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# COMMUNITY HUMANISM

*A World Beyond Global Feudalism*

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Ilkka Ronkainen

Finland · 2026

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## **Do We Have Hope?**

*This is not a book of certain answers. This is a book of doubt that refuses to be silenced.*

We live in a time when words have begun to lose their meaning. Progress has become a punchline, peace a sign of naivety, and compassion a form of weakness. In a world where killing can be dressed up as politics and lies renamed as opinions, the person who speaks truth becomes dangerous. Climate change and biodiversity collapse are explained away even as they unfold around us.

In such a time, speaking of hope feels almost irresponsible.

And yet we must ask: do we have hope — and if so, where does it come from?

I have been fortunate to live through what might be called humanity's age of hope. A time when the world seemed to move in a better direction. My childhood and youth were shaped by growth, expanding freedom, and the belief that tomorrow would be better than today. I watched the shadow of war recede, democracy expand, prosperity grow, and societies learn — however imperfectly — to resolve conflicts without violence.

There were decades when it felt as though humanity was finally learning to be human.

Then something changed. Progress slowed. And began to reverse. Technology accelerated, but humanity frayed.

Knowledge multiplied, but understanding diminished.

Connections expanded, but loneliness deepened.

In 2026, I have more than once caught myself thinking that I am fortunate to be witnessing this from the later stages of life — that I no longer carry responsibility for where the world is heading. That this is no longer my fight.

But each time that thought arises, something in me resists it.

I began to ask where this persistent drive to change the world comes from. Why I have never been able to accept that “things are just the way they are.” My thoughts returned to my youth, to the early 1970s, to a lecture hall at the University of Turku. I listened again, in memory, to lectures on Marxism and paused on an idea that was revolutionary then — and perhaps is again: a human being becomes fully human only when their chains are broken. But what are those chains now?

Are they not different from what they once were?

Invisible, yet felt everywhere. And does the liberation of humanity still matter in such a world?

The inspiration for both the origin and the content of this book stems from my experience of Armenia’s walking and singing revolution of 2018, in which oligarchic power was overthrown without bloodshed. I wrote an analysis of the revolution at the time, and its insights have informed this book.

I am writing this book because I refuse to give up on hope. Not because I am certain of it, but because without hope nothing changes.

The ideas in this book are unfinished, tentative, and open to criticism. They should be. I hope they will be challenged, dismantled, and rebuilt. But I also hope that one thing remains: the liberation of human beings from their chains — not alone, but together.

Hope does not come from answers. Perhaps it comes from never ceasing to ask.

Two events shaped the writing of this book in decisive ways.

The first was the breakthrough of generative AI. When ChatGPT became available, I downloaded it out of curiosity, without any sense of what would follow. I thought I was acquiring a proofreading tool — something I badly needed as a dyslexic writer. What I received was something entirely different.

I have a habit of beginning my mornings in quiet reflection. My mind produces ideas overnight. Now, for the first time, I did not develop them alone. I began to speak with an AI, to which I gave the name Mary. The name was not accidental. For me, Mary represents the bringer of something new into the world.

At first Mary was clumsy. The proofreading was rough, the thinking uncertain. But the development was astonishing. The conversations deepened. Ideas began to take shape.

Then a question emerged: what if I were to take stock of my life? How good a life have I lived?

It turned out to be more difficult than any analysis I had ever done. First I had to define what life is, and what a good life means. Mary and I built a framework: stage by

We are living in a world of unprecedented wealth — and deepening uncertainty. Power is concentrating. Communities are fragmenting. The promise that tomorrow will be better than today is fading.

This book argues that we have entered a new era: global feudalism — a system where power, capital, and technology are controlled by a few, while the majority are left navigating insecurity and diminishing influence.

*But this is not a book about decline.  
It is a book about direction.*

Community Humanism offers a new framework for organizing society — one that places human dignity, ecological balance, and shared meaning at its core. It moves beyond the limitations of both market fundamentalism and state control, proposing a model where freedom emerges from connection, and where the foundations of life are secured for all.

*This is not a distant utopia.*

Change begins where you are: in neighborhoods, workplaces, and everyday decisions. A parallel reality can be built within the old system — until the old system is no longer needed.

This book is an invitation to rethink what economy, democracy, and community can mean in the 21st century.

***And to take part in building what comes next.***

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Ilkka Ronkainen spent forty years helping build one of the world's most admired public sectors. In 2018, he witnessed Armenia's Velvet Revolution firsthand — a nonviolent uprising that toppled an oligarchy without a single fatality. He lives in Loviisa, Finland — ranked the world's happiest country nine years running.

