

## **LOOK UP! 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**

#### **MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!**

*May first is the traditional date that was once celebrated as the beginning of Spring, with 'maypoles' and picnics. But the international distress call, "MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!" is something quite different. It began being used to replace the Morse code for "SOS" in 1923 for voice air distress calls, which was not easily understood when spoken on a radio channel. Because so much air traffic in 1923 was between Croydon Airport near London, and Le Bourget Airport in Paris, Frederick Stanley Mockford, officer-in-charge of radio at Croydon Airport, when requested by his superiors to find an alternative word, came up with the term "mayday," the phonetic equivalent of the French m'aider.*

I write this two days before May 1, 2026, and I feel like shouting to the world, "MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!" While the world is distracted from the deepest mega-poly-crisis in human history—the impending Earth System ecological collapse and the societal collapses that are sure to follow—a foolish criminal war of choice is hastening the early disintegration of the global political economy by cutting off global supplies of oil, gas, and fertilizer. Even as more regions suffer from failing food production due to climate chaos and the consequent unpredictable torrential rains and droughts, nations fight for control over the very energy products the consumption of which is the primary cause of Earth System destabilization.

Oddly, the constraint on global energy supplies due to the closing/blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, is reducing fossil fuel consumption and even stimulating more use of solar and wind power in some places. Meanwhile, the Israel-U.S. war on Iran is producing vast quantities of pollution. It's a lose-lose proposition. This war is the extension of twisted politics on all sides, and in this case is caused by sociopathic egos. That is why our allies refuse to participate; they see the insanity. Politics in the industrial age is the extension of struggles over control of fossil fuels. The modern world runs on fossil fuels, and that dependence reaches almost every aspect of modern life.

This is why what I call the imminent New Great Transformation of society is inevitable, most likely in a very bad way. But a major turn toward global realism—facing the facts of Human

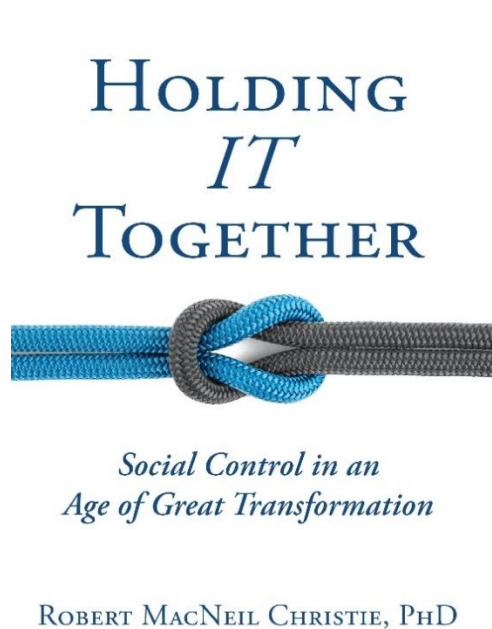
excessive extraction, use, and waste of energy and materials causing Earth System destabilization—and the seeking of immediate and rapid strategies to restabilize the world upon which we and other sentient beings depend on for survival, is our only basis for hope.

The worst effects of the escalating Anthropocene may yet be moderated by swift collective human action, which considering the current state of affairs, gets a rather low probability estimate. Only major social mobilization seems capable of causing the “world’s leaders” to recognize and act on Mahatma Gandhi’s famous admonition to himself, “There go my people, I must follow them. I am their leader.”

~ ~ ~ \* ~ ~ ~

I know that putting the advert below for ***Holding IT Together*** in every issue of this newsletters may seem redundant, but, hey, it costs me nothing. I don’t charge myself a penny. So, it is a free reminder to buy and read the book. How could I turn that down?

.....



Published July 26, 2024, and the product of decades of research and reflection, ***Holding IT Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation*** explains the global changes that have resulted in the catastrophic convergence of the crises of climate, ecosystems, economies, and politics, and the societal chaos, which we now see intensifying every day. In it, I also describe the deep changes that are necessary in order to effectively head off societal collapse so we can more comfortably shape the New Great Transformation of our institutions and our ways of living necessary in a world of less intensive energy consumption. We *will* transition away from fossil fuels, like it or not, and the sooner and more intentionally the better. Later would be catastrophic. Petroleum products provided great affluence for some for a while, yet are already causing chaos and environmental destruction for everyone.

“**Buy it!**” says the author.

Here are excerpts from some prominent editorial reviews:

*A dense and sweeping call to change the direction of human society before it’s too late. Still, his core message is strikingly direct and forceful. It’s hard to imagine any reader not being convinced that just such a massive change is necessary. ~ Kirkus Reviews*

*Christie embeds history surrounding social deconstruction and construction with the kinds of modern references that readers will relish...[He] offers an unprecedented opportunity for readers to apply the basics of economic understanding to the major issues facing humanity's survival today... Hope is embedded throughout his approach. ~ Midwest Book Review*

*Both a wake-up call and a guide, this book calls for decisive action toward a sustainable, equitable future, making it an essential resource for policymakers, activists, and concerned citizens alike. ~ The Prairies Book Review*

With the publication of [\*\*\*Holding It Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation\*\*\*](#), by Bear Claw Press, I seek a wide span of possible readers. After all, the book's content has important implications for the lives of everyone.

If you are a researcher or teacher and would be interested in sending me a short review (two or three paragraphs), or would consider it for use in a class you teach, please go to the [BearClawPress.com](http://BearClawPress.com) website, click on the [Review/Exam Copies](#) tab (upper right) fill in the information, and I will send you a [pdf](#) or [ePub](#) copy free. Also, copies can be bought at a nice discount from the list price at Bear Claw Press.

Otherwise, please buy, read, and offer a customer [rating-review](#) for ***Holding IT Together*** on [Goodreads.com](http://Goodreads.com) or Amazon.com. Without a significant number of customer reviews, good or bad, the Amazon algorithm will ignore a book into oblivion, regardless of its quality.

Some have estimated that Amazon.com sells around seventy percent of all books sold. Nevertheless, I hope many who buy ***Holding IT Together*** will do so at their local independent bookstore. Of course, both paper and eBook versions are available on [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) as well as from independent bookstores via [Bookshop.org](http://Bookshop.org). It is now also available at a discount directly from the publisher, [BearClawPress.com](http://BearClawPress.com)

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](http://GoodReads.com). Or, [review and rate](#) *Hopeful Realism* on its Amazon page. You can 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:** As always, 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***

## Epidemic Insanity

We are all familiar with epidemics. We have annual epidemics of influenza of one kind or another. Then, if we chose to remember the recent past, we would not forget the COVID-19 pandemic? That one peaked in 2020 worldwide until assisted by imperfect public health measures and a remarkable new kind of vaccine, its own natural cycle sent it into decline once it had killed a lot of people and made many more very sick. Defending against it was constrained by political distortions of 'American Individualism' and fear of institutional science. Causes of death included irrational denial fueled by political corruption and projection of conspiracy theories.

Whatever flaws the CDC and the National Institutes of Health may have had, the evidence for the efficacy of the new *Messenger RNA (mRNA)* type vaccine was clear and available to anyone who was interested in the facts. All manner of disinformation and denial clouded the public discourse on optimal public health practices and resulted in a quasi-social movement opposing all vaccines. Is that insanity? Well, it is certainly a loss of a sense of reality...

We are also aware of social epidemics. In the 1960s it was miniskirts, marijuana, and more recently multi-tasking, and today, MAGA and 'screen time.' Now, we may see some of these 'trends' as fads and others as progress, or regress. But they all, and we could list many more, have certain characteristics that are the same. Contagion is one.

Insanity is in one sense a technical psychiatric term, or is it? On the other hand, it commonly refers to someone "going off the rails," or acting in extremely irrational and immoral ways. But can there be an epidemic of insanity? Yes. I can't imagine how the Salem witch trials could not be considered an epidemic of collective insanity. Some evidence suggests that we might be experiencing an epidemic of political insanity right now.

Of course, I have heard the word used in diverse other ways, for example, to express amazement at a magnificent musical performance—as in the praise, "That's insane!" heaped on some talented contestants on *The Voice*. Or, in an entirely opposite way, some use it to express outrage at the cruel prosecution of a war of choice or at the commission of genocidal attacks on an entire population.

I am sure that "insane" has been applied to the actions of Musk's DOGE, or to the ongoing attempts of the current regime to dismantle all components of the federal government that do not directly contribute to the ever-growing wealth of the American Oligarchy. Here, the distinction between rational evil and psychiatric insanity is a bit blurry. Two things can be true at the same time. The unspoken intent of the trumpery is to take from the (relatively) poor beneficiaries of federal programs in order to give to the mega-rich donors and political plunderers of the nation. That is calculated, deceitful, and intentional destructiveness in the guise of governmental efficiency. And, it is also a complete denial of the reality of consequences for all, including the Epstein class.

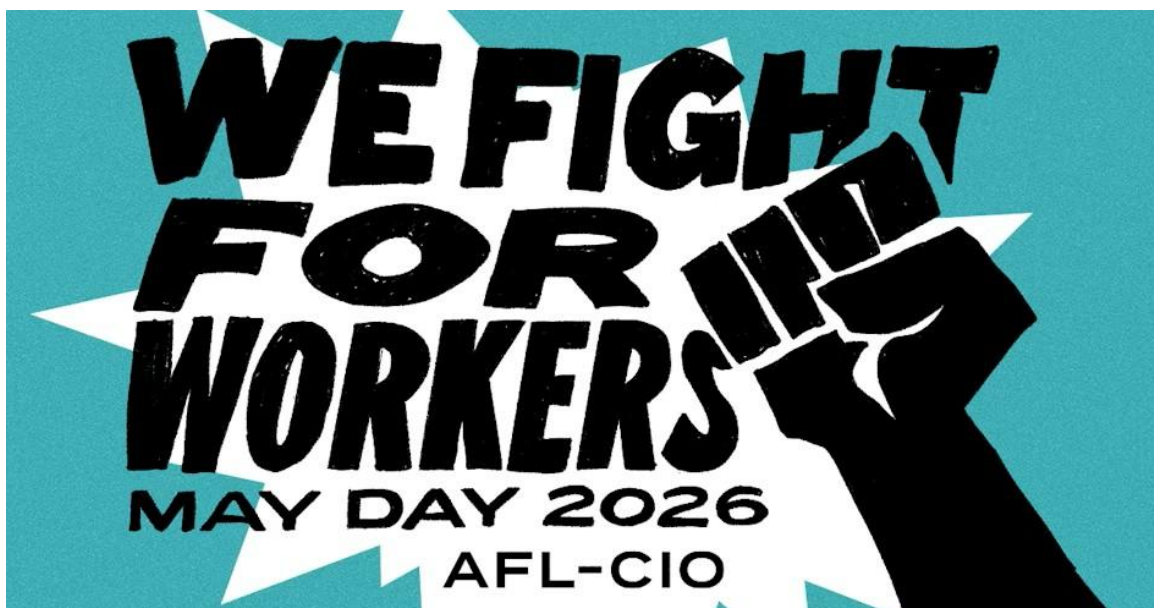
To the extent that the MAGA movement supported such insane political action—in the sense of insane social destructiveness—that movement could be termed insane. On the other hand, the recent swelling of opposition to regime actions that are directly detrimental to the entire population—except, temporarily, for the 'Epstein class,' of course—might be considered a

societal surge of *sanity*. The recent “No Kings” rallies all across the nation, and in other countries too, having brought out upwards of 8-million people. That is the emergence of an anti-insanity movement. Let’s see what happens on May 1, 2026, the May Day coming up in a couple of days, when the “[May Day Strong](#)” national protest to “*to demand a nation that puts workers over billionaires, with many refusing business as usual through No School. No Work. No Shopping.*” takes place. It will certainly be a national emergency distress call.

**MAYDAY! MAYDAY! MAYDAY!**

***Today’s Featured Image:***

***Remember unions? They were quite popular in the 1950s. Back then, we also had a progressive income tax and most of the tax loopholes that lobbyists later persuaded Congress to put in the tax code to favor big business and the wealthiest individuals, did not yet exist. Employment was high and most workers drew a living wage. And, businesses still made a handsome profit. Where are we now?***



Source: AFL-CIO <https://www.mobilize.us/mayday/event/940870/>

***Well, for decades the corporate war on unions reduced the number of unionized workers. In 1955, about 34% of workers were members of a union. That pressured non-unionized employers to offer livable wages too. Today, union membership is down to ten percent of all workers, mostly nurses and government workers. Like all large organizations, some unions had their problems; the teamsters were famous for the corruption of their leaders, who could not have imagined the level of corruption in the current MAGA regime. However, they did succeed in assuring that their members made a living wage. In the 1950s,***

***businesses, including large corporations, paid progressive income taxes; government had the funding to minimize debt in performing its functions; families could afford to pay their rent/mortgage, food on the table, and often their children's college tuition. So, today, the powers that be proclaim "progress" because they are eliminating jobs with robots and AI. The main result is a plethora of billionaires and a surfeit of middle-class workers, many of whom have slid into poverty. "May Day Strong" is a growing message from the people: government is supposed to serve the people, not the billionaires.***

### ***Books and other Sources Related to the New Great Transformation***

I know the whole "Epstein files" thing is hard to follow. So many files, so many redactions, not of the victims' identities—as the law required—but of the perpetrators and enablers. Well, there is so much more to it than protecting the president from exposure of the details of his ten-year close relationship with the world's most famous pervert. Independent journalist Anand Giridharadas has written a series of articles on the nature and larger meaning of the perversion and power of the "Epstein class," which is an important source of understanding.

Anand Giridharadas. 2026. "The Epstein Class Series," in five 'chapters.' *The Ink* (Substack platform). <https://the.ink/>.

It is important to understand that the perverse power of the Epstein class reaches much further than the network of pedophile predators and their personal abuses of (mostly) young girls. It is my belief that the primary reason for the continued refusal of the Trumpist Justice Department is that exposure of all the players would reveal many of the world's most powerful people in the world, not just Trump. That is why Jeffrey Epstein was killed in what was quickly claimed a suicide, even as the critical section of the prison surveillance recording of his cell block vanished. If there ever was a case of 'class consciousness' it exists in the Epstein class. They will do anything to protect and expand their power and wealth.

### ***Quotable Quotes***

I don't remember where I found this quote, but it seems rather appropriate for the times in which we live. One could take it as a determinacy .and conclude that there is no hope. On the other hand, the few ***trying*** to dominate the rest of us is a conditional. They do not have to succeed.

*The history of humanity is the history of a few trying to live at the expense of the many.*

~ Jorge Wagensberg

The recent/current upsurge of anger and outrage at the multiple machinations of the upstart wannabe dictator and his cronies is a foundation for hope that the people will mobilize

sufficiently to exert the force of persuasion, either to radically change policies and practices, or to pressure the perpetrators of plunder, perversion, and violence to get out of the way of those who are willing to take on the greatest challenges humanity has ever faced.

~ ~ \* ~ ~

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](http://The Hopeful Realist.com), read [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto.](#), and, buy my new book,  [\*\*\*Holding It Together: Social Control in an Age of Great Transformation\*\*\*](#) .