

# BULLETIN OF THOMAS PAINE FRIENDS



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## From *The Age of Reason*

*In the first part of this discourse Paine writes of “the three frauds”: mystery, miracle and prophecy.*

*In the Conclusion of part 2 he writes of the “fraudulent description” of revelation in the Bible and New Testament.*

REVELATION, then, so far as the term has relation between God and man, can only be applied to something which God reveals of His *will* to man; but though the power of the Almighty to make such a communication is necessarily admitted, because to that power all things are possible, yet the thing so revealed (if anything ever was revealed, and which, by the bye, it is impossible to prove) is revelation to the person *only to whom it is made*.

His account of it to another person is not revelation; and whoever puts faith in that account, puts it in the man from whom the account comes; and that man may have been deceived, or may have dreamed it, or may be an imposter and lie.

There is no possible criterion whereby to judge of the truth of what he tells, for even the morality of it would be no proof of revelation. In all such cases the proper answer would be, “*When it is revealed to me, I will believe it to be a revelation; but it is not, and cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it to be revelation before; neither is it proper that I should take the word of man as the Word of God, and put man in the place of God.*”

This is the manner in which I have spoken of revelation....; ....it prevents the imposition of one man upon another, and precludes the wicked use of pretended revelation.

But though, speaking for myself, I thus admit the possibility of revelation, I totally disbelieve that the Almighty ever did communicate anything to man, by any mode of speech, in any language, or by any kind of vision, or appearance, or by any means which our senses are capable of receiving, otherwise than by the universal display of Himself in the works of the creation, and by that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions, and the disposition to do good ones.

The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonorable belief against the character of the Divinity, the most destructive to morality and the peace and happiness of man that ever was propagated since man began to exist.

It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such imposter and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel and the Bible prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth and have credit among us.

Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations of men, women and infants, with which the Bible is filled, and the bloody persecutions and tortures unto death, and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes---whence rose they but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament of the other. ....

What is that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion? Nothing that is useful to man, and everything that is dishonorable to his Maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?---rapine, cruelty, and murder. What is it the Testament teaches us?---to believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married, and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.

As to the fragments of morality that are regularly and thinly scattered in these books, they make no part of this pretended thing, revealed religion. They are the natural dictates of conscience, and the bonds by which society is held together, and without which it cannot exist, and are nearly the same in all religions and in all societies. ....

---Selection by Martha Spiegelman

### IN THIS ISSUE

About “Revelation” from <i>The Age of Reason</i>	1	<i>Paine in the Luxembourg</i> by Mariam Touba	4
Acknowledgments and Announcements	2	<i>Times That Tried Men’s Souls</i> by Edward J. Dodson	6
President’s Message from Maurice Bisheff	3	“The Film Project” of Ian Ruskin	8
TPF Annual Meeting and Election Preliminaries	3		

Thomas Paine Friends, Inc., gratefully acknowledges recent dues and generous donations from Charles Ayers, Roger Conant, Peter O. Gante, Victor Madeson, Sarah McKee, Rebecca Nordstrom, Kenneth T. Tellis, Mariam Touba



### A Short Mission Statement

The Mission of Thomas Paine Friends, Inc., is to encourage people to learn about and from Thomas Paine, his times and philosophy so that they may be inspired to participate in public affairs reflective of the spirit of Paine's life, thought and ideals.

### To Know Paine, Read Him

Florence Stapleton -- Thomas Paine Chronicler

## Some Websites and Blogs

**thomas-paine-friends.org** --Our TPF website is maintained by Ed Dodson. Anyone advocating for Paine can send information of Paine-related news, for posting. [edod08034@comcast.net](mailto:edod08034@comcast.net).

**facebook.com/thomaspainefriends?ref=br\_tf** --Facebook page of TPF. Enter discussions here.

**religionpaine.org** --Maurice Bisheff maintains this site of several essays and seminar pieces by him and James Tepfer, about Paine's religious and philosophical views.

**valorww2.com** --This site, maintained by Victor Madeson, contains many articles about Paine, including Commons Sense Clubs, Societies of Political Inquiry, plus other subjects.

**cooperativeindividualism.org** --The School for Cooperative Individualism, Director, Ed Dodson, contains a large archive of articles about Paine. Also, summary of the life of Henry George and list of courses at the Henry George Schools.

**historyisonourside.wordpress.com** --Frances Chiu's blog has excerpts of writings of 18th century and later authors, such as James Murray, Richard Price, and certainly Thomas Paine, relating them to current political, social, educational, cultural conditions.

**algerblog.blogspot.com** --Blogger Algernon D'Amassa writes on a range of subjects, such as Paine's life, ideas, and influence, plus Buddhism and Zen, politics, environment, arts, and more.

**floridaveteransforcommonsense.org** --In Sarasota FL, it sponsors an annual Paine birthday, as well as many human rights, peace and justice forums. TPF members Gene Jones and Mike Burns are pres. and v-pres.

**thomaspainesociety.org** --Website of Thomas Paine Society, Pasadena CA. A Research Library is a major facility of TPS; see the website for details of its use and how to donate publications.

**thomaspainesocietyuk.org.uk** --This Thomas Paine Society in England publishes articles about liberal-progressive thinkers and movements in its *Journal of Radical History*.

**rjlindsey.com** --One-man show, "Thomas Paine, Voice of the American Revolution," by TPF member, Robert J. Lindsey. He has a new show, "Benjamin Franklin: Stories of Revolution".

**thelifeofthomaspaine.org** --Ian Ruskin performs his Paine monologue at many locations. The website has the schedule.

**iona.edu/library/libraries/paine/** --Iona College Library, New Rochelle NY, houses the Thomas Paine collection formerly held by the Thomas Paine National Historical Association.

**thomaspaine.org** --Thomas Paine Institute at Iona College.  
**commonsensesociety.com** --This Society organizes many forums and workshops in Hungary and in the United States.

**facebook.com/pages/Fort-Lee-Common-Sense-Society/199545953428717** --Fort Lee NJ Common Sense Society is raising funds for a Paine statue to be dedicated in 2016.

**tpnha.keybrick.net** --Thomas Paine National Historical Association, New Rochelle NY.

**kenburchell.blogspot.com** --Thomas Paine Review has recent publications, news, comment on Paine and related subjects.

**www.thomas-paine-friends.org**  
Website Manager, Edward J. Dodson  
[edod08034@comcast.net](mailto:edod08034@comcast.net)



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Bulletin staff: Frances Chiu and Martha Spiegelman

Thomas Paine Friends, Inc.  
185 Middle Street Amherst MA 01002-3011

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Maurice Bisheff, President

Santa Barbara CA

805-964-3939 / [maurice@west.net](mailto:maurice@west.net)

Victor Madeson, Vice President

Allentown PA

610-504-3937 / [valorvm@yahoo.com](mailto:valorvm@yahoo.com)

Irwin Spiegelman, Secretary

Amherst MA

413-253-7934 / [spiegelman52@gmail.com](mailto:spiegelman52@gmail.com)

Martha Spiegelman, Treasurer

Amherst MA

413-253-7934 / [spiegelmanmartha@gmail.com](mailto:spiegelmanmartha@gmail.com)

Jennifer Bisheff  
Santa Barbara CA

Frances A. Chiu  
West Hartford CT

Edward J. Dodson  
Cherry Hill NJ

Sidney Moss  
Northampton MA

Christiane Munkholm  
Boston MA

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Morgantown WV

Richard Robyn  
Twinsburg OH

John F. Skibiski, Jr.  
Northampton MA

Merrylees Turner  
Amherst MA

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71 So. Pleasant St.  
Amherst MA 01002

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## President's Message

To the Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as President of Thomas Paine Friends for the past two years as I will be stepping down this fall. I am pleased, nonetheless, to be a nominee again for the Board of Directors.

Some of our highlights could not have been achieved without great voluntary support from many of you. In no order of priority, first I would like to recognize TPF, Inc.'s presence on Facebook thanks to TPF member Algernon D'Amassa, and to TPF Board member Ed Dodson for keeping our website vital. This makes knowledge of Thomas Paine and our organization more accessible to people in our digital age.

Second, Martha Spiegelman and Frances Chiu along with our contributors have continued to provide our members with a regular, informative and insightful *Thomas Paine Bulletin* which I always anticipate reading. And to TPF Vice President Victor Madeson for his contributions to the *Bulletin*, his publishing, and to facilitating Thomas Paine conference workshops and educational meetings throughout the year. (Jenny and I still have your \$2 bill from our tour experience!)

Third, we had a wonderful "Following In the Footsteps of Thomas Paine" American tour which renewed the spirit, ideals, and contributions of Thomas Paine wherever we went. We thank Elaine Lowell from the Pasadena-based Thomas Paine Society and TPF member who helped arrange a wonderful archival tour with the American Philosophical Society as well as Ed and Deborah Dodson who were wonderful tour guides in Philadelphia. We met interested Paineites from host cities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York where statues and

memorials of Thomas Paine exist. Tom Myers reports that in Fort Lee NJ a statue will become a reality in 2016. A big thanks to Gary Berton and Iona College in New Rochelle NY where we toured Paine sites, were given a nice lunch and a tour of the library with wonderful artefacts. Gary helped arrange a forum where 150 or so students heard a great paper about Paine written by TPF Board member Frances Chiu vibrantly read out. Finally, a big shout out to Mariam Touba, TPF member, who gave us a wonderful tour in New York City with stories connected with Thomas Paine including some from his last days there. All in all, a joyful, varied, and informative tour making many new friends!

Thank you to the Board of Directors for your support and engagement. And to my wife, Jennifer Bisheff, TPF Board member, for her encouragement throughout.

Finally, this current year, TPF, Inc., raised over \$1,000 as a contribution to the film by Ian Ruskin "To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine" which is slated to appear on the Public Broadcasting System television in 2016. TPF will be listed in the closing credits.

So as we go forth in the coming years, please continue to provide your insights and knowledge into Paine's life along with contributions to TPF, Inc. Keep the fires burning for it looks like we will have the make the world over again!

—Maurice Bisheff, President, Thomas Paine Friends

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## CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION WILL BE IN NOVEMBER

**DATE TO BE DETERMINED**—Thomas Paine Friends will hold its Annual Meeting in November. Official notice will be sent to members about three weeks before the AM. Attendance will be *via* telephone conference call.

**NOMINATIONS**—The Ballot to elect a Board of Directors and Officers will be sent with the official notice. The Nominating Committee is now seeking nominees. Paid-up members are eligible to nominate and to serve as directors and officers. The Nominating Committee strongly urges self-nomination, as we are not always aware of the interests and skills of many of our members. Nominating Committee: Carol Moskowitz, [cdmosk@comcast.net](mailto:cdmosk@comcast.net), and Martha Spiegelman, [spiegelmanmartha@gmail.com](mailto:spiegelmanmartha@gmail.com), or use USPS, to 185 Middle St., Amherst MA 01002-3011. Please contact us as soon as you can if you wish to be a nominee this year. We need nominations by **OCTOBER 24**.

**NOMINEES SHOULD EXPECT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION**—Besides administration of the organization and decisions about actions to take, directors and officers typically are active on behalf of TPF in some of



the following ways:

- \* obtain a state resolution for *Thomas Paine Day*;
- \* write articles and help assemble the newsletter;
- \* contribute postings to the website;
- \* contact organizations with related interests;
- \* prepare materials for library exhibits;
- \* bring civic education to school and community;
- \* hold Thomas Paine Day events in your locality;
- \* write letters to the media about Paine;
- \* promote Paine memorials;
- \* speak to organizations about Paine and his principles of government;
- \* and, certainly, initiate a new Paine project.

TPF has had a core of a few members who have taken these positions. We recommend that others now step up to be directors and officers. Meetings and decisions are conducted *via* emails and teleconference and are not unduly burdensome.

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*Current Board: Maurice Bisheff (President), Jennifer Bisheff, Frances Chiu, Edward J. Dodson, Victor Madeson (Vice President), Sidney Moss, Christiane Munkholm, Timothy Nelms, Richard Robyn, John F. Skibiski, Irwin Spiegelman (Secretary), Martha Spiegelman (Treasurer), Merrylees Turner*

# Paine in the Luxembourg: The Whys and Wherefores of his Imprisonment

by Mariam Touba

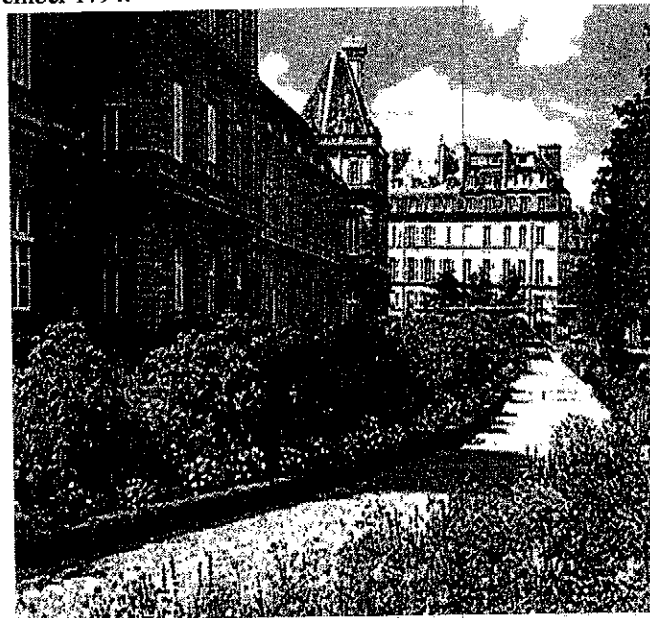
In a recent visit to Paris (my first) I went to see the Luxembourg palace and gardens. There, a lovely peaceful park with flowers and shade and jogging paths is placed in front of the palace that now serves as home to the French Senate. There is hardly any mention that the palace was also a notorious prison during the Reign of Terror in the era of the French Revolution. It was only one of many prisons and not the worst of them, but it, in particular, housed prominent figures and foreigners; and indeed it was Thomas Paine's involuntary abode from late December 1793 to November 1794.

Why was Paine imprisoned? The reasons given are all plausible: that he was too closely associated with the Girondin faction in the National Convention that lost out to the Jacobins in the power struggle; that he fell under suspicion once he had pleaded to spare the life of Louis XVI; that he was English-born and could be viewed as an enemy alien; that he was an effective propagandist and especially so if he had the chance to return to the United States and write for an English-speaking readership. Paine's great 19th century biographer, Moncure Conway,<sup>1</sup> examined this context at length and nonetheless came to the startling conclusion that Paine's imprisonment was almost entirely the behind-the-scenes work of the American minister to France, Gouverneur Morris.

## The Role of Gouverneur Morris

Even before Conway published his magisterial 1892 biography, Gouverneur Morris's own biographers had to acknowledge that Morris had done virtually nothing to effect Paine's release once he was arrested. This insouciance is even more striking in the context of the Reign of Terror when accusation and imprisonment frequently led to capital punishment by guillotine. It is worth remembering that it is here where Theodore Roosevelt, an aspiring historian publishing an 1888 biography of Morris, calls Paine "the filthy little atheist." Roosevelt's *ad hominem* attack may have been as much inspired by his inability to explain the inexcusable in Morris's behavior than by any particular hatred of Paine. But Conway goes even further in naming Morris as the actual *agent* behind Paine's imprisonment, in what he calls "a conspiracy" within the French foreign ministry. France was at war with a coalition of surrounding enemy nations (Paine's correspondence at the time reflects his efforts to end these wars) and, with failed harvests, she was desperate for American foodstuffs to feed her starving and restive population. American goodwill thus became a matter of grave importance, and these circumstances in 1793 gave Gouverneur Morris, a man with known Royalist sympathies, great power over even the increasingly radical French leadership.

I may be in the minority in still finding Conway's theory both sophisticated and persuasive. Conway was, in fact, on a journey of discovery as he sifted through materials in the French archives and compared them to what Morris had been reporting to his superiors. He found clear examples of Morris's falsification, even in this matter where a man's life was at stake. Morris had, in fact, demonstrated just such cold-bloodedness in his suggestions on how to handle the recall of the French minister to America, Edmond Genêt. President George Washington and administration officials had nothing but disdain for Genêt, but would not send him back to his certain death once his faction had lost favor in Paris. Morris,



Luxembourg Palace and Gardens, Paris

by contrast, not only wanted Genêt returned but hoped to facilitate the new regime's examination of his papers so as to discredit his Girondin compatriots in France just when they were under house arrest and most vulnerable.<sup>2</sup>

But did Morris intend Thomas Paine's death? Quite possibly not, as he may have believed just what he callously speculated to his government in his report about Paine, "I incline to think that if he is quiet in prison he may have the good luck to be forgotten." If so, Morris was grossly overestimating his own powers to control something as historically volatile as the Reign of Terror.

## Robespierre's Intentions

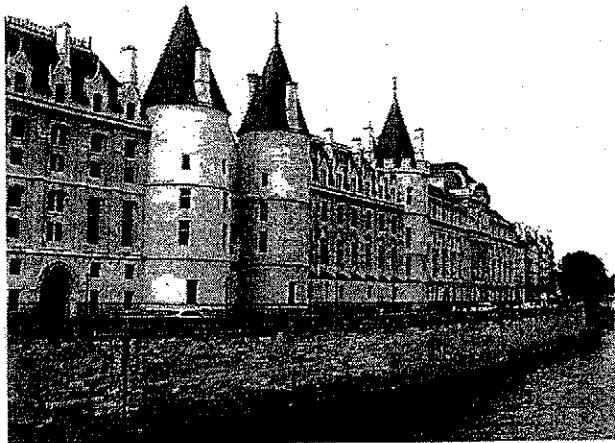
Was Paine actually destined for the guillotine? Here I am not as certain. With the fall of Maximilien Robespierre in July 1794, French officials released edited versions of his papers, and specifically called attention to a memorandum to himself: "To demand that a decree of accusation be passed against Thomas Payne, for the interest of America, as well as of France."<sup>3</sup> According to Conway's plausible reasoning, Robespierre was led to believe—by Morris's threatening insinuations to his foreign ministers—that Paine's influence needed to be removed in order to reestablish good relations with the United States. Robespierre's note is undated, and even Conway expresses some confusion as to when it was entered into Robespierre's journals. Subsequent scholars, however, have dated this particular notebook between September and

Continued on page 5, *Paine in the Luxembourg*

...Paine in the Luxembourg, from page 4

December 1793. The "Payne" memorandum seems to fall into Robespierre's recordings of October events, precisely the time when Morris was intimidating functionaries in the French foreign affairs office. We should pause to remember then, that Robespierre's "note to self" was in all likelihood written *before* Paine's imprisonment. "Accusation" would be necessary, since the law granted deputies to the Convention an immunity whereby one could not be removed from the Convention and imprisoned without such a decree of accusation. This immunity would have applied to Paine: although he had ceased to attend the Convention, Paine was at this time still technically a member of the body in good standing. But with the late December decree expelling foreigners from the Convention and imprisoning Paine as a hostile foreign (British) national, Robespierre could get Paine out of the way in a less lethal manner, and he chose this route.

Paine does refer to another threat to himself: the confession of Bertrand Barère, who later apologized to Paine for "having signed the warrant, by saying he felt himself in danger and was obliged to do it." No one yet knows what this "warrant" was, but it may simply refer to Barère's speech in late December paving the way for the decree ejecting foreigners from the Convention and thus providing a virtual warrant for Paine's



*Conciergerie, Paris*

1 Moncure Daniel Conway, *Life of Thomas Paine*, 1892, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons

2 Morris to George Washington, October 19, 1793, <http://founders.archives.gov/?q=Volume%3AWashington-05-14&s=1511311112&sa=morris&r=3>; twenty-two Girondin leaders were executed on October 31; others remained in hiding. Morris's biographers pass over his chilling suggestions. I would, however, submit that they are the most bloodthirsty words expressed by an American "Founding Father."

arrest. It is worth remarking that Barère, the ultimate survivor and powerful Public Safety Committee member, consulted at length with Paine in August 1793 about American affairs, the grain imports, and Morris's position. The slippery Barère, even more than Maximilien Robespierre, would have come to respect the necessity of appeasing Gouverneur Morris.

### The Chalk Mark

And what of the chalk mark on the cell door that went miraculously unseen, thus sparing Paine and his cellmates in the Luxembourg from a direct path to the guillotine? Paine was honest and heard it from a good source, but he doesn't report it until later.<sup>4</sup> There is a logical and humane explanation for this, as Paine had related that his kind Belgian cellmates, when caring for him in his severe illness, had withheld bad news from him. He was probably informed much later when he went to visit one of these cellmates, Joseph Vanhuele, the mayor of Bruges, in the winter of 1800. The odd story of the chalk mark needs to be understood as a threat distinct from Robespierre's earlier memorandum: overall, prisoners did not go directly from the Luxembourg to the guillotine; instead they were taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal and kept at another prison, the Conciergerie, before going to the guillotine. The trials had become increasingly sham in nature, but they were still part of the process. But, at one point in mid-1794 during the "Great Terror," large numbers of prisoners were tried and executed for forming supposed conspiracies within the prisons, rather than for any antirevolutionary activities before their imprisonment. These were more in the form of mass trials, and the chalk number "4" on Paine's door likely refers to this event since it was meant to include his Belgian cellmates, as well. It was probably not something directed toward Paine specifically, who, had he not been ill, was prominent enough to have occasioned his own "trial."

With his renown and his associations with the damned, his lack of support from his government, and, ultimately, his severe illness in prison, Thomas Paine's escape from death during the Reign of Terror was nonetheless a narrow one. And no one seems to doubt his courage and composure under these circumstances in the most dramatic of times.

3 Paine's translation of "Demander que Thomas Payne soit décrété d'accusation pour les intérêts de l'Amérique autant que de la France:" Robespierre's notebook can be accessed here: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29823/29823-8.txt> and similar sites.

4 "Letters to Citizens of the United States, III," written and published in late November 1802

*Mariam Touba, a member of TPF, is reference librarian at the New-York Historical Society. She was curator of the N-YHS Paine exhibit in 2005. Photos are by Ms. Touba.*



*by Honore Daumier*

# The Times That Tried Men's Souls Never Ended

by Edward J. Dodson

*In taking up any public matter, I have never made it a consideration, and never will, whether it be popular or unpopular; but whether it be right or wrong. The right will always become the popular, if it has courage to show itself, and the shortest way is always a straight line. I despise expedients, they are the gutter-hole of politics, and the sink where reputation dies.*  
(Thomas Paine, 3 December, 1802)

Thomas Paine famously wrote in the first *Crisis* paper, "These are the times that try men's souls." Certainly, his own experiences following the years working for American independence from Britain reveal that those times never really ended.

Over the centuries, some number of people in every society have been able to reach adulthood and labor to gain an income sufficient to raise a family. A smaller percentage of the population have become property owners who are able to pass on their estates to heirs. Yet, for a majority of the people in almost every society for nearly all of history, "normal" has meant a life of endless poverty with no opportunity for a decent human existence.

Widespread poverty began to appear in societies once people settled into one place rather than continue to migrate in search of game and live off what nature provided. Settlement brought on the need for rules under which access to land, to water and other natural resources would be allocated. Tribal societies eventually abandoned their communitarian existence, replaced by hierarchy and privilege. Warrior subgroups often acquired aristocratic, inherited status and power. The knowledge-bearers gained status and power as the self-proclaimed intermediaries with the gods. Religion was born. The rest of the people in every society were charged with producing what all needed to survive as well as what the two leading subgroups demanded. Elaborate rituals, legal codes, intimidation and outright force were from this point on employed to acquire and hold power and wealth.

When Thomas Paine left the Old World for North America, he expected to find a far less hierarchical societal structure, communities in which the opportunity to rise above the station of one's birth existed—as reflected in the person of his new friend, Benjamin Franklin. What Paine found upon arriving in Philadelphia was a city and a colony much changed during the years Franklin had been living in England. These changes are described by historian Jackson Turner Main in his myth-challenging 1965 book, *The Social Structure of Revolutionary America*:

*The wealthiest 10 percent owned about half of the inventoried property in Massachusetts, 40 percent in New Hampshire, and 45 percent in New Jersey, the last figure being average for the North. (p 42)*

*Despite ... significant local variations, the United States in the revolutionary era contained a general economic class structure which can be identified and described. ... [S]ome 10 percent of the whites at the top, consisting principally of large landholders and merchants, held, as a rule, 1,000 [pounds] or more in personal property and the same amount in land. These men owned nearly half of the wealth of the country, including perhaps one-seventh of the country's people. (pp 66-67)*

Already, Europeans and their descendants had displaced, annihilated or caused the deaths by disease of hundreds of thousands of tribal peoples who for thousands of years had lived east of the mountain chain that today has become the Appalachian Trail. By the time Thomas Paine was writing *Common Sense*, frontiersmen and traders were moving west across the mountains, craving freedom from oppressive colonial governments dominated by wealthy landowners.

Settlers migrated west in search of land that could be had cheaply or even free, accepting the very real risks of life well beyond the protections larger communities provided along the Atlantic coast and the inland passageways such as the Hudson and Potomac Rivers.

Rarely did Thomas Paine's powers of analysis and observation fail him. Yet, as late as his writing of *Rights of Man*, he was blind to the degree to which the new *American System* was plagued by hierarchy and privilege. He observed:

*If there is a country in the world, where concord, according to common calculations, would be least expected, it is America. Made up, as it is, of people from different nations, accustomed to different forms and habits of government, speaking different languages, and more different in their modes of worship, it would appear that the union of such a people was impracticable; but by the simple operation of constructing government on the principles of society and the rights of man, every difficulty retires, and all the parts are brought into cordial unison. There the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged. Industry is not mortified by the splendid extravagance of a court rioting at its expense. Their taxes are few, because their government is just; and as there is nothing to render them wretched, there is nothing to engender riots and tumults. (Rights of Man, [1], p 164)*

Of course, as the years went by, Paine began to see more clearly that independence from Britain and the formation of republican government left serious problems to be addressed. Paine expressed his deep fears directly to George Washington in his infamous open letter of 30 July, 1796:

*There was a time when the fame of America, moral and political, stood fair and high in the world. The lustre of her Revolution extended itself to every individual; and to be a citizen of America gave a title to respect in Europe. Neither meanness nor ingratitude had been mingled in the composition of her character. ...*

*Monopolies of every kind marked your administration almost in the moment of its commencement. The lands obtained by the Revolution were lavished upon partisans; the interest of the disbanded soldier was sold to the speculator; injustice was acted under the pretense of faith; and the chief of the army became the patron of the fraud. From such a beginning what else could be expected than what has happened?...*

However, in his open letter to Americans published in 1802,

**Continued on page 8, *Times That Tried Men's Souls***

**ACTIVISTS FOR THOMAS PAINE**

Add your name to the Thomas Paine Friends network and news exchange.

- YES, I will join Thomas Paine Friends, Inc. Annual dues, \$10. Member benefit is *BULLETIN of Thomas Paine Friends*.
- YES, I will work on THOMAS PAINE DAY in my state.
- YES, I want to work on a project of Thomas Paine Friends. Please contact me.
- YES, I want to participate in and suggest activities related to public recognition of Thomas Paine.
- YES, I want my Paine organization / group / project listed in the *BULLETIN*.
- YES, I have news of Paine activities to post in the *BULLETIN*; or a short article (about 800 words) for the *BULLETIN*.
- YES, I want to receive the *BULLETIN* ~ suggested donation of \$10, to cover costs of four issues per year.

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*To Know Paine, Read Him* ~ Florence Stapleton, Thomas Paine Chronicler

*...Times That Tried Men's Souls, from page 6*

he put the blame not on systemic flaws but on the ideologically-driven policies of the Federalists:

*But while I beheld with pleasure the dawn of liberty rising in Europe, I saw with regret the lustre of it fading in America. In less than two years from the time of my departure some distant symptoms painfully suggested the idea that the principles of the revolution were expiring on the soil that produced them. ...*

*But a faction, acting in disguise, was rising in America; they had lost sight of first principles. They were beginning to contemplate government as a profitable monopoly, and the people as hereditary property. ...*

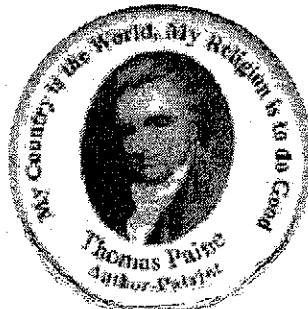
He saw the election of Thomas Jefferson as a sign that the spirit of democracy was restored. On this, he was, sadly mistaken. A huge, sparsely settled continent provided a safety valve for a growing population. Yet, long before historian Frederick Jackson Turner declared the frontier closed, Old World problems had emerged in every major part of the new nation. Paine endeavored to guide Thomas Jefferson along a path designed to preserve and expand the Democracy as the continent was populated. On the 25th of January, 1805, he wrote to President Jefferson:

*Next to the acquisition of the territory and the Government of it is that of settling it. ...These matters though they do not*

*belong to the class of principles are proper subjects for the consideration of Government; and it is always fortunate when the interests of Government and that of humanity act unitedly. ...*

I have found nothing in the letters or other writings of the last few years of Paine's life that suggests he was anything but certain that Jeffersonian principles would prevail into the distant future. I suspect he would have been astounded by the level of corruption that characterized the American System during the 19th and 20th centuries. The author of *Agrarian Justice* would see great wisdom in the establishment of a social safety net for the nation's more vulnerable citizens. Yet, he would likely be perplexed that we have yet to solve the great *land question* so important in the discourse of his era among political economists and other thoughtful individuals. The concentrated control over land and natural resources increases at an increasing rate. As a result, our society is dominated today by a rentier elite, a minority whose accumulation of income and wealth imposes enormous stress on our economy and threaten the democracy the securing of which cost so much to obtain.

*Edward Dodson is a Board member and the web manager for TPF. He is founder of the online School of Cooperative Individualism; also a long-time instructor for the Henry George School of Social Science, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (Temple University), and the LIFE program (Burlington County College).*



Thomas Paine Friends, Inc.  
185 Middle Street  
Amherst MA 01002-3011



*Independence Is My Happiness...  
My Country Is The World,  
My Religion Is To Do Good  
Rights of Man, part 2, 1792*

## BULLETIN

NEWSLETTER OF, BY, FOR THOMAS PAINE FRIENDS, INC.

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 3

FALL 2015

### MEMBERSHIPS AND RENEWALS

THE DATE ON THE MAIL LABEL ABOVE IS YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE.  
PLEASE RENEW IF YOUR RENEWAL DATE HAS PASSED. DUES ARE \$10 PER YEAR.  
THE *BULLETIN* IS A MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT.

## TO BEGIN THE WORLD OVER AGAIN: THE LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE

*The Film Project of actor-writer Ian Ruskin ~ the following information from The Film Project website*

Radical founding father Thomas Paine's life mission inspired writer-actor Ian Ruskin to write his one-man play *TO BEGIN THE WORLD OVER AGAIN* and perform it the past four years in the US and the UK. Paine's life and ideas inspire audiences today; responses have been extraordinary.

The film was made in March 2015 at the Lillian Theatre in Hollywood. The National Educational Telecommunications Association will distribute it to Public Television. We decided to wait until 2016 for PBS distribution, which gives us time to create grassroots support for airings, and have Paine's words ringing out in the Presidential election year!

On January 4, 2016 we will launch our Film Webpage for our campaign to fill the airways of public television with this story. There will be opportunities to host sneak-preview screenings of the film, take specific actions to register people to vote (Paine would love this), and debate on the webpage (Paine would also love this). If you are not on our mailing list, join us by sending your email to [info@thelifeofthomaspaine.org](mailto:info@thelifeofthomaspaine.org). You will then hear about all the ways of spreading the word.

Our first film *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks*, about Union Leader Harry Bridges, aired on PBS for four years



reaching 150 million households. It's now time to present *TO BEGIN THE WORLD OVER AGAIN* across America on PBS, with the added possibilities of the BBC, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, France Télévisions, and more! We are VERY EXCITED that the film is funded and completed, and there will be so many ways in which you will all be able to help! Stand by for more news.

Our other goals still stand:

\*\* Expand the film market; there is great interest in the story of Paine in England, France, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. We want to work with a distributor who specializes in presenting our kind of film. Estimated cost: \$6,000.

\*\* Produce 1,000 DVDs of the full-length version of the play, and 1,000 CDs of the audio version, professionally pressed and sold to the public. And we will press 1,000 DVDs of the 60 minute version to be given for free to schools and educators. Estimated cost: \$5,000.

\*\* Develop a website that takes themes from the film and provides in-depth research tools for students and the general public. This will include a bibliography, links to articles, original source material, and media. We will work with educators and Paine scholars on the content of this site. Estimated cost: \$9,000.

Please send us suggestions of people and organizations that might help in these goals. [www.thelifeofthomaspaine.org](http://www.thelifeofthomaspaine.org) and [info@thelifeofthomaspaine.org](mailto:info@thelifeofthomaspaine.org)

Thomas Paine Society, Pasadena CA, is acting as fiscal sponsor for The Film Project. [www.thomaspainesociety.org](http://www.thomaspainesociety.org)

*Undeniably apropos for the corporatist-beleaguered present. ---David C. Nichols, Los Angeles Times*  
*At a time when so many Americans feel disaffected by the political system, Ruskin has done us the great service of resurrecting the man who wrote and lived by the credo that "we have it in our power to begin the world over again." ---Hector Villagra, Executive Director, ACLU Foundation of Southern California*