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Thomas Paine: The Wages of Honor

JASON KINSEL

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Reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Robert Roecklein  
Lecturer in English and Political Science  
Thesis Supervisor

Ralph Lowell Eckert  
Associate Professor of History  
Honors Adviser

\* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

## ABSTRACT

Thomas Paine is a noted political author and American Revolutionary. His most popular writings were the pamphlet *Common Sense* and the *Crisis* papers. Each of these writings contributed significantly to the American cause. The purpose of this project is to explore the idea that *Common Sense*, and his other lesser known works, were the decisive factors influencing the Colonial decision to break away from Great Britain in 1776. It is also the objective of this paper to trace the philosophical development of Paine's works from his earliest writings through his experiences in France during the French Revolution.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Abstract.....  | i   |
| Table of Contents.....                                     | ii  |
| Acknowledgements.....                                      | iii |
| Introduction.....  | 1   |
| Paine as an excise officer.....                            | 3   |
| Political debate within the Colonies.....                  | 8   |
| Early writings.....  | 10  |
| Paine as a political philosopher.....                      | 15  |
| <i>Common Sense</i> .....                                  | 17  |
| <i>Crisis</i> essays.....                                  | 26  |
| Deane Affair.....  | 28  |
| France and <i>The Rights of Man</i> .....                  | 30  |
| Pleading for the life of Louis XVI.....                    | 37  |
| Imprisonment.....  | 39  |
| <i>Agrarian Justice</i> and <i>The Age of Reason</i> ..... | 41  |
| A lonely end.....  | 43  |
| Conclusion.....  | 44  |
| Notes.....   | 45  |
| Bibliography.....  | 49  |

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Thomas Paine began his life as many young Englishmen in the mid-1700's attending grammar school and with an expectation of acquiring a trade that would provide him with a livelihood. A steady wage and family life are not enough for some men, however, and Thomas Paine was surely of this lot. In his early years, he followed a common path, learning his father's trade of staymaking, and later gained employment as an excise officer with the help of his father-in-law. Paine possessed no passion for these activities, but instead was deeply affected by the plight of his fellow man. In England as a boy, he witnessed regular executions; as an excise officer, he experienced the poverty of his co-workers. Although he had only a rudimentary education, Paine reacted by picking up his pen. His limited education did not allow him to confront perceived injustices from a sophisticated philosophical point, but he possessed a unique ability to penetrate to the core of issues with his natural gift of logic and wit.

After writing *The Case of the Officers of Excise*, there was no going back for Paine. He could no longer be happy unless intimately involved in the betterment of humankind through the medium of writing political tracts. The American Revolution and his pamphlet *Common Sense* propelled him to world-wide fame. Later, he found himself in a battle of wits with the noted conservative writer Edmund Burke during the early stages of the French Revolution. One Revolution was not enough for Paine, for he desired more than anything else that the world would rid itself of all monarchies. He longed especially for his native England to throw off the chains of monarchy and develop a democracy. While recognized as a radical, he was also an honorable man whose heart remained tied to his homeland.

He placed great hope in both the American and French Revolutions wishing that each nation would shine as a vivid example of Enlightenment principles, illuminating all corners of the world and eliminating superstition and oppression. Even though the story of Thomas Paine is

a sad one because in his eyes both Revolutions fell far short of these hopes, his is a noble tale about a common man who never surrenders his honor or the nobility that he believed existed within all human beings. While he despised kings and aristocrats, he pleaded for the life of an absolute monarch; and after being imprisoned in France, he wrote two of his most radical works *Agrarian Justice*, and *The Age of Reason*.

Paine was a man of action. When he sensed that his fellow citizens of the world had to be encouraged and propelled forward, he assumed his natural role as a political writer extolling the tenets of the Enlightenment. Perhaps the most Revolutionary of all Enlightenment thinkers, Thomas Paine came to the American Colonies at precisely the opportune moment to help ignite the first Revolution of the Enlightenment.

When Paine arrived in Philadelphia in 1774, he stepped into the largest city in Colonial America, a land teetering on the brink of decision. The American Colonies were dissatisfied with the treatment they had been receiving from the Mother Country, but separating from England and the Crown had not yet become a viable course of action for the majority of Colonists. The atmosphere in the Colonies was politically highly charged and this was the atmosphere in which Paine found his true calling in life. Paine would come into his own as a writer and political thinker within the cauldron of ideas swirling in the American Colonies and Philadelphia.

He migrated to America from Britain after unsuccessful careers as a staymaker and an excise officer in Britain. Like many who traveled to the American Colonies, he hoped to make a new and better life for himself. His lack of success as a staymaker and an excise officer was largely due to his preoccupation with politics. He spent much of his time advocating for his fellow excise officers and participating in political societies. These activities brought him into contact with Benjamin Franklin whose assistance would prove invaluable in the Colonies.

Paine set foot in Philadelphia with very little in terms of actual property, but unlike many immigrants who came to the Colonies earlier as indentured servants, Paine arrived as a freeman with his introduction letter from Franklin.<sup>1</sup> Along with Franklin's letter and personal freedom, Paine brought with him a unique perspective. His life in England had been a varied one. He was born in the small market town of Thetford in 1737, and fortunate enough to attend grammar school there until the age of thirteen. He first witnessed the harsh punishments meted out by the English government in Thetford where executions at the nearby jail were a regular occurrence. He naturally took up training in staymaking because it was his father's trade. Paine achieved the status of master staymaker after twelve years of apprenticeship and journeymanhood, however, this trade did not suit Paine, as it required a good deal of physical labor and was not a particularly mentally stimulating profession. He spent his time as a journeyman first working in Thetford, then moving to Dover, and later to Sandwich, where with a loan from his master, he established his own shop after marrying in 1760. He and his wife soon moved to Margate, where she died less than a year after their wedding in 1760. Nevertheless, it seems that the father of his deceased wife, an officer in the Customs and Excise Service, inspired Paine to leave the trade of staymaking and pursue a similar government career.<sup>2</sup>

Paine passed the necessary examinations to become an officer of the Excise Service and it is in this occupation that he became acquainted with the type of politics he would grow to despise. In the conduct of his duties, Paine witnessed the harshness of economic life for many residents in his native land. This firsthand experience of poverty would remain with Paine for the rest of his life and helped to transform him into an advocate for the common people. Because of a minor and common infraction amongst excise officers called "stamping the whole ride,"<sup>3</sup> -- when an excise officer filed a report on a load of goods without actually taking the time to examine them--Paine was dismissed from his post in Alford, Lincolnshire. This dismissal sent

Paine down a path where he would witness again the extremes of poverty and discontent within England at the time. He appealed for re-instatement to the Excise Service but for three years would experience much hardship. After failing to re-establish himself as a staymaker, he turned to teaching English for a wage that was half of what he had made as an excise officer. This period in Paine's life was a formidable one; being a young man, possessing wit and intelligence, he was frustrated by his difficulty to progress or advance socially. Either he would be destined to obscurity and poverty or he would begin to develop into something much more.

Paine spent these frustrating years in London and Lewes, both of which contained highly charged environments filled with political discontent. Lewes in the 1770's possessed an atmosphere of unrest distinct from that of London. After writing a humble letter of apology to the Excise Board, Paine received re-instatement as an excise officer in Lewes. This assignment proved a difficult one for any excise official because there existed within Lewes a particularly strong spirit of opposition to the Government and its officials, especially tax collectors. In both Lewes and London, Paine saw the poverty and hardships of the lower classes of England and was exposed to a variety of forms of opposition to the Government. Paine participated in the Lewes debating club which met regularly at the White Hart Inn and also took part in distributing relief to the poor.<sup>4</sup>

Paine traveled between Lewes and London during the winter of 1772-73, working as an excise officer in Lewes and lobbying Parliament in the capital. He happened upon an opportunity to assume a more active role within London politics during the winter of 1772-73 when he led a movement advocating for a salary increase for excise officers. In Lewes, Paine wrote his first political tract entitled *The Case of the Officers of Excise*. Ultimately, his decision to support the officers of the excise would lead to bitter disappointment and failure because instead of remaining at his post in Lewes, Paine traveled to London to push his political tract. This risky



decision reveals much about Paine's character. Having already been dismissed from his post once and after suffering a good deal from that dismissal, he still sought to take a leading role in seeking higher wages for excise officers. As a result, he would again be dismissed from his post as excise officer, this time for abandoning his post.<sup>5</sup> His failures as an excise officer are representative of Paine's personality and talents; later in 1777, he would also be dismissed from his one and only official post in the American Colonial Government as the Secretary to the Committee of Foreign Affairs. This dismissal came when Paine publicly attacked the prominent merchant Silas Deane who had procured war materials from France. Paine's attack on Deane for profiteering from the war originated from his insistence that the aid given by France was a gift and not a loan which would have left Deane without a commission.

Paine's *The Case of the Officers of the Excise* is not a limited tract only meant to drum up support for a pay increase; it is, on the whole, an early statement of Paine's beliefs regarding social equality and justice. While he cites the particular inconveniences faced by excise men's low pay, expenses related to the post, and the negative effects of excise men being placed in posts far from their friends and relations, the body of Paine's work focuses on a larger view of poverty within society. He argues that poverty leads to dishonesty and circumstance to crime. He insists that necessity does not yield to argument when he writes, "No argument can satisfy the feelings of hunger, or abate the edge of appetite."<sup>6</sup> The point Paine sets forth to the Parliament is one of social justice and the idea that the government has a role to play through economics concerning the criminality and morality of its subjects.

Nothing tends to a greater corruption of manners and principles than a too great distress of circumstances; and the corruption is of that kind that it spreads a plaster for itself: like a viper it carries a cure, though a false one, for its own poison. *Agur*, without any alternative, has made dishonesty the immediate consequence of poverty 'lest I be poor and steal.' A very little degree of that dangerous kind of philosophy, which is the almost certain effect of involuntary poverty, will teach men to believe that to starve is more

criminal than to steal, by as much as every species of self-murder exceeds every other crime; that true honesty is sentimental, and the practice of it dependent upon the circumstances.<sup>7</sup>

Paine makes within this passage a philosophical appeal to the members of Parliament, trying to convince them that it is inescapable that impoverished subjects turn to a life of theft in order to avoid self-destruction through starvation.

Paine's description of the excise officers' financial straits is an accusation that Parliament has failed to uphold a philosophical social contract with its employees. He describes the officers as men who cannot marry or support a wife and child, because the officers themselves are always on the brink of starvation or malnutrition with no possible way to feed children or to educate them. According to Paine, this situation created a meanness and indifference within the excise corps. These are characteristics of the human being as described by Jean-Jacques Rousseau before entering the social contract and leaving the state of nature.

The passing from the state of nature to the civil society produces a remarkable change in man; it puts justice as a rule of conduct in the place of instinct, and gives his actions the moral quality they previously lacked. It is only then, when the voice of duty has taken the place of physical impulse, and right that of desire, that man, who has hitherto thought only of himself, finds himself compelled to act on other principles, and to consult his reason rather than study his inclinations. And although in civil society man surrenders some of the advantages that belong to the state of nature, he gains in return far greater ones; his faculties are so exercised and developed, his mind is so enlarged, his sentiments so ennobled, and his whole spirit so elevated that, if the abuse of his new condition did not in many cases lower him to something worse than what he had left, he should constantly bless the happy hour that lifted him forever from the state of nature and from a stupid, limited animal made a creature of intelligence and a man.<sup>8</sup>

Within the state of nature, men are only bound to the fulfillment of what they perceive to be their needs for survival. There is no morality to govern men's actions for theft and violence in the name of self-preservation are perfectly acceptable. Paine is arguing within his plea for the excise officers that the British Government has violated the social contract, forcing these men to

become thieves indifferent to the responsibilities of their post and to return to a state of nature governed by the morality of self-preservation rather than one of duty and honesty.

Paine could have remained silent and safely kept his position, but this course of action did not fit his convictions or personality. Paine always exhibited courage when he felt there needed to be action to resolve a situation or to take up a worthy cause. He chose to write powerful pamphlets that were worded in such a language that the so-called vulgar could easily understand his arguments. This is the type of man that the Colonies needed in the years of 1774-1776 if they were to find a voice and justification for separation from the Mother Country. The difference between Paine and other American Revolutionary leaders was that he was always prepared to act on his core beliefs, no matter the personal consequences. *Common Sense* would decide the issue of separation once and for all. While many contemplated the variety of actions that the Colonies might take in order to resolve their grievances with the Crown and Parliament, Paine acted and delivered a decisive argument that ended the period of conflicted uncertainty and began a period of decisive action.

The Colonies had a history of political and intellectual debate taking place within a wide assortment of written media. By 1775, the Colonies had thirty-eight newspapers, each printing letters, sermons, and official documents, which made issues and arguments available to the general public for consideration. Still, as Bernard Bailyn points out in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, the most important and effective medium to reach the public was the pamphlet.<sup>9</sup> Pamphlets were popular because of their flexibility in size and content; authors could write very short tracts expressing their opinions or much larger expositions of up to sixty or eighty pages. Medium-sized pamphlets however served Revolutionary writers especially well because they had more room than a newspaper article in which to develop their arguments while they did not have to write a full-sized treatise long enough to fill a book.<sup>10</sup>

Ideas about the future of the American Colonies and their governance were popular issues throughout the period of 1750 to 1776. The style of authors generally was not to attack opponents avidly and thus failed to inspire the emotions of the masses. Even though public accusations did occur in some pamphlets, they lacked sophistication and the creative, imaginative forces required to excite the masses. Bailyn points out that American writers were distinctly different from English pamphleteers in that “They sought to convince their opponents, not, like the English pamphleteers of the eighteenth century, to annihilate them.”<sup>11</sup> This difference, according to Bailyn, was due to the nature of the political desires of Revolutionaries in the Colonies.

For the primary goal of the American Revolution, which transformed American life and introduced a new era in human history, was not the overthrow or even the alteration of the existing social order but the preservation of political liberty threatened by the apparent corruption of the constitution, and the establishment in principle of the existing conditions of liberty.<sup>11</sup>

This conservative attitude and atmosphere differs greatly from the attitude espoused by Paine and the radical atmosphere in which he wrote his first pamphlet, *The Case of the Officers of Excise*. In light of the ineffectiveness that native pamphleteers had in initially rousing mass support for an American Revolution, it is hard to imagine that anyone other than Paine could have done so during that critical period of the winter and spring of 1776.

The roots of Colonial thought concerning the idea of Independence can be traced to the early days of immigration and settlement by religious Colonists. The one factor binding American literature was the idea that the Colonists and the Colonies of British America had a special and divine destiny. Even though writers were unsure at times exactly what this meant, this theme gradually turns into a justification for American Independence. A major source of ideas for the Revolutionary generation came from, “the political and social theories of New England Puritanism, and particularly from the ideas associated with covenant theology.”<sup>12</sup> While

American writers and intellectuals cited works by Plato, Cicero, Homer, and others, their understandings of these works were limited. Citation of these ancient sources often served only as an embellishment for writers like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, neither of whom fully comprehended Plato's writings. Historian Bernard Bailyn draws this conclusion in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* in which he describes Jefferson's criticisms of the *Dialogues* as full of futilities and incomprehensibilities. Bailyn also contends that Adams cited Plato as a supporter of equality and self-government, but concluded after he read the *Republic* that it must have been meant as a satire.<sup>13</sup>

Two other groups of writers influenced American Colonists more than any other in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The first were the British "country politicians" of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the second group was from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Of these groups of writers, two individuals from the later group were the most influential. John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon joined forces to publish *The Independent Whig*, *Cato's Letters* and *The London Journal* in the early 1720's, in which they criticized the standing army of William III, the High Church's pretensions and English politics and society. These works were continuously republished in the American Colonies and frequently quoted in American newspapers.<sup>14</sup> Opposition writers such Trenchard and Gordon found a hungry audience in the American Colonies and their ideas shaped opposition thinking in the Colonies. The difference between Paine or more sophisticated writers such as Rousseau and Locke and these English country politicians is that the former argued for radical social and government reform. The country politicians looked back to the days of the English Civil War and the development of an English Constitution as a source for reform. These writers wanted a reversion of English politics and society to this less corrupt time, while Paine, Rousseau and Locke wanted to radically change society, not revert to an earlier form of the same government.

Evidence of this desire to radically change American society is revealed in one of Paine's earliest published articles soon after he arrived in Philadelphia. In 1775, he wrote *African Slavery in America* in which he asked Americans to consider the hypocrisy of complaining about the infringement of their rights while they violently enslave Blacks and the inhumanity and injustice of the particular system of slavery existing within the Colonies. While Paine is, on the surface, mostly concerned with the inhumanity that is being visited upon fellow human beings, there are some elements of John Locke's philosophy emerging in Paine's appeal later in the essay when he writes:

As much in vain, perhaps, will they search ancient history for examples of the modern slave-trade. Too many nations enslaved the prisoners they took in war. But to go to nations with whom there is no war, who have no way provoked, without farther design of conquest, purely to catch inoffensive people, like wild beasts, for slaves, is an height of outrage against humanity and justice, that seems left by heathen nations to be practiced by pretended Christians. How shameful are all attempts to colour and excuse it. As these people are not convicted of forfeiting their freedom, they have still a natural, perfect right to it; and the governments whenever they come should in, justice set them free, and punish those who hold them in slavery.<sup>15</sup>

Paine references Locke when he argues that it is unjust for a people to be enslaved if the people, nation or state capturing slaves has no design to actually conquer the nation and subdue its inhabitants making them legal subjects. The issue of slavery is deeply important to sophisticated philosophers like Locke and even amateur thinkers such as Paine because they are chiefly concerned with individual freedom within society. Institutions such as slavery, which deprive individuals of physical freedom, are naturally opposed to the doctrines of liberty proposed by Enlightenment philosophers. Paine follows in the path of philosophers such as Locke and Thomas Hobbes throughout his life. He is a radical supporter of the individual and individual rights and he makes this especially apparent in his later work entitled the *The Age of Reason* in which he attempts to transform American society once more through an attack upon the

institutions of the church and religion.

American critics of Paine often noted throughout his life that he was a foreign transplant only recently arrived from England in 1774; yet the timing of his arrival and his earlier experiences in London and Lewes seem to have proved critical in the decision of the American Colonies to declare their Independence from Britain. As Paine's life would later bear out, he was always best at the times of decision, or at the very moment of Revolution. His most effective works sprang from his hand at moments of crisis. Indeed, Paine's arrival in Philadelphia in 1774 could not have occurred at a more critical time. Earlier that year, Parliament had enacted the Coercive Acts or the Intolerable Acts as they were more commonly called in the Colonies. These acts punished the port city of Boston for its radicalism, especially for the December 1773 Boston Tea Party. Three of the four acts were directed specifically towards Boston and the Colony of Massachusetts. The Boston Port Act closed the port of Boston until compensation was made to the East India Company for its lost tea; the Massachusetts Government Act limited town meetings and brought all government positions under the direct appointment of the King or Royal Governor; and the Administration Act stipulated that if royal officials could not receive a fair trial in Massachusetts, then they would be tried in another Colony or in Great Britain. The Quartering Act applied to each Colony and allowed governors to quarter soldiers in unoccupied buildings if proper quarters were not already available. These acts brought a storm of protest, resistance and even open rebellion. Mass meetings fueled the creation of various committees and local governments, and royal governors could only bear witness to the creation of Colonial congresses, a process that culminated in the meeting of the First Continental Congress in September of 1774.<sup>16</sup>

This dynamic atmosphere in Colonial politics during 1774 provided Paine with the opportunity to realize his full potential as a political writer. While the possibility for separation

was growing in the minds of many Colonists, the majority still hoped for reconciliation with Parliament and the Crown. At the First Continental Congress, Joseph Galloway, leader of the Pennsylvania delegation, proposed a plan that called for the creation of a Grand Council which would review all laws passed by Colonial representatives or Parliament. This plan for a union between an American Colonial Government and the British Parliament came close to passing, coming up short by only one Colony.<sup>17</sup> Paine himself did not immediately conclude that the American Colonies should break completely away from Great Britain. First, he had to reconcile the inevitable use of violence that would occur in such a rebellion with his pacifist Quaker upbringing.

Paine, the product of a marriage between an Anglican mother and a Quaker father, was influenced by both religions and he had witnessed occasional discrimination against the Quaker community in Thetford. He also saw in Thetford how the two religious groups were able to cooperate in running the community in a secular manner. Ultimately, Paine would refuse to accept either religion as wholly true, but each religion's morality shaped and guided him through many trying episodes in his life.<sup>18</sup> As a child of a mixed-religion marriage growing up in the shadow of very powerful lords with the aristocracy's instrument of justice looming so nearby, Paine was impressed by three key factors: social injustice, political abuse of power, and parents that encouraged free and fair thinking about religious issues. These three elements influenced Paine throughout his adult life, and he steadfastly held onto those beliefs that arose from them to his death.

In May of 1775, Paine wrote *The Dream Interpreted*. In this article, he describes a beautiful country that is dying because of a corrupt government ministry that is choking the life out of it. He then discusses how the American Colonists had asked for peace but were rejected by an arrogant king and a government overrun with corrupt ministers. Eventually in July 1775,



Paine reconciled his pacifist Quaker upbringing with the use of violence in a Revolution in *Thoughts on Defensive War*. In it, he explains that the world has evil in it that cannot be dealt with through negotiation alone. He argues that it is God's blessing that good men have the means to defend themselves from injustice, and that it is the mistake of the attacker to believe that good men do not have the will to defend themselves from an enemy that "has lost sight of the limits of humanity."<sup>19</sup> He justifies the use of arms in Revolution by arguing that the British soldiers have been sent to the Colonies to fight only for gold, not for the defense of natural rights or to repel an invasion.<sup>20</sup>

Paine had already expressed his dissatisfaction with Britain's quest for empire earlier in 1775 when he wrote *Reflections on the Life and Death of Lord Clive*. In this article, Paine styles Lord Clive and the British Empire as greedy and vain characters using violence to amass a fortune of gold through robbery and destruction. The first scene finds Lord Clive arriving home in England to great celebration of his exploits while the second reveals a destitute Clive whom Fortune has abandoned.

The reception which he met with on his second arrival, was in every instance equal to, and in many exceeded, the honors of the first. 'Tis the peculiar temper of the English to applaud before they think. Generous of their praise, they frequently bestow it unworthily: but when once the truth arrives, the torrent stops, and rushes back again with the same violence. Scarcely had the echo of the applause ceased upon the ear, then the rude tongue of censure took up the tale. The newspapers, fatal enemies to ill-gotten wealth! began to buzz a general suspicion of his conduct, and the inquisitive public soon refined it into particulars. Every post gave a stab to his fame – a wound to his peace – and a nail to his coffin. Like specters from the grave they haunted him in every company, and whispered murder in his ear. A life chequered with uncommon varieties is seldom a long one. Action and care will in time wear down the strongest frame, but guilt and melancholy are poisonous of quick dispatch. Say, cool deliberate reflection was the prize, though abstracted from the guilt, worthy of the pains? Ah no! Fatigued with victory he sat down to rest, and while he was recovering his breath he lost it. A conqueror more fatal than himself beset him, and revenged the injuries done to India.<sup>21</sup>

This work supports Paine's conclusions in *Thoughts on Defensive War*, but he goes farther by warning Britain that she will end up like Lord Clive eventually, without fortune, full of sorrow and regret for its aggressive actions.<sup>22</sup>

Paine genuinely wanted to believe that a war between England and her American Colonies would be a purely defensive struggle waged in defense of the principles of liberty and humanity. In *Reflections on the Life and Death of Lord Clive*, Paine makes clear his disapproval of empire-building, absolute power and corruption as defining characteristics of the monarchical system of government. *Common Sense* will provide much more than a specific cause for separation because Paine delivers an indictment of monarchical and aristocratic traditions, the foundations of Western Europe. Certainly, Paine realized that certain men and businesses would profit from a separation from England, but he was more concerned with the philosophical problems of power and its use by government. His explanations of the first societies, the creation of governments and the delicate balance of power and right between society and government are not original. Many of the ideas expressed in *Common Sense* had earlier been considered by political philosophers such as Locke and Rousseau. American writers, like Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Joshua Quincy, contemplated the works of Rousseau and Locke when struggling with the problem of power. The brilliance of Paine was that he possessed the ability to clearly connect the issue of power and right to the current problems facing the American Colonists. He was also fortunate enough to be in such a place as the American Colonies which were ready for his message of Revolution. And his knowledge of his audience would help him create a Revolution of sufficient magnitude as he envisioned. Paine realized that a struggle with England must be fought by the common American and could not be undertaken only by influential businessmen and intellectuals if true change were to be accomplished. *Common Sense* was written primarily to win over the ordinary citizenry of the Colonies to the idea of separation.

The issue of power lay at the heart of political thought and had to be confronted when attempting to reshape or create a system of government. Power which extended beyond its perceived natural or legitimate boundaries becomes a source of decadence and corruption---a destroyer of grand civilizations such as Rome and, for American Colonists, Britain. Reform, not Revolution, was the aim of many dissatisfied American Colonists as well as English non-conformists and radicals. American Colonists saw felt they embodied the ideals described by Roman writers, such as Cato, Cicero and Tacitus, who extolled the virtues of the early Romans---stoic, rustic, effective individuals free from the corruptions existing in later Rome.<sup>23</sup> The American Colonists saw themselves akin to the early Romans, free from the corruptions commonplace in England, but threatened by them. Until the early 1770's, the Colonists loyally revered the King and blamed members of Parliament for perceived injustices within the Colonies. These corrupt English politicians were viewed as power mongers who had gained influence over the King and other members of the government. Eventually, however, when accusations would finally begin to be leveled at the King himself, Thomas Paine led the attack against the entire system of monarchical government which he viewed as inherently corrupt.

American Revolutionaries like John Adams sought to define power in a political sense, beyond the definition of power in natural science. Adams interchanged power for the term dominion when speaking about political power.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, since power or dominion shared the overriding characteristic of aggression, the Colonists and Adams saw power as an ever-encroaching force, possessing a boundless appetite. The natural prey of power was liberty, law and right. Power itself was not unnatural but could not be legitimate if built upon a foundation of an individual's perceived right to power. Power then was only legitimate when built upon a consensus of those individuals to be governed by that power. When and if power violated the original compact of those who created the governing power, that power became corrupt and

illegitimate. This definition bears a close resemblance to Rousseau's social contract, in which men leave the state of nature in order to better preserve themselves. While power is unbalanced, men remain in the state of nature; it is the formation of a social compact which is supposed to create a balance or equality between all members entering the compact.

Since men cannot create new forces, but merely combine and control those which already exist, the only way in which they can preserve themselves is by uniting their separate powers in a combination strong enough to overcome any resistance, uniting them so that their powers are directed by a single motive and act in concept.<sup>25</sup>

Power, in both the natural sense and political sense, is what lies at the heart of the Revolution. Philosophically and theoretically, the wills of the Colonists in America had to be united in agreement that the English Government had violated the existing social contract, then they could form a new social contract between Colonial governments and the individual Colonists.

This uniting role is one that perhaps only Paine could play during the crucial months of the winter of 1775-76. Up to this point, a long tradition of dissent and criticism of the Government within the Colonial mindset had existed, but no one surfaced who could firmly direct the Colonial mindset upon complete separation from the Mother Country. While men such as John Adams, Sam Adams, and Benjamin Rush may have influenced Paine to a degree with their ideas of American Independence, it was the newly arrived Englishman who advocated both Independence and Republicanism. Although the deteriorating situation in 1775 might make it seem that separation was the only sensible option for the Colonies, that is not the case entirely. There were still many powerful merchants, planters and professionals who sought reconciliation and believed a restoration of their rights as Englishmen were still preferable to Independence. These men disliked the popular involvement in politics taking place in the Colonies and feared social changes if Independence came.<sup>26</sup> Paine, in fact, was advised by his friend Benjamin Rush to avoid the word Republicanism and to only broach the idea of Independence in his pamphlet

which Rush would later name *Common Sense*.<sup>27</sup> Paine, however, was not merely interested in American Independence or a restoration of rights as Englishmen, he wanted to provide humanity as a whole with a work that would critique the current English Government, and more importantly, the entire system of Government.

Monarchy was Paine's true target and circumstance had placed him at the right time at the right place to deliver his critique with the greatest effect. The American Revolution was made possible by Paine's recruitment of the common Colonists to the cause of separation by giving them a philosophical work which they could read, understand and base their actions. Unlike the works of other philosophers which influenced American Revolutionaries, Paine's *Common Sense* was penned precisely for the common reader. John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Jean Jacques Rousseau examined the theory of a natural state of man and his movement into a state of society, but these works had a hard philosophical bent that Paine did not push upon his readers. *Common Sense* is only a fraction of the size of Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*, Hobbes' *Leviathan* or Rousseau's *Social Contract*. While John Adams torturously labored over the definition of power and dominion in his *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, Paine opens *Common Sense* with a very brief discussion of the state of nature and man's need for society and government. He deals with the issue of power concisely in a manner his audience can easily understand.

As a long and violent abuse of power, is generally the Means of calling right of it in question (and in matters too which might never have been thought of, had not the Sufferers been aggravated into the inquiry) and as the K—of England had undertaken in his *own* Right, to support the Parliament in what he calls *Theirs*, and as the good people of this country are grievously oppressed by the combination, they have an undoubted privilege to inquire into the pretensions of both, and equally to reject the usurpation of either.<sup>28</sup>

With this statement at the outset, Paine explains to his readers that it is legitimate for the

Colonists to question the power of their Government. This questioning is based upon violations and abuses of power committed by the King and Parliament, and their abuses of power exceed that which was given at the time of the origination of their mutually agreed upon social contract. In this single statement, Paine expanded criticism beyond Parliament to the King himself. Since the King supported Parliament's abuse of power toward the Colonies, he had himself violated the bounds of his power. Unlike Locke or Rousseau, Paine did not have to write an entire book about contracts and what binds society together. Parliament and the King had simply overstepped their bounds and it was the right of the Colonists to resist.

As important as it was that Paine not dwell upon difficult philosophical discussions of terms like power and dominion, it was equally important that he forge a new vision which unified the Colonists. Divisions amongst the Colonies had to be overcome if the Revolution were to take place and succeed. Paine, also realized that even though the Colonies were inhabited primarily by people of English descent, the Revolution and independent America would have to include those immigrants who had come from other countries to the Colonies. Paine eloquently rejects the notion that it is somehow shameful for the Colonies to take up arms against the Mother Country:

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase *parent* or *mother country* hath been Jesuitically adopted by the K – and his parasites, with a low papistical design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from *every part* of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.<sup>29</sup>

Paine's recognition that a rebellion against England could succeed only if the majority of Colonists took up the cause may be his greatest contribution.

*Common Sense* served as the medium in which the intellectual philosophies of Adams and Locke were transformed into everyday common language. The effect of Paine's pamphlet may not be easily measured in empirical terms, but can clearly be seen shortly after its publication and distribution. First distributed on the streets of Philadelphia in January 1776, *Common Sense* rapidly gained in popularity and quickly spread to all thirteen Colonies. George Washington remarked, "by private letters which I have lately received from Virginia, I find that Common Sense is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men."<sup>30</sup> In fact, it would be a Virginian, Richard Henry Lee, who submitted the first resolution of Independence to the Continental Congress on June 7, 1776, only five months after *Common Sense*'s publication. Lee's initial declaration of Independence read simply, "these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."<sup>31</sup> Apparently, *Common Sense* affected not only the minds of ordinary Colonists, but also had a profound effect upon men such as Lee and the Virginia delegation to the Continental Congress.

In *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas*, Carl Becker notes that this first resolution declaring the Independence of the Colonies from Great Britain was passed by the Continental Congress on July 2, 1776. He also points out that earlier on June 10, the Continental Congress had voted to appoint a committee to prepare a declaration for that resolution of Independence passed later on July 2. This is an important series of events because it shows, as Becker explains, that the Declaration of Independence was not actually the official resolution breaking political ties with Great Britain, but a proclamation to the world of the reasons that the thirteen Colonies were declaring their Independence.<sup>32</sup>

The official Declaration of Independence is strikingly similar to Paine's *Common Sense*.

Both are philosophical works in that their primary purpose is to explain and justify a particular course of action. *Common Sense* was directed to the Colonists and explained to them why it was time for the Colonies to seek Independence from Great Britain. The two documents are also similar in language. The committee appointed to prepare the Declaration of Independence consisted of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston. All of these men, but especially Adams and Jefferson, possessed great intellectual and philosophical abilities. Yet, the Declaration reads as easily as Paine's *Common Sense*. His goal was to finally convince the Colonists that separation was their only rational, viable option if they were to realize their full political and economic potential. As a document intended for all who felt oppression around the globe, the Declaration of Independence provided the American Colonies' specific justifications for rebellion, plus spelled out a new set of beliefs based on the philosophy of Enlightenment in simple terms modeled after *Common Sense*. Dissatisfaction amongst intellectuals and their complicated philosophical arguments could never affect the change envisioned by men such as Jefferson and Adams, because in order to successfully revolt against the old order, the masses had to be brought along. The method and language to accomplish that major step was delivered by Thomas Paine in *Common Sense*.

Paine and Jefferson approach their audience in the same fashion, with the sort of reasoning found within the common mind and not within philosophical arguments. Paine enters into the reconciliation-separation debate with a simple mindset of assessing the benefits and disadvantages of each avenue.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right, that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with, and dependent on Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependence, on the



principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependent.<sup>33</sup>

The average reader or listener could easily follow this line of argument because it is obvious to everyone who makes any kind of decision. What is remarkable is that this method of contemplation is being advertised to the multitude of Colonists in order that they can decide upon a course of action which will have vast implications on world politics. The effectiveness of Paine's appeal to the common person as the foundation of democracy is readily apparent.

His common sense arguments are clearly evident in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence:

Prudence, indeed, will dictate, that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient 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 & usurpations pursuing invariably the same objects evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, 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.<sup>34</sup>

The Declaration of Independence, like *Common Sense*, possesses power and force because both of these documents convince the audience of the author's cause through reliance upon straightforward facts and easily understandable methods of thought, not philosophical discourse.

The influence and effect of *Common Sense* is apparent as the pamphlet was widely and quickly distributed throughout the Colonies. Its arguments and methods had a great effect upon the minds of the great and common alike, influencing not only the decision to separate, but also the manner in which the decision to do so was presented to the world. What truly made Paine one of the most influential men of the Enlightenment and beyond was his ability to

reconcile religious tenets existing within the Colonies with that of the argument for separation and rebellion.

Within the Colonies, there existed a multitude of Christian sects--the Church of England whose followers believed themselves to be rational and moderate, deists, Arminians and Calvinists--each group separate and distinct. These dissenting factions believed that society and liberty both in English and Colonial society had declined, or was in a state of decline. This belief originated from the Whig tradition which strongly emphasized the idea of social contract and a balance of power within government. Radical Whigs felt that the easily upset balance within society was especially in danger after 1760.<sup>35</sup> Corruption and the growth of aristocratic luxury and decadence demonstrated the decline and destruction of English society and freedom. From the pulpits of each of these religions, ministers preached against the vices of aristocratic corruption and the virtues of a more rustic and vital past, one embodied by the ancient Romans.

In order for the ideas of the Enlightenment to spark Revolutions, they had to express the zeal of religion. Any appeal to armed Revolution had to be made through or at least reconciled with the religious beliefs of the Colonists. Paine earlier had begun his own reconciliation in *Thoughts on Defensive War*, but he went much farther in *Common Sense* and he achieved what other radicals and Revolutionaries could not. He effectively brings a religious fervor to the argument while at the same time creating religious harmony between the varying sects in order for them to achieve a common goal. He focuses all of these sects upon the issue of decline and the loss of balance within English and, by extension, Colonial society. It must be remembered that Paine arrived in Pennsylvania relatively late in terms of the political discussions that were already occurring within the Colonies. This fact is important in how Paine is to be viewed. Though commonly seen as an American patriot and radical, he in fact was shaped more by English radicalism than Colonial sentiments. What he finds when he arrives in the Colonies is a

population full of discontent with its political status in relation to an accepted form of government. What he brings with him and is able to inject into the Colonial situation is English discontent and a fiery radicalism rarely seen within the Colonies.

The English Whig radicals John Wilkes, who in the 1760's denounced ministerial oppression, and James Burgh undoubtedly influenced Paine's political viewpoint. Burgh in 1771 wrote of the loss of Saxon liberty in his *Historical Essay on the English Constitution*.<sup>36</sup> Again in 1774, in *Political Disquisitions*, Burgh discussed corruption, militarism, and Colonial oppression, all topics which Paine wrote about during his time in Philadelphia before the appearance of *Common Sense*. Burgh and other English dissenters were no longer interested in tolerating the status quo or merely halting the decline, they had begun to envision an entirely new future by the mid-1770's. Joseph Priestly and Richard Price were two other important English dissenters who supported the cause of the American Colonies and viewed Christianity as well as political reforms such as free speech and parliamentary reform through a rationalist lens. Even though the English radicals were rationalists who felt that the balance of the English Constitution had been upset, they also believed that any Revolution had to be led by the educated and those properly trained to govern.<sup>37</sup> These men, while an influence upon Paine, were only that. He never names a specific influence which profoundly affected him, but traces of Burgh and Wilkes are surely present within Paine's writing, even if he is not defined by them.

Religion, particularly Calvinist beliefs, play an integral role in understanding American radicalism. This is because in America, social grievances, unlike those later during the French Revolution, were lacking. Rather than stress social inequality, American radicals relied upon emphasizing the sinful nature of luxury and the corruption bred by the indolence of the aristocratic lifestyle. These criticisms were a plea to natural instincts and less to a Revolution led by the educated. In this way, the American radicals were at odds with the Enlightenment which

glorified reason over passion and superstition.<sup>38</sup> A Revolution for American radicals would present an opportunity to halt the general decline of English society and bring about a new opportunity in which the American Colonies could once again resume their divine mission. For this to actually take place, there first had to be a force that could draw moderates, radicals, deists, Calvinists and other dissenters together and unite them under one cause--a cause elegantly expressed by the Princeton College class poem written by Hugh Henry Brackenridge and Philip Freneau in 1771:

A new Jerusalem sent down from heav'n  
 Shall grace our happy earth, perhaps this land,  
 Whose virgin bosom shall then receive, tho' late,  
 Myriads of saints with their almighty king,  
 To live and reign on earth a thousand years  
 Thence call'd Millennium. Paradise anew  
 Shall flourish, by no second Adam lost.<sup>39</sup>

The yearning for a break with Europe and its old ways lay within the hearts and minds of many Colonists and even some English radicals, but it would take a unique author with extraordinary talent and courage to forge this dissent into a singular voice demanding separation.

The importance of *Common Sense* is hard to measure without seeming boastful of the work. Simply put, *Common Sense* finally called for what many were already thinking, that separation from England was the only true viable option by 1776. Paine achieves much more, however, by appealing to all of those who felt aggrieved for having suffered at the hands of Parliament and the King. He speaks to moderates, rationalist dissenters, and American radicals alike when he discusses the imbalance that the current English Government has imposed upon the nature of man and natural society. Within the same paragraph, he also reconciles the sentiments of the Calvinists and other Christian readers:

Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past?  
 Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and

America. The last cord now is broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive; she would cease to be nature if she did. As well can the lover forgive the ravisher of his mistress, as the continent forgive the murders of Britain. The Almighty hath implanted in us these unextinguishable feelings for good and wise purposes. They are the guardians of his image in our hearts. They distinguish us from the herd of common animals. The social compact would dissolve, and justice be extirpated from the earth, or have only a casual existence were we callous to the touches of affection. The robber and the murderer, would often escape unpunished, did not the injuries which our tempers sustain, provoke us into justice.<sup>40</sup>

*Common Sense* is able to do what no one else had: convince the Colonists, despite their many different particular creeds and reasons for dissent, that Great Britain had injured the Colonies and also refused to make any reasonable attempt to repair those injuries.

Paine provided the American Colonists with a grand vision that their cause was one on behalf of mankind and not merely a quarrel between the Colonies and Parliament. He framed the Colonial revolt as a contest between the new and the old, between reason and superstition, and between democracy and monarchy. Americans, he stressed, had the opportunity to make the world over again:

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is over-run with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind.<sup>41</sup>

History has shown the effectiveness of Paine's style and ability, for *Common Sense* succinctly clarified and expressed the situation facing the inhabitants of the Colonies, and resulted in their Declaration of Independence from Great Britain only a few months after its publication.

Having brought the Colonies to the point of separation, Paine did not quit the American cause. After the success of *Common Sense*, Paine lobbied all Continental Congressmen ceaselessly to vote for Independence and particularly pressured the Pennsylvania Assembly to support Independence. After Independence became reality, Paine immediately volunteered for

military service and became the secretary to General Daniel Roberdeau. He began his *Crisis* essays while in the military and used his writing skills to call attention to the plight of American soldiers, all the while arguing for more support for the military. He also used these essays to justify violence by casting the Revolution as a defensive war against the British, who were now waging an offensive and murderous war.<sup>42</sup>

Paine's most influential and enduring essay in the *Crisis* series is the first one, written on December 23, 1776. The second half of 1776 has seen defeat after defeat for Washington's men who have retreated from New York through New Jersey into Pennsylvania. Having limped into camp at Valley Forge, the Americans suffered from very low morale and the fate of the entire Revolution was truly in question. At this perhaps most critical point of the War for Independence, Paine captivates disheartened Americans with his famous opening line, "These are the times that try men's souls."<sup>43</sup> In the first powerful paragraph, he stirs the souls of patriot soldiers as he recalls in gripping style the reasons for their hardship. He reminds them of the tyranny that they would not submit to and stresses that although their struggle seems great, the reward would be equally as great.

Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain to cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as Freedom should not be highly rated.<sup>44</sup>

In his unique way, the author of *Common Sense* assures his fellow patriots that he is no sunshine soldier and that the fight is still worth the cost.

Having grasped the attention of his audience, Paine calls on his fellow countrymen to choose the side of freedom and support the Colonial patriots. He has harsh words for Tory sympathizers who avoid war and its hardships in hopes that their families will remain unscathed by the conflict.

And what is a Tory? Good God! What is he? I should not be afraid to go with a hundred Whigs against a thousand Tories, were they to attempt to get into arms. Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism; and a man under such influence, though he may be cruel, never can be brave.<sup>45</sup>

Paine recognized at this crucial juncture of the war that it was vitally essential to bring those sitting on the fence over to the side of Independence, while at the same time keeping those who had already joined within the ranks of the new army. Unwilling to give up on those Tories who have been apprehensive, he appeals,

But, before the line of irrecoverable separation be drawn between us, let us reason the matter together: Your conduct is an invitation to the enemy, yet not one in a thousand of you has heart enough to join him. Howe is as much deceived by you as the American cause is injured by you.<sup>46</sup>

While Paine handles Tories roughly at the start, he understands the fear many may feel in risking everything by becoming a traitor to the Crown. He ably confronts the argument that Tories refuse to join the American cause out of a desire to maintain peace and stability by relating a story of an encounter with a Tory tavern owner who declares he would like to have peace in his day as he holds his child near. Paine effectively counters that if the man truly cared for his child, he would face the dangers of his day so that his child would not have to do so in the future.

Not a man lives on the continent but fully believes that a separation must some time or other finally take place, and a generous parent should have said, 'If there must be trouble, let it be in my day, that my child may have peace'; and this single reflection, well applied, is sufficient to awaken every man to duty.<sup>47</sup>

Paine pleads with his fellow patriots to remain steadfast and true to the American cause and their duty during this terrible winter of 1776. Having drifted through life, Paine had now found himself in the middle of the first armed Revolution of the Enlightenment and he was playing a critical role.

Paine wrote sixteen *Crisis* essays throughout the Revolution. Having tipped the balance in favor of separation, he did not sit back to see how the Americans would fare in their struggle

against Great Britain, but instead remained fervently dedicated to the cause. Time after time, he used his pen to keep the Revolution alive and relevant for the Americans suffering the hardships of war. Paine witnessed firsthand the misery of the common Colonial soldier for whom he had great sympathy and empathy. He was always more like them than Washington or Jefferson. It is safe to say that Paine believed wholeheartedly in the ideals of the Revolution and what he had written in *Common Sense*. He believed that all of the suffering would lead to the great reward of self-government and freedom, and that America would be freed from the tyranny he had witnessed since growing up in Thetford.

Sadly, not all who participated in the Revolution cared so deeply for the cause or for those who bore the brunt of the hardship of fighting it. In 1777, General Roberdeau assisted Paine in obtaining appointment to the Foreign Affairs Committee as its secretary. During his brief tenure, he became aware of a secret mission to France to buy arms. The committee sent a merchant named Silas Deane to France to acquire those arms. After negotiations, the French agreed to sell the Colonies arms on the condition that the transactions remain secret, because France, at this point in the war, still held back from declaring open support of the rebellious Colonists and wished to avoid entering the war against Great Britain. Nevertheless, the deal served as wonderful news to the Continental Congress, since it placed France one step closer to supporting the Colonies. The problem, however, was that the arms sold to the Colonies were of very low quality--most had been discarded by the French military-- and France charged dearly for these supplies. The only parties profiting from this arrangement were Silas Deane who was paid a five percent commission on all purchases and the French government. When the outraged Paine learned of this, he responded in the only way he knew, by writing to the public. He attacked Deane and all others who dared to profit from the war in such a way.

Revealing this information to the public resulted in Paine's immediate dismissal from his



post as secretary to the Foreign Affairs Committee. Undeterred, Paine accused the Continental Congress of acting in a manner similar to a despotic monarchy. In response to these accusations, Deane and Congress condemned Paine because he risked the friendship with France, America's only possible military ally against Great Britain. Even though Paine continued his *Crisis* series, these allegations of treachery affected him deeply and, most importantly, his involvement in governmental affairs with the Continental Congress came to an end--he was simply not fitted for government service in that he could never compromise his ideals. The Deane Affair would be the first of several occurrences in which Paine would exhibit the courage to hold fast to his ideals. Later during the French Revolution his idealism would cost him his freedom and nearly his life.

Paine found life rather hard within the Colonies, his reputation damaged by the Deane Affair. He did play an active role in Pennsylvania politics and became a clerk for the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1780. Having gained almost nothing monetarily from the distribution of either *Common Sense* or his *Crisis* essays, he was reduced to petitioning the newly established American Government for funds and a place to live. In late 1779, he talked of leaving for France or perhaps secretly returning to England to foment Revolution there. His cosmopolitan view of himself was at times seen as traitorous by Americans, nevertheless, Paine expressed how he viewed his purpose in life when he told a South Carolina friend, Henry Laurens,

Perhaps America would feel less obligation to me, did she know, that it was neither the place nor the people but the Cause itself that irresistibly engaged me in its support; for I should have acted the same part in any other country could the same circumstances have arisen there which have happened here.<sup>48</sup>

In the same letter, Paine mentioned that the friends he had made during the Revolution knew that was not the case, and that everything that America had gotten from him had been at no expense to the new nation.

After the Deane Affair, Paine became a political outsider. *Common Sense* and the *Crisis* essays had initiated and helped sustain the Revolution, but Paine's role had dramatically lessened by 1779. This depressing trend continued throughout the 1780's so with his political career stymied, Paine finally decided to return to Europe in 1787. His initial plans involved selling designs for iron bridges in England and France, but this venture proved to be unfruitful, although comments about his designs were positive. Paine's political passions were then reinvigorated by the French Revolution and the subsequent publication of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Paine, a friendly acquaintance of Burke, considered Burke a friend of America for his past support of the American Colonies. In 1789, Paine wrote to Burke with enthusiasm about the events in France, however, Burke surprised Paine when he attacked the French Revolution. This gave Paine an opportunity to write a confrontational response which would result in a philosophical rift between the two men.<sup>49</sup>

In letters to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, Paine expressed his joy at having found what he saw as a new cause in Revolutionary France. Paine held a positive view of Louis XVI, in stark contrast to his views about King George III of England, whom he often referred to as his "Madjesty" in reference to the monarch's mental illness. On May 1, 1790, Paine told Washington that he should congratulate Louis XVI and the Queen on the developments in France and "on the happy example they are giving to Europe."<sup>50</sup> He expressed similar sentiments when he found in a Louis XVI's speech that "...he prides himself on being at the head of the revolution; and that such congratulation will be well received, and have a good effect."<sup>51</sup> In a February 26, 1789 letter, Paine tells Jefferson that he is "exceedingly interested in the happiness of that nation."<sup>52</sup> He compares the relationship between the English and their monarch to that which the French have with Louis XVI:

I observe in all the companies I go into the impression which the present circumstances of France have upon this country. *An internal alliance* (between the King and the people) in France is an alliance which England never dreamed of, and which she most dreads. Whether she will be better or worse tempered afterwards I cannot judge of, but I believe she will be more cautious in giving offense.<sup>53</sup>

Paine's excitement continues to grow toward the end of the May 1790 because there was much for a man like Paine to be excited about in that first year of Revolution in France. The absolute monarch of France was being replaced by a Republic and factional violence had yet to erupt. He reports to Washington that he had sent the key to the Bastille which was given to him by the Marquis de Lafayette onward to the President. Moreover, tells Washington, "The French Revolution is not only complete but triumphant..."<sup>54</sup>

A defining moment for Paine in his participation in the French Revolution, however, came after Burke issued his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in 1790. Burke criticized the French for having acted against their "mild and lawful monarch with more fury, outrage, and insult than any ever people has been known to rise against the most illegal usurper, or the most sanguinary tyrant."<sup>55</sup> Claiming the election of the National Assembly as an evil and unlawful act, Burke argued that the actions of the Revolutionaries caused France to lose all forces in society that preserved its cohesion. According to Burke, the dismantling of the institutions of the monarchy and the church destroyed the very foundations of the state, which not only ensured equal representation of all the people in each region, but also bound the population under a common identity. In contrast to this situation within Revolutionary France, Burke described the favorable virtues of the English system and the benefits it provided the British people. The House of Lords and the monarch ensured equality of all the districts of England, providing a political framework within which the elected members of the House of Commons could work. He illustrated the prudence of this system by rhetorically asking if there has ever been a time when one district has been overly powerful or given preferential treatment.<sup>56</sup>

With the publication of Burke's book, Paine once again saw an opportunity to exercise his skill as a political writer in the form of his 1791 response, entitled *The Rights of Man*. Paine disputed Burke's assertion that the French revolted against a mild monarch, Louis XVI, by proclaiming that the Revolution was not against the King himself but rather in opposition to the despotic principles of the government then present in France. These despotic principles, Paine reasons, were not those of the King, but rather principles established centuries before Louis XVI's reign. Paine also reveals an idealistic bias towards Louis XVI, which he in no way would ever share with his "Madjesty." He says, "The King was known to be the friend of the nation..." and that "Perhaps no man bred up in the stile of an absolute King, ever possessed a heart so little disposed to the exercise of that species of power as the present King of France."<sup>57</sup>

Paine, in part, refutes Burke's assertion that the monarch in France was indeed mild, commenting that Burke did not experience life in the Bastille and that he has mistaken the Revolution as solely directed at the King. For Paine, the French Revolution targeted not the King, but rather a system of rival despots, feudal lords and the church that took their toll upon the citizens of France.<sup>58</sup> Completely infatuated with the Revolution in France, Paine hopes that it might spread the rights of man throughout Europe. This idealistic view clouded his vision, for in many ways, Paine hoped that the French Revolution would go far beyond the American Revolution, which he felt had fallen short. One can see such hopes reflected in Paine's description of the Revolution in France:

The revolutions that have taken place in other European countries have been excited by personal hatred. The rage was against the man, and he became the victim. But in the instance of France, we see a revolution generated in the rational contemplation of the rights of man, and distinguishing from the beginning between persons and principles.<sup>59</sup>

Paine had suffered from personal attacks in the Deane affair, he was referred to as a mere adventurer from England and even as a traitor at times. Throughout *The Rights of Man*,

Paine displays a passionate hope that the French Revolution will prove to be a more “pure” revolution, one that would rise above personal hatreds and attacks, and instead act as a spark of light spreading the ideals of the rights of man across the globe.

Like *Common Sense*, *The Rights of Man* ultimately became a bestseller, but again like *Common Sense*, Paine had to put up his own money and borrow from friends just get to the work printed, distributed, and allowed copies to be made and sold without the benefits of royalties for himself. Always the idealist, Paine wanted most of all for the ideals in which he believed to be freely spread to all those who wanted to read of them. Unfortunately for Paine, this resulted in his poverty and constant scrapping for funds. His perhaps naïve expectation that France or the United States would always ensure him a measure of monetary support out of gratitude for his services went unfulfilled.

*The Rights of Man*, nonetheless, caused a considerable stir among English politicians, though wholly negative. Even though some talked of prosecuting Paine for sedition against the English Government, ultimately prosecution was not pursued, as many officials agreed that the price of the publication was too high to have a direct influence upon the working classes in England. They viewed the work as one accessible only to the educated upper class, despite being written in the vulgar or common language. But in fact, *The Rights of Man* did enjoy a wide readership which pleased Paine to no end; still, he made a political mistake by dedicating the work to George Washington and sending him fifty copies as a gift. Washington regarded this as a blatant attempt by Paine to associate himself with the President and use his American citizenship in order to protect himself from prosecution. Paine’s dedication angered Washington because the United States and England were at that time involved in delicate negotiations. Whether a calculated move by Paine or not, it struck a heavy blow to his relationship with Washington. The President waited almost a year to reply to this “gift,” curtly saying that the requirements of his

office demanded much of him, but that he was pleased to hear of Paine's personal fortune and of course hoped that the ideals of the Enlightenment would spread to all men.<sup>60</sup>

In order to facilitate the later, Paine decided to print a less expensive version of *The Rights of Man*, which raised concerns for his safety in England, and soon caused him to flee to France in the spring of 1791. During this short sojourn in France, Paine had his first brush with Revolutionary violence in the streets of Paris. On June 21, 1791, the Marquis de Lafayette roused Paine from his room to inform him that the King had fled. Going outside to witness the commotion of the event, Paine made the near-fatal mistake of forgetting to wear his cockaded hat. The crowd, noticing this, took him to be a royalist, began to physically assault him and prepared to hang him on the spot from a lamp post. Paine's friends were fortunately able to convince the crowd to release him. Somehow, Paine was able to pass this incident off as a rare moment, not at all common to or representative of the character of the Revolution. He refused to acknowledge that the possibility existed that the Revolution in France could deviate from the positive example of the American Revolution and instead become violent, destructive and chaotic. It may be that Paine, at this point, had so thoroughly invested his ideals in the French Revolution that he could not admit to the development of political rivalries and the splintering of interests, yet alone the threat of extreme violence.<sup>61</sup>

After this incident, Paine decided he would return to England in order to rouse a Revolutionary spirit among the working class, but before his departure, he offered his talents to the Marquis de Condorcet and proposed the organization of a political society to be named the "Société des Républicains." The stated purpose of this society would be to develop and spread the idea of Republicanism in France. The members of the group were Condorcet, Paine, Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville and Étienne Chavière and together they established a journal, "Le Républicain." In July 1791, Paine argued in the journal for the establishment of a Republican

government, rather than a constitutional monarchy. While his proposal caused some debate in the National Assembly, it was dropped quickly. Sieyés, a supporter of forming a constitutional monarchy, dismissed Paine's proposal, arguing that Republicanism was not the only valid form of Government and that the people of France had chosen an elective monarchy. Paine held to his conviction that France needed a Republican form of government and responded by declaring again his war against the despotic system of monarchy.<sup>62</sup> Paine's initial call for the King's complete removal from office and his declaration that the monarch's flight was tantamount to an abdication served to complicate matters two years later, when he argued in favor for a reprieve for the King from the death penalty. On July 8, 1791, he left France and returned to England amid fanfare in both nations. Always intent on attacking monarchy, Paine hoped to stir up the Revolutionary spirit and bring the cause of the common man to his homeland.

To accomplish this, Paine planned to expand upon *The Rights of Man*. He would target the fact that Britain did not have a written Constitution and that without, this the English people did not truly govern themselves. In the second part of *The Rights of Man*, Paine explains the Republican system in the United States and the value of having a written Constitution as compared to an un-written Constitution. He argues that the American Constitution is the "property of the nation, and not of those who exercise the government,"<sup>63</sup> as was the case in France. For Paine, "... a constitution is a thing antecedent to the government and always distinct therefrom."<sup>64</sup> He says that in England everything has a Constitution except the nation and that the historical development of the government in England allows only for a petition of the government, but not actual representation. This is the case, according to Paine, because those who are elected to Parliament are elected into a body that has unlimited power over its subjects without the formal restraints of a written Constitution drafted and approved by the people. For Paine, any perceived freedom or democracy ends immediately after candidates for Parliament are

elected. Therefore, the lack of a written Constitution is a most fundamental issue for Paine regarding the English Government: “From the want of a constitution in England to restrain and regulate the wild impulse of power, many of the laws are irrational and tyrannical, and the administration of them vague and problematical.”<sup>65</sup> These attacks upon the system of Government in England could be expected from Paine and show his support for the system created in the United States and the one being worked on in France.

As he proceeds, however, Paine expresses some very modern ideas in his second part of *The Rights of Man*. He discusses the taxation of citizens in England and begins to lay out a plan for social programs to provide for the aged and youth who struggled to survive. Criticizing the Government for its heavy taxes and harsh penal system, he states that the Government should spend less on the lavish regal court and use those funds instead to create jobs for the youth of the nation. Paine lashes out-- perhaps remembering his youth in Thetford-- against the Government, saying that a “Civil government does not consist in executions; but in making that provision for the instruction of the youth, and the support of age...”<sup>66</sup> He also questions why it is generally only the poor who were executed under monarchies. Paine cites the violent nature of the monarchical system, pointing out that kings spend far too much time plotting wars against each other which only increased the suffering of their subjects and sapped the wealth of the nation. After making his case for the Government’s attention to the general welfare of its citizens, Paine lays out the overriding principle that guided his life up to this point, and which he clung to even though it caused him much personal pain and stress. He solemnly asserts, “It is the nature of compassion to associate with misfortune. In taking up this subject I seek no recompence – I fear no consequence. Fortified with that proud integrity, that disdains to triumph or to yield, I will advocate the Rights of Man.”<sup>67</sup> This staunchness as an advocate for the rights of man would endanger his life in England when it became clear that the Government of George III intended to



prosecute him for this second perceived act of sedition.

On September 13, 1792, Paine again fled his homeland for France, but this time the English Government took steps to prevent his return. Tried in absencia, he was convicted of propagating seditious libel in December 1792 and threatened with certain arrest and probable execution if he returned or if he were captured at sea by the Royal Navy.<sup>68</sup> During his time in England when he was writing the second part of *The Rights of Man*, Paine had been offered French citizenship and also elected to the National Convention as a representative from Calais. Thus, upon his arrival in France, he received a very warm, celebrated welcome; however, the good times in France would not last long, for he soon suffered two political defeats. In a debate with Georges Danton about how the judges of France should be replaced, Paine argued that judges should be chosen carefully by trained officials and that the judges should not be politically elected. Danton, on the other hand, advocated for a general election of judges, regardless of whether or not they received any prior training in the legal profession. His second defeat, a more devastating blow, involved his September 1792 appointment to a committee that was established to improve the Constitution of 1791. He worked closely with his friend Condorcet, but grew dissatisfied with the length and complexity of the document and expressed his disappointment with Condorcet's efforts. In a letter to Danton, he argued that the nation needed a brief, easy-to understand document, that one that would serve as a statement in the fundamental struggle against despotic monarchy. The draft of the Constitution written by the committee was rejected by the Convention in February 1793, and the Jacobins formed a rival committee to draft a new Constitution in April. For Paine, this experience revealed how the Girondin party was rapidly losing power to its Jacobin rivals.

The trial of the King also took place during this period and brought Paine to the forefront of the Convention. This trial would be the single issue that would define his experience in the

National Convention. Appalled that Louis XVI might be executed, he argued vehemently for the alternative of sending the King into exile in America. Still, he agreed with the notion of subjecting the King to a trial and expressed his view in a letter to the Convention on November 20, 1792, entitled *On the Propriety of Bringing Louis XVI to Trial*. Paine argued that Louis XVI should not be tried on any individual basis, but for the part he played in the grand conspiracy of the monarchies of Europe which sought to intervene in the Revolution.<sup>69</sup> When it later became clear that the King would be sentenced to death, Paine pleaded to save the King's life in *Reasons for Preserving the Life of Louis Capet*.

This document, read to the Convention on January 15, 1793 by a translator, threw the members into an uproar. Paine's earlier statements about being at "war" with monarchy caused some members to disbelieve their ears when they heard the petition for the King's life. Jean-Paul Marat interrupted, denounced the translator, and proclaimed that he did not believe that Thomas Paine, avowed enemy of all monarchs, would write such a plea for Louis XVI. In his petition, Paine entreated the Convention's members to allow "...the French nation to extricate itself from the yoke of kings, without defiling itself in the impurities of their blood."<sup>70</sup> Although keenly aware of the danger in taking this position, Paine held firm to his lifelong opposition to the death penalty.

His plea to the Convention, although ineffective, represents something of a culmination in Paine's life. When Marat continued to interrupt the translator and say that these could not be the words of Paine, the Convention's members grew increasingly hostile and moved to assault the translator. Paine rushed forward at that moment and assured the members that the words were indeed his. For the first time in his life, Paine was physically present in front of a large crowd completely against him, and yet, in the face of danger, he stood firm. Although he had been earlier assaulted by a crowd in Paris, that was by mistake. Defending the life of the King in front

of the Convention took a greater amount of courage. This moment also differs markedly from penning a philosophical response to another writer like Edmund Burke. Paine did not shy away from his beliefs set forth in *The Rights of Man* when he argued that the cause of the French Revolution, unlike earlier Revolutions in Europe, was not motivated by revenge or personal hatred. Here, before the Convention and facing great peril, he made a final attempt to save the cause of the Revolution and preserve the ideals of the rights of man within the Revolution.

When Paine's desperate effort to halt the execution of the King failed, he knew that his plea for the King's life clearly marked him as an enemy in the eyes of the Jacobins. He decided to retreat to the village of Saint-Denis, fearing that the King's execution would result in the rapid spread of violence between the political factions in Paris. For Paine, the King's demise was a crushing moment because it signaled that political actors would definitely be subjected not only to political attacks, but also imprisonment or even death. He saw this as a huge defeat in that the Revolution in which he had placed so much hope was now devolving into a situation very similar to the monarchies against which he had fought so hard.

In a sense, Paine was back where he began, returned to his youth in Thetford and a time filled with celebrated trials and executions. All he could do now was to hope avoid arrest and execution, so he retreated from the political limelight, assuming a very low profile when he attended the Convention. In April 1793, Paine privately related his disappointment in the Revolution to Thomas Jefferson, telling him that it was no longer feasible for the French to export the ideals of the rights of man throughout Europe because they had failed to conduct the Revolution on its original principles. Although he expressed his wish to return to America, he was unable to sail there out of fear of capture by England's Royal Navy, so he continued to live in a state of fear in France. The worst, however, was still to come.

The last week of May and early June 1793 would bring some of his darkest days. On

June 2, Paine learned of the Jacobin insurrection against the Girondin members of the Convention. Rushing to the Convention, Paine met Danton, who told him that if he entered, he would be risking his life.<sup>71</sup> Realizing the danger to his personal safety, a deeply depressed Paine returned to Saint-Denis, where he tried to avoid the attention of Jacobin leaders. Although he no longer attended the Convention, he continued through the summer of 1793 to work on a new project titled *The Age of Reason*. He lived a quiet life working on his manuscript until Christmas Day 1793, when the authorities finally came knocking. After a long day of questioning, he was imprisoned in the Luxembourg prison in Paris. Although Paine expected an early release when he learned from other prisoners that two other Americans had been released shortly after their arrest, his hopes faded quickly when informed that Robespierre considered him a troublesome Englishman.

Paine's concerns turned to rage when the American minister, Gouverneur Morris, refused to intervene on his behalf, claiming that Paine was a citizen of the French Republic and that the French Government must have good reasons for his incarceration. This constituted a hurtful betrayal for Paine and he saw his continued imprisonment as a conspiracy between the French and American Governments. He reasoned that not only did the Jacobin Government fear his skill as a political writer, but that the American Government and George Washington were fearful that he would cause disruptions in America's relations with France and England.<sup>72</sup> Paine felt that Washington had abandoned him, with no acknowledgment of his past services in aiding America during her War for Independence. He finally gained release on November 6, 1794, largely due to the fall of Robespierre and the replacement of Gouverneur Morris by James Monroe. The incoming regime did not view Paine as a dangerous enemy and with Monroe's intercession, Paine was granted his freedom.

Paine's imprisonment effectively ended his involvement in French politics. Even though

re-instated as a member of the Convention, he chose not to participate in any serious manner. He initially supported the rise of Napoleon, but soon fell from Napoleon's good graces when he publicly questioned a possible invasion of England by Napoleon. Earlier in 1797, Paine had advocated a French invasion, believing that England's working classes would rise up and overthrow the English monarchy in support of the ideals of *The Rights of Man*. But experience had taught Paine that such things were not so simple or likely to happen, and such an invasion would probably result in much bloodshed, not necessarily a spreading of the ideals that were present in the early Revolution.

During the winter of 1795-1796, Paine wrote a major work titled *Agrarian Justice*. He was apprehensive to publish the work because of the radical land reforms it suggested. Having just been released from prison, he feared that his ideas might bring him trouble from French authorities. *Agrarian Justice* was finally published in 1797 and Paine held some hope that his proposed reforms would resonate within France. In it, he reflects upon his childhood experience in Thetford, of witnessing the harsh treatment of the poor and peasant class, along with the complete inability of charity to better their situation. Also, equally dismaying was the gap existing between the rich and poor that continued to grow even in France after the Revolution. In *Agrarian Justice*, Paine lays out his concept that civilization has robbed man of his natural inheritance and the right to live in the natural state. In this natural state, before the existence of civilization, Paine writes that the earth was the "common property of the human race."<sup>73</sup> He does not advocate a wholesale reform of the existing system of civilization or the confiscation of property from the wealthy; rather, Paine argues for a one-time payment to every person when they reach the age of twenty-one and for a lesser annual payment every year thereafter. These payments would assure that no generation inherits a worse condition than the preceding one. In this way, people receive what they would have received if they were born into the state of nature

and not robbed of their natural right to profit from the common land of the earth. These payments are not only meant for the poor or handicapped but also for the rich. The method of monetary payment similarly provides access to the benefits of the land without re-distribution the of land itself.<sup>74</sup>

Paine's *Agrarian Justice* clearly defines his beliefs about Revolution and what political Revolution should accomplish. For him, it is not only important that monarchy be overthrown as a system of government, but that there is a fundamental Revolution in the state of civilization. He asserts that poverty is an injustice that originates from the system of civilization that robs man of his natural right to benefit from the earth. Therefore, to perfect the political Revolution in France and elsewhere, a Revolution must also occur at the deepest level of civilization. Paine warns, "Despotic government supports itself by abject civilization, in which debasement of the human mind, and wretchedness in the mass of the people, are the chief criterions."<sup>75</sup> He explains that despotic governments depend upon breaking the will and spirit of the people through poverty. It is Paine's assertion that men and women in the new Republic must be granted their natural inheritance in order for them to be able to compete fairly in the world and to escape their impoverished conditions, conditions that have plagued humanity throughout the entire history of monarchical governments. Paine pushes for this principle of justice, believing that once instituted by France, it will act as an example throughout the world and will penetrate all of the nations ruled by monarchies, helping overthrow them without the use of armies.<sup>76</sup>

With the publication of *Agrarian Justice* and after expressing his doubtful view that Napoleon could successfully invade England, Paine once again found himself facing imprisonment in France. He was put on notice to stop writing or he would be once more deemed an enemy of the state. Despairing for the cause of justice in France, Paine sought passage to America, finally sailing in the autumn of 1802. He did not receive a warm welcome in America,

however, in part because in *The Age of Reason*, his argument against the need for organized religion in civil society had led many to regard him as an atheist. Another factor for the cold American reception was the letter he had written to Washington in 1796 in which he vented his anger that had built up during his imprisonment in the Luxembourg. He attacked Washington, claiming that the President had shown meanness and ingratitude toward both him and France. Paine pointed out that America would not have likely won her War for Independence without French aid and accused Washington of being an incompetent. “You slept away your time in the field, till the finances of the country were completely exhausted, and you have but little share in the glory of the final event.”<sup>77</sup> He further demeaned Washington’s role in the military affairs of the American Revolution, asserting that other generals were actually more responsible for the ultimate victory. The combined effect of this letter and *The Age of Reason* had destroyed Paine’s reputation in America, though he did have one old friend left from the American Revolution in President Thomas Jefferson. Their close relationship caused some to criticize Jefferson so that when Paine asked Congress for payment for his past services, even Jefferson had to remain silent and distance himself from the author of *Common Sense*. The loss of Jefferson as an intimate friend had to be particularly hard for Paine because the Virginian represented his last close ally from the old days.

Paine ended his life barely scraping by. Paying rent for small rooms in New York became increasingly difficult and eventually, when he became seriously ill and lost the use of his legs, he was forced to move in with neighbors. The loss of intimate Revolutionary friendships must have pained him very deeply; apparently, conversations and visitations were the only things that would alleviate Paine’s suffering as his health declined.<sup>78</sup> Although he did receive visits from local persons near the end of his life, Paine must have longed for conversations with his old Revolutionary friends like Washington, Jefferson, or Condorcet. In the end, he fought to hang on

to every moment of life and held to his beliefs, constantly rejecting ministers' pleas that he repent for *The Age of Reason* and admit his faith in Jesus Christ. In retrospect, Paine might rightly be accused of having faults like self-conceit and intransigence when it came to his political beliefs as reflected in his major political works. At the same time, Paine always remained true to his ideals in a way that showed absolute integrity. He argued against violence when used in pursuit of revenge or oppression and stood in dangerous defiance of the Jacobins in arguing for the life of Louis XVI.

Eventually, Paine succumbed to illness in a small rented room in the city of New York. He died on June 8, 1809 at the age of 72. His body was laid to rest under a walnut tree on his small farm in New Rochelle, New York and only a handful of neighbors attended his burial. His end, like his beginning was humble, but his life was extraordinary. He always strived to promote ideals rather than supporting political factions or parties; moreover, he never sought financial gain from either the American or French Revolutions. For Thomas Paine, everything possible was to be done for the greater cause of humankind and while this idealism cost him fortune and friendship, it never cost him his honor.



## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 16.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-14.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.
- <sup>6</sup> Thomas Paine, "The Case of the Officers of Excise," in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, eds. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 44.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Trans. Maurice Cranston (New York: Penguin Classics, 1968), 64-65.
- <sup>9</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-4.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-34.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-25.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-36.
- <sup>16</sup> Thomas Paine, "African Slavery in America," in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, eds. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 54.
- <sup>17</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution* (New York: The Modern Library, 2002), 47-48.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-49.
- <sup>19</sup> John Keane, *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1995), 1-8.
- <sup>20</sup> Phillip S. Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: The Citadel Press, 1969), 1: 50-55.
- <sup>21</sup> Thomas Paine, "Reflections of the Life and Death of Lord Clive," in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, eds. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 59-60.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 57-62.

<sup>23</sup> Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 59-60.

<sup>26</sup> Foner, *Paine and Revolutionary America*, 74.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Paine, "Common Sense," in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, eds. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 65.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-82.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Carl L. Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (New York: Vintage Books, 1958), 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>33</sup> Paine, "Common Sense," 80.

<sup>34</sup> Becker, *The Declaration of Independence*, 9-10.

<sup>35</sup> Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 155.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 156-57.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 158-59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>40</sup> Paine, "Common Sense," 93.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2: 154-57.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Paine, "The American Crisis," in *The Thomas Paine Reader*, eds. Michael Foot and Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin Classics, 1987), 116.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>48</sup>Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2: 1178-79.

<sup>49</sup>Foner, *Paine and Revolutionary America*, 214.

<sup>50</sup>Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2: 1302-03.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., 2: 1281.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 2: 1282.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 2: 1304-05.

<sup>55</sup>Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J.C.D. Clark (Stanford University Press, 2001), 190-91.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 354-55.

<sup>57</sup>Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," In *Thomas Paine: Collected Writings*, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Literary Classics of America, 1995), 443-44.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 445.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Keane, *Tom Paine*, 306-10.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 312-13.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 316-19.

<sup>63</sup>Paine, "Rights of Man," 578.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 582.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 604.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Keane, *Tom Paine*, 346.

<sup>69</sup>Foner, *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2: 547-50.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., 2: 553.

<sup>71</sup>Keane, *Tom Paine*, 380-81.

<sup>72</sup>Daniel Edwin Wheeler, ed., *Life and Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: Vincent Parke and Company, 1908), 9: 193.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 10: 11.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:34.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:33.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 9:34.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 9: 183.

<sup>78</sup>Keane, *Tom Paine*, 531.

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## Academic Vitae of Jason Kinsel

Jason Kinsel  
5122 Richmond St.  
Erie, PA 16509  
[Jak5208@psu.edu](mailto:Jak5208@psu.edu)

Education: Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Political Science, Penn State University, Fall 2010  
Honors in History  
Thesis Title: Thomas Paine: The Wages of Honor  
Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Robert Roecklein

Awards: President's Freshman Award  
Dean's List  
National Honors Society for Adult Students