

Editors' introduction

The second issue of ANZJES for 2023 is largely compiled from a selection of papers presented at the 16th bi-annual conference of the Australasian Association for Communist and Post-Communist Studies (AACaPS), hosted by the School of Social Science at the University of New South Wales in February 2023.

The conference was held at the peak of the war in Ukraine – the bloodiest military conflict in Europe since World War II that resulted from the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Combined with the prolonged recovery from Covid-19, the war has resulted in political, economic and environmental shocks, felt both in Europe, Asia and the rest of the world. No wonder the main theme of this conference was ‘War, Peace, and the Post-Pandemic World: Eurasian Perspectives’. The conference focused on both issues at hand, but also more broadly on the concepts of war and peace (broadly understood to include, for example, trade conflicts, old and new Cold Wars, culture and soft power competition, etc.) in these regions, as well as contemporary and likely future developments. Topics that looked at the issue from a variety of angles, i.e. political, social, historical, economic, cultural and environmental, were welcomed to the conference.

The conference attracted over 60 papers from scholars and postgraduate students not only from Australia and New Zealand but also from many other countries in Asia, Europe and North America. It has also included an exceptional keynote speaker, Professor Pauline Jones from University of Michigan, USA – a scholar with an outstanding international reputation in research on religious influence on politics in post-communist Central Asia. The conference also celebrated the contribution to the research area by Honorary Associate Professor Stephen Fortesque – a long-standing member of the AACaPS.

This ANZJES issue represents a mix of papers from Australian and foreign scholars with European perspectives on issues of civilization clashes and world order, security, and politics related to the war in Ukraine, but also on important aspects of Australian-Europe relationships in politics and trade. It is an important contribution to European and Post-Communist scholarship in Australia.

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