

Faced with two choices, take the third

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Lead Editorial

4 August 2021
Vol. 23. No. 31



Two generating units at China's new Baihetan Hydropower Station—the second-largest in the world—went into operation on 28 June. When was the last time Australia built something like this? Photo: AFP/Jiang Wenya/Xinhua

Australia, like most nations, is facing a dramatic deficit of trust in our nation's leaders. Over decades both sides of politics have lost any semblance of putting the good of the country ahead of their political ambitions or subservience to the prevailing, failing political and economic order. They have systematically taken down the productive side of our economy, transforming the nation into a service sector, finance hub, resources quarry, and tourist destination. We have been left naked and vulnerable in the face of crisis.

LNP Senator Matt Canavan exemplified this mindset in an interview with former Trump White House Chief Strategist, Steve Bannon, on 28 July. Not only did he undermine all the National Party's talk about reviving Australian manufacturing and the development of the nation, saying, "We've got the iron ore and coking coal here, *I'd love to send it to someone else* to make steel." (Emphasis added.) Far worse, he spoke casually with a leading agitator for war and regime change about going to war against China, lying that 90 per cent of Australians were prepared for the consequences of standing up to China, even though they "don't want war". We have stood with our American allies in every war since WWI, he proudly proclaimed.

In the same vein, ALP Senator Kimberley Kitching is initiating an inquiry into manufacturing, while at the same time pushing for Australia to join the international "Magnitsky" sanctions regime that is part of the constant escalation against China (p. 4).

There is much Australia can gain from collaboration with China. When China began dismantling Communist controls over the economy, it did not allow the rise of Neoliberalism (back page). It followed a third pathway, which was pioneered by the USA (p. 10) after its Revolution overthrew the British imperial free trade system. In its past Australia also adopted aspects of that system, known as the American System of political economy, including our spectacularly successful national bank, the Commonwealth. But Labor and Liberal governments threw that away, which is why we do not have the economic and logistical capacity to provide for our citizens during the current crisis as China does. The choices we are now provided are a false dichotomy.

Only by defusing the economic and financial crisis which is driving nations to jostle for war and chaos in order to maintain control can we take the heat out of the current global situation. That is the nub of the existential crisis impelling the City of London-Wall Street apparatus to war, new fascist controls, and stirring up of suspicion and division among nations and populations, to prevent collaboration on actual solutions.

The deficit of trust makes it virtually impossible to strike the chord required to steer this nation through a crisis. We require leaders who will boldly declare that we "have nothing to fear but fear itself"; who will present solutions that everyone will instinctively recognise will work: "Let's mobilise the nation to build x, y, z, *now!* Concrete plans: Ring Rail, Iron Boomerang, Bradfield Scheme. Bring people to the regions to do it. Here's the People's Bank that will fund it. Until it can be established, we will deploy an interim facility, the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (or similar), which is empowered to issue credit. It starts tomorrow!"

The dangerous leadership vacuum is being filled by ordinary citizens joining the movement for policy change. The ability to restore institutions of government to the service of the people has been demonstrated in several campaigns on which the Citizens Party has worked closely with numerous other movements and institutions. We have seen an educated citizenry force the parliament and our leaders to account. In another example of how that process works, the Licensed Post Office Group on 3 August endorsed the Citizens Party resolution calling for the Commonwealth Postal Savings Bank, and will write to all local councils across the country urging them to do the same.

In this issue:

- Australia Post settles with Christine Holgate, but the rot remains
- Kimberley Kitching's Magnitsky bill is a fraud on the Australian Parliament
- USA to adopt Australia's failed asset recycling model
- Superannuation is a goldmine for global tax-dodgers
- Fed doubles down on bank, hedge fund rescue
- Five Eyes/NATO's Microsoft 'hacking' accusation is stage-dressing for war on China
- US-China diplomacy off to a rocky start
- China and USA concur on industrial development?
- Councils and LPOs want a Postal Bank. Join the campaign!
- Destroying Bretton Woods: The rise of the Neoliberals

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