

The Friday Forum

To be held by Teams Meeting

NOTE: Different starting time

Fri 16th July 2021 9.30am AEST (Melb, Syd, Bris)
(Thurs 15th July 7.30pm EDT, 6.30pm CDT)

Historical lessons for post-COVID capitalism

There is no doubt that the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted the global economy. Some regions of the world have been in lockdown for a year, re-shaping local economies and work habits. Some sectors have been devastated, while others have shown record profits. Global stock markets faltered briefly, but then soared spectacularly. Both USA and Canada were nearing 'full' employment prior to the pandemic, but now have official unemployment levels nearing ten per cent. Everywhere, 'essential' workers turned out to be those paid the least, while schooling was exposed as the fundamental infrastructure underpinning economic activity. International trade routes have been disrupted, nations are unexpectedly outbidding one another for resources in ways that could well worsen our climate crisis and communities worldwide have experienced very strange fluctuations in the supply of toilet paper. The mass annual migration of tertiary students, largely from the 'east' to the 'west' ceased or slowed, causing chaos in higher education sectors worldwide. For Australia, this was one of our top-5 exports, but few political or university leaders expect its full return. Many aspects of global capitalism are unlikely to be the same again. There are continuities, however, as well as changes – perhaps including change itself. Even before COVID, global capitalism was already evidently undergoing significant transformations. The 2008 global financial crisis combined with the looming climate crisis in a pre-COVID decade of uncertainty.

How can history help us to understand what to expect from 'recovery'? What, other than the pandemic, do we need to recover from? Do we need, in some ways, to recover from capitalism itself? What new understandings of historical capitalism have we been able to come to over the past decade and how can they help us think about the future?

Chair: Dr Hannah Forsyth
School of Arts, ACU

Speakers:

Dr Elizabeth Shermer, Loyola University, Chicago

Prof. Sven Beckert, Harvard University

Dr Yves Rees, La Trobe University

Prof. Paul Kenny IHSS, ACU



(Image sourced dreamstime.com)