

The HOPEFUL REALIST Newsletter:
Looking at the World Today as if Facts Matter

Robert MacNeil Christie, PhD

Here we explore the latest facts, actions, and perspectives on the New Great Transformation of the Earth System, as it unfolds before our eyes. We apply the Hopeful Realism we all need to work through the greatest predicament in human history.

Latest News from the Hopeful Realist

Human Folly: The Illusion of Primacy of over the Climate/ecological Emergency. Well, that is a rather long title, but it seems that folly drives the dominant public discussions of what is important or problematic in the world today.

The extractive plunder of the “resources” of the Earth System continues to grow, and with it the direct ecological damage from both extraction itself and processing chemical and physical material. These, as well as the other production and consumption activities, all require the energy supplied by fossil fuels. Meanwhile, the focus of most public discussion of “issues” is on the various forms of chaos that emanate from power struggles for domination of nations and peoples all over the world.

It is worth noting that every one of the armed conflicts in the world today, both ignores and contributes severely to the degradation of the human habitat—the Earth System. Military combat and civil strife over immediate issues of domination and subordination drive the broader issue of human destruction of our habitat further and further from public awareness.

Putin’s destruction of the human infrastructure of Ukraine, along with as many of its people as he can kill, directly disturbs both that nation’s rich agricultural territory and the ecosystems of the region.

The Israeli destruction of Gaza, killing about 35,000 of its people, seriously wounding more than twice that many and starving the rest, constitutes a massive ecological disaster, which is almost never mentioned in the public media. How can that not be considered a crime, against both the Earth and humanity?

Much the same can be said of Yemen, Somalia, and uncounted other locations of human-induced ecological as well as human tragedy. It is all about politics—that abstract notion of who should control whom and to what extent one group can exploit and destroy the other. But in all cases, the consequences are anything but abstract. Here is where we can see the clear insanity

of increasingly autocratic regimes. It makes one feel like becoming an anarchist. After all, who *does* have the “right” to rule?

Meanwhile, the Republican Party in Washington State voted to put in their political platform the elimination of democracy, asserting that it is a dangerous trend. Well, unfortunately for human wellbeing, the growing political trend seems to be in the opposite direction, toward autocratic attempts to build a movement toward fascism.

The formation of that new publishing company, Omega Publishers, which will publish *Holding It Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation*, under its imprint, Bear Claw Press, is near complete. Launch Date for the book remains a moving target, but will surely be within the second quarter of the year. Our award-winning book designer, Nick Zelinger has produced a very impressive book cover design, and is almost finished with the book’s interior formatting. The tentative publication target date is now May 30, 2024, after the pre-publication reviews are in. By publishing the book with a new independent press, we control almost everything, which of course takes more work—and we are learning a great deal about the rapidly changing publishing business. Where is ol’ Ben Franklin when we need him?

My eBook **HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto** remains available as a **free** download from [Kindle Unlimited](#). The regular Kindle eBook price is \$6.99. Please give it a rating/review on [GoodReads.com](#). Or, [review and rate](#) *Hopeful Realism* on its Amazon page. Do so by clicking the button on the lower left of the book’s Amazon page below “Customer Reviews,” and say a few words about what you think about the issues and how I frame them.

Note: Past issues of this Newsletter are available, archived on my web site:

<https://thehopefulrealist.com/hopeful-realist-newsletter/>

LOOK UP! A Bi-weekly Featured Commentary

Conflation Blues. What I have been hearing and seeing on the news about the widespread protests on university campuses lately—and the fearful irrational inappropriate over-reactions by too many administrations—has been very disappointing at best.

Unfortunately, all sorts of things have been conflated with one another. It is not only some of the students who are doing this; the news media is at least as culpable for this grievous error. International politics, warfare, and mass murder are about so much more than “taking sides.”

First, even as the International Criminal Court (ICC) contemplates issuing arrest warrants for top Israeli military officials, possibly including Netanyahu, who directs them, any protest of the IDF atrocities against the Palestinians in Gaza and its support for escalated ‘settler’ violence against Palestinians in the West Bank, is characterized as “anti-Semitism.” Speaking against the criminal

behavior of a few high officials is treated as an attack on the entire Jewish people. The people are conflated with the criminals.

Politicians in the U.S., for example, have for decades feared being accused of anti-Semitic speech or action if they utter any criticism at all. After all, there is a real problem of anti-Semitism in the U.S., and much of the rest of the world. Not only has the Israel lobby been strong, but liberals are quite reasonably intolerant of the anti-Semitism that is often associated with the right wing of the Republican party.

On top of all that, I have noticed a distinct escalation of institutional rhetoric regarding anyone who dares to protest continued pollution of our ecosystems—our habitat—by the fossil-fueled empire of growth. Now, a peaceful protestor who merely holds up a sign in frustration with the phony rhetoric of ‘green’ propaganda or pleads for reduction in carbon emissions, is vilified as an “eco-terrorist,” or simply a terrorist.

Terrorists kill people; climate action protestors are pleading for the controlling institutions and the power elites who run them to stop killing people by expanding the toxic output from their extractive ecocidal industries. The very epitome of conflation is to label as a destroyer any objector to destruction.

For more Hopeful Realist discussions of these and related matters, go to various blog posts at: <https://thehopefulrealist.com/the-hopeful-realist-blog/>

Today's Featured Image:

Human folly is not just a matter of people being stupid, or even of self-induced ignorance. It is more a matter of what Orwell called the “Universal Deceit.” Much of it results from the widespread practice of propaganda by the power elites of the world. One form of growing propaganda is the criminalization of civil protest—a fundamental human right.



Photo credit: New York Times

The students at Columbia University protesting the destruction of Gaza and its people are demanding that the university divest its endowment of investments in Israeli companies that profit from the war on Gaza. Strikingly articulate Isabella Ramirez, Editor-in-Chief of the Columbia Daily Spectator, the highly respected student newspaper, noted that contrary to national press reporting, she directly observed that the student-protestor encampment was consistently peaceful. All across the nation, campus administrators are over-reacting to protests by calling in police to clear out protesters as news outlets conflate protests against brutality toward Palestinians with support for Hamas.

Books and other Sources Related to the New Great Transformation

Some bright lights breaking into our dark times are the new public intellectuals appearing in social media. One such source of light is **Erin Remblance**, a young Australian commentator on climate, economy, and society, who has built a strong following for her insightful commentary and analysis of our deepening climate emergency and the economic sources and solutions we need. Another is **Rachel Donald**, who writes at *Planet Critical* on climate corruption and many related issues. Both these feminine voices for peace and real progress offer remarkable insights into the chaos and corruption of industrial modernism.

Rachel Donald. *Planet Critical*, newsletter, posts, and podcast on Substack.
<https://www.planetcritical.com/>

Among her numerous interviews with key people on a variety of key issues, Rachel Donald's interview with [Erin Remblance](#) on important tipping points inspires creative thinking. Their conversation was riddled with insights and creative analysis. Rachel's essay on the necessity of

a [material transformation](#) of the global economy is a must read for anyone considering the so-called 'green transition.' Her essay, "State Violence is the Norm," offers a rich analysis of why 'rewilding' must be a serious consideration. Well, the list goes on. Rachel Donald is one of the most prolific public intellectuals around. Erin Remblance is too, and her work can be found on LinkedIn as well as on her Substack platform, [Protecting the Future](#), as well as on [Illuminem](#) and elsewhere. Both these women are must reads for moving beyond the conventional thinking of the dominator culture that pervades public discussion of the climate, ecological, economic, and societal crises that confront the global political economy of growth.

Quotable Quotes

I highlighted the work of Erin Remblance and Rachel Donald in this issue of *The Hopeful Realism Newsletter* because their writing speaks truth to power. I know that phrase has become a cliché, but in this instance it has the meaning I intend to convey. I also wrote above on the widespread practice of conflation, a very dangerous form of intellectual dishonesty, or at least delusion, because it is a major form of collective self-deceit that falsely justifies collective hatred and violence. George Orwell understood that so very well.

In a time of Universal Deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act.

~ George Orwell

Pretense is a dominant mode of operation for most corporate and government 'authorities.' The U.S. government pretends to spread democracy around the world while propping up autocratic regimes that support American corporate power. (There are exceptions of course, such as defending the Ukrainian people from the barbarism of Putin.) One of the most important consequences of the universal deceit that Orwell speaks of is the dehumanization of the 'Other.' That is exactly what the Israelis and Palestinians do to each other. No people on Earth should be without a home, and to take away the home of the Other is a crime against humanity.

See you in two weeks. Meanwhile, stay safe, say hello to a neighbor or stranger, check out my blog posts at [The Hopeful Realist.com](https://TheHopefulRealist.com) and read [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto](#).