

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

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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

As the COP27 Meetings Wrap up, Do We Have a Climate-Emergency Action Plan or What?

You probably didn't have to pay much attention to know the answer to that one. I was not alone in 'forecasting' another COP-failure in the 27th attempt to achieve some international agreement to take action on the increasingly dangerous climate emergency. Many climate activists, from the now famous Greta Thunberg on down to the least known member of Extinction Rebellion, have expressed their frustration with decades of empty promises. It does not take all that much analysis to realize that glittering generalities, empty promises, arbitrary targets for emissions reductions or global temperature-rise limit by some future date, ***mean nothing***, beyond providing more glaring evidence of the proliferation of cover stories by governments, international organizations, and corporations alike. The conference runs from November 6 to the 18th. I hope *something* concrete comes of it.

But let's face it. Both governments and giant international corporations, the biggest and most powerful institutions in the world, continue to subsidize and invest in more and more fossil-fuel developments as the world heats up around them. They remain unwilling to turn away from their efforts to gain more short-term profits from the global addiction to fossil-fueled energy projects before it all comes tumbling down.

So, what has all the hoopla in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, accomplished, now that COP27 is almost over? Well, some leading experts have presented "[10 New Insights in Climate Science](#)." They are not really as new as they are important. However, as more evidence is assessed, the urgency of these insights—or, rather, key factors that must be addressed to respond effectively to the climate emergency—becomes unequivocally obvious. If COP27 does not take concrete action on any of these insights it will have failed. The most important question of all is whether and when major institutions will take the immediate and severely disruptive actions that recognizing these insights requires.

Well, anyone who is paying attention knows that we urgently need severe global climate action. By severe I mean cutting carbon emissions extremely and rapidly, just to slow the ongoing damage we continue to cause ecosystems and climate stability. Many things that are very important in their own right pale by comparison to the desperate need to stop the flow of carbon into the biosphere. That calls for actions that are inherently disruptive to 'business as usual' in the entire industrialized world.

As of Monday, Reuters reported the COP27 negotiations were “bogged down and behind schedule” addressing the many important points at issue. Meanwhile, brazen major gas executives promoted themselves as ‘climate leaders.’ Xi and Biden pledged to begin cooperating again on climate change. Concrete real-world climate-action decisions were nowhere to be found.

Necessary radical institutional changes are not on the agendas of the corporate and governmental ‘influencers’ who dominate the deliberations at the 27th Conference of the Parties. Some things are very hard to change—even though they must change very soon—especially when the ‘parties’ with the power are so heavily invested in the status quo.

Meanwhile, U.S. President Biden basks in the glow of strong Democratic candidates fending off the predicted “red wave” of MAGA Republican victories that failed to materialize in the midterm elections. The majority, especially young voters, have rejected election-denying gerrymandering, voter suppression and the anti-democratic forces behind such attempts to corrupt the electoral process.

Biden made what one might denigrate as a ‘cameo appearance’ at the COP27 conference. He stopped over on Friday and gave a speech, in which he derided the kinds of human rights violations practiced by the brutal dictatorship of COP27’s host nation, Egypt. Then he flew off for G-20 meetings in Asia, and notably talks in Cambodia with Xi Jinping, the autocratic president of the People's Republic of China (PRC). His goal was to shore up relations with the biggest, fastest growing nation in the world. However, after having touting climate action as a major policy priority, such a cursory stopover at COP27, does not look like climate leadership to me.

After their “candid” talks, Biden assured us that war over Taiwan is not imminent and that Xi Jinping’s and the Biden administration would continue talks in the interests of peace. What about the global corporate political economy’s war on the climate?

My eBook *HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto* continues to fare well in Amazon’s sales rankings, mostly downloaded free from Kindle Unlimited. I’m always looking for feedback from readers. [GoodReads.com](https://www.goodreads.com) is a great resource for finding books that you will want to read; it’s readers talking with readers about what they read. I use it to find and evaluate new books on areas of interest. Please read, [review and rate](#) *Hopeful Realism* on Amazon and/or on Goodreads.com. On Amazon, 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 explain them. If you don’t do Kindle, email me and I will send you a .pdf version directly.

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

LOOK UP! A Bi-weekly Featured Commentary

The world is still on track toward accelerated environmental chaos, as the reality of radically changing environmental conditions in the early stages of the Anthropocene continue unabated. Tragically, they remain mostly unacknowledged by the ‘authorities,’ whose legitimacy is increasingly challenged by facts. Authority, after all, means ‘legitimate power,’ and the legitimacy of most power elites rests on progressively weaker ground. Why? Because legitimacy in most contexts rests on whether or not the power exercised supports the interests of the public that ‘authority’ is supposed to lead.

Take national politics, a topic of which I grow weary, even as its importance grows with every failed policy and every autocratic attempt. It is bad enough that national governments—in particular that of the U.S.A.—continue down the path of least resistance, supporting endless economic growth on a finite planet. Governments act in the interests of the corporate and financial elites in growing their wealth at the expense of the health of the people and planet. On top of that, we get a narcissist sociopath who continues to encourage the worst of racist xenophobia and welcomes the fascist barbarians at the gate.

The majority of Americans have now exhaled a great sigh of relief, seeing that many voters, who have grown weary of the craziness, turned away from the megalomaniacal MAGA Republican candidates. A large minority of Congressmen have no trace of a moral compass, to the extent that they would vote against accepting completely legitimate Electoral College votes. Then within days of their lives threatened by the president's mob, they rationalized and excused the violence of a Trumped up insurrection. They knew that the same pathological president would 'primary' them out of their job if they were to exercise whatever ethical or patriotic sensibility they might have mustered, but did not.

So, now perhaps, the real work can begin. It will be no easier than before the insurrection, even with the Republican sycophants in disarray. But if the Democrats are anywhere near true to their word, they will become very aggressive in fighting for the survival of the American people. Maybe they will become "Populists" in the original meaning of the word. If only the politicians would represent the people instead of the plutocrats on Wall Street and in the boardrooms of multinational corporations. Then they would put climate action and climate justice—which inherently require economic and social justice—at the front of their agenda. They must also make it quite clear that the climate scientists' insights on the risks call for policies and actions that reflect the true societal emergency we are in, and that we must all become first responders.

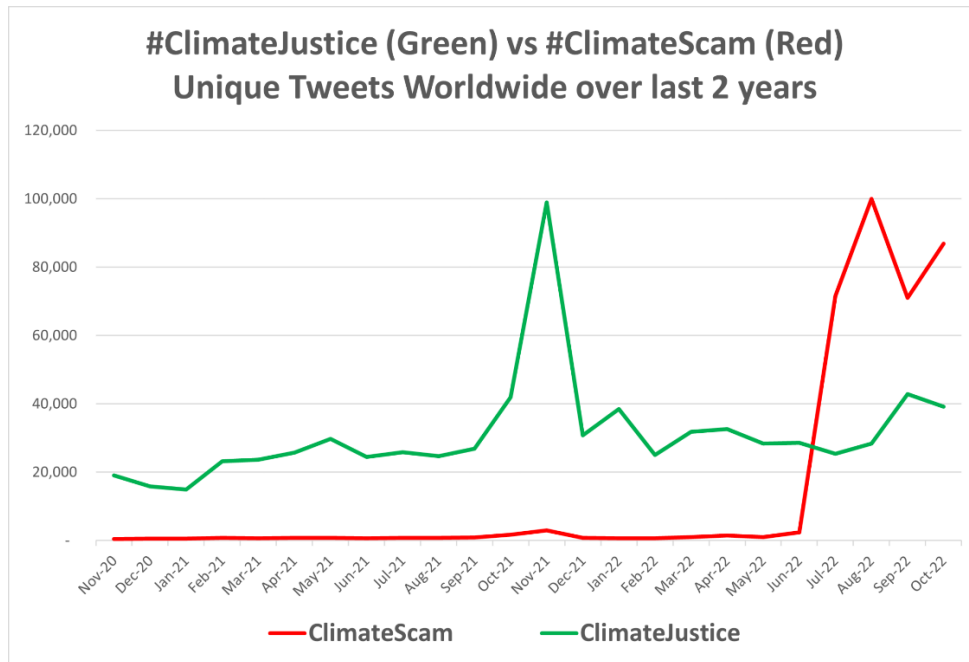
For more discussions of this and various related matters, go to:

<https://thehopefulrealist.com/the-hopeful-realist-blog/>

Today's Featured Image:

The Rise of the #ClimateSham Meme:

By Bots, Trolls, or just the Alienated, Angry, and Confused?



Have Racism and Anti-science Attitudes Caused the Surge in #ClimateScam tweets?

Well, it is hard to say, suggested Professor [Jem Bendell](#), who recently presented the above trend graph on his website, with the speech he gave on November 9 to COP27 attendees. He reported that the data on twitter hashtags, which [TrackMyHashtag.com](#) compiled, showed no evidence that the tweets were from bots. Then, what does the spike in the use of the hashtag #ClimateScam mean? Well, it is hard to not conclude that the growing public evidence of accelerating climate chaos, combined with a growing number of legal losses for the insurrectionists and election deniers, have generated some political anxiety. So may have some indicators of a fading of MAGA electoral chances and a Republican Party in ‘circular firing squad’ disarray, have generated a whole bunch more political and personal anxiety among some of the most disaffected people around.

It is at least plausible that, as is often the case, the fearful are lashing out at what they fail deeply to understand. Fear breeds hatred. Hatred, especially when goaded on by dangerous demagogues, causes ‘acting out,’ including violence. Climate science is a relatively amorphous target without the political weapons to strike back, especially when the aggressor is but a meme. Social media become the obvious venue for such expressions of ignorant resentment.

I looked at the TrackMyHashtag.com site two days ago and read the ten most recent retweets of tweets using the hashtag #ClimateScam, and frankly, they were really dumb. They were not unlike some angry comments on posts I’ve made on social media, blindly attacking particular well-documented facts of climate science.

Even so, it is very difficult to contemplate how so many people, despite the readily available data, still cannot accept the facts that may very well threaten human survival if not dealt with firmly and quickly. Ironically, the climate and ecological actions desperately needed now, if taken will severely disrupt the same systems that these folks resent for the losses of status and power many have suffered under them.

Books and other Sources on the New Great Transformation

Sometimes you know how very important a book is, even before you read it. That is why you never buy some and you immediately buy others as soon as you become aware of them. That is how it was recently when I heard Thomas Frank interviewed about his recent book, ***The People, NO***. If you have read his earlier insightful book, *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, then you know that Frank writes with great wit, clarity, a strong sense of irony, and from a deep well of knowledge of political history. He really understands the contradictions and absurdities of American politics in relation to the surrounding facts. I've read less than half of this one so far—It's a fast easy read—but I can say with certainty that it is worth the time.

Frank, Thomas. 2021. ***The People, NO: A Brief History of Anti-Populism***. New York: Picador.

The thing is, the dominant conception of 'populism' in American political culture, is exactly what its enemies want it to be, the opposite of what it was/is. The term originally referred to The Peoples Party whose members coined it in 1891. Its goal was to re-establish democracy in America and to tame the excesses of capitalism in dominating politics of the time to the detriment of farmers, small businesses, and workers. The party did not last. Not only did the anti-democratic forces whose descendants are so active today demonize its moniker. It has been used as an anti-democratic meme ever since. We all need to understand that history and the importance of real populism—anti-monopoly, anti-elitism, pro-democracy, and pro-public interest over corporate capital—for re-building democracy today. Otherwise, we will not be able to mobilize for climate justice or anything else.

Quotable Quote

We sense we're in a climate emergency and mass extinction event, but we have a deep-seated psychological instinct to defend against that knowledge.

~ Margaret Klein Salamon

More than one book has been written about why and how people are able to deny the obvious in relation to the climate emergency, ecological destruction, and the ongoing mass extinction. The deeper underlying cause, however, is the dominance of political culture by the predatory ideology of the financial, corporate, and wealthy elites who would trade the future of humanity for capturing more of the 'wealth of nations' today.

See you in two weeks. Meanwhile, stay safe and read [HOPEFUL REALISM: A Climate Manifesto](#).