

A Deeper Look at the Green New Deal

Transcript of Charles Eisenstein's Talk

<https://charleseisenstein.org/video/a-deeper-look-at-the-green-new-deal/>

So I've read a little bit about the Green New Deal, and read some of the critiques of the Green New Deal, and you know, a lot of the critiques basically say that it's economically impossible, unrealistic. How would we pay for all of that? It's not going to generate the economic returns that would be necessary, et cetera, et cetera. And I think what these critiques are actually pointing at is that, yeah, it is *not* going to work within the system as we have it right now without a massive shift in our values and priorities. For example, away from military spending, away from the prison industrial complex. It's going to require a shift of focus that can only come from a shift of values. And the Green New Deal is also part of this shift in values that says, "Here is what we hold valuable; here's what we care about."

And I think that we have to be upfront about that. We cannot pretend that it's gonna fit into the direction that society has been going. And in a way, the name "Green New Deal" conveys some of that, drawing on the New Deal, which was a watershed in American history away from laissez-faire capitalism and toward "Yeah, we've gotta all take care of each other."

So this is an expansion of "We all need to take care of each other" to include non-human beings among the "other" that we are taking care of. So it's an expansion of community, an expansion of our togetherness, to include what we are now recognizing to be part of our well-being. It's an expression of the uprising knowledge that we cannot be wealthy or healthy as a society if we're living in an environment that is deteriorating, that is losing its health and its richness.

So on that level, I am very moved by the Green New Deal. And I think that part of bringing it into realization is to be very upfront about those values and to understand that these values are rising even in people who might be politically opposed to us. So we need to be able to speak to that part of them that is stepping into care for this Earth also. And, still, also stepping into care for each other, the people who are feeling not taken care of. And we say, "Yeah, we want to be here for you, we want to be here for your place. We're in this together."

We have to affirm those values and not try to smuggle it in and say "This is gonna make capitalism as we know it work better." And I'm not saying that we have to say that we're socialists, or something like that, but we at least have to say, "Capitalism, what is capitalism?" It depends on what capital is, which means it depends on what we hold valuable. Because money and property are agreements. They're created by a social contract.

So what do we hold valuable? How do we hold it valuable? How do we assign value? Where do we put our priorities? What do we cultivate in the world? We have to begin to enunciate that. And I think that this, ultimately, even if it sounds politically naive, that's the authenticity and heart speech that really make people come alive and that motivate people to transcend their narrow interests and transcend their political identities that might be attached to some existing

set of policies or some political brand, basically. We have to speak beyond those things and not be pigeonholed and categorized as, "Oh, this is just something coming from the left," but to speak a universal language. And I think that'll work because love of Earth, love of life, love of nature is universal among people who identify as liberal, conservative, whatever. This is a growing consciousness today. So let's be forthright about that, about what really is moving us here.