process of hohourongo.

Pono in the first place reveals the reality of the act and the effect of violation on the victim and perpetrator and their whānau (family, community). Secondly, it reveals the reality of the damage done. Thirdly, it ensures all steps are taken to repair the damage. Fourthly, if there is no truth or integrity, hohourongo is not effected.

Aroha must always be a part of hohourongo because there is always need for compassion, sacrifice, generosity, and even affection during the process of victim, perpetrator and whānau.

Elements for Hohourongo Admission, sorrow for the violation, resolve to mend and make right, utu or compensation is required of the perpetrator.

Signs/Whakamā, tears, sorrow, maybe relief.

The victim and whānau can determine the format of the hui hohourongo.

Acceptance of confession, sorrow, admission of guilt and utu, the compensation, granting forgiveness if hohourongo is to be achieved.

Signs/ Maybe tears, karakia, hariru and hongiri.

Kua houtia te rongo – reconciliation has been achieved.

Kua tau te rangimarie – peace has been established.

I end with this Psalm 119:10:

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light to my path."

"Ma te tini me te mano kia taea" With all our contributions we can achieve it.

Arohanui, Rangi

The Essence of Peace for Aotearoa It is very important as we in Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand explore the foundations of our work for peace, along with other sections and associates across the world, that we ground our principles in the vital essence of the land, the taha wairua of its Tangata Whenua, the Maori people.

And while it is fully appropriate that we do this, it is also very much in the spirit of the founder of the Pax Christi movement, Marthe Dortel-Claudot, who saw it as a means of reconciliation and of mending the divisions that had been caused by years of warfare among European neighbours. In a similar way, we can heal the wounds of colonisation in our own land and become a sign of hope to others in our region and beyond engaged in working for peace for all, everywhere.

In the spirit of Justice Love and Peace

From Pax Christi International Website.

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:

Pam Nair (Secretary): 07 3711

3273 pamnair@hotmail.com

**Pax Christi National Council
Meets on Zoom for national
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Contact:

02 9550 3845

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Dr Sandie Cornish, Director Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace, ACBC.

To register: <https://www.trybooking.com/BWHQV>

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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

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