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In the Cause of Humanity: Creating Juried Democracies to New-Model the American Revolution

Howard DeLong

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In the Cause of Humanity is a thorough philosophical analysis of the American Revolution. It sets forth a new understanding of what the Revolution was in the eighteenth century, and promotes a unique vision of what it should become in the twenty-first. Rich in original scholarship the book articulates innovative political and economic ideas that include: Courts of common reason: Institutions of social choice in a court-like setting, where the jury represents all the people in a statistically valid way. The jury would hear arguments on a political issue, then deliberate and vote. When the setting is skillfully designed to increase intelligence and avoid bias, the courts could fulfill Thomas Jefferson's fervent hope that the common reason and humanity of the people would solely determine the actions of American governments. Complex markets: A union of two markets: the first defines our rights of property; the second defines our property in rights. Thus complex markets unite economic exchanges by consumers in places of business with political exchanges by citizens in courts of common reason. The fusion of these two markets into a coherent whole provides the secure foundation for America's political economy in the twenty-first century. Festival America: A yearly festival in which American values and culture are portrayed in ritual, song, dance, and drama, all chosen by the people. This art would also be presented to jurors in courts of common reason during the time they are making their fateful political decisions. Based on the Athenian model, Festival America would instill the powerful and humane effect of the arts directly into the heart of the democratic process. Juried democracies: Governments in which the laws have the continuing, informed consent of the people, as determined by courts of common reason. Moving from the rule of persons to the rule of law was a radical improvement in the organization of societies, moving on to the rule of juried law will be a no less revolutionary change. Perfectionist aspirations: Today, perfectionist aspirations, comparable to those expressed by Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Wilson, and other eighteenth-century figures, are almost completely unknown. Yet they are indispensable to inspire and sustain the deep political reforms that America so desperately needs. In the Cause of Humanity offers a practical program to attain the transcendent goal of the American Revolution: a perpetually improving union of material and moral prosperity.

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