

# DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

*The Journal of Pax Christi Australia*

Vol 47 No. 3

September 2022

## THE UKRAINE CONFLICT CALLS FOR SHARPER VISION AND BOLDER ACTION

Joseph Camilleri

**T**he Ukraine conflict is a sign of our dire predicament, potentially a taste of worse to come.

But first, a few words on the decade long conflict. Right now, the fighting is inflicting thousands of civilian casualties, military casualties on both sides in the tens of thousands, destruction of social and industrial infrastructure that will take decades to rebuild, and wholesale displacement of people. In short, an unmitigated tragedy. The Russian use of force is legally unjustifiable, ethically reprehensible, and an affront to the human conscience.

But Russia is not the only culprit. Poorly thought-out US-led sanctions are hurting developing economies, driving Western Europe into recession, and further destabilising an already volatile international trading and financial system.

The interruption of grain supplies and the associated rise in the cost of foodstuffs, fuels, fertilisers and transport may mean that an additional 50 million people may soon go hungry. The grain agreement signed in Istanbul offers welcome relief, but it covers only the next three months, and implementation remains at best uncertain.

To this must be added the toxic atmosphere in US-Russia diplomatic relations, compounded by

the unseemly vitriol and personal abuse directed against Putin by the US political elite, Biden included. All of this sustained by a well orchestrated US propaganda campaign in which Western mainstream media have been willing accomplices.

If the recent sequence of events is distressing, so is the prelude to it. Successive waves of NATO expansion – something we were promised would never happen – have brought the US-led military alliance right to Russia's doorstep. The coming to power of a Ukrainian government intent on joining NATO has added fuel to the fire.

Over the last eight years, the US and its allies have been ramping up sanctions against Russia, and NATO deployments and joint exercises in Eastern Europe. And all the way through, the persistent refusal of the West to consider Russia's longstanding grievances and proposals. *The United States and NATO have much to answer for.*

War in Ukraine, portrayed by many as a conflict between Russia and Ukraine, is essentially a conflict between the US and Russia. A new Cold War is well and truly with us.

The US security establishment has one main aim: to arrest the decline of US power and influence and restore US dominance in a

'rules based order', where it sets the rules and others dutifully obey.

To curb Russia's resurgence and China's rise, US elites are intent on projecting military power through a network of military alliances and security partnerships, staggeringly high military and security budgets, military bases spanning all continents, and a string of proxy wars.

Are US objectives achievable? Are its two main adversaries willing to play by US imposed rules? Are they prepared to play second fiddle to an America intent on global supremacy?

The answer to all three questions is NO.

Neither China nor Russia is likely to be intimidated. They are laying down clear red lines. Russia will not countenance Ukraine membership of NATO. China will not ac-

### Contents

Ukraine Conflict.....	p 1
Australia and the Nuclear Ban Treaty .....	p 3
Yoorrook Justice Commission.....	p 4
Bruce Kent.....	p 6
New Marcos for the Philippines...	p 7
Myanmar Lament.....	p 8
Letter to Penny Wong.....	p 10
The Queen is Dead.....	p 11

# DISARMING TIMES

A quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia. It aims to provide members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views both local and international. We endeavour in each edition to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in study, Non-violent action and prayer for peace, justice, human rights, development and inter-faith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

## PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide

Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

Human rights, justice and integrity of creation are central to its work.

We take a stand against militarism, nuclear weapons and the arms race.

As an ecumenical Christian movement

Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peace-making.

[www.paxchristi.org.au](http://www.paxchristi.org.au)

Disarming Times is compiled by  
Harry Kerr,  
with the help of Pax Christi members throughout  
Australia

### Pax Christi Victoria

13 P.O.Box 31, CARLTON SOUTH, Vic 3053

Tel: 03 9077 6464

03 9379 3889

email: [ahmkerr@hotmail.com](mailto:ahmkerr@hotmail.com)

### Pax Christi New South Wales

P.O. Box A 681 Sydney Sth 1235,

Tel: 02 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953

Fax: 02 9519 8471

email: [mjscjust@smartchat.net.au](mailto:mjscjust@smartchat.net.au)

### Pax Christi Queensland

PO Box 1262

Toowoomba QLD 4350

Tel: 0428 130 895

Email: [dtutty@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:dtutty@twb.catholic.org.au)

Un sourced material in *Disarming Times* may be copied with due acknowledgement. A copy of the publication would be appreciated. Not all views expressed in this journal are equally shared by Pax Christi Australia.

*Disarming Times* is printed by **Minuteman Press Abbotsford**, 424 Johnston Street Abbotsford, 3067 [abbotsford@minutemanpress.com.au](mailto:abbotsford@minutemanpress.com.au), phone 03 9415 6618

accept a declaration of Taiwanese independence anchored on US military support.

The question then is: will the US concede that it can no longer exercise exclusive control of the security landscape either in Europe or in Asia-Pacific? Is it ready to coexist with others in a multi-centred world?

The answer to that question is less than reassuring. Hardly surprising, then, that the nuclear shadow should loom larger than at any time during the Cold War. The language used by both sides speaks volumes. Within hours of Russia's foray into Ukraine, Putin warned: "To anyone who would consider interfering from outside: if you do, you will face consequences greater than any you have faced in history. All the relevant decisions have been taken."

Soon after, he moved to place Russia's nuclear deterrent on high alert. In a later speech, apparently referring to recent missiles that can carry nuclear warheads, he said: "We have all the tools for this, that no one else can boast of having."

In a recent address at St Petersburg, Putin declared: "We are not threatening anyone, but everyone should know what we have and what we will use to defend our sovereignty."

Such language is deeply disturbing, but it is not unique to Russia.

Three weeks ago, the NATO summit in Madrid adopted the New Strategic Concept which describes NATO as "a nuclear alliance" committed to "high-intensity, multi-domain war fighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors". NATO's nuclear posture, we are told, relies on the forward deployment of US nuclear weapons in Europe.

In this nuclear chess game, the margin for error has drastically diminished.

Unless we check and then reverse the current polarisation in US-Russia-China relations, a nuclear confrontation will become unavoidable.

Behind each of these moves and countermoves lies the relentless logic of 'extremism', a concept pro-

posed by eminent British historian E P Thompson at the height of the 1980s missile crisis.

Thompson pointed to the militarisation of politics. As he put it, *Decisions about weaponry now impose the political choices of tomorrow. . . The pressure rises upwards from the laboratories and strategic war-games simulation rooms. . . all the way to the US Defence Secretary and the President's national security adviser.*

Decisions taken in Washington then become the decisions of a non-elected, unaccountable military apparatus: NATO.

The parallel process we're seeing some forty years later is eerily striking.

So, what is extremism? It is the relentless march of a society's political, economic and military structures towards extermination. Though the final trigger may be 'accidental', extermination Thompson tells us "will not be accidental." It will be "the direct consequence of prior acts of policy, of the accumulation and perfection of the means of extermination."

Australia is an integral part of this mess. Successive governments have tied us to the apron strings of a 'great and powerful ally' – a euphemism for a military-industrial-technological-political machine the outcome of which can only be "the extermination of multitudes".

Only one conclusion is possible: a lasting peace requires that the cancer of extremism itself be removed. Surgery is called for. This means an overhaul of the structures, processes and personnel that presently shape national security policies.

Such a remedy is beyond the capacity or inclination of nuclear armed states. It is for more principled governments, international organisations and above all civil society to take the lead, and bring about the cultural shift on which structural change ultimately depends.

In Australia, as elsewhere, the public conversation has to consider the perilous situation we're in and the strategic choices open to us.

Leadership of various kinds and from many sources is needed. It

will not come from the political class or the mainstream media, content, as they are, to echo the dictates emanating from the corridors of influence in Washington.

Engaging a wider public is now the urgent task. The first step is to engage strategically placed social networks, in particular those working on aid and development, conflict resolution, civil liberties and human rights, violence against women, refugees and asylum seekers, environment (including climate change), public health (including Covid), justice for our First Nations, and cultural diversity. ALL are adversely affected by great power confrontation, oppressive security laws, rising military budgets and destructive military activities, not to mention the prospect of nuclear catastrophe.

Trade unions, professional networks (in education, law, medicine, nursing, media, communications), farmer organisations, religious bodies, human-centred think tanks and research centres have also much to contribute to the conversation.

Doing this well is crucial. It is not a case of pressing this or that sector to support this or that security policy alternative. The aim is to forge a

human-centred discourse that integrates the different objectives, circumstances and capacities of each sector.

Such a discourse will necessarily involve persistence, skill and effective communication. The written and spoken word is critical – publications, discussion papers, fact sheets, podcasts, forums, blogs, use of traditional and social media. But just as important are the visual and performing arts (art workshops, exhibitions, music, theatre, film), not forgetting fiction, poetry, sport, religious services and meditation.

Encouraging signs are coming into view:

a re-energised younger generation keen to address the ravages of climate change;

all around us, mounting levels of personal and social anxiety waiting to be channelled into constructive engagement

a growing appetite for more holistic ways of thinking that connect the personal and the social and integrate economy, environment, culture and security into an ethically coherent framework.

To take full advantage of these possibilities, we need new skills that make for multi-issue, multi-

disciplinary conversations and projects, and a new, energising language that breaks with the clichés of the past.

With the Ukraine as the backdrop, it may be time to set in motion well prepared and adequately resourced small and large community consultations to review where we're at, and where we should be heading – consultations which also allow us to connect personally and organisationally with our friends and partners in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

The stakes are high. We need a widely discussed, well considered, comprehensive and multi-step peace plan for Ukraine. A peace plan that quickly silences the guns and over time reshapes Europe's security architecture, and reframes the international security conversation.

This is our opportunity to imagine and shape a world around the twin notions of human and ecological security, free of the nuclear scourge.

Daunting but doable. *Joseph Camilleri is Emeritus Professor at La Trobe University in Melbourne, a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Social Sciences, and President of [Conversation at the Crossroads](#). This article first appeared in 'Pearls and Irritations'*

## AUSTRALIA AND THE NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

Peter Hooton

**J** *f disarmament is to be truly realistic, the world needs to change the conversation about nuclear weapons.*

The first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty in the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons took place in Vienna from 21 to 23 June. The new Australian government sent an observer, Susan Templeman MP, to the meeting, marking Australia's first engagement with a treaty that is firmly opposed by the nuclear weapons states and their allies. This is good news for the Treaty's many supporters in Australia, including the 55 former Ambassadors and High Commissioners (including myself) who, on the eve of the meeting, sent an Open Letter to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese urging swift realisation of the Labor party's pre-election commit-

ment to have Australia sign and ratify the TPNW.

While the Treaty enjoys substantial support in Australia, its critics have expressed concern that it poses a threat to the established nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament framework, lacks the support of the only countries that can make it work, and that joining the treaty would make Australia less safe and complicate its alliance relationship with the United States. Yet for all the calls to be "realistic" or "pragmatic" about arms control, these claims are at best misleading and mainly wrong. They are, however, entrenched and will not easily be overcome.

So, does the TPNW undermine the old order, specifically the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? No. The NPT's problems are its own. The Treaty rests on a reciprocal under-

standing: non-nuclear-weapon states will not seek to acquire nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon states will pursue "good-faith" nuclear disarmament negotiations. For more than 50 years, non-nuclear-weapon states have largely kept their end of the bargain. Nuclear weapon states, however, have never come close to a multilateral nuclear disarmament process and, in 2019, the United States, citing Russian violations, withdrew from the only bilateral treaty ever to eliminate an entire class of nuclear weapons: the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Nuclear weapon states are committed to modernising, strengthening, and diversifying their nuclear weapons systems indefinitely. Confidence in the NPT's "grand bargain" has ebbed and may die of neglect.



What of claims the TPNW means nothing without the support of nuclear weapon states? 122 states voted to adopt the TPNW in 2017. Since then, 86 states have signed and 65 have ratified the Treaty. In Australia's region, the TPNW has been signed by almost every member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and a majority of Pacific Island Forum members. If this means nothing in the absence of support by nuclear weapon states, then the same dilemma would seem to apply to cluster munitions because only 110 of a possible 193 UN member states have ratified the [Cluster Munitions Convention](#) in the 14 years since its adoption. And perhaps the [International Criminal Court](#) is not to be taken seriously because the United States has not signed the Rome Statute.

(UNIS Vienna/Flickr)

Nuclear weapon states have good reason to prefer the status quo ante. They have the NPT by the throat. Three of them (Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) are the treaty depositaries. The NPT can only be amended with their unanimous support, and five-yearly review conferences can issue agreed outcomes documents only with the endorsement of all states parties.

The TPNW changes a conversation which up until now has been both driven and constrained by nuclear weapon states whose principal message is that no-one else must have the nuclear weapons they need for their security. Normative support for the TPNW will grow over time and the reputational costs associated with the possession of nuclear weapons will in-

crease.

**Australia is really only likely to be the object of a nuclear weapons strike in the event of a wider war "gone nuclear".**

Deterrence is also a misnomer. The concept of extended



Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji, addressing the Opening of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons nuclear deterrence describes the idea that some non-nuclear-weapon states are made safer by the prospect, in extremis, of a nuclear-armed ally using nuclear weapons to defend them. In Australia's case, this makes no sense at all.

This means first imagining a situation in which Australia is at risk of standalone attack by a nuclear weapon state. As unlikely as this is, any resulting conflict would be a conventional one — nuclear weapon states have long said that nuclear weapons will only be used against other nuclear-armed states or their allies actively supporting them (and this situation is not changed by Russia's NATO-driven nuclear posturing over Ukraine). If the United States then came to Australia's aid, it too would do so with conventional arms, or risk a nuclear attack on its own assets or territory.

Australia is really only likely to be the object of a nuclear weapons

strike in the event of a wider war "gone nuclear", and then only by virtue of its alliance with a nuclear weapon state. In this case, deterrence will very obviously have failed.

In face of this enduring possibility, becoming a state party to the TPNW will not make Australia safer, nor though will it make Australia less safe, which is the thrust of the pragmatists' critique.

What will the United States think? The United States hates the idea of Australia, or any of its other allies, signing up to the TPNW. But the United States has a poor arms control and disarmament record generally, and Australia is already party to several conventions — the nuclear test ban treaty, the anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions conventions, the arms trade treaty — that do not include the United States. The US-Australia alliance remains strong despite these differences.

Issues of interoperability have been addressed and are in any case, one would hope, much more likely to arise in the conventional than they are in the nuclear weapons space. This said, Pine Gap's functions would have to be brought into line with Australia's new treaty obligations, and visits by nuclear-armed submarines would be against the spirit — if perhaps not, incontrovertibly, against the letter — of the Treaty.

*Dr Peter Hooton is an Adjunct Research Fellow in Public Theology at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture on Charles Sturt University's Canberra campus. He is a former diplomat with broad Pacific experience and a member of Diplomats for Climate Action Now. This article first appeared in "the Interpreter"*

## YOORROOK – JUSTICE COMMISSION

Aunty Sherry Balcombe

For all Australians, the movement of the First Peoples will bring a peace over the land and a more true and authentic belonging for everyone in this Land, something that has never really been here before.

When we have **Truth & Understanding** we will then have **Transformation** for our entire

nation.

This movement is as new to us as it is to you.

We have never been afforded one before; but now is the time!

The landscape is changing we are experiencing a changing of the guards with the next generation of Australians understanding the great wealth that we bring to the country

you call Australia.

We want to share our knowledge, we want to share our gifts; up until now this has not been a safe place, it is only recently that we are stepping out of the shadows: starting sharing our ceremonies, sharing our culture that is ancient and filled with gifts.

sharing our culture that is ancient and filled with gifts.

We are in a position to look at world Treaties, we can take our time and make sure that we do it right. We can design something that really works and will really help to close the GAP so that the mechanisms we put in place now will benefit future generations.

We have an opportunity right now to make change that is based on Truth and Justice. We are about to rewrite the history books of this nation and we are turning not only a page but a whole new chapter.

We pray this chapter is filled with stories of hope and dreams of a nation that recognizes the gifts of Culture afforded to the whole nation.

This is the gift given to us by the Creator Spirit.

When the Federal government changed this year, there was an incredibly inspiring moment; we heard the new leader give us, the First Nations People, the promise of true justice. This was the first time in Australia's history; before it has only ever before been a Dream.

For so many year's Aboriginal people have carried their flag they have marched, protested and campaigned for a Treaty, only to have the door slammed in our faces and rally cries from governments who strategically misinform the Australian people.

So many have died without any hope of change. They continued to carry the flag when it was not fashionable, when it was not "The Thing" to do; they continued because they knew it was the right thing to do; they did that for us today and for their future generations and we will continue for our future generations.

After 234 years, Australian Aboriginal people finally have a reason to truly hope.

We are the only country in the Commonwealth that does not have a Treaty with their First Peoples.

There are 56 countries in the Commonwealth and 36 of those are republics.

We Aboriginal people have endured incredible hardships since colonization.

We have survived displacement, stolen land and stolen children, culture and language. We even survived the "White Australia Policy" that was not repealed until 1973; Our Government had a program to breed us out and abolish the First Peoples of this country. The lie of Terra Nullius is testament to this, but we are the longest continuous culture on the planet today, something for us all to be proud of.

We are a resilient race of people who have survived despite what we have experienced. We have thrived, we are stronger now than in any time in history since colonization, and we are getting stronger still.

We will not sit in the corner any longer and be quiet we will be heard and the world is now listening ... as well as many Australians.

We all know it is the right and just thing to do.

Listen to Your First Nations people. Hear our voices feel our pain and heal with us. That is what we are asking. Victoria has always been the political state. We were the first state to have an Aboriginal Legal Service, the first to have an Aborigines Advancement League, the first to have our own child welfare VACCA.

We are Dreaming of a new world: one where our culture, our ceremonies, our connection to country and our strong faith in each other understood.

The land is revered, and our God is revered, acknowledged and appreciated. When our children walk in two worlds their culture is a gift to their country.

We as a community have been working on this for decades it is only now coming to fruition.

An interim commission was set up in 2014; our community has worked tirelessly to keep this moving. There was discontent in our community because before we can go to a Treaty; which will help to heal our wounds, we need to hear the true stories. The Truth Telling must take front and center first. If we are to heal, we all need to understand the pain, the suffering, and desperation that Aboriginal people feel.

They need to tell stories for this healing to happen; through that

telling, we can move forward as a nation.

It was initially thought that the Yoorrook, the truth telling, would take a few months. But upon approaching the hurt, pain and deep scars of the past it was soon realized that this will take longer than anticipated; this journey could not be rushed.

So the Treaty Commission is now slowly working through the stories of the past in the only way we know how, with patience, kindness and the right place and space for them to share without causing more hurt and pain.

We do not know what the future holds; we have never had a Treaty before in this country so it is new to us as well.

We hope that we can create a new 'Future Tomorrow'; one that can transform our country and its people to a future where we all belong. It will be a future where our leaders can be proud that their ancestors did the right and moral thing, with true justice and compassion.

Join us on the Journey to our shared future. We know it will be hard, but it will be worth it.

**Truth** – Yoorrook will create a lasting public record of historic and ongoing systemic injustice, how it came to occur and who or what is responsible. It will draw on a wide range of sources and take a holistic approach that recognises both the diversity, commonalities, and continuities of First Peoples' experiences

**Understanding** – By deep listening to the voices of First Peoples, hearing their experiences, and learning how culture has evolved and survived amid trauma, Yoorrook will enable the broader Victorian community to understand the links between past, present and future

**Transformation** – Yoorrook will propose changes to laws, institutions and systems which can be taken up through treaty negotiations and other ways to build new relationships between all Victorians, including by holding the State accountable. These reforms

These reforms must remedy injustices against First Peoples so that Victoria can turn a new page. For more information please see the: [Yoorrook-Justice-Commission-](http://Yoorrook-Justice-Commission-Interim-Report.pdf)

[Interim-Report.pdf](http://Interim-Report.pdf)  
[yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au](http://yoorrookjusticecommission.org.au)  
Yolju leadership in the Modern World: Yingiya Guyula MLA, Member for Mulka

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpuBOzXu6cM>  
*Sherry Balcombe is a Queensland Djabaguy/Olkola woman, Executive Manager Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria .*

## BRUCE KENT'S RICH AND LASTING LEGACY TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE

**B**ruce Kent, described by *The Guardian* as "the most controversial Catholic priest of his generation in Britain", passed away in June after a short illness aged 92.

His was an extraordinary life of unflinching commitment to peace and justice nurtured by immense wisdom, compassion and boundless energy.

Bruce was born in 1929 in London of Canadian parents who moved back to Canada in 1940, when his father decided this was the best place for his wife and children to be for the rest of the war. But by 1943 it was time to return to London

In his autobiography *Undiscovered Ends*, Bruce recounts his days at Stonyhurst, an English Catholic Boarding School, where "discipline was very strict" and "corporal punishment was routine".

From school to two years of national service, to university studies at Oxford, to the seminary, to ordination as a priest, and then to his first posting in a parish, Bruce Kent's life was that of the traditional Catholic, happy to accept the directives of the institution and to enjoy the pleasures of sport and the varied forms of everyday social life and pastoral engagement.

The introduction to Pax Christi came by accident when Bruce noticed in the *Catholic Herald* mention of the Pax Christi international summer 'Routes', which gave hundreds of young people the opportunity each year to walk in smallish groups, visiting different countries, living with families discussing the particular theme chosen for that year.

Having recommended the Route to two young New Zealand girls, he was soon approached by a representative of the small British section of Pax Christi who asked whether he



would be willing to be its chaplain. Thinking there could be no harm in it, he agreed to the request. This was a time when the very word 'peace' was still regarded as a dirty word, perhaps part of a communist conspiracy.

Other than attending to parish duties, nothing much happened for the next few years, except that Bruce was now called upon to take on new roles in the diocese of Westminster. Almost by chance he would make contact with Archbishop Roberts, former archbishop of Bombay.

On returning to England, Archbishop Roberts became a constant irritant to the Catholic hierarchy who had little time for his peace advocacy and theologically based critique of nuclear deterrence. The encounter had a profound influence on Bruce.

After two at times trying years as secretary to Cardinal Heenan, Bruce was asked to take over as chairman of the Diocesan Schools Commission and was soon made a monsignor, and before long was asked to take on the job of chaplain to London University.

It is in this role that our paths would meet. In October 1969 I arrived in London to pursue my PhD studies at the London School of Economics and political Science. Having been heavily involved in Catholic life back in Melbourne, especially as President of the Catholic Young Men's Society, I thought it wise to introduce myself to the University chaplain.

He wasted no time welcoming me to the Gower Street chaplaincy, a wonderful place buzzing with activity, intellectually stimulating and highly supportive of students. I made it my business to attend regularly on Sundays, as well as during the week.

This was a transformative period for Bruce (as it was for me). He became heavily involved in Pax Christi affairs, made it known that I should take on the secretary's role, introduced me to numerous projects and organisations, and had a hand in having me appointed Secretary to the Catholic Bishops Peace Committee. We would meet regularly to discuss not only Pax Christi business, but all kinds of issues near and far, not least the "troubles" in Northern Ireland and our attempts to initiate some kind of mediation between the warring parties. This took us to an unforgettable meeting with Ian Paisley, the face and firebrand of hardline Protestant Unionism. For this we had to drive in the dead of night in the middle of Unionist territory in Belfast to see him as arranged at his premises.

After two and half years of frenetic activism, with PhD completed, I returned to Australia in 1972, but we remained in touch right through the ensuing fifty years.

By the late 1970s Bruce was an established public figure in Britain, widely known and respected throughout the international Pax Christi movement. But it was through CND that he established himself as the inspirational leader of the peace moment in the UK and beyond.

In 1980, he became general secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). As Kate Hudson, the current CND general secretary, explains:

*This was a pivotal moment*

*in global politics. The decision had just been taken by western European leaders to let the US bring 572 cruise and Pershing missiles to Europe. 160 cruise missiles would go to Britain. . . it was absolutely clear that their presence would mean that a US/Soviet nuclear war would be fought in Europe.*

For many, the nuclear nightmare of science fiction had become a reality. This moment called for leadership of the highest quality, which Bruce Kent provided with humility, passion and remarkable effectiveness. As Kate puts it, he transformed the scope and confidence of the anti-nuclear movement beyond all recognition. CND led demonstrations in Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square attracted hundreds of thousands of people.

In his peace advocacy, Bruce brought to the task his exceptional skills at communicating across generations in a language that was readily accessible. With insight, lightness of touch and, when needed, unapologetic firmness he spoke truth to power. He became known as the most trenchant critic of Margaret Thatcher's defense policies.

In 1987, by then painfully at odds with the leadership of the institutional church, he resigned from the priesthood. A year later he married Valerie Flessati, a woman of exceptional qualities and skills who has also made a lifelong and unique

contribution to Pax Christi and the wider peace movement.

1987 was also a significant year for Pax Christi and the Coalition for Disarmament and Peace which hosted Bruce Kent's visit to Australia. It was memorable in so many ways, not least for the connections that were made between issues as well as between Europe and Asia Pacific.

On retiring from his leadership role at CND, Bruce served on many other fronts. From 1985 to 1992 he succeeded the late Sean MacBride as President of the International Peace Bureau (IPB). In 1988 he walked 1000 miles from Warsaw to Brussels calling for a united peaceful nuclear-free Europe

In 1999 Bruce was British coordinator for the Hague Appeal for Peace, a 10,000-strong international conference in The Hague, which initiated several major campaigns. This experience coupled with Professor Rotblat's Nobel acceptance speech calling for an end to war itself inspired Bruce to establish the Movement for the Abolition of War.

In 2019 the IPB awarded Bruce Kent the Sean MacBride Prize in recognition of his life's work for peace and disarmament.

Over more than six decades, through talks across the country, walks, rallies, dissemination of materials, conferences, interventions in the media, social occasions and much else, Bruce raised awareness on many issues. His was a holistic agenda that included: conscientious

objection, UN reform, reconciliation in Northern Ireland, disinvestment from apartheid, the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In 2021, Valerie and Bruce were awarded the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth Cross for Ecumenism, "for exceptional, tireless and lifelong dedication to the Christian ecumenical search for peace, both individually and together." The citation reads in part:

*Their passionate campaigning did not sit easily with ecclesiastical status, so Monsignor Kent felt that to rejoin the laos, the people of God, was his appropriate level of engagement. Was not their baptism into the Body of Christ the highest accolade? Marriage added the mutual support and inner strength which the struggle demands.*

At the time of his death Bruce was a Vice-President of CND, a Vice-President of Pax Christi, and Emeritus President of the Movement for the Abolition of War.

A few weeks prior to his death, Bruce emailed me to say: "the best of times will be when you and Rita pay a visit to London - warmest welcome awaits." Sadly, we did not make it in time. But we shall always cherish his friendship and exemplary life in the service of peace.

*Joe Camilleri is founder and past president of Pax Christi Australia*

## HOW IS IT THAT ANOTHER MARCOS IS PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES AND WHAT CAN WE EXPECT?

Sister Patricia Fox

September 21, 2022, marks 50 years since Ferdinand Marcos Sr. declared Martial Law in the Philippines opening one of the darkest chapters in the country's history. 14 years of brutal dictatorship resulted in numerous extrajudicial killings, hundreds of political prisoners, several massacres, widespread use of torture and suspension of civil liberties. In 1986, a People Power uprising, precipitated by the assassination of Ninoy Aquino upon his return from exile in the

USA, led the USA to airlift the Marcos family and their cronies to the safety of Hawaii. By then they had decimated democratic institutions, politicised the military, and stolen an unknown amount from the national treasury, estimated to be over \$US10 billion, leaving the country mired in debt. Given this history, one may wonder how Ferdinand Marcos Jr, known as Bongbong, could be elected as the new president of the Philippines, taking office last July 1. An independent observer

mission questioned the "validity" of the election results reporting massive vote buying, disenfranchisement, heavy militarization in areas where there was strong opposition, faulty electoral counting machines and an impossibly quick tallying of results according to IT experts. But apart from claims of electoral fraud, the return of the Marcos family to power has been the result of a systematic plan by the family aided by some governments coming after Marcos Sr.

The Marcoses have never apologized to the Filipino people for the atrocities of the martial law years, and have returned little of the stolen wealth. Moreover, victims of Marcos Sr. won a compensation case in the USA and an award was made against the Estate with Marcos Jr, as executor, ordered not to deal with any ill-gotten wealth. In defiance of this order, the family made a deal with the then President Ramos, to sell the few stolen artifacts which had been uncovered in their possession and split the proceeds between themselves and the Philippine Government. The USA court issued a contempt order against Marcos Jr, which is still active with an accumulated \$US350 million currently owing in penalties. He was convicted of failure to pay estate taxes in the Philippines, owing over 300 billion Pesos. Yet the Court of Appeals in the Philippines ruled the USA court has no jurisdiction to enforce their decision in Philippine courts, and before this last election, the Commission on Elections, despite challenges to his fitness to hold office when he does not pay taxes, ruled this was not a hinderance to Marcos Jr's candidacy. The Courts and Commission on Election were, by this time, almost totally appointees of the former President Duterte who was a Marcos "fan". And while Ramos had allowed the body of Marcos Sr to be returned to the Philippines from the USA, Duterte had allowed his burial in the "heroes cemetery" with full military honours. One of the other very significant factors in the rise of Marcos Jr to the presidency, has been a massive social media campaign, painting the old Marcos era as a "golden age" of crime-free prosperity. Millions were spent producing videos which were uploaded on various social media sites, aimed at persuading Filipinos that the vilification of the Marcos's after their downfall was unfair, that stories of unrivalled greed were untrue, and denying there were atrocities committed during the Marcos Sr Regime. These began in 2014 when Marcos Jr planned what became an unsuccessful bid for vice president. It is speculated that much of the stolen wealth of the Filipino people funded this campaign aimed at historical

revisionism. This disinformation was complemented by the massive "troll army" of Duterte, whose Daughter, Sara, was running as Marcos Jr's vice-president. Both used social media, not only to white wash the former Marcos era, but also to vilify their main opponent, Leni Robredo, who had defeated Marcos Jr as vice president in the former election. The burial of Marcos has played into this rewriting of history.

Looking ahead, prospects for an improvement in the human rights situation look bleak. Both Marcos Jr and Sara Duterte have vowed to continue the policies of the Duterte presidency. If we remember, thousands were extra-judicially killed under Duterte, especially the poor, with his so called "war on drugs". But also, opposition figures, activists, human rights defenders church people, lawyers, journalists, environmental defenders, indigenous, farmers, fisher folk were killed, imprisoned on false charges, threatened, tortured and massacred if they stood for justice. No one was spared The International Criminal Court is currently looking into charges against him and other state forces for crimes against humanity.

Moreover, Duterte had weaponised the law which enabled these atrocities. One of the most dangerous laws is the Anti-terrorism law, which Australia helped design. Duterte established a National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) whose role is to brand groups or individuals as "terrorists", referred to as "red tagging". To be red tagged has resulted in funds of groups being frozen with no notice or positive proof of terrorist activities under the Anti-Terror Law. It also often led to the individual becoming a victim of human rights abuse including being killed or jailed. Marcos Jr very worryingly has promised to strengthen and expand the NTF-ELCAC. One of the results recently has been a catholic missionary group, the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines, having their funds frozen, and 16 of their members charged under the Anti-Terrorism law with funding terrorists. They facilitate projects and advocacies in remote rural areas, often with indige-

nous communities, where there is a land dispute with mining companies or plantations wanting to take the land.

The campaign of Duterte to close down independent media and web sites is also continuing. Recently a children's book series on the martial law era as well as some fiction written by a former political prisoner were banned upon the advice of NTF-ELCAC and the authors "red-tagged". Maria Ressa, a Nobel Peace Prize awardee, recently lost her appeal against a Libel conviction despite many anomalies in the case. All this is to continue silencing voices of truth. Given that Sara Duterte is Secretary of Education, the possibility for truth being told about the Marcos and the Duterte era are looking bleak.

Australia's role in the design of the Anti-Terrorism Law, which Michele Bachelet, when chair of the UNHRC describes as against international principles of human rights, and the continuing training of Philippine Army by the Australian Defence Forces, despite the Philippine Army being the perpetrators of many of the documented atrocities, calls us to look at our relationship with the Philippines and the need for solidarity. Especially when a recent article from the International Institute of Strategic Studies posited that the Philippines could be Australia's most important defence partner in South East Asia basically because of access and logistics in relation to a war with China over Taiwan or conflict in the South China Sea. Many people of good will are calling on the Philippine Government to resume the Peace Talks with the national Democratic front of the Philippines to address the root causes of poverty and unrest in the country. Can we change the militarist mindset of the Australian government and stand with the Filipino people wanting peace, justice and a return to true democracy?

*Sister Fox co-founded a congregation of Our Lady of Sion in the Philippines where she worked among the Urban poor until she was expelled by the Duterte regime. She is a member of Pax Christi Victoria Committee.*



# A Christian Reflection for an online Lament and Prayer Service for Myanmar.

Ash Barker

[This is a Christian reflection offered for an online service of lament and prayers for Myanmar hosted by the Faith Communities' Coalition and CRPH/NUG Support group Australia on 21 August, 2022. It came a few weeks after the Military's execution of four democracy activists – Ko Jimmy along with Ko Phyo Zeya Thaw, Ko Hal Myo Aung and Ko Aung Thura Zaw.]

I met Ko Jimmy eight years ago in Melbourne. My friend Kyaw Soe Moe introduced me and immediately Ko Jimmy reminded me of a kind of Martin Luther King Jnr figure for Burma. Both were passionate, articulate and had dreams of a better life for their countries. Ko Jimmy was destined to be a voice for Myanmar. I was sure of it. I moved to the UK and in so many ways Ko Jimmy went on to be that voice.

The next time I heard of Ko Jimmy, however, was last month. I was in Mae Sot, on the Thai Burma border, supporting some remarkable Civil Disobedience Movement workers in our Seedbeds Incubator programme when news started to filter through of the Junta's execution of Ko Jimmy along with Ko Phyo Zeya Thaw, Ko Hal Myo Aung and Ko Aung Thura Zaw. When it was confirmed we were all sat there stunned and devastated. We all wept and got angry. How could such evil happen to such good people? As I prepared for today, there was a line out of Martin Luther King's famous 'I have a dream' speech that kept returning to me. I looked it up and wonder if it connects them both MLK and Ko Jimmy today.

*'I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest — quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.'*

This idea of 'unearned suffering' as 'redemptive' is a core idea in Christian faith. Indeed Jesus said:

John 15:12-14: *'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.'*

Like Jesus, Ko Jimmy's and MLK made the ultimate sacrifice, and along with the others, this is not in vain. Ko Jimmy's love for his friends and country will be the seeds of the new life that Myanmar desperately needs.



What is unique in Jesus is the idea of resurrection. In the Christian imagination, death is not the end and Jesus' resurrection is the first fruits of a new creation.

1 Corinthians 15:2-23: *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.[d] For since death came through a human, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human, for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in its own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.*

Jesus defeated death and rose again so we all can. I look forward to the day when I see Ko Jimmy again. A day when all the earth, including Myanmar, is fully free from all evil, injustice, suffering and death. A day when the Lord's Prayer is fully

answered; Heaven is on earth. Until that day let us keep loving one another with a sacrificial love that comes from God.

## Keep it up! Myanmar! Lyrics – Woonyoe Vocalist – Christopher

Lots of cries, filling our dear country.

With many pains,  
you are heart broken,  
Who can hear you?

Though you search for help?  
So many lives,  
who can save you?  
How long?

Do we have to wait?

Roads of agony, full of barriers, barring our ways,  
Light of hopes? No, filled with darkness.

Lost in the labyrinth ,

No way can be found. Let all these be gone!

Our dear Burma! You are in tears, full of pain and hurts and sorrows,

No. no one knows our falling tears,  
Crumbling Myanmar, Don't cry anymore,  
Can't say don't worry!

But keep it up! Our dear Myanmar.

In treacherous upstream, you are still sailing,  
With firm hands, you are marching on.

With songs waiting for our aged mother,  
in sleepless nights,

Everyone is praying.

When will the cries be fulfilled, our dear Myanmar?

You are in tears, full of pain and hurts and sorrows,  
No one knows!

Crumbling Myanmar, Don't cry anymore,  
Can't say don't worry!

But keep it up! Our dear Myanmar.



# THE CASE FOR AUSTRALIAN SANCTIONS ON MYANMAR JUNTA

## Letter to the Hon. Penny Wong from the Myanmar Campaign Network

29 July 2022

Senator the Hon. Penny Wong  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Cc. The Hon Tim Watts  
MP, Assistant Minister for  
Foreign Affairs  
The Hon Mark Dreyfus QC  
MP, Attorney-General



Dear Minister Wong,

### **Re: The case for Australian sanctions on Myanmar Junta**

It is now 17 months since the February 2021 coup in Myanmar.

Labor has consistently called for targeted sanctions against human rights abusers and coup-leaders in Myanmar.

You have expressed your commitment to use the Autonomous Sanctions Amendment (Magnitsky-style and Other Thematic Sanctions) Act 2021 in response to the serious violations and abuses of human rights and serious violations of international humanitarian law in Myanmar. Such actions would be supported by, and have been at the centre of calls from, Myanmar CSOs, Myanmar diaspora, Australian and international CSOs and NGOs.

In the case of Myanmar, sanctions should be targeting military-owned entities, and state-owned enterprises controlled by the military, top leaders of the military junta, their immediate families, and their business associates.

Sanctions work best when unified and as part of coordinated international action. We know that previous sanctions regimes were a significant factor in the military's decision to embark on the transition to a quasi-democratic government commencing in 2010.

Australia has the opportunity to join with traditional allies and other democratic nations/ institutions such as the UK, Canada, USA, and the EU in applying sanctions to Myanmar more broadly. This is particularly important because most of the military's economic relationships are

integrated into the global economy. At the same time, Australia can work with ASEAN Partners to secure the stability of the region.

The crisis has caused significant regional instability in Southeast Asia. Since the coup, an estimated 60,000 people have crossed borders into neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Thailand, and India. The total number of persons from Myanmar internally displaced is now over 1 million, and the number of refugees has reached 1.2 million. People on the move are vulnerable to human trafficking, people smuggling and related forms of exploitation, which the ALP has committed to tackling.

Since the coup there have been unlawful arrests of elected officials, the use of lethal force against peaceful demonstrators, persecution of journalists, enforced disappearances, the use of civilians as human shields and other human rights abuses. There are continued attacks on health care services, including the abduction, arrest, and detention of healthcare workers. Sexual and gender-based violence and rape as a weapon of war have been documented and the human rights of freedom of opinion, expression, and peaceful assembly have been oppressed. Over 11,000 civilian dwellings have been destroyed, including places of worship, with the use of fire, heavy artillery and airstrikes.

These acts, as documented in the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews, amount to serious human rights abuses, crimes against humanity,

war crimes and violation of international humanitarian law.

As the leading democratic nation in the region, Australia must act on the ongoing and previous human rights violations, crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and serious violations of humanitarian law in Myanmar.

Myanmar Campaign Network and the undersigned call on the Australian Government to introduce the first round of calculated targeted financial sanctions on:

- State-owned enterprises, and military-owned conglomerates and their subsidiaries, and,
- Calculated targeted financial sanctions, travel bans, and visa bans on persons who are:
- Current and previous senior Myanmar military officials, and their immediate families,
- Senior officials of Myanmar state or military owned enterprises and their immediate families,
- Business associates of the Myanmar junta,
- Senior officers from the Myanmar security or corrections agencies.

Yours faithfully,

Myanmar Campaign Network and 122 endorsing organisations. Including:

### **Faith-based Organisations**

Pax Christi Australia

Act for Peace

Anglican Board of Mission - Australia (ABM)

Anglican Diocese of Melbourne

Anglican Overseas Aid

Baptist Union of Victoria

Micah Australia

The Uniting Church in Australia,

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Australian Burmese Muslim Organisation.

Muslim Youth Network

Victoria Myanmar Muslim Community Inc

Interfaith Youth Coalition on Aids in Myanmar

**and 110 Burmese, Australian, and international community, political, aid and action groups and organisations.**



# THE QUEEN IS DEAD. LONG LIVE AUSTRALIA

Harry Kerr

Queen Elizabeth II who has died at the age of 96, was widely loved, admired



and respected not just in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth but in many other places as well. She was a remarkable human being but she was also Head of State of the UK, Australia and many other commonwealth countries. She filled that office superbly but her death raises some fundamental questions about monarchy and indeed about the office of head of state generally, not least in Australia.

I have vivid memories of the day she succeeded her father King George VI. The solemnity of her accession, the King's funeral and related events has stayed with me. This was followed by the build up to her coronation and related events the following year. The coronation itself was a solemn occasion. We were invited to a neighbour's house to watch it on the new television. It was a very Anglican, Church of England occasion. It was set in the context of the book of Common Prayer Eucharist with which I was already familiar. It reflected a feudal England which even now has not quite disappeared. It was also the last celebration of the fading British Empire when representatives of the Commonwealth and colonies joined in the procession through

the streets of London, Queen Salote of Tonga being the star. WE looked forward to a New Elizabethan Age.

Where are we now, 70 years later? Watching the proclamation of King Charles two things struck me. One is that they were going through the same ceremonies using the same words which were used all those years ago. Secondly was the strong military presence and the use of heavy guns. We can expect more of this at the Queen's funeral and subsequent coronation. It reminds us that the head of state is a military person and that the English identify as a military nation, as do most other nations. The heads of state are Commanders in chief.

Watching the ceremonies, despite all the show and spectacle, I was struck by an apparent lack of conviction and gravitas compared with 1952. Back then it all seemed to reflect who we thought we were. Could it be that they now lack conviction because the world has changed. It will be very interesting to see what the coronation will be like. Will the old formulae be used? Will there be any attempt to reflect modern England as a multi racial, multi faith society? King Charles has in the past said he would like to be remembered as "Defender of Faith" rather than Defender of **the** Faith? Will the coronation reflect this? Will it be a celebration of a multi faith, multi-cultural society? Will it in any way reflect the aspirations of a peaceful and just society dedicated to the care of earth? Or will it still reflect a 17<sup>th</sup> century Kingdom with

imperial ambitions whose primary task was to



defend itself against enemies real and imagined. This lingers in public consciousness even as the world changes radically.

What of Australia? When the excitement of the new king has died down the question of a republic will undoubtedly be raised again. What will this mean? Will the white mostly military men and lawyers who inhabit Yarralumla be simply rebadged as presidents and carry on as before, assuming the role of Commander in Chief of course. Will we choose a First Nations woman or an immigrant of colour to take on the role?

The position of Head of State is deeply symbolic. It reflects back to us who we think we are. Will we still aspire to be an outpost of the white Anglo Saxon world who we hope will defend us from enemies real or imagined? Will we begin to aspire to be an Asia Pacific Nation seeking the peace and well being of the rest of that community with whom we make common cause? With whom we want to unite in defending against the real enemy, climate change? Will we promote peace and justice for all and see beyond narrow self interest? The Queen is dead. Long live a new Australia!

**TRUTH NOT WAR**  
UN International Peace Day Rally  
SUN 18 SEP  
12PM STATE LIBRARY NAARM (MELB)  
Music by Ben Smith from 11am  
Acknowledgement to country: Elder Robert Thorpe

MC: AMBER PETTY  
SPEAKERS:  
CHRISTINE MCKENZIE  
JEROME SMALL  
FIONA PATTER  
DAVEY HELLER  
SAMI SHAH  
JOHN LANDERS  
MARK-EXTINCTION  
REBELLION

Hosted by:  
Melbourne4Assange  
PEN Melbourne  
Anti-AUKUS Coalition VIC  
Extinction Rebellion

#TruthNotWar #YesToPeace #ClimateEmergency #NoAUKUS #FreeJulianAssange

IF WARS CAN BE STARTED BY LIES • TRUTH CAN BE STARTED BY TRUTH

# 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](mailto:pamnair@hotmail.com)

**Pax Christi National Council  
Meets on Zoom for national  
issues**

**Contact:**

**02 9550 3845**

**0411 450 953**

**Is the Lucky Country  
Running out of Luck?  
*An Innovative Captivating  
Exploration of  
where Australia Stands  
after the Election of a  
New Government.***

Presented by  
Prof Joseph Camilleri  
*Special Guests*

Dr David Brophy  
Author of *China Panic*  
*Australia's Alternative to Para-  
noia and Pandering*

Prof Chen Hong  
*Professor and Director of  
Australian Studies Centre,  
Shanghai*

**SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER  
2-5 PM**

*Zoom or in Person  
University College,  
Parkville, Vic*

In person \$35, \$20 conc.

Zoom \$20, \$15 Conc.

To register Email  
[camrita44@gmail.com](mailto:camrita44@gmail.com)

## Raising Peace Festival

The Raising Peace online festival is back to celebrate the International Day of Peace, from 17-21 September. The Raising Peace Festival is a forum where together we can learn more about peace in all its forms, from the most personal to peace among nations. It's also a place where participants can equip themselves to act in support of peace.

Leading off with a day led by First Nations people discussing the Uluru Statement from the Heart and more, our festival will also celebrate the great women activists of Greenham Common, invite your participation in workshops to unlock your own peace practice, and dive deep into matters of security, diplomacy and peacemaking in the Pacific. Then we will join with others in celebrating the International Day of Peace itself on 21 September. Join us again for a week of learning, celebration and action.

**Join our online discussions  
from 17-21 September 2022**

Free event, but you must reserve your place via [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com).

The event comprises a variety of online discussion panels and interactive sessions, **via Zoom**

**Further details**  
<https://raisingpeace.org.au>

**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 Terry Byrne [t.byrne15@optusnet.com.au](mailto:t.byrne15@optusnet.com.au)**

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

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

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

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