

CIVICS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

***An All-American Primer,
Labor of Love, Aspiring Love***

~ A Project of the Liberty Institute & Fellowship ~

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Civics is described by old man Webster as:

“The study of the rights and duties of citizenship.”

OPENING WORD

The moral of this story, friends, that you hold in your hand is a simple and, we hope, memorable one.

That is: The foundation upon which we stand (as we speak) — “rock-solid,” we like to say — is forged of miracles. One (the arrival of the Mayflower on these shores) after another (the epic survival of Jamestown) after another (Knox’s Expedition) after another (Valley Forge) after another (the Miracle of Philadelphia itself) itself, after another . . . right into our day and age with the extraordinary achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, the tumbling of the Berlin Wall, and Mandela’s and Havel’s passages from prisoners to presidents of their respective lands.

Is this point clear?

My born again brother speaks of history as His-story. In a more ecumenical spirit old Ben (Franklin) noted that:

“God governs in the affairs of men,” women and, above all, children?

(Such “terms” — both the more sacred and profane — are heartily defined in the following.)

Be that as it is, my children grew up hearing that there is the “real world.”

And then there is the **real** real world.

This latter world, the world of miracles, becomes, we suggest, ever more real, more real-ized in our recognition, beholding of it.

That, friends, is the story, moral, that this Civics Primer dedicates itself to.

Otherwise expressed, these pages are *not* filled with facts, figures, and dates to be memorized. Rather, this offering is a “testament,” a *testament* to the human

Spirit in each and every one of us. In the words of one of its godfathers, “The Sage of Concord,” words that invite your reflection, best thoughts:

*“History is but an insult and impertinence,
if it be anything more than a parable of our being and becoming.”*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The *human* being, the human *being*, the *human being*?

Might our aspiring humanity, our inspiring divinity
lie, friends, in our striving to *become* ever more humane?

~

This All-American primer has been written to be read *aloud* by families, together, around your kitchen table, the festive “board,” in order to kindle . . . and, we trust, illumine the holy flame of the heart, our hearts, anew, ever and anew.

As the Spirit moves you.

* * * * *

THE OPENING REFRAIN

E PLURIBUS UNUM ~ OUT OF MANY, ONE

The Sacred Seal of the United States of America

~

***“The cause of America is in great measure
the cause of all mankind.”***

Citizen Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1776.

If if we, the people, can awaken, awaken as Americans
from, and to, our dream — our *true* dream:

*“America, America, may God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness and every gain divine.”*

The oft forgotten verse of our national song

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Carrying on from old man Webster's foregoing definition of civics.

1) God: He/She/It, that “Power” that is greater than — and yet no less a part of — our very Self. In the words of the Son: “*I am in the Father, and the Father is in me. And I am in you.*”

2) You/the People: *As human beings*, might our humanity, our essential humanity lie in our striving to *become* ever more *humane*? “Me, myself, and I,” the expression goes. Which are you, we? What do we mean when we, in fact, say: “What got into me!” “Gripped me!” “Came over me . . . possessed me!” “*How do I get a hold of myself, my self, my True Self?* Have *We the People* paused long enough in our “maddening” pace to consider this question. If not, can/will we while we still can?

3) Spirit: That which is traditionally believed to be the vitalizing principle or animating force within living beings. (The distinction here is between the spirit, which is more *universal*, and the soul, which is more *personal*, expressing itself in our more “social,” or soul-full faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing.)

4) The “Devil”/Evil, whatever terms you are most comfortable/least uncomfortable with. The Devil, we suggest, is not an atheist; the Devil does not lack faith in God. What the Devil lacks faith in is the human being, our humanity and its inspiring Divinity.

5) Primer: “A small introductory book on a subject.”

6) Love: That “Power” that is borne out of our heartfelt devotion to truth. Might love be that promise, which we not only seek, endlessly, but which remains often un-requited? If so, why? Have we paused long enough in our comings and goings, our busy-ness to consider more deeply this question: What exactly is the love that we seek? Apparently the ancient Greeks took this question to heart. What they concluded was that there were, in fact, 4 different kinds, or degrees, of love — each of which they gave a name, in order to distinguish them and, thus, to be clear. As follows:

^ *Eros* referred to an erotic or sensual love, a purely physical attraction;

^ *Phileo* referred to a more brotherly love or comradeship, a life-bond;

^ *Storge* referred to a nurturing, soul-full love

^ *Agape* was the name the old Greeks gave to what they believed was the highest form of love, the love of the spirit, the higher or best self in the other.

~ ~ ~

PRELUDE

A SECRET **(Manifest Secret)**

E Pluribus Unum

Once upon a time, not so long ago, there was a new world, a land across the great waters where the sun set in the West, an is-land borne on the back of a Great Turtle.

This “New World” came to be viewed by the “boat-people,” settlers, as “the promised land,” “the land of milk and honey”, “of opportunity.” Its streets (rumor had it) were “paved with gold.” It was spoken of as the “city upon the hill,” the “beacon of light” for the rest of the world.

At the aspiring heart of this “New World” slumbered a secret, a secret that whispered silently, eternally in the hearts of people from across the seas . . . and lured them — often through great trials and tribulations — to its shores.

There, the huddled masses were welcomed by the New World Colossus. Crowned by a halo of 7 rays, this great robed figure held in her left hand a tablet with dove-tail handles that invoked the Spirit of Liberty. In her right hand she raised to the heavens the eternal flame, to light the way of all her sons and daughters, who braved the perils to arrive on her shores.

The secret was held in trust by the native peoples of this land and, above all, by a young Huron who came to be known as “The Peace Maker.”

~ ~ ~

After the “Boat People” arrived, among them the Conquistadores/conquerors, the land was settled. Days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, a millennium itself passed, and then something happened.

On a September morn, 2001, the People of that land awoke for a moment, awoke as Americans and discovered that their dream had suddenly become a nightmare.

9/11.

The Pentagon itself, along with the great Twin Towers — symbols of the aspiring world trade of that industrious land — had been struck a deadly blow, as by a lightning bolt, and were crumbling. Thousands of people fled from the towers, amidst shattering glass, smoke, fire. Others, trapped, jumped from the heights to its depths.

And then

The World Trade Center collapsed, burying scores of police, fire-fighters, EMTs, who had rushed to the scene.

And then there was silence. For a moment, a moment of eternity.

Until out of the depths there arose in the hearts of millions upon millions of fellow citizens across that land the question: “*WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, NOW?*”

The question awoke not only on the lips of the people of that land; it awoke on the lips of citizens across the seas: “*NOW, WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO?*”

9/11. Push had come to shove.

WHAT ARE WE / THEY GOING TO DO — Now that the Twin Towers, the World Trade Center, itself, has been brought to its knees?

The question teetered on the lips of millions of citizens of that “New World,” as it did on the lips of fellow citizens around the greater world.

Fewer, it appeared, paused to consider an even more fundamental question:

“*Who are we, We the People?*”

That is, can we know what we are meant to DO, unless we know WHO WE ARE — who are called to act?

The secret?

Have we kept it from ourselves, no less ?

~ ~ ~

We call ourselves “Americans,” a name taken from the explorer Amerigo Vespucci (in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s words a “scoundrel”), who, in fact, never arrived on our shores. “Americans?” Is that who we are, in truth?

A melody wafted across that land, ever “New World”:

*Oh, beautiful, for spacious skies for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountains majesty above the fruited plain,
America, America, God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea.*

Did you know, friends, that when our ambassador to the UN takes his seat in the great assembly of nation, the plaque in front of him does *not* read, “America.”

For, we have neighbors to the north, central and south, who not only are spoken of in the same “terms,” Americans, but who do not appreciate us presuming upon them.

That being the case: Who are we, then, United States-ers?”

“Can it be? Is the United States, a name?

Canada, Mexico, Brazil are names. And the United States? Is that anything more than a definition, the promise of an ever “more perfect union” that we have yet to fulfill? The *United States of America.*”

If so, then who are we: The People?

~ ~ ~

If you turn, friends, to an old encyclopedia or encarta, you will discover that “the “literary,” “poetic,” “oratorical” name for the United States in the 19th century was Columbia.”

Columbia...?

As in the name of our nation's capitol, *The District of Columbia*... as in the name of our first national anthem, *Hail Columbia* — that was played at Lincoln's behest at all important affairs of state — as in the name of the *Columbian / Tammany Society* of which old Ben Franklin was a member as in the name of the *Columbia Space Shuttle* that “just happened” to go down over the home state of our President, as he was preparing to lead us back again into war in the Great Gulf.

“Shock & Awe.”

So it was.

Columbia

“The literary, poetic, oratorical name for the United States in the 19th century was Columbia.”

When I first read those words, a question rose up in me: What does that mean?

That question called forth an answer that rose up out of the depths: *If it's truly good literature, poetry, oratory is it not inspired?*

Can it be, I reflected, that the inspired name for our land is Columbia?

A secret, secret that *We the People* have been keeping from ourselves . . . ?

~ ~ ~

A young, slight, negro slave poetess “comes to mind,” as I write, someone who referred to herself as “the poet of Columbia,” Phillis Wheatley. Following the shot that was fired “heard ‘round the world” from Concord, Massachusetts’ “Old North Bridge,” the onset of the American Revolution, Phillis knocks on the door of General Washington's headquarters in Cambridge, MA. The revolution has begun. Washington has come north to assume the command of the Continental troops.

Surprised by such a visitor, the guard is not certain what to do, until she shows him the letter that Washington had written to her, in response to her preceding missive addressed "To His Excellency General Washington."

**George Washington's Reply
to Phillis Wheatley**

Cambridge, February 28, 1776

Mrs. Phillis,

Your favour of the 26th of October did not reach my hands 'till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real neglect.

I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me, in the elegant Lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyrick, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your great poetical Talents. In honour of which, and as a tribute justly due to you, I would have published the Poem, had I not been apprehensive, that, while I only meant to give the World this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of Vanity. This and nothing else, determined me not to give it place in the public Prints.

If you should ever come to Cambridge, or near Head Quarters, I shall be happy to see a person so favoured by the Muses, and to whom Nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations.

I am, with great Respect, etc.

George Washington

Pausing for a moment, I behold in my mind's eye the guard, allowing the visitor to enter. An explanation is offered the secretary, before Phillis is escorted further to the door of the general's inner chamber.

The secretary knocks on the door. The voice from within bids them to enter. As the young, slight, negro slave poetess steps across the threshold, the general, an older white, male, Herculean figure, arises from the seat at his desk.

The poet of Columbia, "Lady Liberty" pauses, unrolls the scroll that she bears in her arm and, gazing upon the "Generalissimo," addresses George Washington with words that ordain and consecrates him for the War of Independence that is rising up before the young nation.

**Celestial choir! enthron'd in realms of light,
Columbia's scenes of glorious toils I write.
While freedom's cause her anxious breast alarms,
She flashes dreadful in refulgent arms.
See mother earth her offspring's fate bemoan,
And nations gaze at scenes before unknown!
See the bright beams of heaven's revolving light
Involved in sorrows and veil of night!**

**The goddess comes, she moves divinely fair,
Olive and laurel bind her golden hair:
Wherever shines this native of the skies,
Unnumber'd charms and recent graces rise.**

**Muse! bow propitious while my pen relates
How pour her armies through a thousand gates,
As when Eolus heaven's fair face deforms,
Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar,
The refluent surges beat the sounding shore;
Or thick as leaves in Autumn's golden reign,
Such, and so many, moves the warrior's train.**

**In bright array they seek the work of war,
Where high unfurl'd the ensign waves in air.
Shall I to Washington their praise recite?
Enough thou know'st them in the fields of fight.
Thee, first in peace and honours, — we demand
The grace and glory of thy martial band.**

**Fam'd for thy valour, for thy virtues more,
Hear every tongue thy guardian aid implore!**

**One century scarce perform'd its destined round,
When Gallic powers Columbia's fury found;
And so may you, whoever dares disgrace
The land of freedom's heaven-defended race!
Fix'd are the eyes of nations on the scales,
For in their hopes Columbia's arm prevails.
Anon Britannia droops the pensive head,
While round increase the rising hills of dead.
Ah! cruel blindness to Columbia's state!
Lament thy thirst of boundless power too late.**

**Proceed, great chief, with virtue on thy side,
Thy ev'ry action let the goddess guide.
A crown, a mansion, and a throne that shine,
With gold unfading, WASHINGTON! be thine.**

~ ~ ~

That first question, friends — *If it's truly good literature, poetry, oratory is it not inspired?* — bore a second: What does “Columbia” mean?

Further research took me to other sources, revealing the next clue with respect to the secret: Like Columbus, Columbia comes from the Irish and Italian word, “Colum”, meaning “Dove.”

I nodded, closed the cover of the text and, sitting back, gathered my thoughts: Can it be, friends, that we, *We the People* are, in truth — if not yet in reality — the People of the Dove?

September 11, 2001,

Day of the Lord

... And crown thy good with sister- and brotherhood from sea to shining sea.

What, friends, is the significance of this secret, the moral of the story?

When push comes to shove, how *can* we, *We the People*, know what to do in the moments of such crises that befall us — if, as expressed the People, We, do *not* know who we are?

Can we . . . know what to do — beyond merely striking out impulsively?

Truth Be Told.

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.

Do these words make sense, friends, common/uncommon sense?

If so, who are we? Who are we, men and women, of our *aspiring* United States of America?

Until we can answer this questions, TRULY, will we know what is asked of us/the US, United States of America? Will *We the People* know what our TRUE CALLING is?

. . . . *And to the republic, for which it stands, one nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

~ **E PLURIBUS UNUM** ~ **OUT OF MANY, ONE** ~

~ ~ ~

WORD TO THE READER

*"Though I would carefully avoid giving unnecessary offense, yet I am inclined to believe that all those who espouse the doctrine of reconciliation [with Britain, the established "power"] may be included within the following descriptions: **Interested men**, who are not to be trusted; **weak men** who cannot see; **prejudiced men** who will not see and a certain set of **moderate men**, who think better of the European world [powers that be] than it deserves; and this last class, by an ill-judged deliberation, will be the cause of more calamities to this continent than all the three others."*

Tom Paine, "Common Sense"

Taking to heart "Citizen Tom Paine's words," this 21st Century Civics Course, All-American Primer, this "Testament," aspiring Labor of Love will be best understood by those:

1) Who sense that something isn't right about the state of the nation and world today — beginning with the fact that 8 people have amassed half the wealth, common wealth, half the "life-blood" of the entire global population.

And . . . who are concerned enough to actually do something about this growing divide, while we still can.

2) Who don't believe everything you read, particularly from the **corporate** media, which — *with all respects due* — is **controlled** globally by 6 conglomerates. As we will see, those conglomerates have (not surprisingly?) a clearly expressed and unabashed story/agenda to tell on behalf of the 5 parties noted.*

And . . . who understand that we are *not* talking about mere "conspiracies," but about business as usual — in an age when no longer theocracies (the church) or monarchies (the state) call "the shots," but when "Corporations Rule the World," The businessman and woman's day in the sun has arrived. For better and, inevitably, for worse?

3) Who realize that the truest and most accurate, most meaningful tallies, reckonings, are not so much about right and wrong (black and white). Rather, might the more “extreme” challenge that we face be just that: to avoid such extremes. I.E. impassioned by “our cause,” we are called to resist the (eternal) temptation to be *too* right/righteous or not right *enough*.

And this primer will be best understood by those who are committed to doing all you can to strike, gently, that balance.

4) If the foregoing point makes sense — common/uncommon sense — it can lead to something of a revelation.

That is if we consider that the story of our land, ever “New World,” is not merely a story, but something of a drama — as opposed to a play, play — then not only will that drama have “good guys.” But, if we are to awaken, awaken as Americans from, and to, our dream, need it not also have “bad guys,” those “scoundrels” — respectable and otherwise — of whom Lincoln spoke?

Indeed, as noted in the following, how else will *We the People* be roused from our slumber sit up make our way to the edge of our seats arise and step forward onto the stage of this ever “New World” that awaits us? How else can the People, We be expected to make the difference that is asked of each and every one of us — in order to ensure that our government of, by, and for the People shall NOT perish from the earth — if, that is, *We the People* don’t wake up?

5) This 4th point leads to the 5th, the heart of the matter, might one say, in not only Gandhi’s words (that follow) but in the words of those of the most successful reformers of all time — Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela, Wangari Muta Maathai, Cesar Chavez and on and on — going back what some refer to as “the turning point of time” itself:

“In the fire of love,” the Mahatma writes, *“the hardest most stalwart opponent must melt. And if he melts not, the love is not hot enough. The only passion [suffering] that one must grace one’s opponent with is com-passion. For in com-passion awakens one’s own GOOD.”*

Love your enemy.
Bless them that curse you.
Do good to them that hate you.
and
Pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you.

A tall order, friends — for the People of the Dove?

Simply expressed, *practically* speaking, if we can *not* love our enemy, do we not become the same, the very same — labor under that age-old curse? Indeed, did not Pogo himself (of comic strip fame) address this very fact of life, the *real* “real world” in his immortal words:

“We have met the enemy and they is us!”

Love our enemy: our very Self?

Easier said than done.

Until we give it a try, take the first step, move with the Spirit that inspired those who have gone before us, paved the way, including our “Sons and Daughters of Liberty,” including Lady Liberty” herself.

“Forgive them, Lord. They know *not* what they (truly) do.”

~ ~ ~

DEDICATION

... *And crown thy good with sister- and brotherhood from sea to shining seaS.*

The Refrain from Our National Song

To whom, friends, shall we dedicate this civics' primer, this All-American testament that you hold in your hand, as we speak?

Might this aspiring labor of love be dedicated, among others, to that inspiring good that abides in each and every one of us: *We the People*, as that promise re-sounds in the opening refrain (above) of our national song?

Picking up on that refrain, a gentleman who hailed from France, De Tocqueville by name, is said to have noted:

*“America is great, because America is good.
And if America ever ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.”*

Might it be?

With respect to dedications, along with each and every one of us, *in general*, the best in us, does anyone, *in particular*, come to your mind to whom such a testament, primer, such an aspiring labor of love might be dedicated?

Someone, near and dear, such as a parent, grandparent or great grandparent, a sibling, Sunday or Monday-Friday school teacher, a coach, scout leader or simply someone you appreciate, someone who has lent you a hand along your way or who you would like to offer the same? Someone, that is, who may be struggling with unemployment, illness, loneliness, depression — whose fortunes are few, spirits low?

If so, shall we dedicate this testament to him/her? Dedicate it and *more*

If you keep reading, you may discover that these unfolding pages wait to lift not only the spirit of that person — near or far and dear — but to lift (if need be) your own, to lift ALL our spirits and, thereby, our fortunes.

Indeed, have greater miracles not happened to/for those who have not only kept, but kindled, the faith, the holy flame of the heart?

I speak expressly, and with appreciation, of those who have *not* lost the Top-Line out of sight. By Top-Line, I refer not to *principal*, but to those HIGHER *principles* that inspired our Founding Fathers and Mothers to take up the “cause” on our behalf, the cause — that Paine addresses in the opening words — of America, of mankind to which our founders mutually pledged to one another:

“Our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

Might that be what it, indeed, takes, friends, to reclaim our inalienable birthright, our inheritance, as noted in the opening lesson that follows of this 21st Century Civics Course: All-American Primer, this “Testament,” aspiring Labor of Love.

“Many are called; few are chosen.”

And fewer still make the choice?

You are invited, friends, to read on.

~ ~ ~

With respect to the fortunes noted, our inheritance, I refer not just to the “promise” that our Founding Fathers and Mothers made in their “Declaration of Independence,” the promise of “Life, Liberty, and not merely the unending *Pursuit of Happiness*, but, as noted, its very attainment: happiness and that Peace that ever attends it.

The happiness that I refer to, friends, is the happiness — little imagined? — that waits to bless and embrace each of us. When, that is, we pass on to others the gifts that we've, our Selves, been given when, that is, we offer up the best that we have to offer: our gifts, talents, abilities, our “genius” in service to our larger community.

Are these words clear?

I trust.

I invite you, friends, to take up this vital thread on behalf of our Founding Fathers and Mothers, on behalf of the generations to come, on behalf of “All Our Relations”.

~ ~ ~

As noted, civics is described as “the study of the rights and duties of citizenship.”

So it is.

Plenty we hear these days about the former, “rights,” *my, your, everyone's* “rights”.

And (give and take) our duties, responsibilities? I refer to that which — truth be told? — gives our rights their ultimate right and purpose.

Have you paused, friends, to consider what may be your no less inalienable duties, your sacred responsibilities?

Abraham Lincoln's economic advisor, Henry C. Cary, provides a framework for this question and, thereby, sets the scene for this unfolding drama:

“At the founding of our nation, there were two systems before the world. One looks to pauperism, ignorance, depopulation and barbarism; the other to increasing wealth, comfort, intelligence, combination of action, and civilization. One looks towards universal war; the other towards peace.”

From this more general observation (not surprising?), we descend to the “bottom-line,” into the nuts and bolts, the details wherein the old Devil, himself, doth dwells. “God bless him, and ‘keep’ him, *and let His light shine down upon him.*”

Hold onto your hats.

~

Our Fortunes

Unknown?

“The business of America is business.”

President Calvin Coolidge

And the business of business . . . ?

Friends, did you know that if you (or someone you know) gets a speeding ticket and pays it, it is, in fact/truth, paid TWICE.

That is:

1) The ticket is paid by us, ourselves, in my case Stuart Weeks (the real, living, breathing person, whose name is here noted, as I was taught to write it in school, capital S small tuart; capital W small eeks), as my own hand-written signature on that very driver’s license attests.

2) *And* the ticket is paid by the name printed on my driver's licenses (have a look) that I, you, we handed over to the police officer who stopped us. In my case: STUART WEEKS.

As in all CAPS like EXON, BP, CITI BANK, BANK OF AMERICA, VERIZON, STANDARD OIL, COMMONWEALTH EDISON, IRS, CONCORD,

MASSACHUSETTS, (i.e. like the name not only of those corporations that send “YOU” the growing number of bills, invoices, but the CAPITALIZED names of your town, state and federal Government, US, in-corporat-ed one and all.)

The point being that the all CAPS (STUART WEEKS) was *not* the way I was taught to write my name in school.

And you . . . ?

That is, this second payment for your speeding ticket — indeed, would you believe, any bill you receive: a mortgage payment utility bill, student loan, commercial loan, your taxes, you name it? — this second payment is deducted (via the **Court Registry Investment System, CRIS**) from the account that, at your birth, was created in your name without your — or, I trust, your parents’ — knowledge.

That account is referred to as a “corporate fiction” or “straw man” account that was noted on the back of your birth certificate.

< PICTURE TO BE INSERTED OF THE BACK OF THE BIRTH CERTIFICATE >

Depending on your age, that account could be worth a good million dollars, as we speak.

Truth be told.

More likely the value of YOUR account is worth significantly *more* than a million dollars, as, from your birth on, the expected life earnings of someone of your gender, race, and zip-code were not only projected forward but compounded, (which is standard practice in the financial world where money, our “life-blood” is mis-understood as a “commodity” to be speculated with, in order to make a “killing,” as opposed to a “living”).

Is this point clear with respect to your unknown and rightful inheritance?

Truth be further told.

A few years ago, you could have called a particular investment house to find out the value that “YOU” (YOUR CORPORATE ACCOUNT, “STRAW MAN”) were being traded at.

Since too many people started doing that, it now requires a few additional steps, simple and straightforward.

The point?

It is two-fold, for starters, and then a third:

1) As true as this “heist” is, it is not only legal (as opposed to lawful; the distinction to be made). But, ignorance of such legalities is not an excuse. That is, might it be time for us to awaken as Americans, as citizens of the world, from, and to, our dream, our True Dream — before that dream becomes, indeed, the nightmare spoken of?

2) The straw man account, “dead” corporate fiction, the trust fund referred to is not only real, but this accounting of *your own* hard work, *your* blood, sweat and tears is currently enriching others — who are *not* ignorant of such legalities. I refer to those who, as noted, *are* in the business “to make a killing” (nothing personal), while the 99% plus struggle to “make a living,” to survive.

Business as usual?

3) Can you imagine that when *We the People* remember who we are, *truly* then not only will our spirits be lifted, but, as noted, our fortunes will be lifted along with them: lifted, elevated and **enriched**.

This, friends, is the fulfillment of the *manifest* secret referred to above, a secret that you can tell everyone who has the ears to hear.

That secret is intimated in the following age-old exchange between the Sphinx and the Child, Fabel that sounds on down to us from the ages:

*'What doth thou seek?' asked the Sphinx.
'Mine inheritance', responded Fabel.
'From whence doth thou come?'
'Out of ancient times.'
'Thou art but a child.'
'And eternally a child I will be.'
'Who stands for thee?'
'I stand for myself.'*

So it is.

In standing for my Self, *truly*, do I, do we not stand, thereby, for the very Selves
of others?

Are We the People not in this ALL together?

~ ~ ~

LESSON I

OUR INHERITANCE

“All for ourselves and nothing for other people, seems, in every age of the world, to have been the vile maxim of the masters of mankind.”

Adam Smith, “The Wealth of Nations

So, what am I talking about: A trust fund in my/your name that has been established at our birth (the birth of each and every American) which is based on a projection of our life-time earnings, compounded as is the custom that is worth a million dollars and more.

WHAT?

What kind of reckoning is this?

Might the following begin to answer that question, offer cornerstones for a new understanding of the business of America, business itself, *Concordian Economics: An Economics Of, By, and For the People?*

The understanding is grounded not merely in the “bottom-line.” It arises to embrace the Top-Line, no less — in its commitment to a “Free Enterprise System” that based on a *positive* notion of freedom, or freedom-*for* the other (“Crown thy good with sister- and brotherhood”), as opposed to a *negative* freedom, or freedom-*from* a commitment and sense of responsibility to our fellow citizens, “*All for ourselves and nothing for other people*” in Adam Smith’s opening words.

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Concordian Economics

~ *An Economics of Common Sense* ~

“Every man is a consumer, and ought to be a producer. He fails to make his place good in the world, unless he not only pays his debts, but also adds something to the common wealth.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Wealth”

Four Cornerstones

1) Every human being, each one of us is different, unique — not only outwardly, with respect to our countenance or fingerprints, but inwardly. That is, each of us has our own particular gifts, talents, abilities, our own “genius”. To give expression to such gifts is viewed as our inalienable birthright as Americans. Such a “calling” has brought us into the world, why we are alive, what we live for: the unfolding of our full potential as human beings.

If this first cornerstone is clear, it leads to the second.

2) As such, *We the People* have not only the right — which, if left at that, i.e. “my right,” we can choose to disclaim — but, more to the point, we have the *responsibility* to give expression to our unique calling, our gifts, talents, abilities, in service to the greater community: our common wealth.

We have the growing responsibility to give our best to those around us — even if, as noted, our beginnings are as “rude” as the log cabins and huts from which Abraham Lincoln, Phyllis Wheatley, Booker T. Washington, Cesar Chavez, the Peace Maker himself and countless other unsung heroes have stepped forth.

For, if we withhold our unique piece of the puzzle (be it within our family or community, small or larger), then that piece is missing. The puzzle is incomplete. This responsibility, we suggest, gives our rights their ultimate right and meaning.

*If clear, this second cornerstone leads to the third. That is, having established the broader **human** framework, **human** measure, **human** element, the broader **human** context for what, as noted, has come to be referred to as the increasingly in-human, “dismal science” of economics, we have a foundation for addressing the practice of economics itself — in, as noted, the spirit of common sense.*

3) In order to assume responsibility, give our best — in a modern economy that has moved beyond subsistence and barter — in order, that is, to be true to our individual calling, *We the People* need access to money, credit, our common wealth, the very “life-blood” of our nation. That said, such access is, in fact, readily available, at hand, as we speak.

That is, the majority of our individual and family purchases these days is via credit, including *literally* millions of credit card transactions each day.

If this is clear . . . , what may be less so (with respect to such transactions) is the fact that — with each and every swipe of the credit card — new money is created in the moment of that transaction. This is in contrast to debit card transactions, which debit already existing funds from our accounts.

Otherwise expressed, there is no necessary shortage of money/credit.

Is this clear ?

To repeat: There is no necessary shortage of money/credit.

The “rub” is represented by the name and logo on our existing credit cards, both of which represent a bank that, in effect, has *loaned* you the money — as your monthly credit card statement confirms in its accompanying summary of interest charges, in the event that your payment is late or delinquent.

Banks can do that because they have been allowed to insert themselves into our, the People’s business, the sanctity of our exchanges, in order to take a “cut” on each and every one of our transactions.

More accurately expressed, we are not speaking about a mere allowance granted to the banks. Rather, the banks have had the means to hire the lawyers, lobbyists, and politicians to both craft and pass the legislation that has allowed the banks to insert themselves into our, the People's business, the sanctity of our exchanges. Truth be told?

And this will continue to be the case until it is recognized and the People, We, determine whether we believe this to be right.

To grasp this picture clearly, the exchanges, transactions noted are between one person, who has a good or service to offer, and another who not only recognizes but values that good or service enough to extend funds of credit for it. This is the heart of the economic process. As outlined in the proceeding two points, the word *sanctity* speaks most aptly to it.

Our current way of doing business — i.e. with the banks inserting themselves into the midst of our transactions — has led to our **debt-based** monetary system and our resultant mis-fortunes. These mis-fortunes were outlined in the *Oxfam International Report*, spoken of at the 2019 World Economic Summit at Davos. Simply and to the point: “The 1% grabbed 82% of all wealth created.” More than \$8 of every \$10 of new money.

Need one note that this is not what our Founding Fathers and Mothers envisioned? In fact, such disparity of wealth, the co-option of our common-wealth, such draining of our “life-blood” was what led to the break with Britain.

Summarizing this third cornerstone: Reasonable access to our national credit, common/shared wealth, our “life-blood,” is essential in our modern economy. For, without it, *We the People* end up merely “going through the motions,” “punching the time clock,” “getting a job” — “good” or otherwise. Our “pursuit of happiness” remains unending. Our lives and labors are relegated to working to fulfill our “boss” dream, while all too often our own dream becomes a nightmare.

If both this third cornerstone and the two that preceded it make sense, common sense, what more needs to be said about our financial affairs, our fortunes, humanity's fate and future?

*In **human** terms, can it be any more simple and straightforward? If money is, as expressed, our common wealth, the “life-blood” of our nation, it must “flow” unimpeded throughout the entire body-social, enriching every cell/individual in the organism/society — as opposed to being pooled in privileged and selective organs/accounts where it becomes, in effect, a blood-clot that undermines the health of society, the system.*

And yet a question/cornerstone, remains.

4) What keeps us, **We the People**, from recognizing this truth and, thereby, assuming responsibility, as noted, for our “life-blood”, common wealth, national credit — alongside our national debt for which we’re obliged to pay our taxes?

Is the question clear?

Why don’t **We the People** stand up on behalf of our “calling,” give more fully of our gifts, talents, abilities, our “genius,” in service to our communities, nation, and world?

Might the following words of Concord (MA’s) native son speak to this question?

“The [true] cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life [vitality] which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.”

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

This first lesson introduces the second, which takes up this question of *We the People*. What is our inalienable and long-awaited “calling,” promise?

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LESSON 2

WE THE PEOPLE / THE PEOPLE, WE

THE RE-SOUNDING REFRAIN

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In Congress, July 4, 1776

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one **people** to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

— That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,

— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right [and Responsibility?] of the **People** to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient [passing] causes;

and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world

[To be continued From this declaration, The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, we proceed — in this opening overview — to the resultant constitution, the succinct Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America.]

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The Preamble to the Constitution of the United States of America

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

[Also to be continued From this preamble, we proceed to Abraham Lincoln’s words, picking up the opening refrain and recasting it in a vision that spoke to the fellow citizens of his later day and age.]

“That this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

Gettysburg Address

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And what, friends, is that vision?

A government *of, by, and for* the People?

And who are the people, We? What is asked of the “People of the Dove”?

Might *We the People* be in truth — if not yet in reality — the 4th, and critical, check and balance in our “participatory democracy,” the heart and soul of our nation?

Might this un-fulfilled, un-requited fact of life, our lives — this slumbering promise — have inspired the dawning words of Catherine Drinker Bowen, author of *“The Miracle of Philadelphia”*?

“If ‘We the People’ should indeed prove an entity, a corporate being what power that incorporation might one day represent.”

Once again:

“If ‘We the People’ should indeed prove an entity, a corpor-ate being [imagine] what power that in-corpor-ation might one day represent.”

May it be clear, friends, that the “corporate being” spoken is not that of our modern day corporations that have cast their ailing shadows over our land and global community. Rather, the “being” noted is the in-corpora-tion of all that

Lincoln and our Founding Fathers and Mothers — in their strengths and in their limitations, their very humanity — held dearest:

“Life, Liberty and [not merely] the Pursuit [seemingly endless] of Happiness” — but, as noted, its actual attainment, at long last. That happiness we are granted when *We the People* break through to the realization of how we, each and every of us, are “called” to dedicate our gifts, talents, abilities, our very “genius” to the service of our community, small and larger.

When we offer up the best that we have to offer, then, friends, the happiness spoken of will bless and embrace each one of us.

May this All-American primer serve that end — the very means in process — every step along its way. May this “offering” remind us, friends, that “*We the People*,” the People, We are the ones we’ve been waiting for?

If you can imagine such a promise, we invite you to read on.

**“... that government of, by, and for the people
shall not perish from the earth.”**

Abraham Lincoln

Stricken on “Good Friday,” April 14, 1865, “Father Abraham,” our 16th president, offered up his Spirit on the morn of “Easter Saturday”.

D.O. T. L.

May his im-perishable vision be resurrected in our heartfelt thoughts, in our unflinching devotion, in our aspiring love for our land and for our fellow citizens —
“from sea to shining sea.”

