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*Thomas Paine*

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# Thomas Paine – Empire and War in the Twenty First Century.

The Eric Paine Memorial Lecture for 2005

Brian Walker

My purpose is to relate Paine's ideas to two of the more threatening features of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First, I shall consider the growth of "empire" in the evolution of America. Secondly, I shall consider how a modern Paine might react to armed conflict in today's world.

Soon after arriving in America in 1774, the thirty eight year old Paine, despite being something of an admirer of the British Empire nevertheless spoke up for women & children.<sup>1</sup> Three years would pass before he would make a real mark. Paine believed in "reconciliation" when confronted by any breakdown in human relationships. His conversion to revolutionary politics was still to come – mostly due to the influence of Benjamin Rush.<sup>2</sup>

Paine set up a school for women, perceiving that education was the key to their emancipation. He wrote about their plight in the *Pennsylvania Packet* newsletter, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, the *Pennsylvania Journal*, and the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*. He condemned the immorality of treating women as chattel or, selling them off to the highest bidder; he wrote about the abuse to children, explaining how they were pitched into slavery because of their mothers' lowly, non-consequential, status. Sickened by what he saw, he fought to include the abolition of slavery in the early draft of the American constitution. What was the point of independence from Britain if slavery persisted, he asked? First, we must defeat the British, but then we must free our slaves and emancipate women, children and working people. Between 1776 and 1783 his vision would extend far beyond that of Jefferson, Adams, or Washington.<sup>3</sup>

When he published his *Rights of Man*<sup>4</sup> Paine dedicated it to George Washington. He wrote to Washington saying that he hoped the "rights" he had defined, "may become as universal as your Benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the Happiness of seeing the New World regenerate the Old".<sup>5</sup> Alas, Washington & his fellow rebels were hugely suspicious of the attempt to establish

human rights in France long before that rebellion had descended into violent bloodshed. Later, whilst Paine was incarcerated in France and under threat of execution, he wrote again to Washington for help - only to be spurned by his "friend".<sup>6</sup> He never forgave him - as his four lined, "Epigram on General Washington", demonstrates only too clearly,

"Take from the mine the hardest, roughest stone,  
It needs no fashion, it is WASHINGTON;  
But if you chisel, let your strokes be rude,  
And on his breast engrave *ingratitude*."

It was Washington, after all, who had likened the native American Indian to the prairie wolf, explaining - "both being beasts of prey tho' they differ in shape". He wanted to, "extirpate them (the Iroquois) from the Country".<sup>7</sup> Such unacceptable smears resonated with the beliefs of all the luminaries of the American Revolution, despite the accolades of the history books. All the leaders were land owners, monied men, businessmen, slave owners, investors and entrepreneurs. Small wonder that the "Declaration of Independence" denounced American Indians as "merciless Savages".<sup>8</sup> True, some colonial wives backed Paine. John Adams's own wife wrote to her husband, even as the draft constitution was being discussed, pleading, "Please, remember the ladies". The vision of the rebellious leaders, however, was limited and self-serving. Adams went so far as to denounce the common people of his bright, new world as "riff- raff". Jefferson grandly declared, "all men equal", but continued to employ slaves to work his plantation estates.

This is neither to ignore, nor to denigrate, the ideal of democracy promoted by the settlers. They lit a new light – notwithstanding issues of slavery and gender.

One of the most prescient examples, however, was codified by the US Constitution (1785) empowering Congress "to define and punish offences against the law of nations." (Article 1. sec 8, cl 10).

The US Alien Tort claims Act (1789) provided that the "district courts shall have original jurisdiction of any civil action by an alien for a tort only committed in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States. (28.U.S.C. cl 1350). Originally designed to protect ambassadors and to combat piracy, it also provided a

tool for redress against violations of human rights. Paine, we might speculate, would instinctively understand this. President Bush, however, has used the Act to grant immunity from prosecution to President Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Modern U.S. business interests operating overseas would like to see it repealed as it threatens them if human rights are abused. From the nineteen seventies, in fact, the act has been used eighty times, and only twenty of these involved corporate interests.

Meanwhile, for his part, Paine, spoke and wrote about a, "new world". He proclaimed then, as he does today, that every person has the right to determine their destiny. His continued importance, as Russell <sup>9</sup> argued, is that "he made the preaching of democracy democratic".<sup>10</sup> Paine was for the abolition of slavery and against the desecration of women and children in the new America. People are never "property", they are free men and free women, whose children, therefore, must also be free.

In fact, there is no rank higher in society than that of a "free man". Paine understood the value of the ancient, Athenian idea of democracy. He knew it cannot be imposed, but must be the product of "bottom up" processes, not least through universal education. He would know today that it is in the "easy" societies that democracy has taken root – leaving the more difficult, Russia, China, Burma, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran and large parts of Africa still to influence. He would also know that democracy leading to freedom can take different forms. He would have noted that Yeltsin's rise to power in Russia was not democratic. He would have doubts about the election of President Bush - twice over - in modern America.

By 1794 it was a capital offence even to read his, *Rights of Man*, let alone to do anything about those rights. As an independent America emerged, despite the teachings of Paine, the rule of property dominated, and the cause of women, children and slaves was lost for a generation.

A modern Thomas Paine, I think, would recognise the distinction made by Isaiah Berlin of "negative" freedom on the one side, & "positive" freedom on the other.<sup>11</sup> Under the former, the State does not coerce or intrude into the individual's freedoms. Each – the government and the individual - has its own area of freedom for

determining its destiny. Under the opposite concept – “positive” freedom - the individual remains free to make choices as to the way he or she wants to live. But the State is supportive and is able to provide the fruits of freedom which, without the State, would be denied. There is a social dimension to positive freedom denied in negative freedom. Europeans see value in free, universal health care; modern America does not. Europeans see value in state education for all children regardless of ability or background. America does not. We see value in a welfare state; America does not. Today, Paine would favour our approach rather than that of modern America.

If the question is put, “what is the fundamental role of government?” - many Americans would say something like, “to enable the individual to grow and flourish in safety.” Most Europeans would answer, “to provide a safety net to vulnerable people.” In that differentiation lies a philosophy which results in American society having its “Mac-World”, with its globalisation based on a despotic-like tyranny inherent in its suffocating desire to spread the American model around the world – just as the British were doing in Paine’s time. Today’s US model has more in common with the imperialism of the past, than any utopian dream based on liberty and freedom.

A third feature of eighteenth century American opinion helps to explain the difficulties in which we find ourselves today. The founders of modern America, other than Paine, were all “Empire” men. The historian William A. Williams,<sup>12</sup> in his 1959 ground-breaking book was the first to argue this interpretation. At the Second Continental Congress in 1775, John Adams, who followed Washington into the Presidency, supported, “a constitution to form for a great Empire”.<sup>13</sup> The South Carolina delegate William Drayton proclaimed, “The Almighty has made a choice of the present generation to erect the American Empire”. Contemporary American literature, it turns out, revelled in the idea of “empire”.

Its tentacles reached far and wide. The first spelling book for students written in 1783 by Noel Webster, for example, explained the need to “encourage genius in this country (so that) the Empire of America will no longer be indebted to the foreign kingdom for books.”<sup>14</sup> Following the ratification of the new Constitution, Jeddick Morse asserted that America had “risen into Empire”. The western territories of the new country offered a long term, geographical

base for the growth of this new Imperium. Morse wrote, "it is well known that Empire has been travelling from east to west, and", he predicted, "the largest Empire that ever existed would result".<sup>15</sup>

Montesquieu, full of French logic, doubted whether "republic" could be squared with "empire", but from the outset American leaders believed it could. Jefferson, confronting Montesquieu, wrote that American expansion "furnishes a new proof of the falsehood of Montesquieu's doctrine that a republic can only be preserved in a small territory. The reverse is the truth." In 1809 he wrote, "I am persuaded no constitution was never before as well calculated as ours for extensive Empire and self government."

Then, critically and with increasing momentum, mercantilism was married to laissez-faire. This new, economic philosophy would succour the notion of "empire" for the next hundred years. Access to foreign markets would dominate foreign policy. It still does today. Spain and France would follow Britain in being chased out of America, principally through the controlled development of internal markets. As early as 1898 America was demanding access to China, the Caribbean & Central America.<sup>16</sup> In the twentieth century Britain was driven out of oil rich Venezuela and the corrupt dictator Juan Vincente Gomez was installed by President Woodrow Wilson to foster US investment.<sup>17</sup> Wilson had already adopted the "Monroe Doctrine" which advocated that the "United States (should) consider its own interests. The integrity of other American nations is an incident, not an end. While this may seem based on selfishness alone, the author of the Doctrine had no higher or more generous motive in its declaration."<sup>18</sup> In his time Teddy Roosevelt faithfully seized Colombia's province of Panama to build the inter-ocean canal. "I seized the isthmus and started the canal",<sup>19</sup> he boasted. Financial loans paved the way for trade agreements. "Dollar diplomacy" followed. Haiti, Nicaragua & most of Central America fell into the American trade net. In 1900 foreign investments had stood at \$500 million. By 1924 they had reached \$8 billion.<sup>20</sup> Large American corporations were key to the growth of "empire" as aid and trade married each other and flourished. In the thirties, even Hitler and Mussolini were welcomed as leaders who understood the demands and importance of trade and investment.<sup>21</sup>

1943 saw the start of discussions concerning the evolution of the world economy following victory in World War Two by the allies.

America's lead negotiator, Harry Dexter White, conceived and fought assiduously to control what would become the determinants of post war economies - the World Bank and the IMF. The Bretton Woods conference gave birth to both in 1944. White and his team were determined throughout the negotiations that the US would secure enough votes to ensure global dominance. Effectively America's veto, thus secured, remains in place sixty years later.

In 1945 US troops occupied Germany and Japan. Marshall Aid, post 1945, carried the American empire forward. William Clark – a colleague who resigned as the Cabinet's press officer because he knew Prime Minister Anthony Eden was lying about Suez - went on to become the UK 's Vice-President at the World Bank. Clark argued - and he would know - that America had two war aims. First, the defeat of the Axis powers, but, secondly & during that process, by delaying America's entry into the Second World War until 1942, Roosevelt (who had disliked & distrusted Churchill since the early thirties) aimed to ensure that Britain would emerge so weakened and exhausted that the British Empire would offer no challenge to America's dominant role post 1945.<sup>22</sup> Post war, American aid would establish US control as widespread in Europe as possible. Aid, was dependent on, and reflected the rules of, the free market. By the end of World War Two, American industrial production had quadrupled.

In 1945 the Middle East became, and remained, the focus of American hegemony. The State Department that year described Saudi Arabia as a, "stupendous source of strategic power and one of the greatest material prizes in world history."<sup>23</sup> In March 1947, President Truman pointed to what he called "the terrorist activities of several thousand armed men led by communists".<sup>24</sup> They threatened, above all else, "the preservation of order in the Middle East". Eisenhower then described the Gulf as, "the most strategically important area of the world." Israel had already been identified as America's best ally in the Middle East allowing America "to gain strategic advantage in the Middle East" necessary to offset Britain's declining role. By the seventies, Taiwan and the Philippines had been pulled into the new empire.

Twenty years later, Reagan would create the "National Endowment for Democracy". This was designed to manage the foreign affairs of the new empire by reconciling democracy with capitalism, shifting control from coercive to consensual mechanisms. Yet



however benign these might be they were still "empire". There may be mass participation, but tiny minorities rule. It is called "polyarchy". Elections are "managed". Votes and voting systems are manipulated. In one agreed incident during Bush's 2004 election, for example, the citizens of Ohio reported that 3,893 votes had been credited to Bush in a suburb of Columbus where only 638 people had voted. Paine would be out-raged.

In some cases client dictators were rejected to be replaced by management through the masses so as to achieve empire objectives – in other words "controlled democracies" – democracies which can be manipulated. Today, Paine would recognise Putin's Russia as today's most visible example of a controlled democracy. But he would also recognise how in America, rich elites also can dominate through their personal wealth, private aircraft, and private islands in the sun. Ongoing corporate wealth, often controlled through dynastic families, is typified by the Rockefellers, Kennedys and Bushes. US universities are funded by the rich often to perpetuate their own elitist control. The "Economist"<sup>25</sup> reported, for example, that you are 25 times more likely to encounter rich students as poor ones, in such universities.

But there is a critical third step. Thomas Friedman pointed out in 1999, that, "the hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonalds cannot flourish without McDonald Douglas".<sup>26</sup> Economic growth is supported by the muscle of the military. In the nineties Clinton played his part in the evolution of empire as he pulled under his control south-central Eurasia with military ties to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and, then, Iraq.<sup>27</sup>

Ironically this pervasive view of the free market was never shared by its originators. That quintessential free marketer Adam Smith firmly believed selfishness to be a virtue confined to the economics of the market place. Responsibility to and for those less fortunate than one's self went hand in hand with wealth creation. He and his colleagues never considered that the free market ethic should include almost all aspects of public and private life.

Christopher Lasch, Professor of American History at the Rochester Institute of Technology when reflecting on the "unstoppable" philosophy of the "American dream" comments, "The market

notoriously tends to universalise itself. It does not easily co-exist with institutions that operate according to principles antithetical to itself; schools, universities, newspapers and magazines, charities, families. Sooner or later the market tends to absorb them all. It puts an almost irresistible pressure on every activity to justify itself in the only terms it recognises: to become a business proposition, to pay its own way, to show black ink on the bottom line. It turns news into entertainment, scholarship into professional careerism, social work into the scientific management of poverty. Inexorably it remodels every institution in its own image.<sup>28</sup>

Paine would be shocked by the report, "Meritocracy in America"<sup>29</sup>, which argues that modern society in the USA, increasingly resembles that of imperial Britain. Dynastic ties proliferate, social circles inter-lock, and mechanisms of social exclusion are strengthened. Inevitably, the gap between decisions makers and those who shape culture on the one side, is too great for working people to bridge, on the other. Entrenched neo-conservatism, in other words, is ascendant in modern America.

Interestingly, the emergence and proliferation of NGO "think-tanks" in the last quarter of the twentieth century would have resonated initially with Paine as the flowering of "people power". But these constructs were corrupted as the emerging, neo-conservative, "empire" became entrenched. They remained democratically friendly constructs, but with the malign purpose of helping to control civil society.

Today, US NGO's, the primary cells of modern society, are controlled by the "neo-cons".<sup>30</sup> Between 1999 and 2001, 82 conservative foundations gave \$253 million in conservative grants to NGO's - the epitome of which is the right wing Heritage Foundation.<sup>31</sup> Neo-liberal philosophers were allied to money markets in order to spread abroad the US culture of empire. The world-wide web provided a new and effective tool.

In parallel the idea of "preventive" military strikes evolved.<sup>32</sup> Military bases were located strategically around the world, and, then, into outer space - the last frontier. "Full Spectrum Dominance" was the aim. Today it is within reach. One of George Bush's key supporters - Paul Wolfowitz - wrote in 1992, "Our first object is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival, requiring that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose

resources would be sufficient to generate global power.....the world order is ultimately backed by the US".<sup>33</sup> In February 2005 Wolfowitz was proposed by Bush as the next (July 2005) Chair of the World Bank. He had been described by the UK's BBC as "the key architect of the Iraq war", and his appointment was condemned around the world. Nobel Prize winner and a former World Bank chief economist, Dr. Joseph Stiglitz is quoted as saying: "Choosing the right general in the war against poverty will not assure victory, but choosing the wrong one surely increases the chances of failure."<sup>34</sup> Wolfowitz was appointed in March 2005.

Thomas Paine, who first conceived the idea of an "Association of Nations", and who referred to himself as "a citizen of this world", would reject outright the State Department advice to ignore the UN. "That idea", to use one of his favourite comments, "needs to be blown out of the water."

Meanwhile, to protect the new US hegemony, NGO's are carefully monitored in today's America through something called, "NGO watch.org". Created by the American Enterprise Institute launched in the 1940's as a counter balance to the more liberal Brookings Institute, it asks, "Who runs this group?"; "What are its finances & who contributes?" "To whom is it accountable?"; "what are they up to?" NGOwatch.org faithfully records the answers.

A researcher for the "National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy" - Sally Covington - makes a slightly different point. She notes, that, "the National Federation of Independent Businesses, The National Rifle Association and the Christian Coalition, are totally separate entities - but strategically they move synchronously".<sup>35</sup> You can be separate and autonomous - yet share a common objective.

More recently and more seriously, the illegal use of the Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons offends natural justice, as well as civil and military law. Perhaps this was why President Bush appointed Alberto Gonzales in 2004 as his new Attorney General. Gonzales had written a personal memorandum on "torture" for President Bush. He advised that the Geneva conventions, negotiated by the international community across 150 years, were now "obsolete" and "quaint".

In fact, however, ICRC, the international "watch-dog", publicly

accuses America of using torture in those prisons. America denies the charge, but ICRC is rarely wrong in its public accusations. In January 2005 we were advised that US doctors had become complicit in Guantanamo torture abuse. Despite their high calling and professional ethical traditions a handful of doctors used their medical knowledge to devise coercive interrogation methods, including sleep deprivation, stress positions, and other abuses for the military authorities.<sup>36</sup> Not only traducing their own professional ethics, their actions also breached the laws of war. In human nature corruption usually leads to more corruption - as Paine regularly discovered to his personal cost.

The U.K.'s political allegiance to America in Iraq has led not only to an illegal war, but to the unlawful incarceration without trial in Belmarsh Prison of terrorist suspects, contrary to the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 5), habeas corpus, and even Magna Carta. This drew the judgement (17.12.04) from one British Law Lord - Lord Hoffman - that, "The real threat to the life of the nation.....comes not from terrorism but from laws such as these." A second Law Lord, Lady Hale, observed, "Executive detention is the antithesis of the right to liberty". Eight Law Lords agreed. Only one dissented.

In the summer of 1792 Paine was harried and chased by what he called "the Court gentry". The book police were equally active against him. Government spies infiltrated his private meetings, the taverns he frequented, and his favourite coffee houses.<sup>37</sup> William Blake advised him, apparently, of a warrant for his arrest. That night Paine slipped over to France. Today, therefore, he would have no difficulty in advising the UK's Home Secretary that detention without trial in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain is wholly unacceptable. Such a move fatally corrupts our political culture. The defence of liberty demands that we retain our "presumption of innocence", and our right to trial by jury for British nationals and foreigners alike, as fundamental to liberty and freedom. The rule of law, and not the Home Secretary, is the proper arbiter. Paine would be ceaseless in arguing his case.

In fighting for this Paine would also argue that the evolution of modern International Humanitarian Law - the Nuremberg Court in 1945, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafted by Eleanor Roosevelt, the 1980 Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1995 Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty, the 1997 Ottawa

Convention banning anti-personnel Land Mines and the 1998 decision by 120 nations to approve the Rome Statute for setting up the International Criminal Court - is fundamental to a safe and democratic future for humanity.

I suspect Paine would regard American co-operation with the UK's GCSQ at Cheltenham, and the use of military land bases in the UK restricted to the use of American personnel, as offensive to present day Britons as the Red Coats were to eighteenth century American colonists.

He might even echo today Washington's perceptive words written in his "Farewell Address" (1796) to his fellow Americans. Washington, a highly capable military General, warned his fellow citizens to be wary of, "those over-grown military establishments which under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to republican liberty." Paine, on this judgement at least, would agree.

The consequences of the modern American Imperium are substantial. The litany has been well rehearsed - American withdrawal from Kyoto, the abandonment of the anti ballistic missile treaty, the refusal to support the International Criminal Court in Rome, the suspension of missile talks with North Korea, the two invasions of Iraq, the refusal to ratify the Biodiversity Convention or to accept the Bio safety Protocol, or the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention.

There is also America's virtual withdrawal from, and attack on, the UN. Each is symbolic of America's unilateral stance. Each is characteristic of "empire". So is the idea, now a policy, of "Preventive strikes", with its right to act militarily without consultation, even in respect of your closest ally - as Prime Minister Thatcher discovered when her friend President Regan authorised the invasion of Grenada in 1983 - theoretically her responsibility. Small wonder, then, that a State Department official told the Washington Post in 2003, that the US welcomes a more active UN role as long as it does not interfere with America's right to use military force. He argued that no authorisation was necessary to get at the people who murdered American citizens".<sup>38</sup>

Nor, in passing, would Paine overlook the U.K's own massive abuse of human rights in Kenya (1953 - 1956) with 150,000 dead,

and in Northern Ireland (1969 – 2004) with +3,000 dead. These are not records of which we should, or can, be proud.

In October 2001 the Orwellian, “US Patriot Act”, aimed at curtailing US citizens’ rights, became the cornerstone of that administration’s assault on the basic liberties of its own citizens. Today, Paine would oppose that Act. It allows unprecedented secrecy by the Executive; the right of the Judiciary to authorise the search of citizens’ homes through an edict granted by a secret court, and the right to intrude into personal privacy by allowing scrutiny of people’s e-mails, telephones, letters, and web site, and even access to records in the local library, to check who has borrowed which books.<sup>39</sup>

Just before Christmas 2004, the U.K. press reported,<sup>40</sup> that the head of the UK Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Sir Nicholas Young) had warned that the 150 year old neutrality of the ICRC is threatened by America’s stance in Iraq when following weeks of heavy bombardment the Red Cross was refused entry to Falluja,. This contravened international law. In all wars since 1850, the Red Cross/Red Crescent has been trusted by combatants as “neutral” and therefore safe to pursue its humanitarian work. Today, that impartiality has been lost. In Iraq Gen. Colin Powell called humanitarian aid “an important part of our combat force”. Paine would declare – “It is nothing of the sort. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, incorporating 180 countries around the world & employing 300,000 staff, cannot be extinguished, or put aside, by one country – however powerful it may be. That is simply not acceptable to humanity.

Once the world’s super power leaves the straight and narrow path, other lesser powers follow suit. The New York based Human Rights Watch agency, in its January 2005 annual report, advised that Egypt, Malaysia and Russia had begun to reverse their behaviour so as to follow the American example; the same criticism inevitably applies to the UK as we, too, corrupted European law in Belmarsh prison.

The picture I am painting is depressing, so it must also be stressed that at least 48% of US citizens are unhappy with the evolution of their empire, and its style. Furthermore, according to a poll commissioned by the BBC World Service across 21 countries, 58% of people around the world are also unhappy with modern

America.<sup>41</sup> We may assume they would support a modern Thomas Paine in opposing it.

Paine would also note that 40% of US voters failed to cast their vote last year – so Bush does not have the support of a majority of US citizens for his war in Iraq. Our best hope lies perhaps in the common sense of those citizens and the influence they will assert in the next four years and then in 2010 when they elect a new President. Meanwhile, no-one should underestimate the control in depth now exerted by the neo-cons over American society.

In November 2004,<sup>42</sup> Bush had decided that the CIA should expand by 50%. Even by American standards that represents exponential growth. It may take two decades to accomplish. Explicit in such growth, however, is the alarming instruction to transfer the CIA's para-military capacity to the Pentagon. Donald Rumsfeld has long argued for this. The constraining influence will probably be the quality of people available for training as CIA agents, rather than the millions of dollars involved. But happen it will.

In summary, it is salutary to recall Hobsbawm's warning that, "Few things are more dangerous than empires pursuing their own interests in the belief that they are doing humanity a favour." Paine would agree – as should we.<sup>43</sup>

Against the back-cloth of Empire pursued with gathering momentum since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, harnessing to its ends the exploitation of trade, finance, and applied science, and as a consequence generating the process of "globalisation", consider now the single most powerful threat of our new century – the phenomenon of war. This is the fulcrum of the American Imperium; it is also the key determinant for us and our children, as to our safety & future happiness. The phenomenon of modern war, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, is the most important challenge of our new century. That challenge would have gripped Thomas Paine's mind and creative writing skills as nothing before.

The late President Truman is quoted in his memoirs - and he should know because he authorised the dropping of two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 – that, "there is nothing more foolish than to think that war can be stopped by war. You don't prevent anything by war except peace."<sup>44</sup>

Paine would make Truman's advice his starting point when confronting 21<sup>st</sup> century war. For him it would be a statement of common sense.

Paine's actual position in 1775, is recorded in his *Thoughts on Defensive War*, sub-titled, "a lover of peace" – "I am thus far a Quaker, in that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms, and settle matters by negotiation: but unless the whole will, the matter ends, and I take up my musket and thank heaven he has put it in my power".<sup>45</sup>

I don't know whether Paine ever shot or killed a Red Coat, for he rapidly took up his pen and concentrated on acting as a messenger – but his intent is plain enough. Would that be his position today? I doubt it. Why? Because - like all 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightened thinkers – he was keenly interested in science, believing that science has the capacity to open a new way for humanity. He had noted in "The American Crisis"<sup>46</sup> that, "If there is a sin superior to any other it is that of wilful and offensive war". Sixteen years later he wrote in his *Age of Reason*<sup>47</sup>, "The human mind has a natural disposition to scientific knowledge....". "Scientific principles", he continued, "...must, and are, of necessity, as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move....", and so he dedicated part of his life for the rest of his life to studying and applying scientific principles to his political and philosophical reasoning.

Today, Paine would join cause with the 20 Nobel Laureates who warned that "the scope and scale of the manipulation, suppression and misrepresentation of science by the Bush administration is unprecedented." The refusal to take seriously the fact of climate change, the pillage of wilderness and of natural resources laid down by nature aeons ago, and including the fundamentals of soil, water, tree cover and species evolution which guarantee humanity's security, would be one focus of his campaigning.

Nor would this scientific Paine welcome the news that the UK has allowed the military nexus to dominate its science base. In 2004, the UK allocated a third of all science research, (£2.6 billions), to exotic, weapons based, high technology – not to social services, not to education, nor how to help our citizens to become happier and more fulfilled. The UK's military research budget absorbs, in



fact, 30% of all public research and development budgets. Yet the military spends only 6% of that budget on conflict prevention - which cannot be right.<sup>48</sup>

It follows that a modern Paine would ask scientists a fundamental question, "Why do men & women kill each other? Why are we willing to participate in the mass slaughter of our own kind?" "Is the crooked timber of humanity so programmed as to make war inevitable?" He would warm to the scientific answer enshrined in the Seville Statement on Violence 1986, endorsed by UNESCO in 1989.

Rigorous analysis of the evidence was undertaken first by the world's leading scholars in the human sciences, including biology, medicine, psychology, neuro-science, social science, zoology, and the like. Their findings were endorsed by the world's leading scientific societies, & finally, were adopted by UNESCO on behalf of the UN.

We can state today, therefore, that it is scientifically incorrect to say,<sup>49</sup>

1. That we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors;
2. That war or any violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our nature;
3. That in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than any other kinds of behaviour;
4. That humans have a violent brain. How we act is shaped by how we have been conditioned and socialized. There is nothing in our neurophysiology that compels us to act violently;
5. That war is caused by instinct or any single motivation."

Nobel Laureate, Joseph Rotblat, writes, "We are told that we are biologically programmed for aggression; that war is in war genes. As a scientist I reject this thesis. I see no evidence that aggressiveness is genetically built into our behaviour."<sup>50</sup> Prof. Robert Hinde, former Master of St John's Cambridge and one of the expert scientists to sign the Seville statement, argues that some people do have a psychological capacity for aggression, but that aggression is neither "usual" nor "inevitable". What seems to tip us into war are, primarily, social and environmental causes – it

is not something innate. Hinde argues that although aggression might play a part in the individual's conduct in wartime, it has no relevance to the causes or prosecution of war itself. War is something other. He goes on, "We refer to a nation that invades another as "aggressive", and we use the term to describe an individual who intentionally harms another. But that does not mean that there is anything in common between the two situations except that harm is caused. The psychological and physiological mechanisms that cause one individual to strike another have nothing in common with the chains of command in an invading army".

Paine today would be a leading authority on Civil Society. He would argue that people neither declare war, nor go to war to kill fellow human beings. It is not people but politicians who decide, declare and then organise modern war; it is we the people who are conscripted to fight those wars, whose children, the elderly, and the infirm are killed in those wars, and whose homes and livelihoods are destroyed by those wars. We should join Paine in challenging that grim sequence constantly and vigorously. We should confront the myth that people make wars and pin the responsibility for where, primarily, it lies – on the shoulders of our politicians. Once pinned, society might then be persuaded to elect politicians committed to the abolition of war as a tool of international politics even as our forbears had to abolish slavery and the use of women or children as chattel.

War is a characteristic of culture. It is not an in-built fixation of the human mind, heart, or brain. It is the product of culture just as in its day was slavery or treating women as chattel. It is within our power, therefore, to mitigate it, to trim it back and, in due course, to abolish it.

A modern Paine would seize on the authority of science and look for an alternative to modern war. He would launch the common sense idea that war doesn't work today because it cannot work. It has outlived any usefulness it may ever have had. It is redundant and therefore obsolete. Since 1945 its pursuit has been increasingly futile. He would point unerringly to the application of science & technology to the war machine which has made war so imprecise, & so un-manageable, as to render it a redundant tool. He would high light the ugly side of modern war, and point beyond the nuclear threat to the horrors of biological and chemical warfare,

the refinement of targeting bases in outer space, to psychological warfare, to listening devices like Cheltenham and to research facilities like Porton Down. Today, he would tell us, a computer virus may be more threatening to human life than the atomic bomb.

Paine would argue that when, post 1945, the engine of war was allied to 21<sup>st</sup> century globalisation, war ceased to be a tool which could be used in any safe or meaningful way - as Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda and the West Bank surely demonstrate. War is finished as a tool of diplomacy, or for solving disputes between nation states. Its time has come. Common sense dictates that we the people must design a different approach for resolving inter state conflict.

In this quest Paine today might well follow the track a group of English Quakers has pursued over the last five years.

Their project – “Preparing for Peace” - is in one sense simple. It posed four questions and then invited some of the world’s thinkers and practitioners to answer them. The results were published in July 2005 (ISBN – 0-9550527-0-X), and copies presented to each member of the UN’s General Assembly. A web site - [www.preparingforpeace.org](http://www.preparingforpeace.org) - a special study pack for young students called “The Anatomy of War”, and a teachers’ guide, are available.

Question one asked, “Has war, post 1945, been successful in achieving its objectives?” On the whole it has not. Occasionally there can be partial success, as in Sierra Leone, but more likely disastrous failure as in Vietnam, Cambodia, Rwanda, the Congo, the West Bank, India and Pakistan, Chechnya, Iraq, Northern Ireland, East Timor, Afghanistan, Colombia and so on.

Question two asked, “Can modern war be controlled and contained?” Again there was a clear “no” to this question as both Iraqi wars, Suez, Vietnam, the Balkans, Rwanda, the West Bank, Honduras and El Salvador in the seventies and Cambodia in the eighties with its 67 million land mines, demonstrate.

Question three asked, “What are the human, economic and environmental costs of modern war?”

In the Vietnam War some 58,000 American soldiers were slaughtered, as were an estimated 4 million Vietnamese. In the first asymmetrical war in Rwanda an estimated ¾ million people were killed; over 2 million refugees fled their country, whilst a further 1 million were displaced in their own country. In neighbouring Congo six years of conflict have claimed, so far, 3.8 million lives – half of whom are children.

A critical point on which Paine would seize is the plight of civilians in modern war. Civilians now are targeted more precisely and deliberately than the soldier. Statistically, in modern war civilians are ten times more likely to be killed as civilians than are soldiers. In Britain's own war in Northern Ireland some 498 British soldiers were killed across the last 35 years compared to 3,007 civilians. In America's nasty little war in Somalia in 1993, out of 160 American soldiers, 18 were killed compared to an estimated +1,000 civilians. In the horrendous & unnecessary war between Israel and Palestine, well over 500 children have, so far, been slaughtered. Paine would also campaign fiercely for the release of statistics in respect of Iraqi civilians killed in our war in that country. "Why are they a state secret", he would demand. "What is being covered up?"

One world authority - Dr. Paul Grossrieder former Director General of ICRC - advised, "Since 1945, 84% of the people killed in war have been civilians". To reinforce his point he told us that "the average annual number of deaths has been over a half million". These are bizarre figures and cannot be hidden behind weasel words like, "co-lateral damage". Each death, civilian or soldier, obliterates a unique human being with all the potential inherent in that uniqueness. The death of civilians, planned and unplanned, destroys the doctrine of the "Just War" as clauses 6 and 7 (concerning "proportionality" and "non-combatant immunity") inevitably fall. The two words - "just" and "war" – now contradict each other. They offer no moral way forward.

Sir Sam Brittan, former editor of the *Financial Times* provided a paper on the economic costs of war. Originally, taxes were introduced to pay for war. Today British taxpayers subsidise the arms trade to the tune of £240 millions per year. How many schools and hospitals would that pay for per annum? During the Cold War the allies spent over £500 billions simply, according to Prime Minister Thatcher, "to keep up our guard". "We must be

mad.", would be Paine's judgement.

What were the conclusions of our analysis? Certainly the most important outcome - that the simple, indeed elegant idea that war cannot solve disputes between nations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - identifies the best way forward for humanity. Such an assertion, despite the American Revolution, sits comfortably with the teachings of Thomas Paine. He would recognise that Georgia's "rose revolution" and then the "orange revolution" in the Ukraine (January 2005) offer different, and successful alternatives to the war model, and he would hope that the Lebanon now offers another.

War does not work today, he would argue, because it cannot work. The combination of science and technology on the one side, when allied to the irresistible forces of globalisation on the other, renders war obsolete as a safe method for resolving inter or intra state conflict. Like slavery it may take decades to die, but if our generation recognises that war is at once futile & obsolete as a cultural tool, the dissemination of that knowledge will represent an enormous step forward for humanity. War has always been immoral, ugly, and degenerate - today, it is redundant as a tool of diplomacy.

So what replaces war?

In his *Rights of Man*, Paine confronted what he called "despotism". He wrote a prolific 40,000 words in less than three months. Despite coloured people being excluded from government and the democratic process by America's Founding Fathers, America had the potential to be the exception, for the rest of the world seemed to be ruled by despots bent on bullying their own citizens and neighbouring nation states. Despotism, he realized, breeds a culture which invades the whole of life. Long regarding despotism as corrupt, Paine now pinpointed its negative consequences. He pointed to the way in which "family tyranny and injustice" are the off-spring of despotism; he saw how heavy taxation stimulated class divisions and conflict. As the rich become richer, he noted how the poor become poorer. Armed conflict was the likely result. Today, he would point to North Korea, Burma, Nepal, Turkmenistan, Togo, Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe as typical of some 30 - 40 despotic states, which genuine democracies must oppose non-violently.

Wars are the inevitable outcome of despotism. But Paine differed from Hobbes in that he believed that war was not the product of wicked, godless individuals, but, on the contrary, was the product of over-bearing and despotic nation states. Anticipating the Seville Statement by 200 years, he rejected war as a natural consequence of fate, or as built somehow into our genes. If this was understood, then surely war could be avoided. Paine was more than sympathetic to the idea that war could be relegated to the history books.

He was not the first to argue this, but he was perhaps the most persuasive. He went as far as to argue that "war is the art of conquering at home.", because despots going to war inevitably increase their lust for power by coercing their own populations. For Paine none of this was inevitable or embedded somehow in our genes. If it arose, it had to be challenged and removed. Perhaps, he felt, the American Revolution was destined to lead human kind into the pleasant glades of sunshine and peace amongst men. "What is there in the world but man?" he asked plaintively.

Our task is to be vigilant against any feature of despotic rule at national or neighbourhood level. That would squeeze out war and its grisly practices. If rulers betray their trust for negotiating the peaceful settlements of disputes, then the populace should withdraw democratic approval from those states or rulers, as in Zimbabwe, or the Ukraine. And so he developed his ideas on "natural rights". Rights bearing, free and equal citizens, should take preference; the lead should come first from the people and not from governments. Governments rule by the consent of the people. Natural rights are the lodestone against which rulers should be judged – "the fixed and steady principle", he called it.<sup>51</sup> Natural rights belong to our heirs as well as to us. Personally he preferred a written to an unwritten constitution, one which left the citizen space in which to live without interference from government. History taught him that the citizens' social life can be disfigured and corrupted by wicked rulers armed with weapons and repressive laws, reinforced by what he called, "political superstition".

The state, Paine would argue, has a responsibility to safeguard what he called, "universal peace, civilization and commerce." Bellicose despotism could never achieve those ends. "Common

security” for Paine extended inwards to society, but, equally, outwards to other nation & their peoples. The best guarantor for this happy condition was an international confederation of independent and peaceful civil societies charged with maintaining and making more peaceable the international system itself. Today, we call it the UN. Once we feel this condition in our hearts, then wars will cease because people will have no need to go to war. When citizens understand the consequences of going to war as citizens – losing their livelihoods, homes, families, lives - then war will begin to wither on the branch. “Cordial unison”, as Paine called it, will become the order of the day.<sup>52</sup>

So the UN, despite its blemishes, remains central to a peaceful future. In December 2004, a new and more democratic UN blueprint surfaced. If we can implement it, we shall advance hand in hand with Paine and his vision. It offers 101 carefully balanced recommendations. Immediately it attacks the American idea of “preventive strikes”, noting with common sense that, “Allowing one to so act is to allow all.” The founding UN charter recognised the right of sovereign nations to deter wars of aggression, but then the Universal Declaration of Human Rights quickly following in 1948, challenges us to reconcile these two sets of rights. The new recommendations start where Paine would start – namely that the inalienable right of citizens should, and must, take preference over nation states rights. UN members, acting in concert, can then effectively oppose genocide and ethnic cleansing.

Paine would welcome these proposals - especially the need to extend the membership of the Security Council. He might also urge additional points. He would perceive that the Secretary General needs a new, water-tight, and rigorously maintained UN arms register of all arms sales made in respect of the 4 top arms selling nations, including the UK, published annually, and with curbs placed on all purveyors of arms. He would argue also that the Secretary General needs his own, independent satellite system so as to develop his own intelligence - instead of relying on second hand and selective intelligence from America.

Paine would concede that these new recommendations offer a core blueprint for a more peaceful future. That future will be brighter if the empire of the United States takes the lead in their implementation. So Paine would campaign for a re-vitalised UN, looking to his country of adoption for support & leadership. He

would be shocked to learn that since 1945 his America has bombed or invaded at least 22 different countries,<sup>53</sup> he would oppose his country's futuristic "Star-Wars" policy, knowing that the decision to set it up was taken by some 200 unelected American officials. That is not how democracy is meant to work. Paine would say so with vigour.

Finally, if the international community is to be reinvigorated and if America is to play its rightful part in that process, then civil society, world-wide, must evolve and develop with speed. First, within nation states, but then increasingly and with gathering momentum across nation state boundaries. For example, in the European Community, or within the Nordic group, or across Latin America, or in Central America, or in ASEAN, or throughout the Indian sub-continent or, better still, everywhere.

Paine, I think, would embrace Chomsky's proposition that the twenty first century world has two super powers.<sup>54</sup> One is the USA; the other is the voice of free men and free women everywhere, acting in concert as we did over the illegal war in Iraq. Narrow nationalism must be relegated to the scrap heap of history. Democracy and freedom must intensify within society. The voice of the individual in matters of war and peace must be neither subordinated nor conceded to the politician. The people must rule through the politicians, but their voice, based on common sense, should guide the politicians. Here is the humanitarian vision to which Paine would cleave. A world without war is a world of liberty and humanity; and liberty is always indivisible.

Hippocrates is said to have advised, "First, do no harm".<sup>55</sup> Thomas Paine would agree. But let the man speak for himself. In 1793, speaking to the French National Convention on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January he declared, "My language has always been that of liberty and humanity, and I know that nothing so exalts a nation as the union of these two principles, under all circumstances."

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# THOMAS PAINE'S LAST YEAR: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Mae Silver\*

In the past months, ideas have come together for me to explain Thomas Paine's final year differently than most sources. My different perspective about his burial came from my own experience as principal caregiver to my mother and husband as they past on in 1999 and when I read of the sale of Thomas Paine's Bordentown property in 1808 at Mt. Holly, New Jersey Hall of Records. In that record, I read that a Thomas Addis Emmet took over s power of attorney and sold the property for Thomas Paine. The circumstances of that act by Emmet took two pages of documents in the Mt. Holly records. Emmet had gone out of his way on behalf of Thomas Paine. Obviously, this was a person who had a close relation to him. But who was he? My continued research revealed that he was part of a circle of friends who cared for Paine. These caregivers acted sensitively and prudently as Thomas Paine passed on from this life to the next. But it was during my trip to Thomas Paine sites in England from March 6-13, 2005, that provoked my need to write about my different view o Paine's last year on earth.

On the trip I heard English folk call Thomas Paine a traitor, which is technically correct since he was tried and convicted for treason in England.<sup>1</sup> However, this comment was usually prefaced to the "fact" that he died penniless and without friends in America. This was Thomas Paine's punishment for being a whistle-blower and traitor! Here is when I commented that neither is true. Both constitute soap opera history and ought to be corrected. Poor in wealth is easy to dispute by simply reading Paine's will in which he leaves property and stock to various heirs. This will, by the way, took three weeks for Paine and two caregivers to write. I suggested to folks it would be helpful to read Thomas Paine's will and perhaps, also to buy a complete collection of his writings (that include his will) and donate them to their local library. Surprisingly, neither the library at Thetford or Lewes had a complete collection of his writings to show me.

To dispute "poor in friends" will take more words. Specifically, I believe, "poor in friends" relates to the fact that few people, i. e., five, attended his burial. That fact bothered me for a long time. Now I have an explanation to that which no one else has ever put forward. But, to understand why so few attended Paine's burial one must learn more about his caregiver friends and the relationship between him and the deBonneville family.

The French connections between the deBonneville family and Paine began in Paris at the time of the French Revolution and the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte to power. The deBonnevilles, Marguerite, Nicholas and their three sons Louis, Benjamin and Thomas adopted Paine as a member of the family for the five years, 1797 – 1802, he stayed with them. In his lifetime this close relationship was equal to that he had with Mary and Joseph Kirkbride in Bordentown. As an itinerant revolutionary, Thomas Paine had really no family or household of his own. These adopted family ties were very important to his well-being.

Marguerite Bonneville, she dropped the de part when she arrived in America, and her three sons came to these parts in 1803 at Paine's invitation. Parting from this Parisian family he loved was difficult for all of them including and so he offered to care for them should they accept his invitation to come to America. To compensate for his inadequate funds, he promised the Bonneville a share in his inheritance. He kept that promise. Marguerite, in turn, remained a faithful friend, indeed a primary caregiver to Paine through his final days on earth and stood with her two sons and gravediggers at his burial in New Rochelle in 1809. The story of their familial friendship began in Paris in 1792.

In 1792 Thomas Paine fled from England to France literally slipping by soldiers of the English Crown that had tried, convicted and readied to execute him for his treasonous writing, namely *Rights of Man*, against the English government. This was the time of the French Revolution and Paine's writings were widely read and applauded. He received a hero's welcome when he arrived in France. The French bestowed him with an "honorary citizenship". However, as the two factions of the revolution vied for power, the violence became so great that persons of both sides, depending who was in power and when, were executed. Paine became ensnared in this struggle, was arrested, thrown into prison, and condemned to death.

Paine's written efforts to gain his release by American intervention were dealt with in a roundabout way by Gouverneur Morris, America's consul to France at the time. Morris knew Paine and chose to intervene in a diplomatic and rather circuitous way by wrestling with the issue of Paine's citizenship. He was not a Paine fan and really was quite jealous of his reputation with his pen and disliked his personal lifestyle. Luckily, James Monroe replaced Morris, as America's consul almost in the nick of time for Paine was quite ill from his imprisonment by then. In fact, the rumour was that Paine had died. By the hand of luck or a sympathetic guard, his prison door, which was marked with a designation for the guillotine, somehow was positioned in such a way that the mark was unseen. Paine was never marched to his execution. Monroe knew he was a patriot and worked quickly to achieve his release. The Monroes took him to their home and nursed him back to health.

One would think that by that time Paine was more than ready to return to America. However, he faced a dilemma. He was a wanted man. If word reached the English that a certain ship carried him, the English would stop the ship and take him back to England to face execution. He had to be careful. As he stayed in Paris, Paine soon became acquainted with Nicholas deBonneville, a young publisher of a liberal newspaper, *Bien Informe*. His publishing company, Cercle Social, named after a club he helped to found a few years earlier, was very liberal and idealistic. DeBonneville was a freemason and believed by reshaping the world to its ideals, peace and freedom would result. This coupling of deBonneville and Thomas Paine seemed very natural and moved from a friendship of family dinners to one of accomodation at their home. An offer to house Paine for a few weeks turned into a stay of five years. He became an "adopted" family member. Marguerite carefully screened which persons were invited to her salons for Thomas Paine. The children doted on him and the servants adored him. Nicholas and Marguerite polished his writings into acceptable French for Nicholas' publications.

The atmosphere outside the deBonneville household was no so amicable. It was tense. Social forces that quelled the violence of the French Revolution now fertilised an environment where Napoleon gradually climbed to his dictatorship. One evening General Bonaparte rapped on the door of the deBonneville'd 4 rue du Theatre Franciase, to ask for Thomas Paine. They chatted

together and went off to dine at a restaurant. Their conversation was amicable, even flattering to Paine, but soon, in watching Bonaparte's subsequent moves Paine suspected that e should be wary of him. In 1798, the government shut down Nicholas' newspaper. Through the efforts of Paine and other supporters this suppression was rescinded, however, the family became subject to surveillance and when this happened, Paine became so uncomfortable he left for Belgium. As Bonaparte's rise to power deepened, Nicholas responded with a satirical editorial. He was arrested and imprisoned.

Marguerite informed Paine that should he return to Paris he would also be subject to surveillance and so he remained away until 1800 when Nicholas' release seemed imminent. As soon as his return became known, the government let him know that he was suspect. If he wrote against the government he, and perhaps also the deBonnevilles would suffer imprisonment. This threat alone might explain Paine's relatively quiet pen during this time. He now focussed on securing passage to America. President Thomas Jefferson offered him a place on the Maryland, which he refused. His funds were low but fortuitously friends of the *Rights of Man* from England paid him a call and offered him such a handsome appreciation that he was able to settle his debts in Paris and book passage home.

Leaving the deBonnevilles was especially painful and he offered the family his patronage should they wish to move to America. Given the political situation in France, it was no surprise that Marguerite agreed to the offer. On November 1, 1802 Paine landed in America. Warmly received by President Jefferson, Paine also received attacks in the press from the Federalists who used every trick, exaggeration and mud slinging to smear Jefferson by way of Paine. This was now a different United States of America where thirteen individual colonies worked to mesh their rights with that of the new national government. No easy task. No models to imitate. At times they were just "winging it". Undoubtedly a painful but important experience to effect, these two major political parties, embodying this struggle, strove to find a way to be the United States of America and balance their individual and states rights.

In September 1803, Paine learned that Mm. Bonneville and her three sons had arrived in New York. While his tiny place in Bordentown could hardly handle four people, this is where the

Bonnevilles stayed until larger quarters in New Rochelle were ready. Marguerite must have shivered from culture shock. Accustomed to a household of servants, large quarters, ample funds and a cosmopolitan atmosphere, she was now in a pastoral village, as it were, in the middle of nowhere. Help from the Kirkbrides might have come except for the fact that Thomas Paine's good friend Joseph died in October of that same year. Such a death probably eclipsed possible assistance from Nary Kirkbride. When the expanded quarters in New Rochelle were ready, Mm. Bonneville found these objectionable, too. Paine was mystified at her objections and reactions. He quipped in a July 31 letter to John Fellows, she could.... "not even make an apple dumpling for her own children" (French women don't make apple dumplings, English women do). But, in truth, Paine had little understanding of running a household, as he usually had none to run. He often was the guest in a household run by somebody else. When Marguerite's oldest son Louis declared he did not wish to live in America and wanted to return to his father in Paris, Mm Bonneville agreed reluctantly and Paine booked his passage home. Benjamin stayed with his mother in New York city and Thomas Paine stayed with his namesake in New Rochelle. The family came together at weekends. Marguerite became a French teacher.

Thomas Paine could not work the New Rochelle farm successfully and soon he was back in the city, then back to New Rochelle as his funds dwindled, then back to the city, etc., as he tried to work this new life and commitment to the Bonnevilles. When his friend William Carver seemed to offer him rooms gratis, Paine accepted only to find he was mistaken. Soon Carver wanted rent and this caused a rift between them that escalated into a lawsuit. When Carver became so incensed at Paine's refusal to pay \$150 back rent, he conjured a tale of a romance between Mm Bonneville that explained the child Thomas Paine de Bonneville as Thomas Paine's child. He spread this "story" to James Cheetham, supposedly Paine's friend, who published a scurrilous Thomas Paine biography that included this "story" in the spring of 1808. Paine responded with a lawsuit citing libel. Imagine this, Thomas Paine, now actively dealing with illness and death, must now mount a lawsuit to defend his honour and the Bonneville's!

As Paine's health deteriorated, Marguerite remained near by. Gradually it became clear that while, at first, when she came,



Paine was her protector, however, now these roles were reversed. She had behaved like a dutiful daughter in Paris, but now she had become his protector, his principal caregiver. She was not alone in her caregiving to Thomas Paine. There were other friends who gathered together and offered assistance as caregivers. It is reasonable that they all knew each other and they knew Marguerite. Two were Thomas Addis Emmet and Walter Morton. Emmet, a well-known and respected attorney from Ireland, viewed his friend not only through the eyes of an attorney but a physician as well. His first education was a medical degree from Edinburgh before he turned to the law. With these two skills, his caring involvement with Paine was invaluable. His younger brother Robert achieved icon status in Irish patriotic history days when he led an Irish revolt against the English and paid the ultimate price, his life. Thomas left Ireland so that he too would not lose his life. Emmet's love of liberty and freedom drew him to Paine who wrote so passionately about it.

With the eyes of a physician and an attorney, Thomas evaluated Paine's surroundings at one point, and he prevailed upon Paine to move to better rooms for better, cleaner care. Then as good caregivers might well do, he and Walter Morton one day took matters into their own hands, scooped Paine up in a chaise, piled his belongings on top and took him to a better place. Likely, Paine complained all the way. Sensitive to Paine's sense of pride, Emmet offered himself with power of attorney to sell Paine's Bordentown properties to provide him with fresh money of his own to cover the cost of these new accommodations. Documents at Mount Holly show that on July 6, 1808, as Thomas Addis Emmet with power of attorney and John Sturdyvant, Thomas Paine's Bordentown cottage and seven acres were sold to John Oliver for eight hundred dollars. His Bordentown property that had provided him with so much joy and comfort in the past, now gave him funds to maintain him for his last days on earth.

Emmet and Walter Morton helped Paine get his affairs in order by spending three weeks with him to craft a new will. They were friends who performed with grace, kindness and skill that anyone would want. Walter Morton, a former custom's officer, now ran the Phoenix Assurance Company. He arranged in February, 1809, for a rent increase to cover the new intensive care that Paine required. He became an executor of Paine's estate. Another friend, John Fellows, then manager of New York City waterworks, dated

back to the battle of Bunker Hill, where he fought and achieved the rank of colonel. Fellows had published the first American edition of *The Age of Reason*. As a deist and Freemason, his thoughts on life fit easily on the same page as Paine's, who often turned to him with ideas about further publications and gave him articles to pass on for publication. But for matters personally close, he also called on Fellows by way of letters to him. In his 1805 letter Paine said, in effect, help the boys, the Bonneville boys, with some of your good advice. And, by the way, please retrieve my favourite penknife and blanket from where I left them last and send them up to me. Fellows helped with business also when in 1804 he arranged the sale of some sixty New Rochelle acres to balance Paine's cash flow problems.

John Wesley Jarvis, a young artist whom Paine met through James Cheetham, became part of his caregiving circle. Looking for a new place to stay, Paine arrived at "Bachelor's Hall" where Jarvis resided and decided to accept the offer to move in. Jarvis was a bon vivant, a marvellous storyteller, an inveterate partygoer, and often was the life of any party. While he knew of Paine's view on religion, John Wesley Jarvis took no offence that his old friend's views were different from his Wesleyan Methodism. From January through April 1807, these storytellers enjoyed each other's company. Jarvis' famous quote about Paine to Charles King in a letter of spring 1807 was classic: "I have had Tom Paine living with me for these past five months. he [sic] is one of the most pleasant companions I have met with for an old man". Jarvis seemed neither intimidated by Paine's cantankerous outbursts nor overly concerned but accepted Paine as the superb storyteller he was and joined him at it! Some portraits of Paine are attributed to Jarvis but have not been found, instead, the death mask and a silhouette of Paine survive. Two prominent New Yorkers, Dr. Alexander Anderson, a wood engraver, and John Pintford accompanied Jarvis to take Paine's death mask. The plaster cast of the head and a plaster bust of the mask were donated to the New York Historical Society.

During the last months of his life Paine did not want to be left alone, and so it was arranged. Dr. Manley, a physician, who worried as much about Paine's soul as his body, came daily. In addition to his caregivers, there was a host of women who actually administered care, feeding, changing of linens etc. Also there were many visits from many religious people who wanted to save

Thomas Paine's soul. To say that Paine was without friends and visitors during his last days is utterly wrong. Marguerite was almost always there. Finally he prevailed upon her to allow him to stay with her in her place and she agreed. As he came nearer death, he became more afraid and did not want to be alone. Anyone who has cared for a dying one knows that such a request is not unusual. After he moved to her place at 49, Grove Street on May 4, he felt immediately better and received more friends. He was only one month short of his death. Many, many friends came. Soon after his death on June 8, 1809, Jarvis came and created his death mask.

As Marguerite's role shifted from being protected to that of Paine's protector, she, of course, was part of the circle of Paine's caregivers. She probably exerted the major role among his caregiving friends. After his death, her grief for his passing may have engendered in her an acute protectiveness regarding his reputation. Such a reaction to grief is not unusual. Aware that the lawsuit against Cheetham still was not resolved, I believe Marguerite wanted the burial to be dignified, private and quiet. Cheetham's scandalous biography of Paine still had its share of lively believers and lip smackers. Zealots could use his burial as an event for a bizarre demonstration. It is not unreasonable to think that his caregiving friends agreed to keep his burial private and even keep the time and place a secret. We all know that a request for a private burial is not an unusual one. I believe the absence of his close friends at his burial was because these good friends desired to protect and honour Thomas Paine with a private, dignified burial.

Continuing her role as protector after Paine's death, Marguerite pursued the lawsuit against Cheetham and the court found in Paine's favour in 810. In court, at least three friends, Robert Fulton, John Wesley Jarvis and Thomas Addis Emmet rose as her character witnesses along with many parents of children who had learned French from Marguerite. The reputations of Thomas Paine and the Bonnevillees were cleared. History now records that. Afterwards, still in her role as his protector and likely, dealing with her grief for him, Marguerite destroyed some of Paine's unpublished papers he left to her, mostly dealing with religious matters.

Thomas Paine did not die in poverty or without friends. I sincerely hope that my readers on both sides of the pond will correct this "historical" mistake, whenever they hear it, let us set the record straight for Thomas Paine and history.

1. Paine was charged with seditious libel not treason – ed.

### Sources

The major source is John Keane's excellent biography of Paine. The Jarvis information is from Harold Dickson's biography published by the New York Historical Society in 1949. The Bordentown property sae information is at the Hall of Records and Deeds, Mount Holly, New Jersey, Book S, pp.675-677. Emmet material is from Patrick M. Geoghegan, *Robert Emmet*, Montreal, Queen's University Press, 2002.

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Silhouette of Thomas Paine by John Wesley Jarvis, which is thought to be the last portrait made during Paine's lifetime.

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