

Bimonthly

Pax Lumina

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A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation



WAR

CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES





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Pax Lumina

A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation

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Promotion of Peace and Reconciliation

The Nodal Platform for Peace and
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fostering peace with a multi-pronged approach.



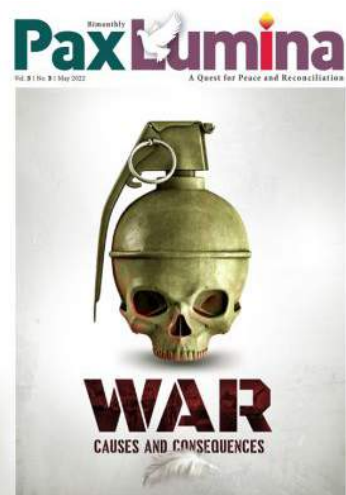
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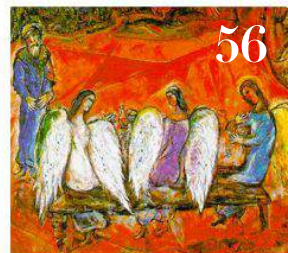
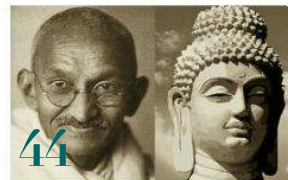
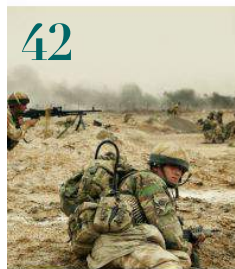
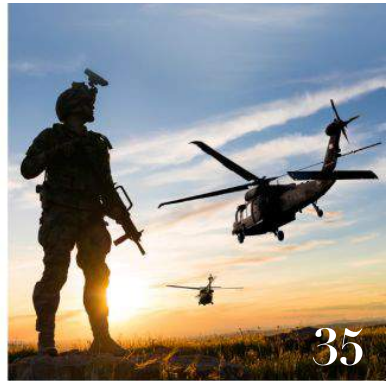


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WILL FOR PEACE

Editorial

The Ukraine war has slipped out of the headlines, though not yet disappeared altogether from the news. There are some lone voices still being raised but the fervour of hope is, I am afraid, burning out. On Sunday, May 1, 2022, after the Regina Coeli prayer to Holy Mary, Pope Francis raised the question whether or not there is a real will to stop the war and come to the negotiating table. Coming from Pope Francis who has been urging for peace from the very beginning of this war this is indeed a desperate lament. But the collective ear-drum of the world has become so thick with avarice that a universal deafness has drowned the leaders of the world and the conscience of humanity remains stultified. And thousands continue to perish in Ukraine and elsewhere. Reports say that the Pope is trying for an appointment with the Russian President Putin but so far without success. Putin, Ukrainian President Zelensky, NATO or the most powerful and crucial player — after all this is a war game, for all except those who die and suffer and their families — American President Joe Biden. He does not seem to hear the noise of war machines or the wailing of the wounded. The silent dead have already become statistics and been forgotten.

Actually, the Pope is right; there is no will to want peace. The kinematics of this war is by now fairly known to everyone. Any one of the players can stop playing the war game and the war will end and negotiations can begin. Just take Biden. What has he done to enforce a cease-fire? Negotiations and solutions can wait. Biden is supposed to be a Catholic. Doesn't he hear the lament of the Pope? Can't he not talk to Putin to assuage his apprehensions, real or imaginary, and give him the security assurance he is paranoid(?) about? After all, Zelensky and NATO are under his control. For that, he should have a will for peace. What are the apparently enlightened and humanistic European countries doing except to hike up their defence budgets?

I understand all these leaders have their mentors, domestic as well as foreign, to cater to — the military-industrial complexes, the ultra-nationalists and vultures of naked greedy capitalism. Just take the case of



Exxon Mobil, the Texas oil and gas giant which refused to release more gas to the market despite the severe shortage faced by Europe after the beginning of the Ukraine war, because the company's profits, which have doubled during the past few months of the war, will take a hit if gas production is increased. Profits are strictly private, not meant to be public or social.

Let me recall a science-fiction story I read years ago which was written by the celebrated astrophysicist, Jayant Narlikar. It is about an imminent collision of a huge comet with Earth. The only possible solution to avert the total annihilation of the Earth was to hit the comet with a rocket carrying all the nuclear bombs existing then. The technical issues were resolved by the scientists but the cooperative effort needed from the nuclear powers was becoming impossible and time was running out. I do not recall how but I know Narlikar's sagacious story-telling could not have ended in hopelessness.

The same dilemma is faced by humanity in Ukraine, in the Middle East and many other flashpoints all over the globe. The players, identities and ideologies are different but the dilemma is the same: to want or not to want life and peace.

The noted historian Yuval Noah Harari in an article written at the beginning of the Ukraine war has said the same thing. Unless humans keep remembering the lesson they have so far learnt from history that they have to communicate and work with each other, the survival of the planet and humanity is in danger.

Our authors of this issue of Pax Limina too echo the same point from their experiences and memories.

Please read them and light a candle of hope.

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THE SUFFERING WROUGHT BY WAR IN UKRAINE



Soon after the war began, I had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine several times with humanitarian aid transports. **On the return journey, these transports brought back refugees who were eager to get to Poland. It was there that I met people affected by war.**



The outbreak of war in Ukraine came as a big surprise to me. Until then, Europe seemed to be a continent where, after the horrors of two world wars and the experience of totalitarianism, nobody dared to start an armed conflict. Soon after the war began, I had the opportunity to travel to Ukraine several times with humanitarian aid transports. On the return journey, these transports brought back refugees who were eager to get to Poland. It was there that I met people affected by war.

The first time I went to Ukraine, I experienced the uncertainty of war. The day before I reached the Polish-Ukrainian border, there was news that, in the morning, the military training ground in Jaworów had been struck. As we had planned to pass near this town, we had to change our route. We also did not know whether this was just a single attack or perhaps the announcement of more bombings.

Luckily, however, we reached one of the parishes in Lviv and delivered humanitarian aid. There we found more than 200 refugees in the local parish. Most of them wanted to stay there longer. They wanted to wait and observe the situation. But among them, there were a dozen people who were willing to come with us to Poland.

I remember an elderly couple and their sick friend as they struggled to get into our car. They came from Kharkiv. After a few days of travelling, they managed to reach the aforementioned parish in Lviv.

They travelled with a piece of luggage and two dogs - all they were able to take from their home. They had lived their whole lives in Kharkiv. They were in their last years of retirement. They seemed calm and it looked like they had accepted their fate. They were very happy to reach Poland because they had a plan to get to the United States, as they had been there once before.

After a conversation, however, one could sense the deep sorrow and misunderstanding they felt about the war. The lady asked me, full of incomprehension, sighing deeply, "Why did [Russian President Vladimir] Putin start all of this?" That day there were also two mothers with their adolescent children and three other women.

Shortly afterwards we went to the same parish again. This time, waiting for us were two mothers along with their children and a young man named Piotr. At the border, I found that Piotr was very thoughtful and stressed. He walked around smoking cigarettes now and then. It turned out that he wasn't sure whether he would be able to get out of Ukraine. He was of conscription age.

But Piotr had documents proving that he was unfit for military service, but he didn't know whether they would be recognised. Piotr came from Zaporozhye. He wanted to get to Poland, as his parents and siblings were already there. At the customs check, the guard told me that usually, people of this age have to stay back in Ukraine. In the humanitarian bus that was waiting in front of us, there were four young men, who had to leave the bus and stay back in Ukraine.

This time, waiting for us were two mothers along with their children and a young man named Piotr. At the border, I found that Piotr was very thoughtful and stressed. He walked around smoking cigarettes now and then. **It turned out that he wasn't sure whether he would be able to get out of Ukraine.**



Piotr presented his documents. We waited for an hour. He was in a very difficult situation. Piotr was only 20 years old and could soon be sent to the army. At the same time, he was standing at the border, beyond which his parents were waiting for him. Finally, at passport control, the guard looked at Piotr and said, “Everything is fine.”

It was a very happy moment for him.

The third time I went to Ukraine, after delivering products, I went to the railway station in Lviv. There, we told a group of volunteers that we can take six people to Przemyśl. This information was announced over a loudspeaker. Slowly, more and more people arrived.

That day we met Natalia, Alexandra and her mother Maria as well as Katia, Olga and her teenage daughter. It was a difficult moment. They had to make a quick decision of whether or not to go to Poland. At the border, we began talking to one another.

It turned out that Natalia, Alexandra and Maria had got out of Mariupol. Natalia was a former teacher who had worked in Mariupol for many years. With a smile expressing hopelessness she recalled the tragic situation she had experienced. She said the Red Cross had announced a humanitarian transport in Mariupol. She wanted to get to the assembly point. However, the moment she began moving to the point, the Russians bombarded the city. Natalia had to return to the shelter.

When the attack was over, she went to the assembly point again, but Natalia did not find the transport. She was not discouraged. Soon, Natalia began her long trek across Ukraine. She showed us on her phone, how day by day she managed to reach nearby villages and cities. It took her a few days to reach a city, from where she took a train to Lviv.

Alexandra and her mother Maria also shared some of their difficult experiences. They had spent several days in the basement, listening to shells exploding in the city. Maria was already over 80. They both had incredible strength and peace inside them. You could see the tiredness in their eyes but there was no despair. All the women we took that day to Poland were very grateful for our help. Still, they were refugees, who had to find their place, but, at least, they were safe.

I heard similar stories from the confreres working in Ukraine. It is hard to believe that Poland alone has already received almost three million refugees, who were made homeless by the war. Many of them will never again see the familiar streets where they grew up, worked and where their friends and relatives lived. And all of this is expressed in that one word that we in Europe hoped to never hear again: ‘War’.

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UNITED NATIONS and THE RUSSIAN INVASION of UKRAINE



Every day we see the horrors of this war unfold on our screens and airwaves. We are pained, and distressed and are moved to pray for it to end soon. **Diplomacy, sanctions, voices of reason and advocacy from Pope Francis, world leaders and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have not provided a ray of hope at present**



The Russian invasion of Ukraine began on February 24, 2022, as a ‘special military operation’ to ‘demilitarise’ and ‘de-Nazify’ Ukraine. Despite all the troops and weapons build-up on Ukraine’s borders, there was a sense of disbelief when missiles and airstrikes hit across Ukraine. In fact, the war began during the emergency meeting of the UN Security Council called by Ukraine on February 23 in New York.

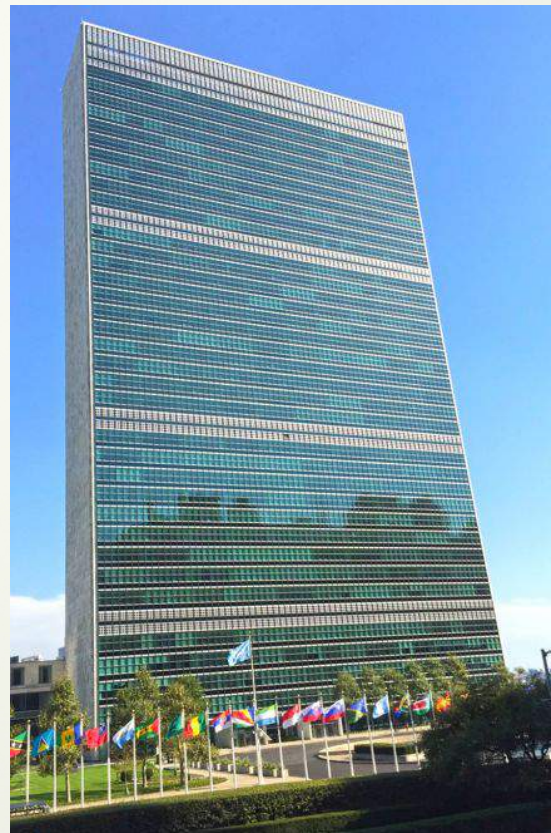
The invasion received widespread international condemnation as an act of aggression. Many countries imposed sanctions on Russia. The UN criticised the invasion as being unjustified and without precedent.

Why has the UN failed to end the war on Ukraine by Russia, given the stated purpose of the UN is to ‘maintain peace and security? According to article 24 of the UN Charter, the primary responsibility of the Security Council is ‘the maintenance of international peace and security’, and, as per article 25, all members agree to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter’.

Moreover, the Council ‘shall determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression and shall make recommendations, or decide what measures shall be taken ...to maintain or restore international peace and security’. The Council has the power

to ‘call upon the parties concerned to comply with the provisional measures proposed by the council, without prejudice to the rights, claims, or position of parties concerned’.

When parties in question fail to comply with the provisional measures, the Security Council (not involving the use of armed forces) may call upon the members of the UN to apply measures like, ‘complete or partial interruption of economic relations and rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communications, and the severance of diplomatic relations’.



When all measures have been proved to be inadequate, as per article 41, the Council ‘may take such action by air, sea, or land forces as may be necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security’.

The United Nations, born out of war to end wars, has not lived up to its objective ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’. The UN, shaped by the victors of World War II, placed the axiom, ‘winners take it all’ to hold on to their power and military might in the post-war world. To that end, they called themselves Permanent Members of the Security Council, with the privilege and power to veto any resolution that went against their interests or sphere of influence.

According to PassBlue reports, “since 2010, there have been 38 vetoes blocking 27 draft resolutions: 23 by Russia, 11 by China and 4 by the US,” paralysing the work of the Council. In this context, the UN is a flawed/failed body with no power to protect us from war. Geopolitical calculations of power-hungry nations are unwilling to reform the UN into a truly multilateral body ready to uphold the human rights of all, especially the right to life and security.

Every day we see the horrors of this war unfold on our screens and airwaves. We are pained, and distressed and are moved to pray for it to end soon. Diplomacy, sanctions, voices of reason and advocacy from Pope Francis, world leaders

and the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have not provided a ray of hope at present. The day Russia invaded Ukraine, Guterres told Russia: “In the name of humanity, bring your troops back to Russia. Do not start in Europe what could be the worst war since the beginning of the century.”

A month later he told them, “It is time to end this absurd war.” Numerous emergency sessions of the Security Council, strong statements and condemnations have not yielded any concrete action to end the war or to declare a ceasefire.

To all the impassioned speeches and requests, the Russian Ambassador, Vasily Nebenzya’s response was, “We did not start this war; we want to end it.” Russia has used its veto power at the Security Council to stop the legally binding resolution, demanding that Moscow immediately stop the war on Ukraine and withdraw all troops on February 25. In fact, in the wake of the invasion, Russia has used the Council to spread misinformation.

Does the UN Secretary-General have any power?

According to Article 99 of the Charter, the Secretary-General (SG) may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter, which, in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security. This Article is interpreted as providing the SG with an

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Given the inability of the UN to effect any change in the ongoing war, Antonio Guterres who is extremely interested in finding ways to create the conditions for effective dialogue, and create conditions for a ceasefire as soon as possible recently met with Putin and the Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

President Putin has agreed in principle to Guterres' request to create humanitarian corridors to get civilians out of besieged cities and distribute food, medicine and other basic goods. The SG has proposed the establishment of a Humanitarian Contact Group, bringing together the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the UN. The response of the Foreign Minister to this proposal was, "Russia was ready to cooperate with our colleagues from the UN to alleviate the plight of the civilian population."

Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine was bombed by Russia, while the SG was meeting with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, flouting international norms. The SG is deeply concerned about the repeated violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws and suspected war crimes, and is calling for an independent investigation for effective accountability. He supports the involvement of the International Criminal Court and is calling on Russia to cooperate with it.

UN Diplomacy

Since Russia could veto any resolution in the Security Council, on March 2, the General Assembly voted on a resolution to condemn Russia's unprovoked war and demand Russia 'immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders'. The resolution, sponsored by 90 countries, needed a two-thirds majority in the Assembly to pass. The resolution received 141 votes in favour, 5 against and 35 abstentions. This resolution indicates that the international community strongly supports the core principles of the UN.

Another resolution, entitled 'Humanitarian consequences of the aggression against Ukraine', drafted by Ukraine and 90 co-sponsors was passed with 140 votes on March 24, 2022, during an Emergency Special Session of the General Assembly. (140 votes in favour, 5 against and 38 abstentions.) This resolution demanded civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine. This premeditated war on Ukraine has brought about catastrophic loss of life and untold human suffering. The indiscriminate bombing and shelling of civilian areas, hospitals and childcare centres have caused more than 11 million people to flee their homes since the conflict began. According to the International Organisation for Migration 5.3 million people have fled to neighbouring countries and 6.5 million are internally displaced – more than half of whom are women and other vulnerable people.

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Around 12 million people are stranded or are unable to leave areas affected by the fighting. The UN is working alongside numerous international organisations to provide humanitarian assistance wherever necessary and possible.

According to the director of the UN World Food Programme, no humanitarian corridors are open to distribute food to the starving people in the besieged cities. Around the world, millions of people will face starvation, if Ukraine is not allowed to ship food out through the ports blockaded by Russia. Before this, Russia had the gall to propose a resolution on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, which called for respect for 'humanitarian principles', condemning attacks against civilians and a negotiated ceasefire in Ukraine.

It did not mention the reason for the crisis in Ukraine was a result of the Russian invasion. This resolution could not move forward, since it was backed only by China and all other 13 members of the SC abstained. (Nine votes are required for a resolution to move forward in the Security Council). The principle of multilateralism, leading to dialogue is a key to solving global challenges the world faces currently, especially to maintaining peace and security in the world. The Security Council has failed repeatedly in the past decades to prevent conflicts and invest in genuine peacebuilding. In the absence of any effective action against

threats to international peace and security by the Security Council, what role can the General Assembly play?

The veto power exercised in the Security Council harms the effectiveness of the UN on matters of international peace and security. Without attempting to reform the UN, Liechtenstein introduced an innovative resolution: 'standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council' on April 26, to provide a strong voice to the General Assembly when the Security Council is unable to act. The General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus and came into force immediately. The Liechtenstein Ambassador described the resolution "as an expression of our commitment to multilateralism...and to secure the central role and voice of the United Nations."

The General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus and it came into force immediately. The resolution requires the president of the General Assembly to convene a meeting every time one or more of the five permanent Security Council members casts a veto. The Assembly would hold a debate on the situation on which the veto was cast, and those who vetoed would be invited to address the Assembly to explain their action. It is not subject to any further intervention or decision -- open-ended with regards to the outcome.



The principle of multilateralism, leading to dialogue is a key to solving global challenges the world faces currently, especially to maintaining peace and security in the world. **The Security Council has failed repeatedly in the past decades to prevent conflicts and invest in genuine peacebuilding.**



How to remove a UN Member?

According to Article 6: 'A Member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter may be expelled from the Organisation by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council'. Suspension from Human Rights Council: The General Assembly can suspend the rights and privileges of a Council Member that has persistently committed gross and systematic human rights violations during the tenure of its membership. To suspend a member state, a two-thirds majority vote is required by the General Assembly.

Russian invasion of Ukraine and alleged human rights violations. Reform of the UN– the power structure and the Secretariat/administration are necessary to make it relevant and fit for our times, as a true multilateral organisation. Debates on UN reform demanded by both Member States and civil society have been going on for more than 30 years without any clarity and consensus.

The current structure does not take into account the present geopolitical realities and has no representation from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South America in the Security Council. For any meaningful discussion on reform, the Security Council has to agree and there is no consensus to move ahead to make the UN fit for the 21st century.

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A PEACE MANIFESTO ON THE US-EU-NATO POLICY ON THE UKRAINIAN WAR





The news that Sweden and Finland are deliberating about an option to apply for NATO membership and to increase their defence budgets to buy more weapons, especially in the case of Sweden, is the worst setback to a sustained macro-strategy of peace in well over two hundred years since Swedish leader Bernadotte's 1812 Policy (Sweden entered a treaty by which it promised to support Russia against Napoleon). Peace lovers and peacemakers of all cultures, of any ethnic group, religion or philosophy should be appalled by the news.

I do not consider that the adherence of Sweden to the European Union (EU) in 2009 was an essential change in her neutrality policy, because, as it is now clear in the case of Ukraine, it is possible (and convenient for many countries) to belong to the EU but not to NATO.

Instead of joining NATO, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark should rather lead a

new European Peace Belt Organisation of nations, starting from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean, including Iceland, Greenland, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and the new united Germany, the last two prodded by a cut-off of the gas pipelines from Russia.

The negotiated end of the current war could be a recognition of an independent and neutral West Ukraine, which will join the EU but not NATO, and also recognising an independent East Ukraine (the Donbas provinces), both declaring neutrality and hopefully being reunited again after a few decades.

The Peace Belt organisation would go South through the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria, Tirol, Moldavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia and Greece.

Each one of them should publicly and solemnly proclaim neutrality in the sense that they will not allow any American, Russian, Turkish or NATO weapons in their territory nor the passage of troops by land or air from East to West or from West to East. They might or might not choose to belong to the EU but not to NATO, or the Russian Federation but not to their Defence Alliance.

There is hope that Ireland and North Ireland will soon reunite, declare their neutrality, and proclaim their return to the European Union but not to NATO, followed soon by Scotland,



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perhaps Wales, and by an autonomous Euskadi and Catalunya, along with Spain and Portugal. This will be the beginning of the end of the useless United Nations, tied up with the vetoes of the superpowers. This war has made the UN and its fumbling Secretary-General ridiculous.

The superpowers will be isolated and confronted by the growing World Peace Organisation now starting in Europe, and they will have to end up asking to be accepted in it, agreeing to abstain in the voting of resolutions involving complaints about themselves or their satellite countries.

By acknowledging and even supporting the new European Peace Belt Organisation, Putin should make it believable that Russia is not trying

to expand westward, and the few remaining European countries should make it believable that NATO (without the US) is only a defensive alliance and will not move one step eastward from the boundaries of 1990. As of now, the Russian commitment to stop expansion has more credibility than the alleged defensive character of NATO, judging from the multiple violations of agreements with Russia since the collapse of the Berlin Wall and then of the former Soviet Union in 1990.

This will also be an opportunity for almost all European countries to issue firm statements, some of them even still belonging to NATO, in the sense that they are not going to allow the United States to use and abuse them to try to expand into Eastern Europe 'interposita persona' (through the interposed country).

This will also pressure Russia to respect the United States' claim to their current zone of influence ('America for the Americans', even with the cynical distinction in the use of the word in the first instance for the whole continent from Canada to Antarctica, and, in the second case, for a small part of North America, mostly stolen from Native Indians, Mexico, France, Russia and Spain). Even with this sour interpretation, and independently of his political, financial and moral misbehaviours, former American President Donald Trump had envisioned a return of America to greatness without appealing to starting invasive wars.

He had conceded the defeat in Afghanistan and had sent then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to sign a surrender treaty that Biden had only to accept and bear the shame of. Trump had decided to leave NATO's financing to their members and stop sending troops to Europe,

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as well as providing more arms to them at US expense. He promised to disengage from the ‘Middle East wars nobody understands’, and arranged a peaceful coexistence with Russia and China, including the One-China Policy, as long the U.S. trade deficits would be contained and regulated.

Now, the self-defeating sanctions on Russia will increase inflation in the US. This increment in the cost of living, plus the \$30-billion war aid to Ukraine, will turn against President Joe Biden, even a good part of the Democratic voters. Biden will lose all power in both chambers of Congress next November. Putin can wait.

In this scenario, Turkey and its President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will also be forced to declare that they are not planning to advance their borders and their zone of influence northward or westward, fuelled by their dreams of reclaiming their lost power after the First World War. Assuming that Russia, China and India would also agree not to expand anymore in any

direction, a renewed United Nations starting from the enlarged World Peace Organisation could concentrate on the thorny problem of Shi’ite vs. Sunnite Islamic countries (including Turkey), and of all of them with Israel.

To be realistic, the main obstacles to these utopian considerations are just two, both formidable: the Military-Industrial Complexes that make billions of dollars producing and selling arms, and the international banks that finance that deadly trade. They will do all they can to prevent the reconstruction of the old UN through the new World Peace Organisation. Those are the staunch enemies of peace. Wars are their business, but now they would have fewer countries to push to war.

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MEMORIES OF CONFLICT IN KENYA





We hypothesise that African ethnicity originates along the lines of the post-independence schema against what Kenyan intellectual Peter Kagwanja calls balkanised and multi-ethnic units demarcated by arbitrary boundaries that cut across ethnic groups¹

This indecisive co-relation between ethnicity and nation remnants is true in Kenyan politics. A sporadic outbreak of violence, lack of peace, and the quest for national stability are periodically caught in a web of ethnic anxieties, tensions, and suspicions.

Both Kenyan politics and ethnic-based violence have a long past. It is fuelled by grievances over land, privilege, and inequality². Throughout the campaign period and before election day, the dynamics change within the surrounding community. Neighbours become very hostile. Children are the spies who come to the houses to listen to the conversation in the family and to gauge whom they are going to vote for.

My experience of Kenyan post-election violence in 2007/2008 is still submerged in my memory as I still hear the voice of my late father saying, “We cannot leave our house and go to the streets. We belong to this land.” I grew up in Eldoret, where I lived with different ethnic groups. It was normal to teach each other the language as the best way to unite us. I left and joined the convent. I had to move to Nairobi (312 kms away), but my parents and siblings remained in Eldoret.

In 2007, three months before the election, an anonymous letter was dropped at our doorstep. It asked me to vacate the house within 24 hours. My parents called me. I told them to move, but they said they were going to remain in Eldoret.

This question of ethnicity and nationhood is inherently tied to the question of residency and belonging. However, is it an issue of the place of birth, ownership of property in marriage, the language spoken, or how long one has lived in a particular place? This background brings me to the memory of my niece who was raped during the Kenyan 2007/08 post-election violence by a familiar person. She later said she told the rapist she was representing my parents. Since they could not attack them, they punished her through rape.

This incident echoes what scholars have said about symbolism and the family body. According to Nathalie Etoke, an associate professor of Francophone and Africana studies at the Graduate Centre, City University of New York, the female body signifies several conflicting political projects and positions of power in post-colonial Africa. As a result, the family is a body or is a symbol of desire and political violence

This indecisive co-relation between ethnicity and nation remnants is true in Kenyan politics. **A sporadic outbreak of violence, lack of peace, and the quest for national stability are periodically caught in a web of ethnic anxieties, tensions, and suspicions.**



that is ethnised with her entire community. The body is the enemy that the rival group wishes to punish and humiliate³. Nevertheless, in Kenya, unconventional violence is deeply rooted in chaotic environments created by our political, social, and economic realities.

An example is the ongoing protracted and historical pastoralist conflict in Marsabit County, Kenya. It is highlighted by the persistence of historical grievances, impunity for violence, and past human rights abuses as the main drivers of violence.

Such grievances hinder intergroup reconciliation and trust in government institutions and religious groups. This results in suspension and a cycle of revenge. The situation is similar to that of the violence in 2007 where ethnicity is seen as key to the conflict. Women and children are the victims of the conflict. Peacebuilding interventions are likely to view local leaders and peace actors as invariably biased in favour of their ethnic groups.

Impact of the violence

The 2007/008 violence in Kenya shook the country. Its economy, politics, and social life were affected. People were displaced as a result of the violence. There was the destruction of properties by burning. There were mass killings of family members. Women and girls suffered the psychological effects of sexual violence.

During such conflicts, children's ability to cope is conditioned by their ability to understand their parents' reactions and coping mechanisms. Children were also exposed to violence. This



affected their worldview of good neighbourhoods and their moral development. NGOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) stepped in with psychosocial support programs and activities.

Solutions for lasting peace

Kenya has been a strong security partner of the United States in an extremely volatile region⁴. It is a strong and consistent contributor to international peacekeeping operations both in South Sudan and Somalia.

Kenya was a lead mediator in Sudan's north-south Comprehensive Peace Agreement and has hosted multiple attempts to mediate among Somali factions. But the government of Kenya has always failed to look to the past. As a result, there is a cycle of violence every election year. For lasting peace, the government needs to improve peacebuilding activities within communities, monitor early warning signs and address fear in the aftermath of violence. The government and key stakeholders must find the right balance of building trust and confidence among the communities by providing technical and capacity-building ability to support the national institutional legal framework through peacebuilding that involves a range of measures to reduce recurring violence.

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SOUTH SUDAN CONFLICT

REFLECTING on a LOST DECADE 2013-2022



While acknowledging the fluidity of the causes, I must mention that there are what could be termed ‘fundamental causes’ and ‘circumstance-driven causes’.



On July 9, 2013, South Sudan became the youngest state in the world following the referendum held in January. This happened after more than 50 years of the struggle for emancipation and freedom from the social, economic, and political domination of Sudan (John: 2022).

While in the ecstasy of hope for a prosperous new nation-state, in December 2012, tensions among the ruling South Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) marked the beginning of a protracted conflict that persists even today. Conflict in the oil-rich state has damaged the much-anticipated prospects.

More than 400,000 people have been killed and there are nearly 2.27 million refugees and asylum seekers (Council on Foreign Relations: 2022).

The rights of people have been violated, and their economic and social life have been disrupted due to the loss of billions of dollars in illicit financial flows amidst the ongoing conflict (United Nations Human Rights Council: 2022).

For a decade now, there has been no substantive progress at all levels – neither political, economic, nor social welfare has been achieved.

As the conflict and acts of atrocities continue, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), through the United Nations Missions in South Sudan (UNMISS) has been working tirelessly to ensure the following:

- a) Protection of civilians.
- b) Creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- c) Support the implementation of the ‘Revitalisation Agreement’ and peace process.
- d) Monitoring, investigating and reporting on violations of international humanitarian law and the violation and abuse of human rights (United Nations Security Council: 2022).

Despite all these efforts, women, children, youth and the old continue paying the price through increased hunger, homelessness and shattered dreams.

By highlighting the need for prioritising dialogue and elite collaboration in the implementation of peace agreements in South Sudan, this piece extrapolates the causes of the South Sudan conflict while urging conflicting parties to go beyond elite interests, for sustainable peace.

Root Causes

The causes of the South Sudan conflict are diverse, multidimensional, and dynamic. From the academic analysis of events since the eruption of the 2013 civil war, scholars have given diverse perspectives related to the causes.

While acknowledging the fluidity of the causes, I must mention that there are what could be termed ‘fundamental causes’ and ‘circumstance-driven causes’.

While the two are inevitable, intertwined and overlapping, it is important to indicate that the first one remains constant while the latter changes and rejuvenates. Thus, sustainable peace requires that the two are constantly monitored and addressed adequately.

Fundamental causes

Sometimes these are referred to as ‘root causes’. They are at the centre of any conflict. They reflect the primary issues making peaceful co-existence difficult to achieve. They may not be direct or explicit triggers but rather, the roots of a conflict.

In the context of South Sudan, a few can be highlighted as the fundamental causes.

These include:

- a) Economic interest.
- b) Political representation and exclusion.
- c) Poor governance structures
- d) Ethnic disunity and manipulation (Kulang & Ogbonna: 2018, Mayik & Ochi: 2020, Kuol: 2020, Magara: 2022, & John: 2022).

Among these primary causes, one of them seems to influence the others. In this case, I can identify economic interest as the main root cause. The colossal natural resources such as oil that South Sudan is endowed with, have been at the centre of the war.

This economic richness has turned out to be a curse for South Sudan, instead of being a blessing for the citizens’ economic emancipation.

South Sudan can get back to the joyous celebration experienced at the time of independence. **The window of opportunity to recover the lost decade exists. This could be possible by prioritising genuine dialogue and elite collaboration.**

Elite interests, especially over the control of oil fields and other resources, has culminated into the political power-sharing struggle, and more importantly, the manipulation of ethnic mobilisation. This has led to one of the most complicated and protracted conflicts of the 21st century.

The diagnosis of the causes of the South Sudan conflict also manifests itself in what I call circumstance-driven causes. They could also be understood as secondary causes. These are not necessary at the root of the conflict but rather, come in circumstantially and facilitate conflict prolongation.

These include:

- a) Ethnic militarisation.
- b) Arms proliferation.
- c) Weak institutions.
- d) Marginalisation.
- e) Repression
- f) Mistrust in the peace agreement processes
- g) Corruption.
- h) Factions, among others.

The South Sudan conflict, therefore, is entangled between these two important and interrelated conflict dynamics. Because of this, peace has been elusive despite the presence of regional bodies such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Union (AU) and UNMISS.

Lasting peace, dialogue and elite collaboration

South Sudan can get back to the joyous celebration experienced at the time of independence. The window of opportunity to recover the lost decade exists. This could be possible by prioritising genuine dialogue and elite collaboration. One that focuses on addressing the ‘fundamental causes’ of conflict while creating resilience and monitoring mechanisms to address ‘circumstance-driven causes’. On that note, genuine implementation of the 2018 Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) requires greater dialogue and elite collaboration among political





actors. This would require political elites to go beyond their selfish interests and focus on state-building and prioritising the welfare of the citizens.

The R-ARCSS is a powerful tool to promote elite collaboration. This is because it looks to be driven by the spirit of national unity, desire for a permanent ceasefire, accountable security arrangements, justice, reconciliation and healing (R-ARCSS: 2018). The failure of implementation lies in the lack of political will among actors to collaborate for a common purpose.

The April 3, 2022 agreement on unifying the security command in South Sudan is a positive step toward the implementation (John: 2022).

It offers a window for more dialogue on governance system reforms, and unity in the security architecture and opens a new opportunity to extend efforts in economic management reform (John: 2022) as it seems to be one of the primary causes of the conflict.

Conclusion

Hope for peace in South Sudan is not completely lost. Though the past decade saw little gains, the hope for a new life in the next decade is not dead. However, this hope lies in the hands of political elites and people of influence. As such, among the elites, there is a need to maximise genuine dialogue and collaboration. This ought to be a more comprehensive and overlapping top-down and bottom-up approach to open dialogue.

Is an act of nobility – one that makes the welfare of the citizens a priority – elite collaboration in the implementation of the R-ARCSS is one of the key factors to sustainable peace in South Sudan.

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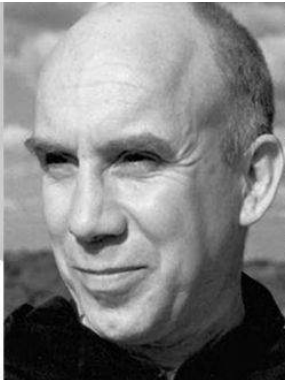
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UKRAINIAN WAR

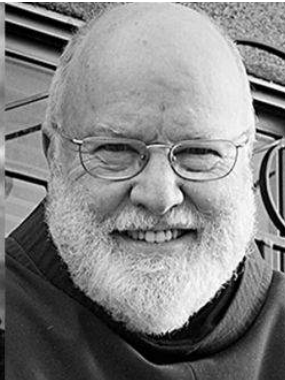
A Warning of Global Calamities



Pope Francis



Thomas Merton



Richard Rohr (OFM)



Joe Biden

As of this writing, NATO is de facto committed to war with Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin bombed Kyiv while the UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited the Ukrainian capital. **Putin's contempt for international cooperation or peace couldn't have been made more clear; we are willful fools if we think otherwise.**



When I was asked to contribute an American reflection on the issue I was honoured, but stymied. In the interim, I have experienced anger, sadness, and scepticism, but, oddly, some small degree of hope. I am an American evolutionary biologist and naturalist – a ‘Gringo’, as my Latin American friends say.

My views are strongly influenced by a typical middle-class upbringing and schooling in the US Catholic Church, western (and long globalised) capitalism, modern biology, and the spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin, Pope Francis, Thomas Merton, and Richard Rohr (Order of Friars Minor) and his faculty at the Centre for Action and Contemplation (CAC) in New Mexico.

As of this writing, NATO is de facto committed to war with Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin bombed Kyiv while the UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited the Ukrainian capital. Putin’s contempt for international cooperation or peace couldn’t have been made more clear; we are willful fools if we think otherwise.

From the outset of its February invasion of a free nation, Russian forces have committed acts of barbarism equivalent to those committed by Nazi Germany in World War II -- perhaps not of the same scale, but certainly of the same nature.

Given its Stalinist history and the Soviet mindset of Putin, there is no reason to expect Russian acts to abate and every reason to expect them to spread and intensify.

The western press is sharply focused on Ukraine but what about the rest of the globe? Not so much, me thinks. In a quick survey of Indian online newspapers, I see no headlines referring

Understandably there are many other issues of national and local import.

The same holds for different regions, and those papers reporting are also primarily concerned with the economic impact of war-related destabilisation. However, I suspect the Ukrainian war to be a warning of global calamities.



to Ukraine, and two of three papers refer to the war as either ‘conflict’ or ‘flare-up’ in second-tier articles.

Understandably there are many other issues of national and local import. The same holds for different regions, and those papers reporting are also primarily concerned with the economic impact of war-related destabilisation. However, I suspect the Ukrainian war to be a warning of global calamities.

Let me comment on several threads of a Gordian knot -- threads that are entangled and not necessarily separate. There exists no political/social/institution or religion that is not deeply rooted in capitalism, albeit brutish or genteel. Entities that have historically proclaimed themselves as some version of communal (including communism and socialism) are fleeting and rare in the grand scheme of nations.

Capitalism is grounded in unrestrained growth and is dependent upon both sellers and buyers. Both seek accumulation whether measured as currency or resources. Ultimately, capitalism



becomes grounded in power, whether it is the power to shield oneself from the vicissitudes of life, or the power to bend others to one's nationalistic or tribal will or self.

Power is narcotic, and, as the saying goes, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Make no mistake: Like their investors in the US and Europe, Russia, China, and India are overtly capitalist.

The so-called socialist cultures, as exemplified by Nordic nations, are simply systems that operate in a more genteel spectrum. They rank at the highest levels of sociological 'happiness' scales but supply both sophisticated technology and capital to leverage resources supplied or garnered by poorer nations headed by brutal governments.

These governments consist of individuals only too happy to acquire 'currency' at any cost, vastly disproportionate to their production. China, for example, under the vicious rule of President Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has embarked on a Belt and Road Initiative that will soon devour the natural resources of the poorest nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America for generations.

China has quickly become the penultimate and most successful capitalist state on the planet. Despite the word 'Communist' in CCP, there is nothing remotely communal about life in China. Over one million Uyghurs interred in Han forced-labour camps can attest to that.

Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro and his industrial partners are systematically dismantling the Amazon in the act of ecocide. Former American President Donald Trump and his ilk were intent on the same fate for parts of North America and may yet return to power.

The most visible result of Putin's misread of Russian history, and gross military blunder, is the direct suffering of civilians and the attempted erasure of Ukrainian culture. Unfortunately for Ukraine, the response from the west has been 'old arms' and 'we will economically isolate Russia at ostensibly the lowest cost to ourselves'.

Meanwhile, suffering abounds in American, European, Asian, and Russian economies. These are highly interdependent concerning resources and markets. Those countries that choose not to take sides are keenly aware that their power cliques (wealth accumulators) will not tolerate economic losses unless those losses can be passed on to large numbers of citizen producers that live and work in marginal or barely subsistent conditions. Instability always generates fear among the powerful.

The 'New York Times' reported recently that although oil prices are high, American oil companies are not eager to pump more oil for at least one to two years, to help European countries that are cutting ties with Russian oil. Exxon Mobil Corporation reported first-quarter profits of \$5.5 billion, more than double the same period last year; this despite a write-down of \$3.5 billion in Russian field operations.

What about the resources of the earth itself? In 1798, British economist Thomas Malthus published his observation that populations tend to overrun available resources, and hence their sizes tend to be corrected by war, disease, starvation and calamity. We are well beyond resource capacity as a species, especially where wealth (resource) accumulation is considered. We are not just in climate change; we are in a full-blown biological crisis. The Ukrainian war is only now exposing the deep roots of an economic, spiritual, and ecological catastrophe in its opening act.

Institutional Christianity has long been comfortable and complicit with concentrations of power and wealth. Since its anointing as the official religion of the empire in the 4th to 5th

centuries, Christianity has willingly and regularly participated in sins of both commission and omission.

The most flagrant example related to Ukraine is the warmongering promulgated by the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, who weaves (like former US President Donald Trump) nationalism, faith, conservative values, and the restoration of the 'Russky mir' ('Russian world') into some Holy War. Opposition by Kirill would certainly have had some impact. Sadly, the good patriarch is probably only too aware of the Siberian gulag that would have awaited him.

I hope US President Joseph Biden and his NATO counterparts are taking sufficient steps to minimise the suffering of the Ukrainian people, neuter the beast that occupies the Kremlin, and prevent the spread of hostilities to surrounding peoples. I very much hope that other nations also pause to reflect on the potential global consequences of Putin's appetite.

What about the spiritual aspects of our current crisis? Most evolutionary biologists such as myself have long abandoned ideas of 'balance' in nature, at least in terms usually expressed in the popular science lexicon. In a 13.8-billion-year-old universe, on a 4.5-billion-year-old planet, any notion of balance is simply a frozen Newtonian snapshot in time that fails to capture the essential nature of shifting constraints and soft boundaries.

The universe, and all life, are engaged in an unfolding creation process.

Each human life also reflects this same nature. Richard Rohr (OFM) would say that each person passes through three essential stages: order, disorder, and re-order. I believe the same can be said about human history. To construct economies of open-ended consumption and accumulation is not only punishing but unsustainable. Real sustainability must accommodate and participate in the process.

In my opinion (I am not a theologian) the most prescient document ever written by a Pontiff is 'Laudato Si'. In it, Pope Francis harkens back to a view of all creation as divine, and in varied forms an expression of Imago Dei. 'Laudato Si' is largely ignored by the American Church and in particular by US Bishops.

I hope US President Joseph Biden and his NATO counterparts are taking sufficient steps to minimise the suffering of the Ukrainian people, neuter the beast that occupies the Kremlin, and prevent the spread of hostilities to surrounding peoples. I very much hope that other nations also pause to reflect on the potential global consequences of Putin's appetite.

In the recent past, those same bishops have largely concerned themselves with political issues that pander to American conservatives and economic interests; especially those that supplant spirituality with so-called tradition (In the US, Vatican II was also apparently just a bad dream). My metaphysical sense of the universe is that fundamentally creation is ontologically relational, and not subjective.

My fervent hope is that the Ukrainian war will force humanity to stop and reflect on this divine relationality. I have come to know the Presence of a wildly affective God who laughs when we laugh, cries when we cry, suffers when we suffer and is joyful with abandon to ALL of his creatures.

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MEMORIES OF THE LEBANESE CIVIL WAR



The sound of the shells and the almost daily bombardments on the residential areas of **Beirut** made us experience excruciating moments of fear, insecurity and uncertainty about the future.



The civil war in Lebanon from 1975 to 1990 left indelible traces in our memories of childhood and adolescence. The sound of the shells and the almost daily bombardments on the residential areas of Beirut made us experience excruciating moments of fear, insecurity and uncertainty about the future.

When the bombardments became fierce, we were forced to flee our homes to take refuge in the suburbs and the so-called ‘calmer’ villages.

The unpredictability of the situation could sometimes spoil our mood in college or the

middle of a school day. The teachers could not ensure a safe way back into the bombarded districts. The memory of the school and college corridors crowded with students frightened by the sound of shells remains deeply rooted in our memories. Along with all this were the concerns regarding the shortage of food and water. This became acute as the war dragged on. These images still torment our minds.

As for the shelters, these were the car parks, the basements, and the landings of our buildings. We filled this space with mattresses, blankets, a few tin cans, water, and radios to follow the news interspersed between the few patriotic songs that we listened to with fervour to cheer us up.

Sometimes, news of injuries or deaths to our loved ones made us cry. Only collective solidarity could console us at that time.

The psychological and social consequences were serious. But solidarity and resistance were strong in our society, through the efforts of charities, religious communities, and missionaries who took over the educational institutions. They ensured salaries were paid to teachers so that the schools and colleges could continue to function.

They also took over social and health institutions and helped us come back from the depths of despair. The banks were functional, and the hospitals also provided a good quality of service,





The psychological and social consequences were serious. But solidarity and resistance were strong in our society, **through the efforts of charities, religious communities, and missionaries who took over the educational institutions.**



although these were located on either side of the demarcation lines in a city divided in two.

In a multi-dimensional society, adaptation and reconstruction have been slow and precarious. We still don't have a solid foundation at the community strategic level. The October 2019 revolution is proof that this reconstruction, at least on the political and strategic level, was not made.

After October, the population has been affected by the devaluation of the Lebanese pound. We are witnessing an increase in unemployment and a shortage of food and medicines. This has had disastrous repercussions on the people. The poor have become poorer. The middle class is almost absent.

Add to this, the explosion of the port, on August 4, 2020, which left hundreds dead, and thousands injured. The culprits have not been caught so far. As a result, there is an exodus of the young in search of a better future.

Owing to multiple reasons our country has been in a mess for the past 30 years. One problem is that there are no barriers between the legal, the political, and the religious. Corruption, power and money, unfortunately, take precedence. These prevent any peace process from seeing the light of day.

What is the solution? There is no easy solution in our complex country. But we will always hope that one day peace will come to our country. And that light will eventually reappear at the end of this long and dark tunnel!

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HUMANS AND WAR



Why do human beings resort to war from time to time?

A toxic combination of anger, hatred, ambition, and fear causes wars. **All the four toxic ingredients might not always be there, even though at least three of them are invariably there.**



Contemplating the blood-stained pages of history – alas one too many – it is difficult not to raise a few questions however difficult it might be for the limited human intellect to answer them.

Let us go seriatim.

First, why do human beings resort to war from time to time? A toxic combination of anger, hatred, ambition, and fear causes wars. All the four toxic ingredients might not always be there, even though at least three of them are invariably there.

The Bhagavat Gita, Chapter 2, Verses 62 and 63, says:

‘While contemplating on the objects of the senses, one develops attachment to them. Attachment leads to desire, and from desire arises anger.

Anger leads to clouding of judgement, which creates confusion in the memory. When memory is confused, the intellect gets destroyed; and when the intellect is destroyed, one is destroyed.’

German leader Adolf Hitler was angry that Poland was not conceding to his demands on

Danzig (following World War I, the 1918 Treaty of Versailles declared Danzig to be a free city to be administered by Poland and the League of Nations. Germany resented the loss of this largely German city. Source: Wikipedia).

Hitler had the ambition to project himself as the winner before a planned rally in Nuremberg on September 1, 1939. The rally had to be cancelled as on that day an angry Hitler invaded Poland triggering the Second World War without intending to do so. This shows that we need to add one more ingredient to the toxic combination: ignorance of the consequences of the action one takes.

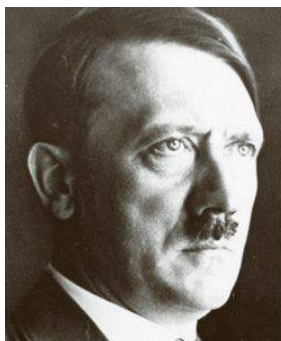
President George Bush embarked on the 2003 invasion of Iraq because he had the ambition to project himself as an invincible leader after he signally failed to prevent 9/11 despite his aides doing their utmost to get his attention to the growing threat.

President Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine as he was angry that President Joe Biden was not responding to his demand for security guarantees. We might assume that Putin is now facing the unintended consequences of his act of aggression.

He reminds one of Winston Churchill’s words, “Never, never, never believe any war will be smooth and easy, or that anyone who embarks on the strange voyage can measure the tides and hurricanes he will encounter. The statesman who yields to war fever must realise that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events.”

The element of ignorance that can be a crucial ingredient of the toxic combination takes us to the only law that history obeys: the law of unintended consequences.

That law finds one of its most painful applications in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s chase of the mirage of military victory in Yemen that was called ‘Arabia Felix’ in antiquity as opposed to ‘Arabia Deserta’ referring to what is now Saudi Arabia. Operation Decisive Storm launched on March 25, 2015 was supposed to last only weeks leading to the surrender of the Houthis.



Hitler Vladimir



Vladimir Putin



Winston Churchill



Immanuel Kant

Second question: What has man done to prevent war? Historically, the most successful effort has been that of Emperor Asoka. Having shed unconscionably large amounts of blood in Kalinga, he decided not to wage war any longer. It should be added that Asoka maintained the largest standing army in his time. He sent out his missionaries to all parts of the known world, the first and the finest example of globalisation of the good variety.

The second example is that of Saint Mother Teresa whose sisters are in 133 countries running 600 missions.

Suffice it to say that while Stalin was exceptionally cruel, he was a realist who understood the correlation of forces. **He knew that he could not take on the West militarily and focused on consolidating Communism in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. He had no intention of exporting it to Western Europe using military means.**



Third question: What is the contribution of Western civilisation to starting, waging, and prolonging wars in the centuries starting with Christopher Columbus discovering America in 1492 and Vasco da Gama reaching Kozhikode in 1498?

World Wars I and II as well as the Cold War originated in the West.

The proposition that the Cold War originated in the West might be contested. This is because for decades Western scholarship blamed an aggressive and ambitious Joseph Stalin, the Russian leader, whom they demonised as the principal cause of that war. We do not have space to get into a detailed argument on this.

Suffice it to say that while Stalin was exceptionally cruel, he was a realist who understood the correlation of forces. He knew that he could not take on the West militarily and focused on consolidating Communism in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. He had no intention of exporting it to Western Europe using military means.

Let us see whether and to what extent the toxic combination helps us understand the war on Ukraine, on its 66th day as I share these thoughts with the distinguished readership of 'Pax Lumina'.

Let us attempt to formulate a few propositions:

- 1) It is wrong to say that the power that fired the first bullet started the war and is to be held responsible. We need to ask why that power took a shot. Thus, Russia alone cannot be held responsible for the war.
- 2) Russia was concerned about the eastward expansion of NATO that brought US weapons

The global political leaders should be requested to read and ponder over what **St. Augustine wrote about just and unjust wars; Immanuel Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch’, and Pope Francis, who quoted from his own encyclical ‘Fratelli Tutti’.**



including missiles closer to Russia’s borders. Despite Russia’s expressing its concerns from 2007 onwards, NATO continued with its expansion plans which started within a few years of the collapse of the Soviet Union on December 26, 1991.

- 3) NATO was founded in 1949 to ‘keep the Soviet Union out and Germany down’. After Germany’s reunification post the fall of the Berlin Wall, on November 9, 1989, there was a compelling case for dismantling NATO, and inducting Russia into a new European security system. This did not happen as the Military-Industrial-Congressional complex stood in the way. If there is détente and peace ‘the merchants of death’ will cease to make profits.
- 4) Even though Ukraine is not in NATO, on November 10, 2021, the US and Ukraine signed a Charter that guaranteed the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the latter by the former. In short, Washington urged Ukraine to take a tough line with Russia.
- 5) Putin, who was disgruntled with Biden’s unwillingness to engage in serious diplomatic negotiations, wrongly decided that by



resorting to a blitzkrieg a la Hitler he could get what he wanted.

In short, the ongoing war is the result of the collaboration, unwitting though, of three presidents. That collaboration comes in the way of a cease-fire too.

The global political leaders should be requested to read and ponder over what St. Augustine wrote about just and unjust wars; Immanuel Kant’s ‘Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch’, and Pope Francis, who quoted from his own encyclical ‘Fratelli Tutti’. The Pope decried the atrocious and grievous events that the world has witnessed, which confirmed that ‘war is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, and a stinging defeat before the forces of evil.’

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GENDER DIMENSIONS OF WAR

**The world is in the grip of a gory war.
What do women go through during wartime?**

The more perceptible image of women in conflict scenarios is marked by vulnerability, and financial instability from displacement, while men are pushed into mandatory military services. Conflicts mar the development process, especially, the process of employment generation, alleviation of poverty, and establishing equality in society.

The females who survive are pushed into immeasurable hardships. The heavily culturally coded and compartmentalised gender roles in normal circumstances are what jeopardise the survival of women in wartime and the post-war period too. In his book, 'War and Gender' (How Gender shapes the war system and vice versa), Joshua S Goldstein, Professor Emeritus of International Relations at American University says, "Killing in war does not come naturally to either gender, but gender and the war system shape each other. The extant war

The gender dimension of war is a broad area of study involving the impact on vulnerability, **the lack of fluidity of gender roles in war, gendered war structures in both conflict and post-conflict settings, and challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the female-dominated population.**



system is excessively gendered and simplified to the opposites – the male aggressor vs. female peacemaker. The gallantry of women warriors on the battlefield, in sharp contrast with the caretaker-peacemaker role, never assumes permanence or is celebrated when the war is over.

The gender dimension of war is a broad area of study involving the impact on vulnerability, the lack of fluidity of gender roles in war, gendered war structures in both conflict and post-conflict settings, and challenges of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the female-dominated population.

It could be even more exhaustive since the available literature is very limited, particularly longitudinal studies on the affected people and their post-conflict lives.

“It has probably become more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier in an armed conflict,” says Major General Patrick Cammaert, a former United Nations (UN) peacekeeping commander. It sums up what women undergo in conflict scenarios. Apart from wartime atrocities committed on women, post-conflict societies also experience high levels of sexual and domestic violence. This is more so for ex-combatants who internalise violence during the war either as victims or perpetrators who can perpetuate violence against women and the vulnerable. In reality, the cultural codes of males having to

safeguard women do not ensure the security of women at any point.

Probably, one of the darkest chapters in human history is the genocide of Tutsis in 1994 in Rwanda, and the rape of their women during the war. About 2.5 lakh Tutsi women were raped by Hutu government soldiers and extremist militia. A quarter of them contracted the HIV/AIDS virus.

Rape was used as a weapon of war in the most brutal way. Hutu leaders took AIDS patients from hospitals, jobless youth, and petty criminals to form rape squads to infect Tutsi women. The UN Security Council referred for the first time in December 1992 to the ‘massive, organised and systematic detention and rape of women, in particular, Muslim women in Bosnia and Herzegovina’. There are rape calls in different corners of the world even today, be it in war or for ethnic cleansing. They have the same tones of anarchy and barbarism.

The UN has shifted its focus from the concept of peace as the absence of war to peace as a more holistic concept, largely owing to the gender-based violence in both conflict and post-conflict settings. The UN uses the term ‘Gender dimensions of violence’ in identifying the gaps in the policy and guidance on disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programmes in countries emerging from conflicts.

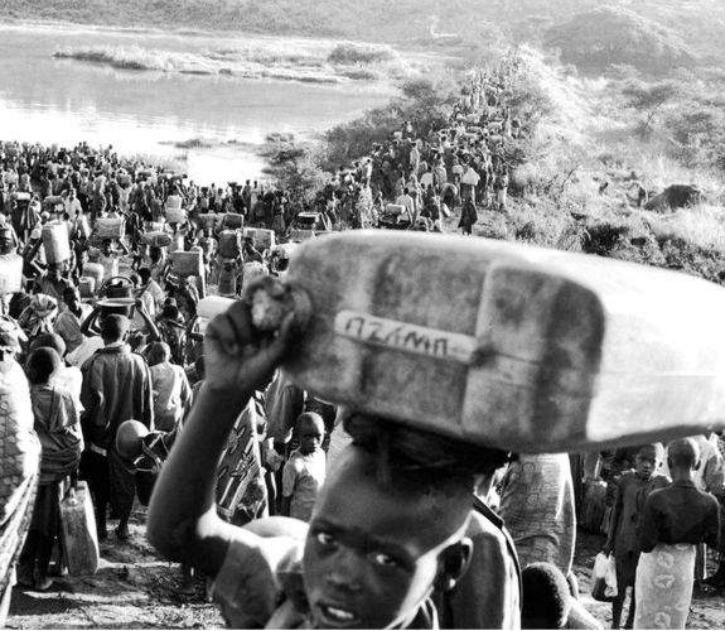
There is no doubt that war affects both men and women. But the impact is disproportionate, and manifested in disparate ways, predominantly due to the disadvantageous gender position of women.

Armed conflict disturbs the political structures and economic systems. More women could get trafficked, forced into sexual slavery, or get exploited economically. The fact that 80 percent of the 65 million people displaced in war are women tells us the magnitude of the catastrophe and its potential for escalating gruesome humanitarian problems.

Female-dominated post-war societies need not necessarily provide increased opportunities for women in the reconstruction process as decision-makers.

There is no doubt that war affects both men and women. But the impact is disproportionate, and manifested in disparate ways, predominantly due to the disadvantageous gender position of women.





On the contrary, this complex scenario-disarmament can be disempowering for men and they can view it as a loss of manhood coupled with the loss of identity. In this context, the empowerment of women in reconstruction might lead to more resentment for men, leading to violence against women.

Ex-combatants (including women soldiers) are susceptible to the risk of psychological distress from traumatic war experiences. The absence of effective programmes to provide mental health to them will also increase the probability of violence against women. It is also seen true that the struggles of single women who provide for a displaced family and a male head in a similar state are not equal in nature or intensity.

Now, at the other end of the continuum, from a caretaker to fighter roles assumed by women in war, how do women fare? In history, a very dismal proportion of women fighters has participated in the frontline of the wars. During

World War II, women served in all branches of the military in many countries around the world. Around 2.25 lakh served in the British army, 4.5 to 5 lakh in the American army, 5 lakh in the German, and about 10 lakh in the Soviet army. They had practically served in all masculine roles such as sniper, machine gunner, tank driver, and commander of an anti-aircraft gun or sapper. These women have killed enemies, carried wounded men and corpses double their weight, dug up graves, and buried corpses.

Many hide these images of theirs for fear of lack of societal acceptance. They go back to gendered roles -- into oblivion for their own chosen benefits. In peaceful moments they knitted sweaters or embroidered kerchiefs, proving that these dichotomous, gendered compartments are the creation of society.

We have girl superheroes in movies, cartoons, or games, but rarely do we accept one in real life as a wife or a lover. Women fighters are rarely followed as role models, and they are rarely decorated. Nor are their achievements celebrated the way that their men counterparts are.

Svetlana Alexivich, the author of the Nobel prize-winning book, 'The unwomanly face of war' says, "Women's war has its colours, its smells, its lighting, and its range of feelings. There are no heroes and incredible feats. There are simply people who are busy doing inhumanly human things. And it is not only they (people!) who suffer but the earth, the birds, the trees. All that lives on earth with us, they suffer without words, which is still more frightening."

There has been much fluidity in the recent past in terms of the shift to advanced roles for women in reconstruction due to efforts taken by the UN. Conflict improves resourcefulness in coping and survival strategies as well. These positive gender role changes need to be sustained for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Dr. Jazeela Sherif is an engineer turned CFO who writes frequently on gender and equality. She also has long years of academic experience.

Memories of WAR IN IRAQ



The worst event happened in 2014 when the Islamic State managed to control the three major provinces of Mosul, Anbar and Tikrit. The militants killed innocent people and displaced others from their original homes. It took another fight between the Islamic State and the security forces to liberate these provinces.



I was born in 1972 in Baghdad Iraq. A few months after my birth, my family decided to move to another major city called Mosul. In 1986, we moved to Kirkuk. I remember that there was a kind of stable security and political situation only for the first seven years of my life.

In 1979, Vice President Saddam Hussein became the president and high commander of the military forces. Shortly after that, Iraq went through a series of long and destructive wars. The first, against Iran in 1980, lasted for eight years. These were years of destruction and sorrow. Families lost their beloved sons, about one million of them, due to this long and nonsense war. Most of them were young people forced to join the war.

Then, after almost one-and-a-half years of peace, Iraq invaded its neighbour, Kuwait. This resulted in a coalition led by the USA which attacked the Iraqi army. Again, another bloody war took place. Thousands of Iraqi soldiers and civilians died in both countries.

This war resulted in putting Iraq under embargo and sanctions. This lasted for 13 years. It caused suffering and poverty among the people. Only families who were well-off managed to have three meals a day.

This second war was followed by a period of violence by the armed militias which controlled most of the cities from south to north. This resulted in a civil war between Saddam's forces and the militias. Again, thousands of civilians got killed or lost their belongings and homes. The third war in Iraq started in 2003 when the USA formed a coalition to invade Iraq and get rid of the Saddam regime. This destroyed the infrastructure.

After this war and regime change, the people thought that it was the end of their suffering and that the rebuilding, and peace era would prevail. Unfortunately, the opposite happened. Armed groups attacked the American troops and the Iraqi police and army inside the cities through bomb explosions. It caused the death of thousands of civilians and military members.

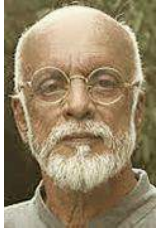
The worst event happened in 2014 when the Islamic State managed to control the three major provinces of Mosul, Anbar and Tikrit. The militants killed innocent people and displaced others from their original homes. It took another fight between the Islamic State and the security forces to liberate these provinces. So, what kind of memories can someone like me have except destruction, instability, fear, sorrow, and an unclear view about the future of my family, my people and beloved ones.

The violence in Iraq is very complicated because it lasted for a long time. There is no interest among the different political groups to find solutions to the problem and focus on rebuilding. Instead, they keep creating an unstable political and security situation. The aim is to steal the wealth of the people to build their kingdom.

We need leaders who are willing to serve the people and work for the interest of Iraq instead of implementing their personal agenda.

This seems to be far away from our expectation now.

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WAR, VIOLENCE and the METAPHYSICS-LED WAY of LIFE

Freedom from violence

Most people believe in an Ultimate Reality. This belief generally gets articulated in a religious/spiritual vocabulary. But philosophers and scientists also have their own versions of the Ultimate Reality. Because of this belief people tend to live under its influence. Even though they believe in ethical virtues, they do not give ethics primary significance.

This tendency to give primacy to the metaphysical and to relegate ethics to a lower status is what I mean by the phrase 'the metaphysics-led way of life'.

Those who believe in God and God-denying Marxists both lead metaphysical lives. Because Marxists are metaphysical materialists. Like God worshippers, they too relegate ethics to a subordinate position. Only three philosophers, in the entire gamut of human intellectual history, questioned the metaphysics-led way of life and suggested instead an ethics-based way of life.

They are the Buddha, Socrates and Mahatma Gandhi. However, within 200 years of the Buddha's death, Buddhism began shedding its ethical stance and reverted to propagating a metaphysical way of life. Gandhi too is often, and I think wrongly, treated as one who gave primacy to metaphysics.

This tendency to give primacy to the metaphysical and to relegate ethics to a lower status is what I mean by the phrase 'the metaphysics-led way of life'.



In its broadest sense Gandhi's solution is the idea of learning to function within a framework of Satya, Ahimsa, Sarvodaya (concern for the well-being of all) and Aparigraha (non-possession). **But when we look at this broad framework carefully, we notice that Gandhi's solution demands among other things, a stateless society.**



This is in spite of his shift from 'God is Truth' (metaphysical) to 'Truth is God' (ethical). Gandhi's journey from the metaphysical to the ethical is fully articulated in his booklet 'Ethical Religion'.

However, among the three philosophers, Gandhi was the only thinker who developed an ethics-led political philosophy as part of his ethics-led philosophical way of life.

In this article, I focus only on Gandhi's critique of the political entity 'State.' This was the central theme of his ethics-driven political philosophy.

Necessary and unnecessary violence

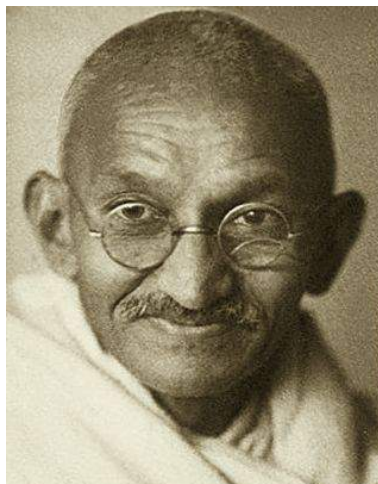
Since life feeds on life, some form of violence is necessary. But when we are talking about violence, we are talking about avoidable violence. How can we put an end to all forms of unnecessary violence? To my mind the only person who has given us an overall solution to the problem of violence is Gandhi.

In its broadest sense, Gandhi's solution is the idea of learning to function within a framework of Satya, Ahimsa, Sarvodaya (concern for the well-being of all) and Aparigraha (non-possession). But when we look at this broad framework carefully, we notice that Gandhi's solution demands among other things, a stateless society.

In fact, the absence of a centralised authority is a minimum requirement. Gandhi perceived, and perhaps correctly so, the State as the embodiment of all avoidable violence.

Gandhi, unlike the political contract theorists, therefore, saw the State as a hugely troublesome and absolutely unethical political entity. He wanted a stateless, non-hierarchical world order to replace the State system. But can a stateless

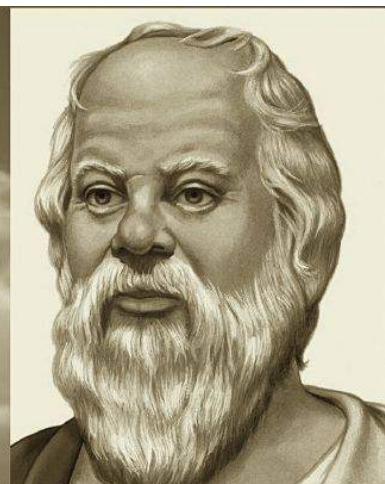
Mahatma Gandhi



Buddha



Socrates



As long as we function within a metaphysical framework, we will remain exposed to the dangers of violence. **This has the potential to become more disastrous and explosive than the type of violence we now experience on a daily basis.**



human world ever come to pass? Gandhi believed that it was, in fact, possible. This Gandhian belief was a position diametrically opposed to all the established theories of political/social contracts.

From Gandhi's point of view, our belief in the inevitability of the State apparatus is a product of our thought process that is attuned to a metaphysical way of life. Gandhi believed that if we acclimatised ourselves to an ethic-led lifestyle, instead of the traditional metaphysical one, our propensity to violence would change dramatically. And once we are attuned to this ethics-led way of life, the State with all its institutions would appear, to use Gandhi's expression, 'Satanic'.

Gandhi argued that our tendency to hold on to the idea of an Ultimate Truth/Reality is a result of our existential insecurity and the existential angst that ensues from it. Instead of rejecting the idea of an Ultimate Truth Gandhi invited us to ground such an idea in ethics.

That is, he wanted us to make ethics our primary concern instead of the idea of an Ultimate Truth.

Once ethics takes over our orientation, we would become less selfish and our concerns would become other-centred instead of self-centred.

With this shift of concern from the self to the other, through the cultivation of Satya, Ahimsa, Sarvodaya and Aparigraha, Gandhi thought that our existential angst would disappear.

Once that happens, Gandhi thought, we would be in a position to see the desirability of stateless communities in the world. He described such a world as Rama Raj/Khuda, the Kingdom of God on Earth. Generally, he used the term 'Swaraj' to describe such a political scenario.

The shift from the well-being of the self to the well-being of the other is essential to end the eternal conflict between the self and the other. This proposition remains true regardless of whether the self is an individual, a nation or a state. As long as we function within a metaphysical framework, we will remain exposed to the dangers of violence. This has the potential to become more disastrous and explosive than the type of violence we now experience on a daily basis.

In conclusion, let me add that the simple solution for freedom from violence is the cultivation of ethical virtues and the adoption of an ethics-led way of life.

Even a person who is wary of giving up his metaphysical beliefs and associated practices could think of grounding these beliefs on an ethical foundation.

It was Gandhi's belief that as long as we are in the grip of metaphysics, the violence that we see around us will never disappear. It could end up in the total destruction of animal life on this planet. The only solution is a state-free and an ethics-oriented lifestyle which gives more significance to the well-being of all.

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CONFRONTING THE MONOLINGUALISM OF WAR

Peace is a meta term; it is a holism that encompasses the fragmentary nature of war. Peace is holistic, it heals. It goes beyond contract and regulations to be a lived world, a form of being and becoming. Peace is not the cessation of violence, it is a form of repair, of healing. Peace is every day.

I asked Irom Sharmila, the Manipuri activist, once, “Are you going to keep fasting?”

She smiled and said, “I am a woman, I want to fall in love, and have children. I don’t want to be the statue you are turning me into.”

Peace in that sense celebrates life and is life-giving. As a Kashmiri woman said, “Peace is arrival, it is a homecoming. It is a lack of wanting. It is the contentment of everyday life, a lack of fear, and a sense of absence. It is an ode to everydayness outside history. Peace is the intimate domesticity refusing history as rupture.”

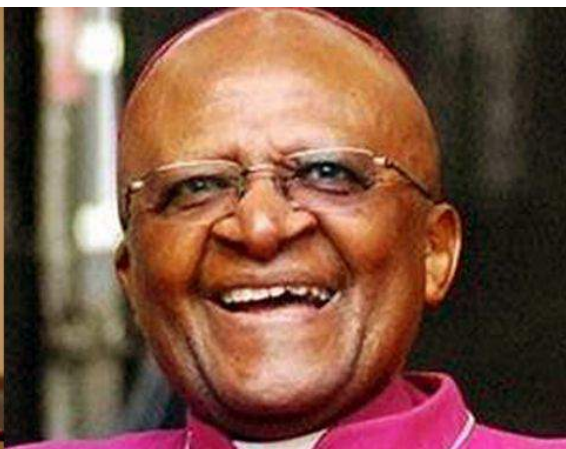
Peace is one word that demands constant inventiveness, and new ways of discovering your humanity. Peace in that sense is a form of knowing as being. It is a movement, a search, a pilgrimage. It is the ultimate commons

Peace is one word that demands constant inventiveness, and new ways of discovering your humanity. Peace in that sense is a form of knowing as being. **It is a movement, a search, a pilgrimage. It is the ultimate commons redeeming the homelessness called war. Peace is an initiation into a new world.**





Ela Bhatt



Bishop Desmond Tutu

The questions asked and the answers we get will be radically different. **Instead of the government and nation-state creating the discourse of peace, civil society has to enter and transform the conversation and the way we conduct it.**



redeeming the homelessness called war. Peace is an initiation into a new world. Peace is both everyday and primordial. Only when it embraces both domains can it also be political, economic, and institutional. It is a craft that crosses the alchemical.

To fight for peace, we have to think about peace, and to think about peace is not easy. It is not a knee-jerk absence of war, which ignores other forms of violence. Peace needs a different kind of discourse. To borrow from the language of International Relations will not do. All we have is the inadequate vocabulary of borders, contract and nation-state.

A strategist getting ready for war and a Satyagrahi think differently. The former works in a narrow frame instrumentally. The latter thinks of a culture of peace inventively. We have to think in the language and perspectives of democracy, not a nation-state.

The questions asked and the answers we get will be radically different. Instead of the government and nation-state creating the discourse of peace, civil society has to enter and transform the conversation and the way we conduct it.

As Gandhian activist Ela Bhatt put it succinctly in her recent book, “You cannot talk peace or sustainability in the language of the nation-state.”

One has to talk twice or ask twice, first on behalf of synecdochal groups, women, tribals, margins, and parts which can think and represent the whole.

Secondly, one thinks holistically of a totality of connectivities. War in that way is thought of too analytically in terms of cause-effect or contract. The ecology of peace has to think differently.

Ela Bhatt showed how women linked women, work and peace into a new agenda. One has to begin similarly by creating new institutions and a different set of thought experiments. Civil society has to innovate at three levels: at the level of knowledge, at the level of organisation, and the level of movements. All three have to be enclosed in a model of the Tacit Constitution.

A Tacit Constitution goes beyond a no-war constitution into confronting the roots of

violence as genocide, extinction, displacement, triage, obsolescence, and extraction. It seeks both cosmology and constitution for peace.

The late Nobel Prize-winning South African Bishop Desmond Tutu during the prelude to the Truth Commission made this distinction between formal law and cosmology, between Anglo-Saxon law which defined justice and compensation, and the folk idea of Ubuntu which created an ecology for forgiveness. The grammar he pointed out was different.

One needs epistemic brokers to link law and folklore. Spirituality enters in, not in a specialised way but through gossip and exemplars, whose performative acts help create and link the epic and every day of peace.

One of the things we have to confront is that the questions and the answers remain cliched. They need to be re-read or reanimated as experiments in a new context. How do women look at peace? Such a question returns agency and interpretation to women as victims of war, to those waiting for peace.

The Grahani, as Ela Bhatt demonstrates, creates a new home science of peace by linking 'Oikos'

War from the machismo of a man's eyes dotting on nationalism and patriotism may need the caring sensitivity of a woman to rethink the grammar of peace. **Everyday peace may be eventless, as ahistorical as not waiting for the males to return in an anxiety-ridden every day.**

to 'Cosmos' to the 'Polis' creating a peace linking livelihood, gender and peace, articulating a world through the lenses of vulnerability, and seeking plurality.

War from the machismo of a man's eyes dotting on nationalism and patriotism may need the caring sensitivity of a woman to rethink the grammar of peace. Everyday peace may be eventless, as ahistorical as not waiting for the males to return in an anxiety-ridden every day. Waiting for peace might mean having a timetable of work and life that faces few disruptions.

For the margins, it might mean living a livelihood without facing vulnerability. In that sense, peace becomes polyvocal, multicausal, and adjustable.

One suggestion made in this context where the different reasons for war and the possibilities of peace can be discussed is a knowledge cum peace panchayat where peace is no longer the prerogative of experts, but of lay people deciding how their lives can be lived.

Democracy enters a new realm as it debates questions never discussed before. A peace panchayat as an imagined community virtually outlines a tacit constitution, a wish list of assumptions stemming out of the folk categories of society, articulating dreams in words which have a common currency.

Mechanical stereotypes give way to flexible solutions allowing the dynamics of peace itself to be a surprise. Ordinary virtues like flexibility, forgiveness, and memory become part of a glossary of peace, an ordinary language which experts cannot diminish.

People can revisualise the border between India and Pakistan, linking it with ritual entries



A peace panchayat as an imagined community virtually outlines a tacit constitution, a wish list of assumptions stemming out of the folk categories of society, articulating dreams in words which have a common currency.



that a security discourse cannot imagine. New notions of sharing a commons might emerge from what looks like frenzied battlegrounds today. Security zones could be transformed into sacred graves, creating places on both sides to find new respect.

Memory is a crucial lifeworld that has to be reworked for peace. Memory becomes folklore's precautionary principle against war. An orality of memory like the Harikatha might give you a multiplicity of interpretations rather than one dogma, allowing for a plural peace to confront the monolingualism of war.

Storytelling changes as two sides confront

each other seeking how to understand the narratives of the Other. Cause and effect may have embeddedness which is more human, and tangible than pretend for analysis to be fragments of an abstract social theory. Memory articulated as orality erases repressed silences, and allows for a more open sense of justice.

Spiritual leaders, and exemplars mediating between communities might create consensus priests or technocrats cannot. The future becomes a common responsibility for mediating groups which might lead to a new inventiveness of peace. Memory adds a backstage to justice, so it can go beyond the formally articulate creation of new trusteeships of peace between bordering areas.

The ashram supplements the peace panchayat, counting the think tank in the way it dreams and reacts to policy. Policy becomes more like a tentative cookbook recipe than a frozen formula.

Tentativeness and flexibility allow for multiple readings of pain and brutality. Cause and effect get blinded by perception and plurality. War looks a bit less inflexible. Redefining a problem is part of the search for peace.

The ashram, unlike the think tank, is a spiritual answer to life and peace. It is an experiment on oneself and a lived way of inventing alternatives. The think tank specifies the expertise of policy research. It is didactic. Dialogue becomes both method and style for a search for peace. Spirituality rather than being purely esoteric is a lived choice. The exemplar performs before us.





We see peace unfolding before us. The critical elements are sacrifice and trusteeship. Both emanate from a deep sense of caring for the lifegiving. This sense of sacrifice and spirituality goes beyond the contract to the realms of trust. It adds to the tacit dimensions of peace.

The question of war expressed as technology and armaments raises questions immediately. Controlling technology is critical because war is often a potlatch of armaments triggered by corporations. We need to control Big Science, particularly science linked to defence technology.

Secondly, we need to control corporations creating a politics of anxiety around each wave of armaments. There is a necessity for an equivalent of the Pugwash movement where scientists provided both the critique and the self-control.

Academics should demand greater transparency of science to challenge the secrecy inherent in the Defence Establishment. Changing the way we do science is a critical part of peace and a playful science becomes part of the aesthetics of peace.

One has to challenge the backstages of war to handle peace. This requires that we create a culture that creates a science open to the epistemics of violence. The genocidal index of various sciences must be recorded for society to view science and technology critically.

War has to be seen as a culture to challenge the power of violence. A mere political economy does not help. Peace needs both compassion, and the meditative power to combine with critical social science to produce more life-giving ways of thinking about knowledge and life.

In this context, the survivor is a strange creature. He not only has to survive the war but its aftermath, which has a different claim to everydayness. The survivor looks at war differently. He can go beyond hate and instrumentality, to look at an ecology for peace. The language of discourse changes from the strictly paradigmatic to an ordinary language world of folk wisdom, and everyday insight. One de-freezes the procrustean world of international relations into flexibility of democratic politics

The rite of passage to normalcy is not easy. Normalcy retains the scars and stigmas of unjust wars. The first thing normalcy must do is to make sure the conditions and causes of war are not repeatable. All too often, so-called peace is merely a temporary cessation of war which creates a vintage sense of hate such as Germany nursed after World War I.

In that sense, peace is a daily exorcism of war and the causes of war. One should not take causes too seriously. Corporations and leaders go to war whimsically or to deflect attention from real problems. War creates an effervescence that politics can feed on.

Russian President Vladimir Putin plays Ukraine to create a halo, a myth for himself, a deflection from economics. War feeds political egos and seeds the narcissistic nature of nationalism. One needs pedagogy as much as politics to create this world.

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Science and Peace

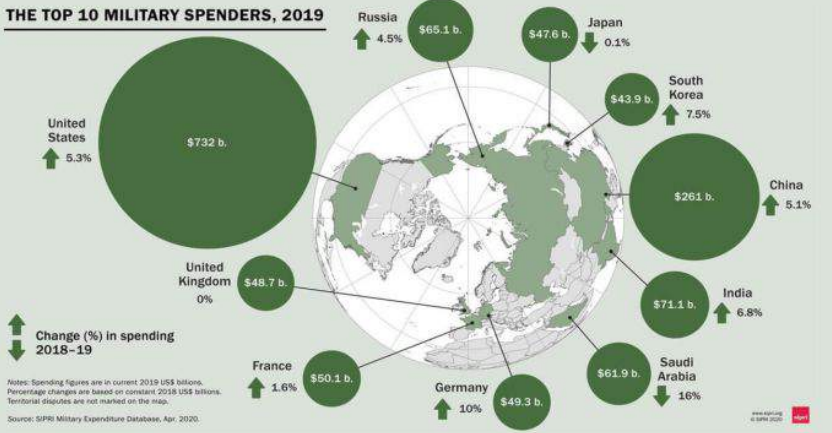
The world is again in turmoil. It could be on the brink of a third world war. The war raging in Eastern Europe is capable of triggering such a catastrophe. But war is as old as the human race, so why should we be upset on account of the present war between Russia and Ukraine?

The death of human beings and destruction of valuable properties are inevitable in every war. However, today's wars are fought with weapons, which are far more sophisticated and lethal. Modern science has made it possible for weapons to be made into extremely efficient killing machines. The title of this article would have been more appropriate if it was 'Science and War'. The world's military expenditure has crossed \$2 trillion. We have plenty of war machines, but unfortunately no 'peace machines'.

As a 21st century society, we have to wage wars on an incessant basis. We should have a war on poverty, we should fight diseases, we should wage a war on ignorance, we should resist environmental degradation, and we should have a continuous war to spread peace on Earth. These are all wars which are acceptable



THE TOP 10 MILITARY SPENDERS, 2019



Though war is a major avocation, next to it, science is the greatest enterprise of mankind. Science is also the greatest adventure of the human mind. However, scientific developments have also given new impetus to war efforts. Technological advances have inspired new military adventures as well.

Conversely, war has stimulated new scientific research. Thus microwaves, radars, guided missiles, high power lasers, satellite phones and many other inventions fall in this category.

Technology and war efforts seem to have mutually aided each other and moved together in unison. All the scientifically advanced countries have huge military expenditures also (see tables 1 & II). This is not disputing the fact that science and technology have been a strong factor in improving other aspects of human life and its comforts and conveniences.

Science, by itself, is not to be blamed for its misuses and the miseries that it causes. Wiser

However, scientific developments have also given new impetus to war efforts. **Technological advances have inspired new military adventures as well.**



storage, launching pads for rockets, and troop movements are being scrutinised by the spy (eye) in the sky.

Unmanned drones and robots have taken over the jobs of human soldiers, inflicting heavy damage to the enemy in terms of persons and properties. Strangely, nuclear weapons, which are a million times more destructive, serve to establish 'peace' as they turn out to be very effective deterrents against a full-scale war. Every country will think thrice before making a pre-emptive nuclear strike since the effect of retaliation will lead to total annihilation. Every country knows that there will be no victors in a war fought with megaton bombs. One could say that in this way, scientific progress has prevented more wars and established peace in a delicately balanced manner.

TABLE I

Top 10 countries in the SIPRI list of world military expenditure 2021 as per its respective figures and percentage of global share.	
1.	The US (\$801 billion, accounting for 30%)
2.	China (\$292 billion, accounting for 14%)
3.	India (\$76.6 billion, accounting for 3.6%)
4.	The UK (\$68.4 billion, accounting for 3.2%)
5.	Russia (\$65.9 billion, accounting for 3.1%)
6.	France (\$56.6 billion, accounting for 2.7%)
7.	Germany (\$56 billion, accounting for 2.7%)
8.	Saudi Arabia (\$55.6 billion, accounting for 2.6%)
9.	Japan (\$54.1 billion, accounting for 2.6%)
10.	South Korea (\$50.2 billion, accounting for 2.4%)

TABLE II

**Science & Technology Research
Spending by Major Players**

No	Country/Region	Expenditures on R&D (billions of US\$, PPP)	% of GDP PPP	Expenditures on R&D per capita (US\$ PPP)	Year
1	United States	612.714	3.1	1,866	2019
2	China	514.798	2.2	368	2019
3	Japan	172.614	3.2	1,375	2019
4	Germany	131.932	3.2	1,586	2019
5	South Korea	100.055	4.6	1,935	2019
6	France	63.658	2.2	944	2019
7	India	58.691	0.65	43	2018
8	United Kingdom	51.702	1.8	762	2019
9	Taiwan	42.945	3.5	1,822	2019
10	Russia	38.549	1.0	263	2019
11	Brazil	38.0	1.3	181	2017
12	Italy	33.840	1.4	561	2019

and more beneficial use of science and technology can, without doubt, transform human society as well as the planet. Mankind, at present, has the resources, tools and technologies to alleviate the miseries of a large section of the human population. A UN report prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the European Union this year shows that out of 77 countries which they studied (India is not on the list), 53 are facing severe food shortages and are being ravaged by famine. Nearly 20 crore people are in the grip of severe poverty and hunger.

The determination and decision to use science wisely and sensibly rests entirely with human society. Efforts by world organisations in this respect are only successful to a small extent. Most of these bodies are under the control of wealthy and globally dominant world powers. Naturally, they gave priority to their self-interest rather than the interest of the unfortunate billions in the world.

There is a tendency to blame science for disrupting the world peace. Nobel laureate Richard Feynman once said, "I'm not responsible for the ills of the world." This is very much true for science

as well. Mankind, especially the world leaders, is vested with the power and responsibility to prevent the misuse of science and consequent ills of the world.

In this context, the efforts by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) are praiseworthy. It is dedicated to carrying out research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations to policymakers, researchers and media. SIPRI's vision is a world in which causes of insecurity are identified, understood or resolved and peace is established. However, science by itself will not lead to peace or war. It is humanity's good sense that will usher peace in this world.

The writer is the former Director of the International School of Photonics and Dean of the Faculty of Technology of Cochin University of Science and Technology, Kerala, India.



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ART is a SPIRITUAL PROCESS

Painting by Jackson Pollock



Art is essentially spiritual because human beings are essentially spiritual beings. There is an urge in everybody to surpass the external and the material into a realm deeper and beyond. I consider this inclination as a primal spiritual urge of human beings to attempt to transcend his or her situation.

To a great extent, this is achieved through artistic expression. The spiritual in art gives expression to what is deeper and beyond, the invisible and incomprehensible reality. A sense of mystery in the life in which we live is integral to human consciousness. It is a basic primitive consciousness with which we search for the 'ground of our being'¹.

For many modern artists, art was not for art's sake but art was part of their inner journey and quest. **Their art was in a way, a process of their own 'death and rebirth' and a constant process of coming into being.**



Crucifixion with Angel Montecastelli, by Craigie Aitchison

I am not attributing 'spiritual' elements to artistic practice. Rather, I see the spiritual as the essence of artistic expression. The term 'spiritual' is not necessarily associated with any religious faith or doctrine, even though various religious tenets influence the understanding of it.

Artistic creations and ritualistic practices used the same process in many of the early traditions. Art has been an integral part of religious worship and faith expressions in both major and folk religions.

In modern times, art is not purely religious. Instead, it has tried to liberate itself from the religious domain. However, at the same time, in modern and contemporary art, there is a dimension of spirituality, such as its inner dynamism and power of expression.

This is a salient feature of modern contemporary art, even though artists may not recognise it as spiritual.

American art historian and critic James Elkins stated that contemporary art appears to be miles away from religion, but there is something religious or spiritual in much of contemporary art. American writer John Updike called modern art 'a religion assembled from the fragments of our daily life' (Elkins, 2004).



Painting by Marc Chagal

Even though religion in its traditional manner has no place in art, there is a profound concern about the spiritual element in modern art, especially in the expressionist and abstract expressionist works. Theologian Paul Tillich admired the German expressionist paintings of Emil Nolde, Ernst Haekel, and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff. To him, it illustrated how art could have spiritual value. For Tillich, expressionist paintings were the best 'mediator of the ultimate reality'.

The 20th century witnessed many artists whose personal religious beliefs and identities influenced their works. These included Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky, Georges Rouault, Cecil Collins, Piet Mondrian, Francis Bacon, Barnett Newman, Stanley Spencer, Kazimir Malevich, and Mark Rothko. For many modern artists, art was not for art's sake but art was part of their inner journey and quest. Their art was in a way, a process of their own 'death and rebirth' and a constant process of coming into being.

A transition away from religion and towards spirituality is a major shift in modern cultural history. Today's artists now search for meaning within themselves rather than from supernatural stories or the rituals of institutional religion.

As Diana Apostolus Cappadona, Emerita Professor of Religious Art and History at Georgetown University, said, "Modern artists now have the singular opportunity of 'presencing' the spiritual significance of the totality of human experience in their recognition of the foundational necessity of the religious imagination" (Crumlin(ed), 1998). Academician Graham Howes said, "What the artists convey are not discourses of religious truths but a profound inner experience."

Artist Craigie Aitchison painted the crucifixion which does not have any religious affiliation or belief. His Christ is an unconventional and indiscernible human. It is a bleak vision of the human form, but also one that for many is also distinctly spiritual because it so well conveys what lies behind that form. Purely secular artwork can give a profound spiritual experience. According to historian Mircea Eliade, "there is a quest within us for the unrecognisable sacred. The sacred is no longer expressed in conventional religious language. Even though modern man declares himself to be irreligious, it survives, buried in his unconsciousness. Modern artists unconsciously may be trying to give expression to this unconscious in various ways. Perhaps unknowingly the artist penetrates the depth of the world and his psyche" (Eliade, 1995).

In 'The Daily Telegraph' (September 25, 2009) art critic Mark Hudson commented on what draws us to the artworks, on the occasion of a Rothko retrospective in Tate Modern, London. He wrote, "Churches may be empty, but art is more popular than ever."

There is a growing significance of art in our increasingly irreligious world. Art has in a way become a religion for the modern man in which he/she has a deeper transcendental experience.

Paul Tillich (1989) said, "Everything in human culture has a religious dimension." The religious dimension, he stated, is in a broader sense, not as the activities of a group in which the direct relation to a divine being is expressed in ritual and doctrinal symbols. Religion in this sense, (which I call spiritual consciousness), 'can appear in all expressions of man's cultural activity, both in the created works and in the creating persons'.

The awareness that the surface of everything is not real, drives us to break through the layers of deceptive surfaces to the deepest, to the real. "We constantly search for an ultimate reality, something lasting in the flux of transitoriness and finitude" (Tillich, 1989).

According to philosopher Sri Sankaracharya, everything that appears is 'Maya' (an illusion). The real lies behind the visible, which can be seen by the 'inner eye', the eye of the 'Self', through which we can experience the realness of the realities.

In art, we seek and express what lies behind the visible. This expression does not evade the cultural, historical, mythical and other aspects of human consciousness. So the artistic experience, both creating and viewing, is the experience in its totality.

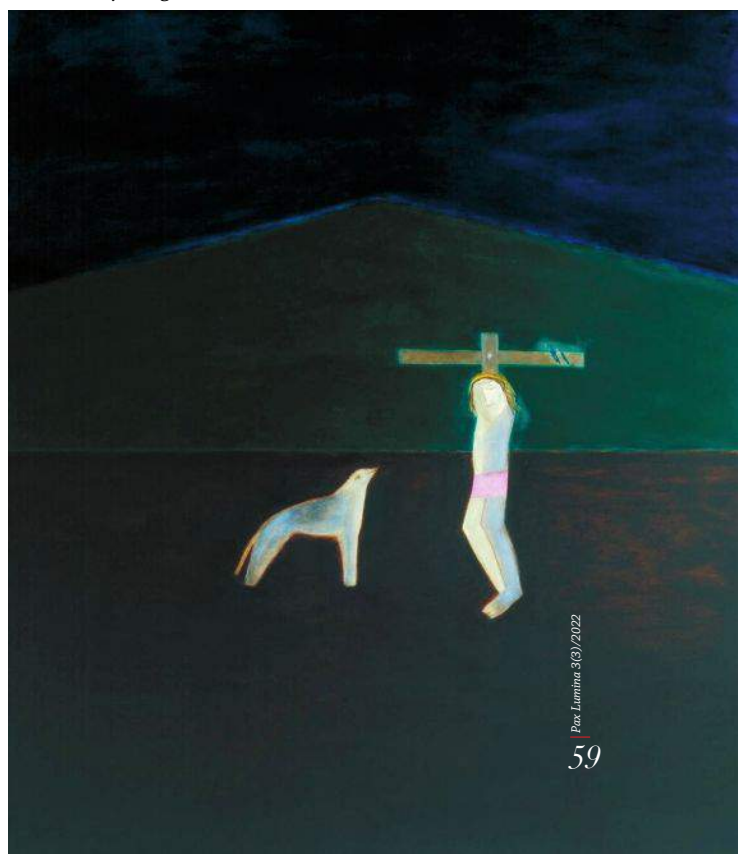
I consider that every artistic process is a process of liberation. An artist, through his works, liberates himself and the viewers from the illusions of surfaces and images. The concept of liberation encompasses all aspects of life concerning the inner and outer world.

It is not negating the outer reality, but detaching ourselves from its falsification and getting

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into the elementary substance where we come in touch with the essence of the reality. Theologian Thomas Merton stated, "In art, we find ourselves and lose ourselves at the same time" (Cappadona(ed) D., 1995). Giving up and finding out is the inner working of art. This is a constant process of stripping away.

Crucifixion by Craigie Aitchison

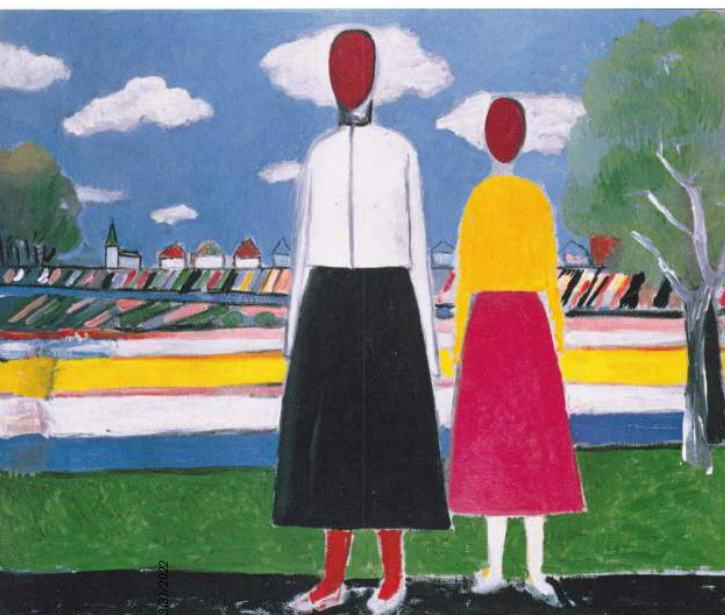




Christ and the Children (1910) by Emil Nolde



Painting by Marc Chagall



Painting by Malevich

This liberating process is seen in the artistic journey of Jackson Pollock and Mark Rothko.

An artist's inner world of feelings and emotions, at times conflicting and complimentary, becomes more important than any subject. Art transforms crises into creative freedoms. It becomes a life-giving force. It is a process of liberating our real 'self' from social disguises and pretensions, revealing in all its expressive nakedness.

Expression with certain madness reveals the primitive depth of the psyche. This whole process is a psycho-spiritual quest, as artist Emil Nolde stated that he "yielded to an irresistible desire to portray a deep spirituality, religion and inwardness; descending into the depth of human divine being" (Kuspit cited in (Bruderlin, 2003).

Kuspit explains that what is expressed in a work of art is the depiction of this passage from the unconscious to conscious spirituality with utmost vitality to a transfigured world in which physical and spiritual sensations are one.

For example, viewers are drawn to Rothko's work and have the experience of their elemental emotions by shedding their social disguises and pretensions. That may be the reason they cry in front of his paintings.

As Kuspit affirms, painting is, 'to be caught in a trap – in a vicious closed circle of rebirth and death – the rebirth of authentic selfhood and the living death of self-falsification', (Kuspit D., 1993).

Creativity is the moment of dying to our self and experiencing the rebirth. Every work of art was a process of death and a process of coming into being.

1. This phrase is often used by Paul Tillich in his writings and later by John Robinson in 'Honest to God' (1963). His chapter three is entitled 'the ground of our being'.

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BOOK
REVIEW

Pax Lumina 3(3) / 2022 / 61-63

The Extraordinary Contributions of **RUSSIAN WOMEN WARRIORS**

**This is shown in agonising detail in the book,
'The unwomanly face of war' by Nobel Laureate
Svetlana Alexievich**

The book, 'The unwomanly face of war – an oral history of women in World War II', as the title indicates, is an astounding oral history of Russian women who fought on the warfront, during the Second World War alongside the men.

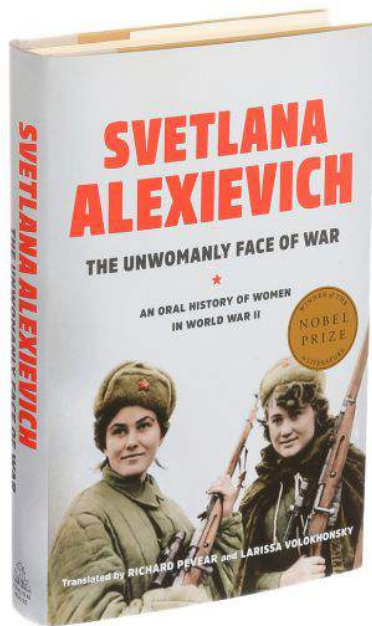
Written originally in Russian by Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich, the book was first published in 1985. It has been translated into English by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky in 2017.

Svetlana has taken the oral testimonies of people she has interviewed and placed them as first-person narratives. The book is horrifying like her other books, 'Voices from Chernobyl', 'The Last Witnesses' and 'Enchanted with Death'.

When we hear the word 'war' or 'combat', undoubtedly, the gender which comes to mind

The manly face of war is always glorified. The life of female soldiers is rarely told and seldom praised. Breaking all norms and history, **Svetlana interviewed over 2000 women who served at the warfront, from doctors to nurses, pilots, anti-aircraft gunners, machine gunners and snipers to carve out a gripping story of horror and heroism.**





is that of 'male' or 'men'. Even if we think of women soldiers the first picture that comes to our mind will be of a nurse serving a wounded soldier on a battlefield.

The manly face of war is always glorified. The life of female soldiers is rarely told and seldom praised. Breaking all norms and history, Svetlana interviewed over 2000 women who served at the warfront, from doctors to nurses, pilots, anti-aircraft gunners, machine gunners and snipers to carve out a gripping story of horror and heroism.

There is a common theme: they had to suppress all their memories of the war within themselves, without revealing the facts to their families too. **They were horrified to witness the horrible reality of war.**

For years these former women soldiers lived in silence. No one listened to their stories. But the arrival of Svetlana changed everything. Through her work she brought these women to the limelight. Finally, they too got recognised and began to be called the War Heroes of the World.

Born in 1948, in Belarus, Svetlana did not have first-hand experience of the trauma of war. But she did hear horrifying stories of blood and sweat on the battlefield from the members of her family. Belarus was a city which witnessed the tragic outcome of the Second World War.

Her journey, to find the contributions of women on the battlefield, began when she read an article about a farewell party given in Minsk for a senior female accountant. As a sniper in the Second World War, she had killed 75 people and had received 11 decorations.

The heroics of this woman captivated her imagination. Svetlana began interviewing these women warriors for over seven years in the late 1970s and early 80s. In this epic process that went into the preparation of the book, she travelled thousands of miles and visited more than 30,000 warriors to record their anecdotes.



While going through the pages, the reader gets to know what war is from a woman's viewpoint. This is a unique view. **There are also inspiring stories of women who stood up to the adversities with resilience and courage.**



During the Second World War, there was a shortage of men. And the girls, mostly teenagers, from the Soviet Union volunteered to fight for Mother Russia. The Soviet Union was the first nation to allow women pilots to fly combat missions. These young women were ecstatic when they signed up. They were filled with patriotic pride.

But there was a paradigm shift in their understanding of war when they entered the battlefield. They discovered that the reality was not glory but brutality. They found killing harder than men. Rather than working in the factories, these women were amongst men. They had to learn how to shoot guns, shoot down aircraft, and survive in the trenches. Some of them were carrying babies on their backs during the war.

One woman said, "It all happened before my eyes... Men stabbing each other. Finishing each other off. Breaking bones. Sticking a bayonet in the mouth... And this... How to describe it? I'm too weak... Too weak to describe it... In short, women don't know such men, they don't see such men at home. Neither women nor children. It's frightful to think of..."

There is a common theme: they had to suppress all their memories of the war within themselves, without revealing the facts to their families too. They were horrified to witness the horrible reality of war.

When a soldier wrote to her mother, she said that everything was fine, and she had warm clothes and boots. But the reality was different. "The person shooting at you doesn't care who you are or what gender you are," she said. "All you have to do is to fight back."

The hardships and memories of the past were too bitter for many. Some of the former women soldiers whom Svetlana approached for an interview refused to talk about their past life. One of them said she was never going to delve into her past because she did not want to recollect, re-imagine or relive what she went through.

Svetlana not only dealt with their experiences during the war, but the post-war life of the woman is also chronicled. They were not glorified; instead, they were ignored. Their countrymen turned their back on them. Even though the women were in their early twenties, men didn't want the women who fought at the war front or who spent their days on the battlefield. They said that they were rejected by men.

The men thought these women were rough and tough. They were looking for feminine softness and not the toughness of female warriors. In some cases, married women were abandoned by their husbands on account of their participation in the war. When they returned from the battle, these young ladies no longer felt young again as they were encumbered by the baggage of agony they carried within them all the time.

While going through the pages, the reader gets to know what war is from a woman's viewpoint. This is a unique view. There are also inspiring stories of women who stood up to the adversities with resilience and courage.

Franshine Francis is Assistant Professor of English, St Xavier's College, Thumba.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pax Lumina 3(2) / 2022 / 72



Dear Editor,

The article, 'Art as Metaphor' (*Pax Lumina*, March, 2022) by Dr Jacob Thomas proposes an inspiringly beautiful and original idea. Were he alive, artist Pablo Picasso himself would have been proud of this idea. It is nearing three months since the war on Ukraine broke out, and almost all diplomatic avenues and economic deterrents to stop the war have been explored and exhausted. Nevertheless, the war continues to be fought unabated.

As of today, the only sane course left to stop the war perhaps is for a one-to-one meeting to take place between the two warring Heads of State. *Guernica's* stupendous aura could provide an ideal setting for this meeting. This certainly will add moral, ethical and humanitarian dimensions to this ongoing monstrosity and might very well lead to its end.

After all, a 'war does not determine who is right – only who is left'.

But the question that arises is who will take the lead in initiating the meeting? Bearing in mind that the UN, the NATO allies and the rest of the world have not been successful in their earlier and continuing efforts, I dare suggest that His Holiness the Pope might consider stepping in to organise such a meeting.

As we all know, His Holiness has already condemned the war in unequivocal terms. I wonder if the publishers of *Pax Lumina* could endeavour to bring the article, 'Art as Metaphor' to the attention of His Holiness. Furthermore, I also would like to add that the editorial has been extremely

thought-provoking. Historically so much has been researched and documented independently about the twin scourges of rape and war.

However, while a war draws international attention, rape mostly tends to be locally archived as a piece of statistic. The editorial has courageously associated the twin scourges together to highlight the fact that the rape of an individual is no less devastating than a war on a nation.

The contents have been astutely curated. All articles on the two lead subjects provide candid insights and attempt to answer many unanswered questions. The authors need to be congratulated. I conclude by stating that many glorious and eventful miles have been travelled since its journey began, but with this issue, *Pax Lumina* has arrived.

K.S. Somasekhara Reddy, Bengaluru.

Dear editor,

Thank you for the copy of *Pax Lumina* on the subject of rape. It brings enlightenment on a burning issue, especially in our country.

God bless you,

+ **Archbishop Felix Machado**, Mumbai

Dear Editor,

Kudos to all associated with *Pax Lumina* for this well-researched edition. The masterstroke was indeed the inclusion of the war in Ukraine.

It is being abused by Russia and the world is just a spectator. All in all, a well-thought-out edition that brought tears to my eyes. Congratulations once again and looking forward to more amazing content.

Shruthi H., Trivandrum.

Dear Editor,
Congratulations on coming up with the sensitive topic of rape. Very insightful articles and interviews. The articles on the current Ukraine war were timely.

Denzil Fernandes, Delhi.

Dear Editor,
Sexual violence leads to extremely heinous crimes against the powerless, which tear apart the victims physically, mentally and psychologically. The effects, in most cases, last for the rest of their lives. The ensuing processes by the police and judicial authorities can be even more traumatising.

Having been chosen as the focus of the March 2022 issue, Pax Lumina has done justice to effectively cover various issues relating to violence and related crimes. The contributors, too, have been courageous and open to witnessing and narrating what they have gone through or witnessed. Not only the articles, but even the photographs evoke in the minds of the readers the well-deserved sympathy for the victims and revulsion for the criminals.

The articles give hope that laws will be made effective, procedures to bring about justice streamlined, and adequate measures taken for healing the wounds of survivors. As civilisation itself is housed in human beings, it is imperative that the seriousness of the crime and how rampant and damaging it is perceived and understood by everyone.

I am sure this issue will go a long way.

Regards,

K.A. Joseph, Kochi.

Dear Editor,
Pax Lumina is stunning! Not just because you took up a very challenging theme like Rape. All the issues looked so striking, so impactful, so colourful that I cannot think of any serious writing in India which can match this in its power and it's beauty. It is a marvelous journey to be taken through each issue though I could read only the January issue on 'Climate and the Poor' which is a topic that strikes a chord in my heart - not that I am insensitive to the terrible crime covered in the latest issue.

In fact it is too painful a topic to be gone through without being prepared for shocks. But the issue is so full of gripping stories and striking themes. I found myself overwhelmed with the scenes which were captured from real life and their impassioned messages of power and conviction. I honestly feel it deserves a much wider audience and much greater acceptance of its unmatched quality of content and aesthetic feel.

I can see your artistic genius and your scientific temper perfectly fused in such an intellectual enterprise of great social significance.

I am sure even for ordinary readers without much concern for more serious topics, stirring stories like Chithra Nilambur or award winning 'Ottal' will prove fascinating. A lot remains to be explored in this treasure house and meantime please accept my sincere compliments and best wishes for more glorious days for Pax Lumina.

Abraham Kurien, Calicut.



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