

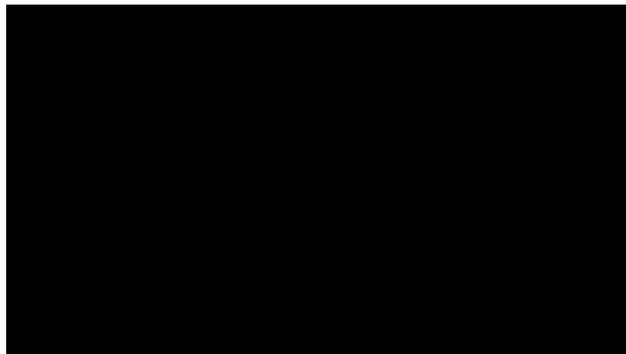
NOT EVEN PAST



Talk: "Hope, Agency and Transformation: Lessons from the Coronavirus Pandemic and Tackling Our Planetary Emergency" by John Barry, Queen's College Belfast

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On the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, Dr. John Barry webcasted from Queen's University Belfast, to speak on "Hope, Agency and Transformation: Lessons from the Coronavirus Pandemic and Tackling Our Planetary Emergency."



We have been here before. Massive social and economic disruption. Rapid and massive intervention by states around the world to minimize or prevent social disaster. Except it was the 2008-09 global financial crisis where states bailed out the banks. In the wake of that crisis there was a lot of talk about, and an opportunity for a 'green new deal,' using the various stimulus packages being proposed by states to usher in a step change in the economy, encompassing a low carbon, inclusive agenda for a different economy. But it failed. Now states have been forced to 'bail out the people,' find money to shore up national health care systems, leading to them effectively implement a 'basic income' for workers to compensate them for staying at home, to nationalize all public health resources within their jurisdictions, and to inject trillions of dollars in 'quantitative easing for the people' as an emergency measure. Vital though these state interventions are, this emergency and stabilization strategy by states needs also to move onto thinking about what a post-pandemic economy looks like. Is it a return to the 'status quo ante,' a completely understandable 'back to normal' desire, or should we also be thinking of 'building back better'? To paraphrase a popular meme on social media, "The coronavirus has cancelled the future. But that's OK. It was a pretty crap one anyhow."

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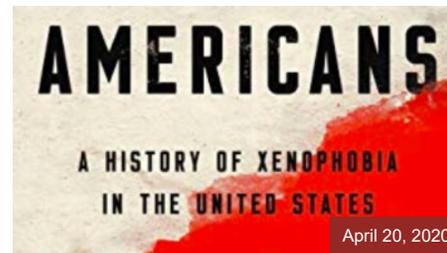
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John Barry is Professor of Green Political Economy in the School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics at Queen's University Belfast. He has written or edited numerous books, articles and book chapters on green political theory, the political economy of unsustainability, the green movement, the politics, economics and policy of the transition to a low carbon economy, republicanism and green politics, eco-feminism, Irish and Northern Irish politics and culture, interdisciplinary approaches to sustainability research, Q methodology and academic activism. His most recent book, *The Politics of Actually Existing Unsustainability: Human Flourishing in a Climate-Changed, Carbon Constrained World*, was published by Oxford University Press in 2012. He is a former co-chair of the Green Party in Northern Ireland, a sitting Green Party Councillor, a founding member of Holywood Transition Town, a director of the Association for the Study of Peak Oil (Ireland), and co-founder of two think tanks, Green House and the Centre for Progressive Economics. He is winner of the PSA Mackenzie Prize for best politics book of 1999. He blogs at www.marxistlentalist.blogspot.com. Read more about his work on his [QUB Research Profile page](#), and at Academia.edu, and follow his work on Twitter at [@ProfJohnBarry](https://twitter.com/ProfJohnBarry).



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