

Why Care About Thomas Paine?

This is some of Paine's accomplishments. He is best known in America for *Common Sense*.

A few excerpts from Victor Madeson's website, <http://www.valorww2.com>
from his Independence Day message



Fifteen years later, his two-volume *Rights of Man* would decisively change Europe and within twenty-five years his later writing would inspire the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* [adopted by the United Nations in 1948]. Now that corporatism has returned much of the world to colonial status, we hope that citizens can put aside diversions and follow the path of his restless spirit. With the robber baron running dogs in hot pursuit, Paine's works can shelter a memory of liberty while we mobilize against freedom's oldest enemy: *the passion of the few to rule the many*.

He inspired global change. John Adams, who respected English legalism and royalism, hated Paine's ideas and half-seriously proposed renaming the *Age of Reason* as the *Age of Paine* (Oct. 1805) because he did not know any other man who had influenced the inhabitants or affairs of the world more for the previous thirty years. Despite his dislike of Paine, in 1814 John Adams paraphrased Joel Barlow to write that: "*There is but one element of government and that is THE PEOPLE,*" and "*...Without the pen of Paine, the sword of Washington would have been wielded in vain.*" Adams later conceded (1818): "*...a change in the principles, opinions, sentiments, and affections of the people, was the real American Revolution.*"

[Paine] is often dismissed as a *radical*. The best answer to such detractors was in President Franklin Roosevelt's speech to the Daughters of the American Revolution: "*Remember always that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists.*" (20 April 1938)

Note: To understand the true meaning of Independence Day, consider viewing Ian Ruskin's play "To Begin the World Over Again: The Life of Thomas Paine". The idea that Americans are brainwashed to forget the inspiration of history might be hard to accept. That case is made elsewhere, but you should consider if the current history of the 4th of July would help mobilize *against the few who rule the many*. Did the Founders pledge "*...our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor*" for tea bag taxes or for "*a new birth of freedom*"? The actual history of American Independence is directly linked to Bastille Day in France (14th July).
