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# Thomas Paine and Masonry

Shai Afsai

Thomas Paine (1737-1809) was one of the most active and prolific radicals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and perhaps “the first man to practice revolution as a sole reason for being.”<sup>1</sup> He wrote and fought for American independence from England, encouraged the abolition of slavery,<sup>2</sup> helped shape Pennsylvania’s constitution,<sup>3</sup> advocated a restructuring of English government,<sup>4</sup> argued for elimination of the death penalty,<sup>5</sup> participated in France’s legislature,<sup>6</sup> and “laid out the first design of a modern welfare state,”<sup>7</sup> among other activities.<sup>8</sup> While he lived, he directly influenced politics in America (perhaps even coining the name “United States”<sup>9</sup>), in England, and in France, and long after his death his writings have continued to be primary documents in the struggle for freedom and human rights worldwide.<sup>10</sup> But what connection, if any, did the famous — and, at times, notorious — author of *Common Sense*, *The Crisis*, *Rights of Man*, and *The Age of Reason* have with the Masonic Order?

In *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom*, Professor Jack Fruchtman writes that there is insufficient evidence to answer the question with certainty: “It has long been questioned whether Paine was a member of the Masons. There is no definitive proof either way. There is no specific date known on which he joined nor a specific lodge to which he was attached.”<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, it has been common to ascribe Masonic membership to Paine. This is seen in the tendency of some Grand Lodges, during the 1990’s, to publish brochures that placed Paine on the roster of famous Masons.<sup>12</sup> One such example, “The Real Secret of Freemasonry,” an informational brochure put out by the Grand Lodge of Oregon, states: “*The pantheon of Masons holds George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine, among others.*”<sup>13</sup> Various Masonic Web-sites continue

to make similar claims about Paine and Masonry, as well.<sup>14</sup>

In *The Transatlantic Republican: Thomas Paine and the Age of Revolutions*, Bernard Vincent devotes a chapter to "Thomas Paine, the Masonic Order, and the American Revolution," and explains several aspects of the inclination to consider Paine a Mason:

*While working on my Tom Paine biography, I was intrigued from the outset by the fact that all of a sudden, within just a few weeks or months, and as if by magic, Paine leaped from his obscure humdrum existence in England—where he had worked as a corset-maker and Excise officer—onto the American literary and political stage, there to become, at the age of almost forty, one of the leading lights of the Revolutionary movement.*

*How was it that a man who was little short of a failure in his native country became acquainted so rapidly with the most prominent figures in the Colonies, even becoming a friend of theirs in many cases? How can one account for the quickness of his ascent and the suddenness of his glory?*

*One way of accounting for this, one hypothesis (which has several times been made), is to consider that Paine became a Freemason and that, as such, he enjoyed, first in America, then in England and France, the kindly assistance of certain lodges or of certain individual Masons.<sup>15</sup>*

*Vincent rejects this hypothesis, however, due to a lack of corroborative evidence. It is certain that Washington and Franklin were Masons, for example, but there is no equivalent support for such a claim about Paine.*

*Assertions of Paine's Masonic membership also rest on the fact that between 1803 and 1805, after returning to America from England and France, he penned the essay "Origin of Free-Masonry."<sup>16</sup> For some, Paine's curiosity about Freemasonry, and his decision to write about it, have been, in and of themselves, sufficient proof that he was a Mason. However, Vincent rejects this line of reasoning as well:*



Paine's interest in Freemasonry was such that toward the end his life, in 1805, he wrote a lengthy piece entitled *An Essay on the Origin of Freemasonry...* But this does not prove, any more than any other detail or fact that we know of, that Paine was a Mason. There is indeed no formal trace of his initiation or membership in England, none in America, and none in France. Questioned about Paine's membership...the United Grand Lodge of England had only this to answer: "In the absence of any record of his initiation, it must, therefore, be assumed he was not a member of the order."<sup>17</sup>

Though not necessarily a Mason himself, Paine certainly had several close friends who were members of the Order. For example, while living in France, after fleeing England in order to escape charges of sedition, Paine resided at the home of Nicolas de Bonneville. Samuel Edwards describes Bonneville as "[a]n active Freemason" who "was convinced that the principles and aims of Masonry, if applied to the world's ailments, would bring peace and prosperity to all nations."<sup>18</sup> The bond between the two men was quite strong: "From 1797 until 1802, Paine lived with the Bonneville's in Paris, and Marguerite, Nicolas' wife, and their sons eventually followed Paine to America."<sup>19</sup> Fruchtman suggests that during Paine's time in Paris, Bonneville introduced him to the philosophies of Freemasonry and Theophilanthropism.<sup>20</sup>

William M. Van der Weyde, in *The Life and Works of Thomas Paine*, also mentions Paine's Masonic associations, while at the same time emphasizing that these friendships are not evidence he belonged to the fraternity: "Paine was the author of an interesting and highly instructive treatise on the *Origin of Freemasonry...*but, although many of his circle of friends were undoubtedly members of that order, no conclusive proof has ever been adduced that Paine was a Mason."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Moncure Daniel Conway proposes that "Paine's intimacy in Paris with Nicolas de Bonneville and Charles Francoise Dupuis, whose writings are replete with masonic speculations, sufficiently explains his interest in the subject" of Freemasonry, even though he himself was probably not a Mason.<sup>22</sup>

Bonneville's widow published Paine's "Origin of Free-Masonry" in 1810, after his death, although she chose to omit certain passages in it that could be seen as disparaging to Christianity. Most of these were restored in a later printing, in 1818.<sup>23</sup> Paine's central premise in "Origin of Free-Masonry" is that the Order "is derived and is the remains of the religion of the ancient Druids; who, like the Magi of Persia and the Priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were Priests of the Sun."<sup>24</sup> The idea that Masonry derived from the Druids did not begin with Paine, and has been advanced by others after him.<sup>25</sup> According to Paine, however, this Druid origin is the true and deepest secret of Masonry, from which extend all the ceremonies and concealment Masons engage in:

The natural source of secrecy is fear. When any new religion over-runs a former religion, the professors of the new become the persecutors of the old... [W]hen the Christian religion over-ran the religion of the Druids...the Druids became the subject of persecution. This would naturally and necessarily oblige such of them as remained attached to their original religion to meet in secret, and under the strongest injunctions of secrecy. Their safety depended upon it. A false brother might expose the lives of many of them to destruction; and from the remains of the religion of the Druids, thus preserved, arose the institution which, to avoid the name of Druid, took that of Mason, and practiced under this new name the rites and ceremonies of Druids.<sup>26</sup>

Commenting on Paine's "Essay on Freemasonry," Masonic author Albert G. Mackey quips that Paine "knew, by the way, as little of Masonry as he did of the religion of the Druids."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, it is evident from Paine's essay that he was not very knowledgeable of Freemasonry — although that fact alone does not, of course, prove he was not a Mason when he wrote it. Paine's general tone, however, shows him to be an outsider trying to assess what is in the Order, rather than a member of it, and that, more than anything else, indicates that he was not a Mason at the time he composed "Origin of Free-Masonry." For example, after referring to certain statements about Masonry made by the Provincial Grand Master of Kent, Captain George Smith, in the latter's *The Use and Abuse of*

*Free-Masonry* (1783), Paine concludes:

It sometimes happens, as well in writing as in conversation, that a person lets slip an expression that serves to unravel what he intends to conceal, and this is the case with Smith, for in the same chapter he says, "The Druids, when they committed any thing to writing, used the Greek alphabet, and I am bold to assert that the most perfect remains of the Druids' rites and ceremonies are preserved in the customs and ceremonies of the Masons that are to be found existing among mankind." "My brethren" says he, "may be able to trace them with greater exactness than I am at liberty to explain to the public."

This is a confession from a Master Mason, without intending it to be so understood by the public, that Masonry is the remains of the religion of the Druids...<sup>28</sup>

These are not the words of a man who is himself a Master Mason, but rather of one who is guessing at what secrets a Master Mason knows and may be inadvertently revealing. Paine, an outsider, mistakes Smith's personal conjectures for an unintended confession. If he was not a Master Mason at the time he wrote the essay, could Paine have been an Entered Apprentice or a Fellow-Craft? It is difficult to argue that Paine was curious enough about Freemasonry's origin and philosophy to write seriously about the fraternity, and also to begin the Craft degrees, but that he did not wait until he had concluded them before finishing his essay. It is far more likely that he was not at all a member of the fraternity at the time of its composition, and was writing as a complete outsider.

In his essay on Thomas Paine in *Freemasonry Today*, David Harrison speculates: "If Paine did enter into Freemasonry, it would have been during the period of the American Revolution, his life being at the epicentre of the social elite at that time, his closeness to Franklin, Washington, Lafayette and Monroe suggesting that he was undoubtedly aware of their Masonic membership."<sup>29</sup> Paine's "Origin of Free-Masonry," however, indicates that despite his closeness to these men, he did not enter into Freemasonry at

that time. Years later, around 1803-1805, he was still writing as an outsider.

Although he may not have been a member, facets of Paine's thought can be seen to correspond to Masonic principles. In *The Age of Reason* (of which "Origin of Free-Masonry" may have originally been intended to be a part<sup>30</sup>), for example, Paine explains his religious beliefs:

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.<sup>31</sup>

Such statements, which have a Masonic ring to them, prompted Masonic historian Joseph Fort Newton to write of Paine:

Thomas Paine...though not a Mason, has left us an essay on *The Origin of Freemasonry*. Few men have ever been more unjustly and cruelly maligned than this great patriot, who was the first to utter the name "United States," and who, instead of being a sceptic, believed in "the religion in which all men agree" — that is, in God, Duty, and the immortality of the Soul.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, Vincent concludes in *The Transatlantic Republican* that while Paine "probably never belonged to any specific fraternity, he nevertheless actively sympathized with the Masonic movement and the philosophy it espoused."<sup>33</sup>

Although Voltaire, for example, became a Mason shortly before passing away,<sup>34</sup> there is nothing to suggest that Paine became a Mason in the interval between composing "Origin of Free-Masonry" and his death a few years later, in 1809. As he was certainly not a Master Mason when he wrote the essay — and as there is no evidence he joined the fraternity after then — one may conclude, as have Mackey, Newton, and others,<sup>35</sup> that Paine was not a Freemason. Still, though the "pantheon of Masons" may not hold Thomas Paine, this influential and controversial man is nonetheless indelibly



connected to Freemasonry, if only due to the close friendships he had with some in the fraternity, and to his having written an intriguing essay on its origins.

## NOTES

1. Jerome D. Wilson and William F. Ricketson, *Thomas Paine* (Boston: Twayne Publisher, 1978), p. 163.
2. Christopher Hitchens, *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man: A Biography* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), pp. 28-29 and 43-44.
3. Isaac Kramnick, ed., *Common Sense* (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 31.
4. Kramnick, *Common Sense*, p. 33.
5. Hitchens, *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, p. 60.
6. Kramnick, *Common Sense*, pp. 34-36.
7. Hitchens, *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, p. 109. See also p. 120. Bernard Vincent devotes a chapter to "Paine's Agrarian Justice and the Birth of the Welfare State." See Vincent's *The Transatlantic Republican: Thomas Paine and the Age of Revolutions* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), pp. 125-135.
8. Kramnick (*Common Sense*, p. 28) believes Paine also supported women's rights. Hitchens, however, disagrees: "he was not a notable advocate of the rights of women" (*Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, p. 98). So does Vincent, who considers Paine's attitude toward women's suffrage to have been pedestrian: "For once, Paine failed to be a prophet" (*The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 124).
9. Hitchens, *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, pp. 8 and 36. Joseph Fort Newton, among others, believed this to be the case. See below, note 32.
10. Hitchens, *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, pp. 141-142.
11. Jack Fruchtman, Jr., *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1994), p. 491, note 28.
12. "Famous Non-Masons," on the Web-site of Anti-Masonry — Points of View, <<http://www.masonicinfo.com/famousnon.htm>>.
13. "The Real Secret of Freemasonry," published by authority of the Trustees of The Grand Lodge of A.F. & A.M. of Oregon (U.S.A.: Still Associates, 1990).
14. Two such examples: The Key West Masons Web-site, <<http://www.keywestmason.com>>, which has a page of famous Masons, among whom Paine is listed, and the Web-site of the Valley of Albany, New York, <<http://www.valleyofalbany.aasmasonry.us/>>, where a quote from the opening lines of *The Crisis* is attributed to "Bro. Thomas Paine."
15. Vincent, *The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 35.
16. Vincent (*The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 36) cites 1805 as the year "Origin of Free-Masonry" was written, as does Fruchtman (*Thomas*

*Paine: Apostle of Freedom*, p. 491, note 29). However, William Van der Weyde places its writing in 1803. See "Chronological Table of Thomas Paine's Writings," on the Web-site of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association, <<http://www.thomaspaine.org/chron.html>>.

17. Vincent, *The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 36. It may be incorrect to describe "Origin of Free-Masonry," as Vincent does, as "a lengthy piece." It is actually less than 5,000 words long.

18. Samuel Edwards, *Rebell A Biography of Tom Paine* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 227.

19. Fruchtman, *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom*, p. 275.

20. Fruchtman, *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom*, p. 275 and pp. 379-380.

21. William M. Van der Weyde, *The Life and Works of Thomas Paine* (New York: Thomas Paine National Historical Association, 1925), vol. 1, p. 171.

22. Moncure Daniel Conway, ed., "Origin of Free-Masonry," in *The Writings of Thomas Paine* (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), vol. 4, p. 290, note 1.

23. Conway, *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 4, p. 290, note 1.

24. Conway, *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 4, p. 293.

25. Albert Gallatin Mackey addresses these ideas in his chapter on "Druidism and Freemasonry" in *The History of Freemasonry* (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1898), vol. 1, pp. 199-216. See also Andrew Prescott's lecture on "Druidic Myths and Freemasonry," on the Web-site of The Centre for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism, <<http://freemasonry.dept.shef.ac.uk/index.php?lang=0&type=page&level0=243&level1=387&level2=392&op=381>>.

26. Conway, *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 4, p. 303.

27. Mackey, *The History of Freemasonry*, vol. 1, p. 199.

28. Conway, *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 4, pp. 294-295.

29. David Harrison, "Thomas Paine, Freemason?," *Freemasonry Today*, Issue 46, Autumn 2008, <<http://www.freemasonrytoday.com/46/p11.php>>. Arguing the possibility that Paine became a Mason during this time, Harrison continues: "Paine was certainly attracted to clubs and societies throughout his life, such as the White Hart Club which Paine attended when he was an exciseman in Lewes. He was a founding member of the first Anti-Slavery Society in America and he was involved in the society of Theophilanthropists and Philosophical Society..." In contrast, Vincent argues: "A rugged individualist, Paine neither liked collective ceremonies nor secret practices... Both his nature and the lessons of experience made him loathe the idea of regimentation. He never was a declared member of any party or sect or church, and it is highly probable that he never joined the Masonic Order" (*The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 39).

30. Conway, *The Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. 4, p. 290, note 1.

31. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology* (Boston: Josiah P. Mendum, 1852), part 1, p. 6. These sentences are quoted, with slightly different wording, in

Hitchens's *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man*, p. 126.

32. Joseph Fort Newton, *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry* (Iowa: The Torch Press, 1916), pp. 225-226, note 3.

33. Vincent, *The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 35.

34. Vincent, *The Transatlantic Republican*, p. 38.

35. For another example, see Augustus C. L. Arnold's *Philosophical History of Free-Masonry and Other Secret Societies* (New York: Clark, Austen, and Smith, 1854), p. 204, second note. Arnold concludes that Paine was not "a member of the brotherhood." He reproduces Paine's entire essay in his *Philosophical History*, adding his own notes to it, with the aim of, among other things, correcting what he considers to be Paine's mistaken assertions about the fraternity. See *Philosophical History*, p. 204, first note. See also the entry on Paine in William R. Denslow's *10,000 Famous Freemasons*, vol. 3: "Although Paine wrote *An Essay on the Origin of Freemasonry*, he was not a Freemason... Certain writers have made claims that he was a member of various lodges both in America and France."

## PAINE DEPARTS FROM ENGLAND FOR THE LAST TIME

*We thank Paul Myles for the transcript of this important letter, now in the British Library (BL ADD 58968 F. 67 Account of Dover to Calais by J. Mason), from the government agent J. Mason, to J.B. Burges, an under secretary for foreign affairs, which demolishes the constantly repeated mantra of Paine having fled the country to escape arrest. It is clear from what Mason writes that Paine had agreed to travel to France following the arrival of an official representative from the municipality of Calais, the people of which had elected him to represent them in the French National Assembly, sent to invite and accompany him there. The text remains as written.*

R.W.M.

To James Bland Burges Esq  
etc.etc.etc.  
Whitehall

to Dover by favor of the captain of the Kings Packet the Courier  
Sept 15th London

I take the liberty of informing you that in the packet which brought me from Dover here, this morning, came Mr Thos Paine, the Great Patriot accompanied by a Mr Audibert , a [ municipal officer] of this place, who, by the accounts before I left Paris was sent to London to fetch him, a Mr Frost an Attorney, of Electioneering memory if I am mistaken not, accompanied them, and is going to Paris with them- They arrived at Dover at half past ten, this morning, and, as Mr Audibert said were followed from London by a P. Chaise all the way, when they got to the inn the officers of the customs came and insisted on searching them, which, after some objections on their part, was submitted to, as force was threatened in case of refusal, the officers said they on information etc, which Mr Audibert wanted them to produce, but they did nor, they were kept an hour and 5 minutes in the room, with the door locked a great part of the time,

Mr Frost (I heard him) said he wanted to go to the recupury (toilet)

and they refused to let him go. They examined their papers very strictly and opened some of their letters, the most suspected no doubt and took the directions of the others, when asked what money they had, Mr P. told that in the Packet, he had about 25 guineas. I believe they made him count them. I think, but not so positive as to this, Mr A. said he tore a letter that their curiosity might not be satisfied in reading it notwithstanding it was of no consequence, according to his account. Mr Audibert complains violently of the ill treatment they received, and being kept in prison for an hour and 5, after his being so serviceable to members of English at Calais etc.etc.etc.

Threatens he will publish it in all the English papers, if they will not put it in, he says he will have bills posted up at his expense in London to publish it to the nation. This group of 3 set off tomorrow I believe, for Paris, therefore the National Assembly will be informed of it in the course of a few days. This company sir, went on board the packet immediately on being liberated, the packet was followed 'till out of the pier, which might be a quarter of an hour, by numbers of people, to stare at Tom Paine, as they called him, he was hissed a great deal, and a many ridiculous speeches made relative to his trade, / he has been a stay maker at Dover / the crowd increased very much, the wind being stuck the Packet was obliged to be towed out, I believe had we remained much longer, they would have pelted him with stones from the beach.

Personally Sir, he is a very mean looking man, it is in my opinion a disgrace to them, rather than a merit that a better representative can not be found at home without having recourse to a foreigner, like him. He is the picture of a journeyman Taylor who has been drunk and playing at nine pins for the 3 first days of the week, and is returning to his work on Thursday. We arrived at Calais and as soon as he was known to be on the shore the people flocked to see him, and it was talked of saluting him with the guard as he passed the Place d'Armes, it rained hard as I left him.

He has had an interview this evening with Lord Landerdale, who I believe was desirous of seeing him and has been also at the assembly of the [ In e o buis ] here, which I believe is held three times a week, Mr Paine made a very short speech there / in English / en quatre mots / saying that he was proud of the honour

the citizens of the Pas du Calais, had done him in electing him etc. That he had ever been a friend to the rights of man. and hoped that he should continue to be so.....nearly these words.

The captain of the Packet told me it was an order from the Treasury to examine them- I perhaps need not inform you of that Sir, I saw this morning at Dover a man of the name of Clark, from the upper office, who was just arrived from London, who with one of this place, Dover, possibly came about this Business. I hope Sir, this might come safe to your hand, the Captain Jo. Oyton of the courier packet who sails tommorow has promised to put it in the post at Dover, I leave it in the care of the Landlord here, for this purpose.

Upwards of 200 frenchmen arrived yesterday at Dover from Dieppe etc. this morning about 60 sailed in a boat for Ostend, the Town is full of them.

I have the honour to be, with the utmost respect

Sir  
your most obedient and most humble servant  
J. Mason  
Calais  
11 o' clock, Friday Morning  
Sept. 14th 1792

J B Burges Esq.

London

(BL ADD 58968 F. 67 Account of Dover to Calais by J. Mason)

(The London Mission of Thomas Pinckney, 1792-1796 Author(s): Samuel Flagg Bemis Source: The American Historical Review, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Jan., 1923), pp. 228-247)



## HAZEL BURGESS RESPONDS TO KEN BURCHELL'S REVIEW OF HER BOOK

In the last issue of this journal a 'review' of my book *Thomas Paine: A Collection of Unknown Writings* appeared. Our editor kindly offered me space to comment on the piece. I thank him and, although I think Kenneth W. Burchell's offering is unworthy of dignifying with a response, my regard for the truth warrants it. That which follows should be read with his critique to hand.

I shall endeavour to respond with some decorum, but as the so-called review is passionately bigoted in its defence of Thomas Paine, and no more than a personal attack on my husband and me, that may prove difficult. I do not believe the journal should have been subjected to use as a forum for venting personal, unfounded criticism. Such is the petty nature of the piece that I doubt any but Burchell would take it seriously. There is nothing in it that cannot be refuted; it is ludicrous.

I thank him for his positive remarks on my book, and am pleased to have provided him with useful quotes for his collection. I am grateful for his saying I 'get some things right', because as suggested in my previous paragraph he himself does not. For the rest, his comments can be brushed off as a personal point of view to which he is entitled. I must here make it clear that I am not in any way biased towards or against Thomas Paine, a position that makes research of the man difficult as most who have written about him seem to take a passionate stance. I have enormous admiration for his journalistic skills. I see him as a mere mortal, neither saint nor sinner, but a man like any other who had to make a living.

*There are, however, writes Ken Burchell, two problems. First, a great part of the collection is either already in print, easily obtained. And more problematically, the very small quantity of new Paine material is sandwiched in between a much greater quantity of work that is not of Paine's authorship.*

To the first complaint, the reader is advised to read my preface. To the second, no reader of history expects to read items such as Paine's pieces in isolation; they must be set in context. Some of his published pieces that can be found in collections of his works are certainly included in my book, in every case to support the item being addressed. For example, see the letter he wrote to George Washington dated 22 July 1783 introducing the article published 9 July 1783.

*The cover, for example, claims that the works in this*

*compendium have 'not been seen, either publicly or privately, in over 200 years.'*

The cover blurb reads, 'This collection offers a glimpse of Thomas Paine, the eighteenth-century radical pamphleteer, as has not been seen, either publicly or privately, in over 200 years.' There is no claim (a strong word, always to be used with caution) that the book contains nothing but material that could be so described.

*The first three items in Burgess' collection, for example, were all in print at the time she compiled her collection. She writes that the New York Historical Society had already published them at the turn of the last century and claims to be doing a service by reprinting them in this collection for the first time in over a hundred years. She does not write, however, that the 1898 collection is available – by my count – in at least 154 libraries in America and the UK. It is also available in a good quality hardcopy edition that has been in print since 2007. The same work is available, moreover, in a free digitized and fully searchable edition on Google Books. Burgess makes no mention of the contemporary editions – hardcopy or digital – so she was either unaware or omitted to mention them. From the outset, then, Burgess' bibliographical claims relative to these works appear thin at best and, as we shall see, there are other problems with this "revelatory collection."*

This is correct to the extent of publication. I did not claim to be doing a service and did not write that the book was not available in libraries. I received my 2007 facsimile of *The Deane Papers* on 21 September 2007. I did not name it as my source as it is an exact copy of the original with no mention of a publisher in the front matter, only on the back cover where it names Kessinger Press. It is a 'Legacy Reprint'. This is quite irrelevant as the pieces are included in my book because they have never appeared in collections of Thomas Paine's works; as explained in my preface, the object of my book was to embrace works not known within these collections. In that regard, they are 'unknown' to many students of Paine.

*She acknowledges some of his accomplishments, but misses no chance to belittle his character. Why, for example, does Burgess indulge in the sniping comment at p. 30 that there was "little in the treasury but sufficient for Paine to draw immediately on his salary," as if Paine's payment were not authorized by vote of the Pennsylvania Assembly?*

Burchell writes that 'discerning readers' will be puzzled by my stance on Paine, but surely readers of discernment will

consider my book with an open mind. If they consider my comments sniping, I would assure them that no sniping was intended. Burchell gives an example of a 'sniping comment' from my p.30 (it is actually from p.31). On my reading of the paragraph containing the 'sniping comment', I find it pleasingly favourable to Paine. I don't understand how he could have drawn on an unauthorised salary.

*... there is her stunning allegation, as we will see later, that Paine was no abolitionist or enemy of slavery, but himself a slaveholder.*

I made no such allegation, merely suggested a likelihood.

*Reader's [sic] unfamiliar with Burgess' background will be at a loss to understand her rancour, but a brief look at the editor's own history may help to clarify her agenda.*

The account of my 'own history' is not only dangerously inexact, but also irrelevant.

On the writer of a long pamphlet included in my book Burchell writes: *the author of this work favoured titled distinctions and wrote that when the present financial crisis ended, then "may we, with safety, return to ceremony, and the etiquette of distinction, rank, and title" and, secondly, the adjective "godlike" itself [does not] appear in any other Paine work. And yet the faux-Paine used it four times on a single page, the repetition itself uncharacteristic of Paine's simple, declarative style.*

Firstly, Mr Burchell does not give the quotation together with the previous or following sentences it requires. He is a master of self-serving truncation. The following sentence reads, 'But, upon this great question, all affectation of distinction is absurd nonsense and folly; nay it is an outrage and offence against human reason, as well as the common good'. That sentence rings of Paine. Secondly, Burchell is on the right track in looking for similarity of words and phrases, but time, place and context also need to be taken into account. For Paine's use of the word godlike, see *The Dialogue Between General Wolfe and General Gage in a Wood Near Boston* where the word godlike is used twice in two consecutive sentences. As a self-styled 'specialist on Thomas Paine and his cohort', he should know the piece.

Burchell's objection to the writer of *Reflections* referring to himself as an individual 'but little known'; styling himself *Common Sense* does not stand scrutiny.

It is true, as Mr Burchell says, that there were a great many writers who used the same pen name, not just during the late eighteenth century as he writes, but also before and since. Paine

was indeed known extremely well by that pseudonym in America, but from the time 'Common Sense' revealed his true identity in 1778, the British press referred to him as either Thomas Paine or Tom Paine, only on very rare occasions, 'Common Sense'. The papers and periodicals are readily available for reading and time-consuming research. I have read, and I have researched at length – not lightly. As 'Common Sense', Paine was little known in Britain. As Burchell says, 'Paine was already heralded in his own name on two continents ....'

He denies Paine's authorship of *Reflections on the State of the British Nation*. Any reader who doubts this being Paine's work should read it side by side with *Rights of Man* and *Rights of Man*, Part the Second. If they cannot attribute it to Thomas Paine, they, like Burchell, regard him as a plagiarist.

My use of the word turncoat is, says he, 'indefensible'. It was used in reference to an item related to a letter already known within the Paine canon, (corpus, *oeuvre*, call it what we will). As mentioned in my book, the letter prompted Moncure Daniel Conway to observe 'that this supposed purblind enemy of thrones was found in 1789 maintaining that the monarch, however objectionable, was more related to the people than a non-representative Parliament'. (See Conway's *Writings of Thomas Paine*, vol. IV, General Introduction, p. vii.) Surely Burchell knows enough about Paine's writings to recall his complete turnabout from opposing to supporting the Bank of North America, and writing for the Federalists and then against them - perhaps not.

If Mr Burchell wishes to impress with his knowledge of Latin, his '*post hoc ergo propter hoc*' would read better as *post hoc ergo propter hoc*.

He writes of a conversation he had with me at San Diego in 2005 during which, '*sotto voce*, in high dudgeon as it were', I confided in him that I believed Thomas Paine owned slaves.

The alleged conversation did not occur. In plain or 'simple, declarative' English, this is a lie. On the contrary, Burchell approached me and '*sotto voce*', questioned me on a matter regarding Paine's remains. The question he asked was answered in this journal in 2007. No book was mentioned, but I did say all would be revealed in a forthcoming publication. I was still researching that article in 2005; I had promised it to our editor. (As recently as 8 April 2009, Burchell mentioned in an email he sent me, 'I read your article in the JOURNAL OF RADICALISM of the TPS of Great Britain just a while back'. It is patently obvious that my simplistic explanation of the scientific methodology involved in

the subject matter is beyond his comprehension; I clearly explained the impossibility of the path he now tells of my having followed.)

The people to whom I have mentioned the *likelihood* of Paine owning slaves are fewer than the fingers on one hand; Burchell is not of them. When the possibility came to light, I also mentioned it in writing to one person only; it was not Burchell. The possibility disturbed me because many people have been led to believe that Paine wrote an anti-slavery essay for which he was much admired. I have shown that he did not. (Beyond the views Burchell has expressed in this journal, he writes elsewhere that it is 'indisputable', even if Paine was not the author of the essay, it was he, as editor, who published it. As a 'Paine specialist', he should know that Paine was never editor of the *Pennsylvania Journal and the Weekly Advertiser* in which the essay appeared. It was a rival publication to Robert Aitken's *Pennsylvania Magazine*, of which Paine has frequently been alleged to have been editor, based solely on a letter from Benjamin Rush to Paine's derisive biographer, James Cheetham whose work Burchell rightly holds in contempt. It is not difficult to find Burchell's 'specialist' comments on the World Wide Web.)

Burchell's endnotes lend no verisimilitude to his 'review'. My responses follow:

Note 1: To my understanding, research is always about seeking the truth. Unfortunately, it is not easily found, and I make no 'claims' to have done. I did not gain a degree in Religious Studies. Such a discipline, if that it is, does not exist at the University of Sydney (spelled with two ys – S-Y-D-N-E-Y in the English-speaking world). My background is described in the preface to my book. My undergraduate degree was gained in Anthropology, and my doctoral degree in Studies in Religion, a broad-ranging discipline embracing, in brief, philosophical, critical studies of multiple religions and societies from ancient to modern times. I made it clear in my book that I was not an historian. This criticism might have been relevant were I a religious person who attacked Paine on religious grounds. As I have not done, and have no intention of ever doing, it is not only irrelevant, but also obtuse.

Note 2: The piece given in my pp. 192-8 set the small Paine addition in context.

Note 3 speaks for itself!

Note 4: By going to the recommended URL, readers will find that the book concerned is searchable in snippet view, but not readable. To read the book online see

<http://www.archive.org/stream/deanepapers00deangoog>. It is, of course, the original publication, digitised by Google, but not readable on Google. Burchell misleads this journal's readers.

Note 5: Mr Burchell claims unequivocally that the word forsooth 'appears in none of Paine's major works; not once', but the reader will find it without any difficulty in *Crisis No II* (not a major series?), and again in his second letter on *Peace, and the Newfoundland Fisheries*. It is also contained in a quotation from Daniel Defoe in *To the Citizens of Pennsylvania on the Proposal for Calling a Convention*. Forsooth it is.

Note 7: This note is quite irrelevant, but one wonders if Mr Burchell really thinks any descendants of Robert Treat Paine (formerly Thomas Paine) would think themselves anything else. They would have their own family lore.

Note 9: This note has no matching number in the text of the 'review'. It makes an extraordinary claim (it is a claim) regarding my doctoral thesis. It is, Burchell writes, '*unfortunately sequestered or withheld from public view by the University of Sidney [sic] at the request of the student. A letter from Burgess' dissertation supervisor noted, "Students may request that they not be made public. Few do ..." Few, indeed. I don't know of another such instance. The practice flies – insofar as I understand it – in the face of both academic tradition and open scholarly inquiry*'.

'Simple, declarative' language is again required - Burchell lies. My thesis is held in the Rare Books Library of the University and is readily available to any visitor who wishes to read it, as are the vast majority of theses of the University, which follows in the traditions of Oxford and Cambridge. It is also available to visitors at the American Philosophical Society and the Buffalo and Erie County Library, New York; it is listed in the online catalogues of both libraries. It may be purchased at a very reasonable cost from the University of Sydney Library. I made no request that my thesis be withheld in any way (as can be done under some circumstances that scholars worldwide understand and appreciate). In the light of his astounding 'disclosure' in the fourth paragraph of his review, I have difficulty in understanding why he did not simply ask *me* how best to obtain a copy of this work (our acquaintanceship has consisted of some few email messages and one brief personal encounter – hardly as he describes it, as if it were something for which he wishes no rapprochement). It could have been easily arranged when he wanted it in 2007. In that year an Associate Professor at Weber State University, a mutual



acquaintance, contacted me. She wrote that Burchell was having difficulty in accessing my thesis and that she, who had bought a copy, would copy it for him. Since reading his 'review', I have learned that just four weeks after my being told of his difficulties, he wrote to at least one administrative department at the University of Sydney enquiring as to why my work was 'withheld'. He had already obtained my academic records, which strikes me as gross impertinence and imprudence. I have seen some of the correspondence in which he wrote of 'researching' my thesis. To research something it is necessary to have it. If my thesis was copied, I am advised that it was in direct contravention of the Copyright Act 1968 – Section 32 (Commonwealth Consolidated Acts). It is also in contravention of Clause 6 of the University of Sydney (Intellectual Property) Rule 2002, both applicable to infringement in the United States. It would have been illegally obtained.

The administration passed on his complaint to my supervisor who, in her tactful way, did not tell me at the time. I now know of comments Burchell made to her about me. They were unnecessary, extraordinary, defied belief, and could only be called unprincipled. Beyond that, as he did with Paine's words in the quotation he gives from *Reflections on the Present State of the British Nation*, his elisions from her reply in his 'review' truncated what she said and misrepresented her response. As mentioned, truncation for self-serving purposes is his specialty.

Note 10: The information Burchell gives under 'See also' is given in my introduction to *Reflections*. There was no need to repeat it in his notes. See p. 71 of my book.

Note 22: Mr Burchell dismisses the item of 11 April 1801 with the simple and unconsidered comment that the writer's 'attitude towards Britain is antithetical to Paine's, its negative attitude toward the Declaration of Independence, and perhaps even transatlantic transit problems.' He is to be reminded that by 1801 Thomas Paine was a rational, observant man of international savvy and reputation who, still in France, had personal experience of lack of the right to 'life, equality, and the pursuit of happiness'. He was not blind to transatlantic policies, alliances or the related effects on commerce; he was aware of the futility and danger of nursing old wounds already healed. He was also aware of the dangers of feeding what he described as 'the minds of an ignorant, and brutal mob'. His common-sense criticism of the Declaration of Independence lies in an extract he appended to his letter to a Philadelphia paper. It is in regard to only one sentence of the

Declaration - a sentence scratched about a bit by Thomas Jefferson in the earliest known draft, a fact that may have escaped Mr Burchell's notice. As no truly known, original draft of the document seems to exist, it is quite possible, as many have argued, that it was originally drafted by Paine. I had difficulty myself with the piece I included, but with an open mind, careful reading, and the due consideration it required, I gave it to Paine.

Note 29: It is interesting that the quotation mentioned is sourced back to the original item, not my book where Burchell found it. A note to the effect of 'See Burgess, p.201' would not have gone amiss. I take the liberty of borrowing and paraphrasing the useful quote: This apology for a 'book review' is no more than a say so of Mr Burchell, who says it because it suits *him* to say it. In my opinion, neither personal bias nor animosity has a place in scholarship; civilised debate does.

Notes not mentioned do not merit a response.

Back to the 'review': Our reviewer makes no mention of *Compact Maritime*, which was first and last published *in full* in English in 1801. It occupies pp. 159-172 of my book. In ignoring it, he seems to deny Paine's authorship or again imply that he was plagiarising.

To all this, I would add that I welcome doubting readers to prove me wrong with hard evidence or even just strong, circumstantial evidence, the stuff on which future research relies. There are thirty five items in my book, but, as Burchell can only fault three on false claims, his 'review' amounts to simple muckraking.

In all, Mr Burchell has nothing to say and much to reckon with. I would advise him to read some excellent advice gleaned from a Students' Workshop last year. It can be found on the American Historical Association's website at [http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2010/1001/1001tea1\\_cfm](http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2010/1001/1001tea1_cfm). It deals with professional ethics. Burchell claims to be a member of the AHA. I would also strongly advise him to read and familiarise himself with Paine's writings, both public and personal; neither stands alone.

Burchell's pitiful, petulant protest speaks of obsession. With some revision I quote Paine from my book, 'it is obvious that there is not a case asserted or assumed in this "review" but may be overthrown' (see Burgess p. 201). It is, as Mr Burchell admits, an 'unfortunate review'. He should heed Paine's words, 'It is less dangerous to offend than to deceive', a quote he has frequently used as one of his email signatures. His was not the only hand in

the 'review'. The aforementioned mutual acquaintance volunteered the information to me that she 'saw an early draft of Ken's review (he asked me to help him copy-edit it)'.

Whatever Kenneth Burchell's motives were in writing his 'review' that is not a review, they do not show him in a good light. Where is his expertise? His knowledge of Paine's life and writings is sorely wanting. As Thomas Paine wrote to Silas Deane, '... I am surprised that any one who would be thought a man of sense, should risk his *reputation* upon such a frivolous tale; for the event of the story, if any can be produced from it, is greatly against himself'. (See *Pennsylvania Packet*, 15 December 1778.)

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# PAINE'S PLACE IN RADICAL ENGLISH POETRY

Roth Dikhter

Paine is well known as a writer. His *Rights of Man* is an incisive critique of monarchy and a passionate advocacy of republican democracy; his *Age of Reason* from a deist standpoint undermines religious orthodoxy. He is far less well known as a poet. This article seeks to place him in the tradition of English Radical Poetry and compare his work with some of his contemporaries and some of those who came after him.

In 2005 the Freethought History Research Group and the Thomas Paine Society took the bold step of republishing *Miscellaneous Poems Of That Noble of Nature, Thomas Paine*, which had first been published by James Watson around 1840. This is a collection of 16 poems of various quality, they deal with subjects ranging from love to the death of General Wolf, and his troubled relationship with George Washington. His best is the *Liberty Tree*, a song to be sung to the tune of *The Gods Of The Greeks*. Paine writes : " But hear o ye swains ('tis a tale most profane)/How all the tyrannical powers/King, Commons and Lords, are uniting amain/To cut down this guardian of ours/From the east to the west blow the trumpet to arms/Through the land let the sound of it flee/Let the far and the near all unite with a cheer/ In defence of our *Liberty Tree*".\*This pamphlet can still be had from either organization at £2 plus postage.\*

If English Radical Poetry can be said to have a beginning it is in the work of John Milton ( 1608-1674 ). He was a strong supporter of Cromwell and the Commonwealth and Cromwell's Latin Secretary of Foreign Tongues. Apart from being a poet he was also a pamphleteer. In 1649 he wrote *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, " It is lawful", wrote Milton, "for any who have the power, to call to account a tyrant, or wicked king, and after due conviction, to depose and put him to death..." In 1660 he wrote *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. But the Establishment, fearing a revival of the revolutionary democratic ideas of the Levellers, had already decided to restore the Stuart monarchy. Milton withdrew from public life and went into hiding. He could have easily suffered the fate of Sir Henry Vane who was executed for regicide.

In 1667 *Paradise Lost* was published. This epic poem was written ostensibly from an orthodox Anglican viewpoint but Blake and Shelly felt Milton showed great sympathy for the devil who was seen as an archetypal rebel. Shelly wrote, "Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined." Blake created illustrations for *Paradise Lost* and wrote *Milton: A Poem*.

William Blake ( 1757-1827 ) was an engraver and poet was a friend of Shelly and Paine. It is said that it was he who alerted Paine that the authorities were seeking to arrest him on a charge of seditious libel. As it was, Paine was already en route to France having been elected a deputy to the National Convention. Unlike Paine, Blake was not an Enlightenment deist. He was a religious mystic influenced by Emmanuel Swedenborg. His views were not those of orthodox Christianity with its promise of heaven for the rich and hell for the sinful poor, but of a new millennium with sexual and racial equality and justice for all. "My business", said Blake, "is to create Jerusalem." In 1791 Blake wrote *The French Revolution, A Poem in Seven Books*. He is firmly on the side of the revolutionaries. In his *Proverbs Of Hell*, he wrote " Prisons are built with stones of law, Brothels with Bricks of Religion, and "As the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys". Such views bring him near to the anti-clerical millenarian sects of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For Blake, "The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction".

In the ranks of the tigers of wrath was Percy Shelly (1792-1822). Born into a Whig family, he was expected to inherit the family baronetcy. He was educated at Eton where he read Paine and in 1810 went to Oxford University. He was expelled in 1811 for writing *The Necessity Of Atheism*. "If the knowledge of a God is the most necessary, why is it not the most evident and the clearest." This led to a falling out with his father, and an often impoverished and nomadic life. Shelly became friends with William Godwin whose *Political Justice* is a precursor of Anarchism. Shelley eventually eloped with Godwin's daughter Mary. Unlike Godwin, Shelley involved himself with the working people around him. In Wales he would often go out at night and have long conversations with the reservoir workers who were forced to grow their own food by moonlight in order to live.

In an England being rapidly changed by the industrial revolution,

Shelly defined slavery thus: "Tis to let the ghost of Gold, Take from toil a thousand fold. More than e'er its substance could. In the tyrannies of old." Freedom is, "food, clothes and fire and food for the trampled multitude." He calls for words not deeds. He sent his poem, *The Masque of Anarchy* with its call to revolution, to his friend Leigh Hunt in 1819. But it was not published until 1831 amid growing demands for reform. Shelly died in a boating accident in Italy.

Shelly influenced a whole generation of Chartist poets and Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx lectured on his Socialism. Among these poets was John Bedford Leno. Leno was born in Uxbridge in 1826 and came to work as London. He was a Chartist, having founded Chartist branches in Uxbridge and Windsor, and a member of the First International. He met Marx several times and was friends with Deptford's Red Republican George Harney. In 1848 he was batoned in the face by the police during demonstrations on Clerkenwell Green.

When the Reform League to campaign for an extension of the male franchise was formed in 1865 he became a leading member. The League held some of the largest demonstrations, some of them ending in riots, the largest seen since Chartist times. The League qualified its demand for manhood suffrage with the term "registered and residential" thus excluding the unemployed and casual workers. After the Reform Act of 1867, the League's leader Robert Applegarth literally sold out to the ruling class by taking Home Office bribes to mobilise the new enfranchised working class behind the Liberal Party. Leno became a Liberal election agent for the League's former General Secretary, George Howell.

In 1867 Leno and other Reform League members were met by the French revolutionary Gustave Cluseret. Cluseret offered to start a revolution employing the services of 2,000 Fenian Irishmen. Leno declined which was just as well because the next day there was a full report of the meeting in *The Times*.

Leno was a prolific poet, *The Woolwich Gazette* called him the "poet of the poor". Among his best known works are *King Labour*, *Judge Not A Man*, *The Song Of The Spade* and *The Dreamer*. Riddled with gout, he spent the last two years of his life in Uxbridge and died in 1894.



It is not known if William Morris (1834-1896) read either Milton or Paine, but his Kelmscott Press produced a magnificent edition of Shelley's works and he admired John Leno. Morris was born into a prosperous middle class family and was originally destined for the church. His mother had visions of his becoming an archbishop. But after his education at Oxford University he opted for a career of creative design. A polymath he excelled at everything he did from stained glass windows and fabric and wallpaper design to poetry and painting.

The threat of war brought him into politics and eventually he crossed what he called the river of fire and became a socialist. Peeved with the dictatorial way H. M. Hyndman conducted the affairs of the Social Democratic Federation, together with Eleanor Marx, Belfort Bax and others he broke away and formed the Socialist League becoming editor of its paper the *Commonweal*.

For Morris the pioneer socialists, the few against the world today condemned as fools and dreamers would tomorrow be seen as the brave and wise. No mean poet, after the death of Lord Tennyson he was considered for the post of poet laureate. One wonders what he would have written about Queen Victoria, nicknamed by the radicals of the time Empress Brown. His best known socialist poem is the one he wrote for the funeral of Alfred Linnell who was killed during a Trafalgar Square demonstration. Its refrain of "Not one, not one, but thousands must they slay, but one and all if they would dusk the day" hurls defiance in the face of a murderous ruling class. There were many anarchists in the Socialist League and eventually they removed Morris from the editorship of *Commonweal*. He wrote his futuristic novel *News From Nowhere*, which gives a glimpse of what a socialistic society might be like and carried on working for a united socialist party in the Hammersmith Socialist Society until his death in 1896.

What unites all of these poets and countless more are some common themes: opposition to priestcraft and kingcraft, religious unorthodoxy or even overt atheism, a desire to improve the lot of working people either by radical reform or revolution and visions of a new and better world based on liberty, equality and fraternity.

\*The address of the FHRG is BCM Box 5276, London, WC1N 3AX. The Freethought History Research Group, joint publisher of Paine's poetry, continues this tradition and has recently published

*Ca Ira: Poems to Shake the Walls of Church and State.* It includes two poems by Terry Liddle, who is a Thomas Paine Society committee member. It can be had for £3.50 post free from the address above.

## Book Review

**The Foots and The Poets**, Derek Summers (ed.). London, Jarndyce, 2010, Paperback, 123pages; ISBN 978-1-900718-75-2.

Plato wanted poetry banned in his republic. Like many totalitarian reactionaries he saw poetry as essentially subversive. This book shows the relationship between poetry and three generations of a family which if not subversive were at the very least politically radical.

The first subject is Isaac Foot, the son of a Plymouth carpenter who qualified as a solicitor and became the Liberal MP for Bodmin. An avid reader, he collected 70,000 books. He also admired the Civil War parliamentary Oliver Cromwell and his Latin Secretary, the blind poet John Milton. He founded the Cromwell Association and kept a commonplace book full of quotations from Milton. The book contains several of Milton's works in poetry and prose although sadly not his poem in praise of the executed regicide Sir Henry Vane. In his biography of his father, written with Alison Highet, Michael records Isaac's love of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy and R.L. Stevenson.

The youngest of Isaac's children was the late Michael Foot MP for Plymouth Devonport and then Ebbw Vale, editor of *Tribune* and leader of the Labour Party in the 1980s. Michael converted from Liberalism to Socialism when he saw poverty and unemployment in Liverpool where he worked as a shipping clerk. Michael was not only the biographer of Aneurin Bevan but also studies of Byron and Jonathan Swift.

Another source of inspiration was the German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx's cousin. Heine was not only a poet but also a political philosopher. In his *On The History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany*, published in 1834, he maintained that the German philosophical revolution, which culminated in the work of Hegel, was the prelude to a political democratic revolution. Included in the selection of Heine's writings in the book is his poem *I Don't Believe In Heaven*. " I don't believe in the devil,/ In Hell or its counterpart:/ I believe in your eyes only/And in your devilish heart." There is also his celebration of a Luddite-style uprising by the weavers of Silesia.

Michael was also interested in more recent poets. Among them was Adrian Mitchell. When proposed for the position of Poet Laureate, he wrote on poem on why he wanted the monarchy abolished. Mitchell first read his poem *To Whom It May Concern (Tell Me Lies About Vietnam)* at an anti-war rally in 1964 and revised it to include subsequent conflicts. Other modern poets who interested Michael included Tony Harrison, Derek Walcott and U. A. Fanthorpe, "Her poetry is one of the delights of the age," said Michael.

Michael had an interest in the radical essayist William Hazlitt and in the poet William Wordsworth. Wordsworth's sonnet to Milton and his sonnet to Toussaint L'Ouverture, the former slave who overthrew the rule of the French slave owners in Haiti, are included in the book. Wordsworth may seem a strange choice. He at first supported the French revolution, "But Europe at that time was filled with joy/France standing on the top of golden hours/And human nature seeming born again", but later became a reactionary. Some would call him a class traitor.

The last Foot is Paul, Michael's nephew, one of the more intelligent and attractive members of the Socialist Workers' Party. He was another convert from Liberalism to Socialism, Socialism, not of the social-democratic, but of the Trotskyist kind. At public school he met Richard Ingrams, editor of the satirical magazine *Private Eye*, and wrote for it for several years. For 14 years he wrote for the *Daily Mirror* and later edited the SWP's paper *Socialist Worker*.

Paul's hero was the romantic poet Percy Shelly an atheist who seen as a precursor of Socialism. Paul wrote two books on Shelly and a number of pamphlets including work on the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 and the miners' leader A. J. Cook. The book includes selections from Shelly's *Masque of Anarchy* which was inspired by the events in St. Peter's Field in Manchester. Thousands of radical reformers gathered to listen to Henry Hunt only to be cut down by the sabres of the yeomanry. It calls for resistance by the oppressed and exploited: "Shake your chains to earth like dew/Which in sleep had fallen on you/ Ye are many, they are few."

The book contains a useful biography of source books and further reading.

There are those who disparage poetry, who dismiss it as so much romantic waffle, but as this book shows it can excite and inspire the struggles which still need to be fought.

Terry Liddle



Isaac Foot



Michael Foot



Paul Foot

TEXT OF THE SEPARATION DOCUMENT  
BETWEEN THOMAS PAIN [PAINE] AND HIS WIFE  
ELIZABETH, JUNE 4, 1774

Transcribed by  
Paul Myles

This important document has recently been purchased by the  
Sussex Record Office

*Articles of Agreement Tripartite Indented had made and agreed upon the Fourth day of June in the Year of our Lord One thousand and Seven Hundred and Seventy four Between Thomas Pain of Lewes in the County of Sussex [late- inserted above] Excise Officer of the first part Elizabeth Pain Wife of the said Thomas Pain ( late Elizabeth Olive Spinster) of the Second part and the Reverend James Castley of Lewes aforesaid Clerk of the Third part.*

*Whereas certain unhappy Quarrels and dissensions have arisen (and which do now in part subsist) between the said Thomas Pain and Elizabeth his Wife for putting an End to which They the said Thomas Pain and Elizabeth his Wife hath mutually agreed to live separate and apart and Previous to such Separation he the said Thomas Pain hath consented thereto and also proposed and agreed that the said Elizabeth shall have and take a few fixtures now remaining in their late dwelling House at Lewes and valued by Mr Vorrall at about Twenty five Shillings*

*And whereas Samuel Olive late of Lewes aforesaid Grocer deceased Father of the said Elizabeth in and by his last Will and Testament Did give and Devise All that his Messuage or Tenement and Appurtenances wherein he lived Situate in the parish of Saint Michaels in the Town of Lewes aforesaid unto his Wife Hester Olive for and during the Term of her Natural Life and after her Decease he gave and Devised the same unto John Ridge of Kingston in the said County Gentleman and John Attersoll of Lewes aforesaid Carpenter and the Survivor of them and the Heirs and Assigns of the Survivor In Trust to sell the same and out of the Monies arising thereby In Trust to divide the same between his Four Children John Samuel Thomas and Elizabeth ( now the Wife of the said Thomas Pain as aforesaid) in equal shares and in case any or either of them should happen to Die before the Monies Should become Payable then to pay the same in such manner as therein is mentioned As in and by the the said Will and Probate thereof relation being thereunto had more fully will appear*

*Now the said Thomas Pain hath also consented and agreed that the said Elizabeth shall have and take her share of the said Monies of the said House when the same shall become due and Payable and will also give any Discharge that shall be then required to and for the Use of the said Elizabeth And the said Elizabeth hath agreed to give up to the said Thomas Pain the sum of [ Forty Five Pounds- inserted ] now in her Possession on or before the [ Sixth- inserted ] day of [ June - inserted ]*

*And the said James Castley for and on behalf of the said Elizabeth Pain hath agreed to Indemnify the said Thomas Pain of and from Payment of all Maintenance Monies to be by her the said Elizabeth Pain demanded or Recovered against him the said Thomas Pain as also of and from all contracts Debts and Engagements whatsoever to be by her the said Elizabeth Pain in any wise contracted and which he the said Thomas Pain shall actually Pay together with Charges touching the same in such manner as hereinafter is mentioned*

*Now these Presents Witness that the said Thomas Pain in Pursuance of his aforesaid Proposal and Agreement doth hereby for himself his Executors and Administrators and every of them Covenant Promise and agree to and with the said James Castley his Executors and Administrators and doth also agree with the said Elizabeth his Wife in manner and form following, that is to say, That it shall and may be lawful to and for*



*the said Elizabeth his Wife and that he the said Thomas Pain shall and will Permit and Suffer her the said Elizabeth from time to time and at all times from henceforth during her Natural Life to live Separate and apart from him and to reside and be in such Place and Places and in such Family and Families and with such relations Friends and other Persons and to follow and carry on such Trade and Business as she the said Elizabeth from time to time at her Will and Pleasure (Notwithstanding her [present- inserted above] Coverture and as if she were a Feme Solé and unmarried) shall think fit and that he the said Thomas Pain shall not nor Will at any time or times hereafter sue her the said Elizabeth in the Ecclesiastical Court or any other Court for her living Separate and apart from him or Compel her to Cohabit with him or to sue Molest disturb or trouble her for such living Separate and apart from him or any other Person or Persons whatsoever for receiving harbouring or entertaining her nor shall or will without the Consent of the said Elizabeth Visit her or knowingly come into any House or Place where she shall or may dwell reside or be nor shall or will at any time hereafter claim or demand the said few fixtures or the said Monies which she shall be entitled to at the time of the Sale of the said House in Lewes aforesaid or any of the Monies Rings Plate Clothes Linen Woolen Household Goods or stock in Trade which the said Elizabeth shall or may at any time hereafter buy or Purchase or which shall be devised or given to her or shall otherwise acquire and that she shall and may enjoy and Absolutely dispose of the same as if she were a Feme sole and Unmarried*

*And also that he the said Thomas Pain shall not nor will at any time hereafter Slander or defame his said Wife or detract from her Good Character or do any Injury whatsoever to her or her reputation And also that it shall and may be lawful for the said Elizabeth to have receive and take to her own Separate Use and Benefit her said Share of the Monies for which the said Messuage or Tenement in Lewes shall be Sold when the same shall become due and Payable*

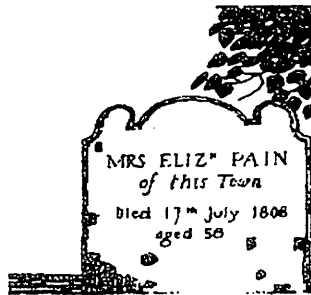
*And the said James Castley for himself his Heirs Executors and Administrators and for every of them doth covenant Promise and agree to and with the said Thomas Pain his Executors and Administrators by these Presents That he the said James Castley his Heirs Executors and Administrators shall and will from time to time at all times hereafter well and Sufficiently save defend keep harmless and Indemnified as well the said Thomas Pain his Heirs Executors and Administrators as also his and their Lands Tenements Goods and Chattels of from and against Payment of all manner of Debts whatsoever and of what nature or kindsoever which she the said Elizabeth Pain from henceforth from time to time and at all times hereafter during the said Separation shall Contract or make with any Person or Persons whomsoever and also of and from Payment of all Alimony Maintenance and Support whatsoever which [ she- inserted above] the said Elizabeth Pain at any time hereafter may have claim challenge or Demand from the said Thomas Pain or his Estates Real or Personal during the Continuance of such Separation and likewise of and from all Costs Charges Expenses and Damages whatsoever which he the said Thomas Pain his Heirs Executors and Administrators shall or may at any time hereafter pay Sustain or be put unto by the said Elizabeth Pain Contracting any such Debt or Debts or Demand of any such Alimony Maintenance or Support as aforesaid or for or by reason or in respect of any other Cause matter or thing whatsoever which may be born paid or Sustained by him the said Thomas Pain touching or concerning her the said Elizabeth so living separate and apart from him the said Thomas Pain during the time aforesaid*

*In Witness whereof the Parties first above named have to these Presents Set their Hands and Seals the Day and Year first above written*

*Signed Sealed and Delivered ( being first duly stamped) by the said Thomas Pain and James Castley in the Presence of John Ollive*

*William Wright*

*Signed Sealed and Delivered ( being first duly stamped) by the said Elizabeth Pain in the presence of  
John Ollive*



The gravestone of Elizabeth Pain at Cranbrook churchyard, Sussx.

For details of the life of Elizabeth Pain (Paine) see the article: 'The Wife of a Revolutionary' by Christopher Rumsey, in the TPS Bulletin, Vol.4 No.2. 1999. pp.14-22.