

Coronavirus shock is chance to reshape history



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Lead Editorial

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Long-time spokesman for the Anglo-American Establishment, Henry Kissinger, now 96 years old, warned in the 4 April *Wall Street Journal* that “the coronavirus pandemic will forever alter the World Order”, and that it is urgent to start “planning for a new epoch”. However, he intoned, with ruling institutions widely discredited it is necessary to “safeguard the principles of the liberal world order”.

On the other side of the world, a 6 April article in *The New Daily* about what the post-coronavirus world might look like cited Milton Friedman, co-founder of the notorious neoliberal Mont Pelerin Society (MPS), saying: “Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around.” Another notorious economist, Lord John Maynard Keynes, once observed that ideas were vastly more powerful than vested interests.

No political force has left more ideas “lying around” Australia than us. In addition, the Citizens Party uniquely exposed the MPS for thirty years, revealing how its prescriptions minutely infiltrated policy-making by effecting an ideological shift against the physical economic principles that protected industry and growth and therefore, people. In the midst of today’s health emergency the Citizens Party is working closely with a brains trust of parliamentarians, economists, banking and business experts and others who are bringing clear solutions to the table to excise the policies that left our nation defenceless against a microscopic enemy.

A raft of other economists and commentators are foreshadowing that the population will not accept a return to orthodox economic know-how. “Officials inside Treasury are drafting plans for an entirely new economy”, wrote Karen Middleton in *The Saturday Paper* on 4 April. “Traditional ideological positions are being jettisoned without a backward glance and there is a growing view that the economy as we know it now may never be the same.”

Numerous economists are cited, discussing what is an effective, if temporary, nationalisation of private hospitals and childcare, and other expected takeovers of strategic businesses that may otherwise cease to exist, with a general consensus that we’re in a different world, and that we cannot go back to the way things were.

Writing for *The Conversation* on 2 April, University of Queensland economist John Quiggin described how “Australia’s post-war recovery program provides clues as to how to get out of this”. He discussed the “success of the WWII economy in mobilising all available resources, including workers who had long been unemployed and apparently unemployable”. With a productive and growing economy the big expansion of debt necessary was not a major concern, and was easily reduced. The end of the pandemic will see drastic economic controls relaxed, wrote Quiggin, but “we should resist any attempt to return to the market liberal economy of the past few decades”. It exposes us to crisis with or without pandemics. A “strong government with a strong commitment to providing security and prosperity” is required.

“The world we knew before the coronavirus will not return”, said former Keating adviser and Office of National Assessments ex-head Allan Gyngell in the *Australian Financial Review* on 31 March. State sovereignty will be reasserted, self-sufficiency will grow.

Even neoconservative journalist Greg Sheridan wrote a piece for the 18 March *Australian*, titled “Why this COVID-19 pandemic will kill globalisation”. In the period ahead, he said, people “will want their national government to create conditions that create jobs”. He concluded: “In times of crisis, like coronavirus, it is the nation that counts”.

The most pernicious act in the neoliberal takeover of Australia was the demand in the 1981 Campbell

Financial System Inquiry Report that all public banks, including the Commonwealth Bank, must be privatised. They duly were, robbing the nation of crucial tools for national investment. The one exception is the Clean Energy Finance Corporation, which we show (p. 4) could direct public investments to return the economy to its true purpose— meeting the needs of the people.

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