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Moncure Daniel Conway: a Very Unusual Virginian

Nigel Sinnott

MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY came from Virginia, where his early years were privileged and orthodox. He was born on 17 March 1832, on a plantation near Falmouth in rural Stafford County, where his father, Walker Peyton Conway, was a local planter and judge. His mother, Margaret Daniel Conway, was the granddaughter of a signatory of the Declaration of Independence. The family were devout Methodists. According to Conway's biographer, John d'Entremont, the atmosphere that would have surrounded the young Moncure would have been "patriarchal values, unquestioned devotion to slavery and white supremacy, and a world view that set politics and power above artistic and intellectual pursuits".

As Moncure Conway wrote years later, "Destiny had lavished on my lot everything but freedom."

The patriarchal values did not, however, apply to his female relatives. Two paternal aunts, his sister and a cousin were opposed to slavery, and so was his mother, who was also critical of Southern patriarchy generally. She encouraged him to read widely, despite his father's disapproval of fiction. She was also a practitioner of homoeopathy, and took Moncure with her on her rounds. John d'Entremont says that "Moncure spent more time with his mother; the central lessons he drew from her and other female relatives were the legitimacy of the self, the importance of reconciliation, the value of intellectual endeavor, and the immorality of arbitrary power."

The young Conway went to Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, then a strict Methodist institution, and after graduating in 1849 followed his father's advice to study law.

In 1850, however, Moncure discovered the writings of "the Sage of Concord", the Unitarian writer, poet and transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson. The young Conway decided that law was not for him, and he decided to enter the Methodist ministry.

For 23 months in 1851 and '52, Conway was a travelling minister, riding a Methodist circuit in Maryland, another slave state. Here he met literate, anti-slavery Quakers who added to the heterodox notions he was imbibing from Emerson. In 1852 his older brother died. Moncure Conway felt he could no longer be a Methodist in accordance with his father's wishes. He crossed the Mason-Dixon Line and began training for the Unitarian ministry at Harvard University in Massachusetts. To quote John d'Entremont again, "His mother wished him well; his father, in effect, disowned him."

In Massachusetts Conway met and befriended his "spiritual father"

Emerson. He also got to know members of the anti-slavery movement and Theodore Parker, abolitionist, radical Unitarian and the real coiner of the words "A democracy, that is, a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people".

In July 1854, at an anti-slavery rally, Conway publicly committed himself to the abolitionist cause.

Also, in 1854, Conway graduated from Harvard and became a Unitarian minister. At his first church, in the city of Washington (D.C.), his sermons against slavery made him adoring friends and bitter enemies.

In 1856 he moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. Here the congregation did not mind his fulminations against slavery, but they were upset about something else. Conway had come under the influence of German biblical criticism and, if you will pardon a bad Lewis Carroll pun, Methodists believed in Siamese triplets of Cheshire cats, Unitarians believed in only one Cheshire cat, but Conway was reducing the cat to a grin, without teeth, and with the halitosis of infidelity. Or as d'Entremont put it: "He repudiated the divinity of Christ, debunked New Testament miracles, and began to speak of Eastern religions as being as valid and valuable as Christianity". "Your minister," said Conway in 1859, "is not a believer in what the churches call Christianity."

Cincinnati gave Moncure Conway something else: Ellen Dana, whom he married in 1858. She was intelligent, supportive and radical. The marriage was very happy and produced four children, Eustace, Emerson, Dana and Mildred.

Conway left Cincinnati in 1862, and thereafter, according to d'Entremont, no longer called himself a Unitarian. He was sympathetic towards, but did not join, the Free Religious Association set up by radical Unitarians.

In November 1860 Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States with a pledge to stop slavery being introduced into the western territories. The slave states of the deep south had threatened to leave the Union if Lincoln became President: they seceded, starting with South Carolina, followed by Alabama, Mississippi and others, and set up the Confederate States of America. Virginia, a border slave state, debated secession and voted against it.

But in April 1861 a Louisianan Creole brigadier-general named Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard demanded that the Union army give up Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina. An ultimatum was not met, and at 4:30 a.m. on 12 April Confederate batteries opened fire on the fort, which surrendered next day after a 34-hour bombardment. It was the start of the bloodiest war in North American history.

Lincoln called for all states still in the Union to provide militia for

the war. Virginia took another vote on secession and left the Union. Eventually Richmond, Virginia, became the Confederate capital. Meanwhile Union sympathisers in western Virginia seceded from Virginia and established what became the Union state of West Virginia.

Conway's two brothers joined the Confederate army. His mother and sister, on the other hand, went to live in staunchly Unionist Pennsylvania. The family home became a Union field hospital as it was barely two kilometres from the appalling battle of Fredericksburg.

Conway initially supported the Union and wrote two books in 1861. The following year he became joint editor of a new anti-slavery magazine, *The Commonwealth*, published in Boston.

In 1862, in the chaos of war, many of Conway's father's slaves left the plantation and reached Washington. Moncure Conway tracked them down and planned to transport them to the free state of Ohio. To do so they had to change trains and stations in Baltimore, in the slave state of Maryland. This was very risky. In April 1861 a Massachusetts regiment, when marching between the stations, had been attacked by a mob of Confederate sympathisers; nine civilians and four soldiers had been killed. Conway's party was beset first by a black mob, who thought he was a fugitive slave catcher, and then by surly white mob. But in the end they reached Ohio and safety.

In 1863 Moncure Conway decided to visit Britain, as an overseas reporter for *The Commonwealth*. He met lots of interesting people in London, and also wrote letters to pro-Union newspapers about the American Civil War. However, he got into very hot water when he started corresponding with the Confederate envoy in London, James Mason. Conway rashly stated that, if the South were to free its slaves, the abolitionist movement would try to persuade Lincoln to end the war. Conway had no authority to make this bargain, and the suspicious Mason submitted the correspondence to *The Times*, which sympathised with the Confederacy. A very embarrassed Conway took a holiday in Venice.

Back in England, in May 1863, Conway was invited to speak at South Place Chapel, in Finsbury (London), which, by coincidence, had been founded by an American Universalist in 1793. Many of its religiously radical members were fed up with their minister, whose sermons were far too orthodox for their taste, but they liked what they heard from Conway. Soon afterwards they forced the minister's resignation, and in February 1864 Conway was given a trial as his replacement. He had found his congregation, and they liked him.

Conway still had to contend with the anguish of the war across the Atlantic. It ended in mid-1865 after killing 750,000 people, plus or minus 100,000. Also, after his family joined him in London, Moncure and Ellen's son Emerson died in August 1864. But otherwise

Moncure thrived. In January 1866 his appointment became permanent.

South Place Chapel, which had been in the doldrums in the 1850s, flourished again. By 1873, d'Entremont informs us, minimum Sunday attendance was 400, "growing to an average of seven hundred a few years later". In addition to the chapel services, a South Place Institute was established with guest speakers such as Robert Browning, Thomas Henry Huxley, John Tyndall and Max Mueller. There were concerts, theatricals, a fortnightly discussion group and what d'Entremont termed "glittering monthly soirees".

As he grew in confidence and experience, Conway's own views subtly changed. In 1869 he dropped the use of prayers. In 1872 pews were removed and replaced by ordinary seats. And from 1874 readings were often taken from Conway's *The Sacred Anthology: a book of ethnical scriptures*, of which I have the fifth edition of 1876.

He also wrote a semi-autobiographical book, *The Earthward Pilgrimage*, published in 1870. Its first chapter sets the scene as it is entitled, in a parody of John Bunyan's subtitle to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "How I left the world to come for that which is".

Conway went back to the United States several times, and his friends there included, of course, Robert Green Ingersoll, whose militant agnosticism was as forthright as any atheist's invective against theology.

In 1882 Conway was invited to lecture in Australia by Robert Jeffray and Henry Turner. And if any of you do not know who Henry Gyles Turner was, please have a wander round our central courtyard at lunchtime.

In 1883, after visiting the United States, Conway crossed the Pacific, stopping in Hawaii, but having only a day in New Zealand, which he regretted. After what he termed "the sublilities of Sydney Harbour at dawn", he arrived in Victoria in time for the Melbourne Cup. He described it in his book *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East*, published in 1906.

It is odd that Melbourne, rigidly Presbyterian, should have for its Pan-Australian synod a horse-race. Melbourne has, however, made its racing week a social congress of the colonies. The betting is universal. Sweepstakes were arranged in the schools (by the teachers), and Cup Day is a holiday. ...

Early in the morning I walked over the course, so to say. Byron Moore, secretary of the Racing Club, guided me, and I saw the artistic arrangements for this great event. The apartments for the governor and his company, the committee rooms, the medical rooms, the ladies' rooms, — all were elaborately elegant. There was fine floral decoration everywhere; cosmetics in the ladies' room, and

needles threaded with every colour, ready for use.

In the element of grotesquerie the English Derby has large advantages over the Cup, where respectability was carried to an extreme; there was hardly a side-show, nothing characteristic of the country, no aborigines, no boomerangs. It all impressed me as too much a Presbyterian Vanity Fair; no one could fail to be struck by the multitude of beautiful ladies and fine looking men, but they appeared so serious! It was pleasant to see so many people without any tipsiness, but there might have been some fun.

...

Conway also made notes on the variety of religions and philosophies available:

The census of 1881 gave Victoria a population of 862,246 and registered 144 denominational names. . . . The number of those who rejected every form of Christianity was 20,000.

The Unitarians numbered about one thousand. In 1851, when registration of opinions was compulsory, seventeen hundred confessed the Unitarian faith. In that year the Victorian government voted to divide fifty thousand pounds among all the churches in proportion to their members (giving the five talents to him who had five and the two to him who had two), and the subsidy was continued many years. Under that arrangement the Unitarians received a good piece of property. It now had for its minister Mrs. Webster, who began preaching there as Miss Turner. She is a sister of Henry G. Turner of the Commercial Bank of Australia, himself a literary man and editor of the "Melbourne Review." Mrs. Webster is a rationalistic Unitarian, and her discourses are very impressive. I had the pleasure of preaching to her society, which consists of educated and influential families.

After Victoria, Conway went to Tasmania at the invitation of Andrew Inglis Clark, later one of the founding fathers of federation. He visited what he termed "the smallest conventicle in Hobart" because its denomination was given as "Campbellite". "Alexander Campbell", explained Conway, "was the only Virginian who ever founded a sect, a little brick chapel in our town, Fredericksburg, being by tradition the first built by Campbellism."

Conway also tells us that "I lectured in various parts of Tasmania, and had the honour of being attacked in the papers by orthodox writers. My lectures were not theological, but my account of London,

my sketches of scientific men, and the fact that I was there by invitation of distinguished rationalists gave sufficient ground for this clerical imprudence, which filled my halls wherever I went" (87)

From Tasmania Conway went back to Sydney, where he was the guest of Justice William (later Sir William) Windeyer and gave a lecture in the presence of the premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes. He also visited Adelaide (South Australia) and Albany (Western Australia) on his way to Ceylon and India. But for reasons of time I will not go into detail.

In mid-1884 Conway left South Place and toured Europe with his family. From mid-1885 he lived mainly in New York city where he devoted himself to writing, producing his best-known book, his "crowning achievement" in John d'Entremont's opinion, the two-volume *Life of Thomas Paine*, first published in 1892 and later made available as a cheap reprint by the infant Rationalist Press Association. A French edition appeared in 1900.

In late 1892 Conway reluctantly acceded to requests to return to South Place, now named South Place Ethical Society; but in 1897 Ellen became terminally ill and Moncure resigned again. John d'Entremont describes Conway's final discourse, on 27 June, far better than I could:

"His topic was John Cabot's exploration of America. . . . But near the end of his talk he broke down and could not continue. 'At the close there was general weeping,' wrote one observer. . . . 'Strong sober men left hurriedly in great and manifest grief.' There was good reason; a great institution had lost, under the saddest of circumstances, its greatest leader."

The Conways sailed for New York on 1 July. Ellen died on Christmas Day.

In 1898 the United States went to war with Spain. Conway was disgusted and spoke out against the war, which was not the popular thing to do. Theodore Roosevelt sarcastically suggested that Conway join the Spanish. He was also appalled by lynchings and Jim Crow laws in the southern states. Although he kept a flat in Greenwich Village, he spent most of his time in France, particularly Paris.

At the age of 75, while working on a biography of Jean Calvin he died, in Paris, on 15 November 1907. He was cremated at Père Lachaise cemetery and on 1 December there was a memorial meeting at South Place.

In 1910 South Place Ethical Society held the first Conway Memorial Lecture, and the 82nd such lecture was given in June 2014. After the First World War the Society decided to leave Finsbury and move to Red Lion Square in Holborn. The architect Frederick Mansford was commissioned to design the Society's new

building, which was completed in 1929. It was named Conway Hall and serves as a meeting place for many organisations as well as being the headquarters of the National Secular Society. More recently, in November 2012, South Place Ethical Society changed its name to Conway Hall Ethical Society.

John d'Entremont says of Conway: "He was that rare teacher and thinker who could combine genuine tolerance with fierce commitment to principle. And whether in the role of teacher, scholar or activist, his own life gave vivid expression to a line from his autobiography which may fairly be taken as his credo: 'Those who think at all think freely'."

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Book Review

Liberty Property and Popular Politics: England and Scotland 1688 – 1815; essays in honour of H. T. Dickinson edited by Gordon Pentland and Michael T. Davis, Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp. xvi & 240.

As Frances Dow's Appreciation of Harry Dickinson demonstrates, in the first of the fifteen essays in this festschrift, few British historians can claim greater international recognition or be more worthy of being thus honoured than the scholar to whom they are dedicated. Internationally he has taught at Universities in France and the United States, and established links with institutions of higher education in Germany, Estonia, Poland and above all China, where he is Concurrent Professor of History at Nanjing University. He has made many significant contributions to British history in the long eighteenth century, as an Appendix of more than eight pages providing a 'selected list' of his publications documents. His biography of Bolingbroke, which started out as a doctoral dissertation at Newcastle University under my supervision, was published in 1970 and remains the standard life of that statesman. *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in eighteenth – century Britain* (1977) and *The Politics of the People in eighteenth – century Britain* (1994), were, as Dow observes, 'explicitly aimed at imposing some coherence on eighteenth – century ideas and politics'.

These 'key works' also inform the essays contributed to the festschrift, as the title given to the collection conveys. Thus it is divided into three sections: 'Parliament and Political Cultures'; 'Beyond Liberty and Property'; and 'The Long and Wide 1790s'. It is another tribute to Harry's international standing that the five essays in the first part include one by a German scholar, Eckhart Hellmuth, one by a Japanese scholar, Shin Matsuzono, and one by a French scholar, Remy Duthille.

Hellmuth's essay is on "'the press ought to be open to all": from the liberty of conscience to the liberty of the press.' It investigates the arguments for and against state control of the press following the lapse of the Printing or Licensing Act in 1695. The main focus, as the title hints, is on the disagreement between Anglicans, who by and large were in favour of suppressing heterodox publications, and deists who favoured an unlicensed press. Led by Matthew Tindal they developed the claim that the liberty of the press was a natural right.

Matsuzono obtained his Ph. D. from Leeds University with a thesis on the

House of Lords in the Reign of Queen Anne. He went back to Japan to take up a post at his alma mater Waseda University, where he is now a Professor in modern and contemporary Western History. Shin has established himself as an authority on the House of Lords in the eighteenth century. His expertise in this field is demonstrated in his essay on "could the Scots become true British?" The Prelude to the Scottish Peerage Bill 1706 – 16.' He implicitly answers the question he poses in the negative with his conclusion that 'for the Scots peers, the road from the Union negotiations to the renewed controversy in 1718 – 19 was a long and bitterly disappointing one.'

Duthille has the rare distinction of being awarded a joint Ph. D. by Edinburgh University and the Sorbonne. He is currently Senior Lecturer in English Studies at the University Bordeaux – Montaigne. His essay deals with political toasting in Britain, America and France 1765 – 1800. After recounting examples of political toasts on both sides of the Atlantic in 'the Age of Revolutions' he concludes that 'in America, France and Britain, toasting served to bond individuals to new loyalties, celebrate dead and living leaders and heroes, advertise aims and threaten opponents'. One of his examples will come as a surprise to students of Tom Paine. 'A famous sentiment was coined by Thomas Paine' he writes 'at an "elegant Supper" in London attended by John Adams in September 1774: "May the Collision of British Flint and American Steel, produce that Spark of Liberty which shall illumine the latest Posterity".' He cites the diary of John Adams as his source. The edition cited is that of the original in the Massachusetts Historical Society which is available on line. Accessing this revealed that Duthille had gone through two red lights when reading this entry. The first was placing Adams in London when he was in Philadelphia attending the Continental Congress. The second was identifying the Paine who proposed the toast as Tom, when it was Robert Treat Paine, a fellow Congressman who had accompanied Adams from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania.

The remaining essays in this opening section are by Matthew P. Czisnik and Joanna Innes. Though Czisnik's surname might suggest that he too is not a British scholar, he was born and raised in Scotland. His contribution, 'Liberty, Property and the Post – Culloden Acts of Parliament in the *Gaidhealtachd*' demonstrates that his expertise in eighteenth - century Scottish history is buttressed by knowledge of Gaelic. He convincingly refutes the conventional accounts of the legislation passed after the 'Forty – five rebellion as being unduly influenced by the military suppression of the Jacobites and the political agenda of the duke of Cumberland and his associates in the army and in parliament. While the acts were undeniably attempts to prevent another uprising they did not extend to a determination to suppress highland culture. The more repressive intentions of men thus minded were offset by

parliamentarians who strove to uphold the rule of law. Perhaps the most startling example he offers is that the notorious Act of Proscription 'did not – as countless modern commentators assert – bar the wearing of tartan but only those articles of tartan which made up the Highland dress.'

The essay by Innes, 'Parliament and Church Reform: on and off the agenda', opens abruptly with the words 'As the graph in Figure 3.1 shows...!' The graph, of 'English general acts concerning parishes and parochial clergy 1689 – 1830', reveals that 'attempts by Parliament to improve the Church of England's performance of its pastoral functions ceased following the Hanoverian accession, but resumed in the later eighteenth century, first tentatively, and then from 1800 in a more determined and focused way.' Much of the essay is devoted to explaining this pattern. The revival of ecclesiastical legislation at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries owed much to the personal interest taken in it by the Younger Pitt and especially his cousin William Wyndham Grenville.

The second section of the Festschrift features essays on Edmund Burke, William Ogilvie and Thomas Spence. Martin Fitzpatrick, 'examines Edmund Burke's attitude towards Protestant Dissenters ... as a way of understanding his changing attitude towards Church and state.' Burke's political views have long been a subject of dispute between those who argue that they changed from radical to conservative and those who maintain that they remained consistent. As Fitzpatrick demonstrates, his views on dissenters, and particularly those who were regarded as 'rational', undoubtedly changed. At first he sympathised with their aspirations to extend the scope of religious toleration, but after 1780, and especially after 1790, he became hostile to them until 'it is no longer possible to view him as a Whig in Church – state matters'.

William Ogilvie is the subject of an essay by David Allan which focuses on his radical political philosophy in the context of the Scottish Enlightenment. Where enlightened economists have the reputation of providing a philosophical justification for capitalism, Ogilvie's view expressed in *An Essay on the Right of Property in Land* upheld the natural right of men to a fair share of land. He took issue with those like Locke who maintained that investing one's labour, or even one's servant's labour, in the cultivation of land justified its transformation from common to personal ownership.

There are two essays on Thomas Spence. The first, by Stephen M. Lee, investigates methodically how far he was influenced by the writings of James Harrington and others. Lee shares Quentin Skinner's scepticism about attributing influence on writers to previous authors. He concludes that Spence scholars have sought to do so because he himself was poor and self -

educated, an example of what E. P. Thompson condemned as 'the enormous condescension of posterity'.

One predecessor who did undoubtedly influence Spence, as Mathew Grenby demonstrates in the other essay on him, was John Newberry, a publisher of children's literature. Spence drew on Newberry's *The Lilliputian Magazine*, 'the first children's periodical, published in three parts in 1751 and 1752', for his own *A Supplement to the History of Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1782. He probably did not have access to the original publication but to extracts from it pirated by a Newcastle printer and bookseller, Thomas Saint. Saint, the publisher of Spence's *A Supplement*, 'published at least twenty – four Newberry piracies in Newcastle'. Grenby, a Professor in the English department at Newcastle University, studied history at Edinburgh University. His familiarity with the history of eighteenth – century Britain, which he developed under the tutelage of Harry Dickinson, enables him to put Spence's writings into a detailed political context.

The third section of the book concentrates on the 1790s. It opens with an essay by Emma Macleod on William Winterbotham, author of *An Historical, Geographical, Commercial, and Philosophical View of the American United States* (four volumes, 1795). Thomas Paine referred to it in his *Letter to George Washington* as 'Mr Winterbotham's valuable *History of America*'. It was written while Winterbotham was serving a four – year prison sentence for sedition. Though much of it was lifted from published works available to him, Macleod maintains that the political views he expressed in it were sufficiently his own for her to 'discuss Wintherbotham's observations on the American constitution'. These were for the most part favourable, as might be expected from a radical dissenter.

In the essay that follows Atle Wold poses the question 'was there a law of sedition in Scotland?' Wold is Senior Lecturer in British Civilisation Studies at the University of Oslo, another reminder of Harry Dickinson's international connections. The question had also been addressed to Lord Braxfield, the notorious judge who presided over the Scottish sedition trials in 1794, by Maurice Margarot, one of those accused of the crime for attending the British Convention in Edinburgh the previous year. 'I beseech your lordship' Margarot exclaimed 'to point out the law which makes sedition a crime'. He meant what statute had been passed to make it so. In fact there was no such law on the Scottish statute book. There was a fifteenth – century Act, which had been reaffirmed in the Edinburgh parliament of 1703, that made 'leasing – making', or slandering the king, a criminal activity. But commentators on the legal system in Scotland, the main focus of Wold's investigation, had ruled that leasing – making did not amount to sedition. Treatises on the laws were

appealed to in trials in Scotland as explicating what was the common law of the land. Such commentators as Sir George Mackenzie and John Erskine had addressed Margarot's question previously in print and decided that sedition was a crime not by statute but by common law. Their opinions were subsequently amended in the light of the 1794 trials by Baron David Hume in his *Commentaries*.

Michael T. Davis follows Wold with an essay which will appeal especially to readers of this journal. 'The vilification of Thomas Paine: constructing a folk devil in the 1790s' shows how Paine was systematically demonised by his many opponents. His works were held responsible for bewitching men into committing suicide or adultery and even driving them insane. This vilification resulted in the construction of a negative image of Paine as a folk devil, the incarnation of evil. His own alleged insanity – he was often represented as 'mad Tom' – was held to be contagious through reading *Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*. He was also associated with Satan in some hostile prints and tracts. Contemporary biographers from George Chalmers to James Cheetham built up a portrait of Paine as an alcoholic who neglected his personal hygiene. The widespread ceremonies of burning Paine in effigy symbolised the purging of his obnoxious body from the land. Yet another of Harry Dickinson's overseas colleagues, Marianne Czusnik, contributes an essay to this section. Dr Czusnik, who obtained her Ph. D from Edinburgh University, trained as a lawyer in Germany and is currently Head of Finance in the Brandenburg State Office for the Environment. She published *Horatio Nelson: A controversial hero* in 2005 and, using social network analysis, draws on 4,838 of the admiral's letters to analyse the means by which he 'built up a wide range of contacts And the ways in which he used the resulting social networks.'

While Nelson's networks are somewhat marginal to the main themes of this festschrift the last essay in it, by Gordon Pentland, returns squarely to them with an examination of 'The Posthumous Lives of Thomas Muir'. He shows how Muir's remarkable career has been appropriated by subsequent historians who used it for causes to which he never subscribed such as revolutionary socialism and more recently Scottish and even Australian nationalism.

'The great (and often just) charge made against volumes of this description' as the editors of this festschrift observe 'is that they are a hotchpotch'. They are to be congratulated for assembling a team of Harry Dickinson's former students, friends and colleagues who between them have composed a collection which honours not only its dedicatee but also addresses a sufficiently closely related number of issues to make the whole a substantial contribution to British history in the long eighteenth century.

W. A. Speck
University of Leeds

MEMORIES OF AN OLD FREETHINKER, 1869 - 1949

Ernest Smedley

I was born at New Hall, South Derbyshire, where when I turned 12, I started work as a bricklayer's labourer working daily from 6am to 5pm, for which I was paid 10 pence a day. At 14 I worked in a coal pit, then when I was 15, I worked *seven shifts* one week - five days and two nights, for which I drew a wage of 11 shillings from which my mother gave me *three pence* as pocket money. In February 1886 I went to live at Hucknall, Derbyshire, and started work at Hucknall pit. Then I was converted, that is I found Christ, becoming a member of a sect called Church of Christ in which I became a clan leader. I did much religious reading. I also listened to sermons, mostly given by working men, however, began to have "ma doots" about going to hell by all those who did not "believe in the lord and get baptised." Without the latter you were "eternally damned." As Ingersoll said, "either be damped or damned!"

One day I was looking through a newsagent's shop window and saw a copy of *The Freethinker*, illustrated, priced one penny [this was a weekly atheist and secularist newspaper] and wondered how anyone could be so wicked as to criticise the Bible and Christianity. Dare I buy it and keep it dark? I did so and took it home under cover to read. The next week I bought another copy and sent for the *Bible Handbook* and the following week another copy and sent for a few pamphlets, etc. Shaking my *faith* thereof! I wrote to the editor G. W. Foote telling him about myself and how I came to read *The Freethinker*. Not yet 18 I heard that Charles Bradlaugh was to lecture in Nottingham and went to hear him. What a grand man, I thought. He was greeted with rounds of applause! By the way, I walked the seven miles from Hucknall to Nottingham and then back to Hucknall. I heard Foote was coming to lecture in the afternoon and the evening. I attended both, tea being provided for visitors staying on for the evening lecture. Between these I talked with Foote in an upper room in Beck Street, Nottingham. [the Nottingham branch of the National Secular Society rented premises in Beck Street as their secular hall]. Then Charles Watts came to lecture in the same room. I began really to enjoy hearing these lectures. I had a short chat with Watts, I thought him a very nice man.

James (Jimmy) Hooper was Nottingham's secularist lecturer in those days. Hooper, being known as Nottingham's secularist "brick". I went on Sundays to Sneinton Market where "Jimmy" would hold forth. He often debated with "Jesus men" at the hall in Beck Street¹. I often met Hooper in Nottingham always wearing his top hat and limping due to his club foot. When George Jacob

Holyoake came I heard him. The room was filled. After the lecture Holyoake came to the book table and I had the pleasure and honour of shaking hands with him, what a personality!

Again Foote came, but here is a story. The Jesus men got together to stop him from lecturing, going the rounds trying to persuade hall proprietors not to let their halls to Foote. In *The Freethinker* he said he would visit Nottingham even if he had to speak outdoors in winter. Foote came and lectured in a skating rink wearing his top coat! Hooper presided and mention was made of the attempts to prevent the lecture, with even the police having been approached.

I heard Mrs. Besant lecture and debate in Nottingham. Not only did I hear Freethought lecturers in Nottingham - and walk both ways to hear them, but Christian exponents, too, including Robert Roberts and David King, both of whom met Bradlaugh in debates in Nottingham and Leicester, also W. T. Lee, who debated with Foote, "Father" Ignatius, who held a friendly debate with Bradlaugh. "The Father" drew large crowds to hear him "thunder forth" against the "higher critics" of those days. I also attended a public debate on Christadelphianism between Frank Jannaway and James Marchant. No one can say I was one-sided.

But reverting to *The Freethinker*, I must relate a curious story. Once when I called at the newsagent for my copy, the old newsagent told me that the Vicar of Hucknall had called in a bought three copies of *The Freethinker*. Then the next week he bought six copies and the following week nine copies then twelve copies. See the newsagent to be ordering more copies the vicar then stopped buying, Asked what he was doing with so many copies he replied, "burning them, what I would like to do with its editor!"

About this time Bradlaugh's brother came on a Christian mission in Hucknall. I went to one or two to hear him. He was an all out anti-Atheist, trading on his illustrious brother's name, telling his story of how he was refused permission to see his dying brother so afraid that he would convert Brother Charles. I had a long talk with W. R.² in the chapel vestry. He struck me as being very poor indeed and complained that not one freethinker in London would meet him in debate. I had been in correspondence with Arthur B. Moss and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner regarding W. R. and so I told him why. In his next address (from the chapel pulpit) W. R. made no mention of his brother or any other freethinker, but as the climax to his address he pulled out a copy of *The Freethinker* and read from it Foote's reply to a question from me. The Baptist minister of the chapel wrote to me in a private letter in which he told me that W. R. B's addresses were "remarkably poor", and for him to have *The Freethinker* with him in the pulpit was shocking! W. R. B. left Hucknall with the chapel folk glad

to see him go; they regretted he ever came.

Well, here I am aged 80. I Never regret first buying *The Freethinker*, and I am interested in Freethought now as I was ever, or more so. As an old age pensioner existing on a pension and my spouse is 81. Long Live *The Freethinker*. Of course I have heard Joseph McCabe and Chapman Cohen a few times, and another name or two I well remember: "Saladin" (Stewart Ross) whom I have met and talked with, and Robert Forder, secretary of the National Secular Society, who I met in his little shop in Stonecutter Street. Miss Vance was there too. 40 years ago I was seeking work and inquired at a colliery office but the manager, a local preacher who knew me, refused me work, for, as he said, if I set you on, the Lord would blow the pit up. "No infidel will work here". But I weathered storms, its not all honey to be a known freethinker. One must expect boycott and ostracism. Yes, but *here am I!*

This article, slightly abbreviated and edited, but still largely as Ernest Smedley wrote it was published in *The Freethinker* in the issue in August, 1949. The author died about three years after it appeared, his wife having predeceased him. His beloved *Freethinker* is now defunct although a version appears on line.

MODERN PROMETHEUS: THOMAS PAINE AND OUR NEW AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Frances Chiu

In a fit of envy, the 71-year-old John Adams scribbled furiously to a friend, seething that few men, if any, *“had more influence on its inhabitants or affairs or the last thirty years than Tom Paine.... A mongrel between pig and puppy, begotten by a wild boar on a bitch wolf.”* With a near audible sigh, he added: *“Call it then the Age of Paine.”*

So who was this Tom Paine—originally baptized Thomas Pain on January 29, 1737, O.S. (February 9, 1737) in Thetford, England? Who was this “mongrel between pig and puppy” who bravely rooted for American independence and the abolition of slavery when the likes of John Dickinson and Thomas Jefferson were too reluctant to do so? Who was the man who hobnobbed with some of the greatest statesmen and thinkers, from Jefferson and George Washington to the first modern feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, Irish nationalist Theobald Wolfe Tone, the philosopher Marquis de Condorcet, and the Jacobin revolutionary leader, Georges Danton? And more importantly, who was the man who challenged hereditary government while laying the foundations of a modern welfare state with provisions for the young, the elderly, and the poor? In short, who was this modern Prometheus, this revolutionary radical who ignited a fire, bringing a new political discourse to the people—only to be variously prosecuted, proscribed, and punished by the powers-that-be, the British, American, and American governments? And why is he still relevant today?

It could be said that Paine’s early life embodied the very concepts of revolution and innovation—that he “disrupted” everyday expectations for men of his working-class background by refusing to pursue his father’s vocation as staymaker and instead adopting one that had long been reserved for well-educated elites. Indeed, Paine would venture on a number of new paths as he embarked on a privateer, attended lectures in London on the burgeoning field of astronomy, applied for work in the Excise after the death of his first wife, and tried his hand at teaching after being falsely accused by a supervisor of “stamping” without inspecting goods. That he was requested by his fellow officers not long after his reinstatement to the Excise in order to lobby for higher wages attested to skills not commonly associated with those who had little formal schooling. Although this petition proved unsuccessful when Parliament denied any future consideration, Paine’s keen awareness of economic inequality can already be gleaned from such sentences as: “The rich,

in ease and affluence, may think I have drawn an unnatural portrait; but could they descend to the cold regions of want, the circle of polar poverty, they would find their opinions changing with the climate."

Not that this was altogether an entirely singular or novel awareness on Paine's part. After all, by 1774, some had begun to comment on economic and political injustice in Britain, drawing attention to the ways in which the aristocracy and gentry—the literal and figurative bigwigs of the day—lorded it over others. Pamphlets such as James Murray's popular *Sermons to Asses* (1768) grumbled about the taxes on windows, soap, leather, and other items which affected the poor and middling orders far more than the wealthy. Murray and other contemporary writers seethed at high-handed earls and dukes who not only had a hand in every election to endorse prospective M.P.'s willing to enact policies suitable to their needs, but spent obscene sums spent on elections—enough to feed a village or two. At the same time, other writers also began to appeal for the abolition of slavery in Britain and criticize the greed and corruption displayed by British colonial forces around the globe. Times were a' changing.

Many of these ideas would be further radicalized by Paine when he crossed the Atlantic after his sacking from the Excise and a plea of separation from his second wife. The man whom Benjamin Franklin recommended as an "ingenious, worthy young man" would unequivocally censure British brutality in India, rejecting the conjoined ideas of conquest and empire altogether in the pages of *The Pennsylvania Magazine*. More daringly than other British writers (if partly because he was thousands of miles away), he scoffed at the idea of peerages and titles. What were they good for anyway when so many so-called "Right Honourables" were anything but? And although Paine did not write about women's rights, he saw fit to insert an article in the magazine about the oppression of women and the double standards they faced: ideas that his friend Mary Wollstonecraft would develop a decade and a half later in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

His most important work from this period, of course, is *Common Sense*, arguably the first American bestseller. If the vast majority of colonists deplored British regulations on commerce, they were less certain about casting Britain off entirely; as Jefferson primly stated in the conclusion of his *Summary Rights of British America*, "It is neither our wish, nor our interest, to separate from her." Indeed, only a third of the colonists were willing to entertain the idea of American independence when it was finally declared in July 1776. But here was no pussyfooting for Paine when he claimed "We have it in our power to begin the world over again."

Whether or not his desire for independence was informed by the miseries he suffered in Britain or by an overall dissatisfaction with an unreformed Britain is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless, what emerges from *Common Sense* is a much more daring and democratic vision than either Ronald Reagan or today's Tea Party ever imagined—even as they have variously purported to embrace Paine. If the neoconservative (and neo-liberal) demand for lower taxes and small government relies chiefly on a privileging of already powerful corporations and the wealthiest .1%, Paine's call for small government offers a diametrically anti-elitist contrast. Firmly rejecting “the remains of monarchical tyranny” and the “the remains of aristocratical tyranny” in the “exceedingly complex” constitution of England, he countered American veneration for both hereditary establishments by claiming that “The state of a king shuts him from the World, yet the business of a king requires him to know it thoroughly.” More often than not, kings did more harm than good, not to mention that the very origin of the monarchy was anything but honourable. Not least, this proclivity for war and conquest in monarchical governments, Paine argued, distinguished them from peaceful republics such as were found in Holland and Switzerland. But if *Common Sense* delivered a bold defence of republican government—one that had not been witnessed since the English Civil War with the beheading of Charles I—*Rights of Man*, Parts 1 and 2 (1791-2) went much further. Having left America to propose a design for a single-span iron bridge, Paine did not initially anticipate to become involved in politics again; but with the fall of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, he grew interested in a revolution which many believed to be inspired by the American revolution. When Edmund Burke, a recent acquaintance and supporter of the American cause, published a tome deprecating the revolution in France, *Reflections of the Revolution in France*, Paine replied with a fiery rebuttal, *Rights of Man*, Part 1, defending the French revolution. Here Paine not only argued that precedent was a poor excuse for retaining an outdated, anachronistic government that served only the needs of the nobility, but that in fact it was high time to tend to the “rights of man” which were anything but theoretical and abstract as Burke pretended. It was time for Britain to reject church-state establishments and a House of Lords which granted certain men the right to legislate merely on account of birth and lineage.

As Part 1 outsold *Common Sense*, and indeed, any previous texts in the publishing history of Britain, Paine would continue the momentum with an even more intrepid Part 2. The problem with so many governments—including the British one—he explained, was that it was impeding, not helping, their people. Popular discontent and rage arose from a “want of happiness”—particularly when the odds were stacked against the ordinary man and woman. There was no denying that “excess and inequality of taxation, however disguised in the means” was an evil which never fail to appear in their effects. As a great mass

of the community are thrown thereby into poverty and discontent, they are constantly on the brink of commotion; and deprived, as they unfortunately are, of the means of information, are easily heated to outrage.

What struck Paine was that in spite of the affluence and apparently elevated state of civilization in Europe, it was also all too true that "a great portion of mankind, in what are called civilised countries, are in a state of poverty and wretchedness, far below the condition of an Indian." For beneath the apparent facade of the glitter and pomp of civilized society, there "lies hidden from the eye of common observation, a mass of wretchedness, that has scarcely any other chance, than to expire in poverty or infamy."

Why was it so? In a word, drastic inequality—one that favoured the few at the expense of the many. Overall, the king and his court as well as the aristocracy were largely propped up by the middling and lower orders, and even the poor: in other words, by the 99%. If the bulk of taxes went to support the monarchy and their frequent and useless wars of ambition, where "War is the Pharo-table of governments, and nations the dupes of the game," in addition to jobs created for aristocratic heirs and their kin, it was nothing short of inhuman to talk of a million sterling a year, paid out of the public taxes of any country, for the support of any individual, whilst thousands who are forced to contribute thereto, are pining with want, and struggling with misery. Government does not consist in a contrast between prisons and palaces, between poverty and pomp; it is not instituted to rob the needy of his mite, and increase the wretchedness of the wretched.

Moreover, since the titled and landed elites frequently resided at their large, secluded estates, remote from the populace, they were therefore spared the expense of relieving local poverty: as such, the poor-rates—sums which supported the poor—were almost always paid by those barely better off, resulting in the farcical scenario of "one class of poor supporting another." This imbalance was worsened by the fact that the proportion of taxes paid by the wealthy, mostly in the form of property taxes, had declined as the aristocrats and their kin who sat in the houses of Parliament shifted taxation from property to commodities. Needless to say, insult was added to injury when taxes on such basic necessities contributed even further to the vast wealth of men like the Duke of Richmond, an owner of coalmines. How was this just or equitable when taxes consumed at least a quarter of labouring incomes? If "Humanity dictates a provision for the poor," Paine asks, "by what right, moral or political, does any government assume to say, that the person called the Duke of Richmond, shall be maintained by the public?" Something is amiss when "any man, more especially at the price coals now are, should live on the distresses of a community" and any government which "permits such an abuse, deserves

to be dismissed.”

Indeed, unlike America “where the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged” and “Industry is not mortified by the splendid extravagance of a court rioting at its expense”—with fewer taxes to boot, so-called “civilized” nations like Britain were mired not only in stark inequality, but in terrible injustice. There is something profoundly flawed “in the system of government” when “we see age going to the workhouse and youth to the gallows.” Paine was quick to inform his readers that: Civil government does not exist in executions; but in making such provision for the instruction of youth and the support of age, as to exclude, as much as possible, profligacy from the one and despair from the other. Instead of this, the resources of a country are lavished upon kings, upon courts, upon hirelings, impostors and prostitutes; and even the poor themselves, with all their wants upon them, are compelled to support the fraud that oppresses them. From here, Paine would draft what is arguably the earliest outline of a modern welfare state, introducing measures that would improve the conditions of the many.

Educating Impoverished Children

Having recommended the abolition of primogeniture in Part 1, Paine advocated the breaking up of large estates to abolish the “unjust monopoly of family property” and thereby dampen its “overbearing influence” on elections while also proposing progressive taxation—especially on large inherited estates. Paine was careful to note that “The object” was “not so much the produce of the tax as the justice of the measure” since Parliament had screened themselves from taxation for so long. A proportion of surplus taxes could easily be allocated to the education of impoverished children so that “the number of poor will hereafter become less, because their abilities, by the aid of education, will be greater.” Such was especially true when “scarcely any are executed but the poor”: an evil exacerbated by “wretchedness in their condition,” where youth are commonly “Bred up without morals, and cast upon the world without a prospect,” thereby perpetually remaining “a sacrifice of vice and legal barbarity.” For Paine, “A nation under a well-regulated government”—unlike “monarchical and aristocratical government”—should “permit none to remain uninstructed.”

As for the elderly, those over 50 would receive six pounds a year and those over 60 ten pounds a year: after all, “It is painful to see old age working itself to death, in what are called civilised countries, for daily bread.” This support, as Paine asserted, “is not of the nature of a charity but of a right” since “Every person in England, male and female, pays on an average in taxes two pounds eight shillings and sixpence per annum from the day of his (or her) birth.” Few

could quibble if it was better that the lives of one hundred and forty thousand aged persons be rendered comfortable, or that a million a year of public money be expended on any one individual, and him often of the most worthless or insignificant character? Let reason and justice, let honour and humanity, let even hypocrisy, sycophancy and Mr. Burke, let George, let Louis, Leopold, Frederic, Catherine, Cornwallis, or Tippoo Saib, answer the question. Here, too, Paine would attend to employment, recommending voluntary workhouses that will admit "all who shall come, without enquiring who or what they are" provided they put in "so many hours' work" for "meals of wholesome food, and a warm lodging." And just as he pointed out the wide disparity in incomes for heads of clergy and parish ministers in Part 1, noting how the former earned 10,000 pounds a year and the latter a mere 50, he endorsed collective bargaining for workers—not unlike in his days as an excise officer petitioning for higher salaries.

Altogether, a new republican Britain would become a nation where there were no more wasteful wars of conquest and domination. It would be a humane world where few would be shocked by the sight of "ragged and hungry children, and persons of seventy and eighty years of age, begging for bread." Widows would no longer be "carted away, on the death of their husbands, like culprits and criminals; and children will no longer be considered as increasing the distresses of their parents." To the 1% of his day, Paine turned and asked: "Ye who sit in ease, and solace yourselves in plenty, and such there are in Turkey and Russia, as well as in England, and who say to yourselves, 'Are we not well off?' have ye thought of these things? When ye do, ye will cease to speak and feel for yourselves alone."

Not the least amazing aspect of *Rights of Man* is Paine's populist and unpretentious style—one that could be readily understood by everyone, not just the well-educated and well-heeled who read and wrote political discourses. It is here that we find a modern simplicity with clear, crisp prose. And rather than peppered with dozens of quotations from Cicero, Locke, and Montesquieu, all wrapped in prolix, never-ending clauses no less, *Rights of Man* contains references to readily imagined and visualized images—for instance, "ride-and-tie" and the "beasts in the tower." We might also wonder if Paine's remarks on monarchy did not inspire a climactic scene from the 1939 adaptation of the *Wizard of Oz*, as he quipped that monarchy is not unlike "something kept behind a curtain, about which there is a great deal of bustle and fuss, and a wonderful air of seeming solemnity; but when, by any accident, the curtain happens to be open — and the company see what it is, they burst into laughter."

Rights of Man, with its revolutionary manifesto, electrified not only Britain but much of Europe and America—even as the British government declared it

sedition. A Promethean pain(e) in the aristocratic ass, he frightened the local powers-that-be who, in turn, incited ordinary Britons to burn effigies of Paine up and down the island, claiming that the “levelling” Tom wanted to redistribute property (a favourite conservative tactic through the ages). However, whatever popularity Paine enjoyed with *Rights of Man* came to be destroyed in America with his publication of *Age of Reason*, a work that sought to debunk the Bible. Ultimately, his notoriety was such that the Quakers denied his request to be buried in their cemetery: Paine had no choice but to be buried in his backyard. His prediction that his bones would be dug up was fulfilled as the Tory-turned-radical Englishman, William Cobbett, stole them with the intention of burying them in his native land.

Fast forward two centuries and two decades. It requires little imagination to determine whether we are closer to Paine’s assessment of colonial America “where the poor are not oppressed, the rich are not privileged” or his portrait of a corrupt Georgian England presided by presumptuous barons, earls, marquises, dukes and king. True, we do not have a hereditary government (unless, of course, we count the Bushes and Kennedys), but we have one that panders to the beck and call of the .1%. Nor can we deny that Citizens United allows our aristocrats—Wall Street and large multi-national corporations—to wield a political power all too comparable to that wielded by Paine’s titled peers, with men like the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson assuming the part of the lordly political sponsor. In the meantime, few can argue that our CEOs, with their bloated compensations and curious lack of accountability, have come to resemble kings who can “do no wrong.” Do well, get a big bonus; do poorly, get a lesser bonus.

Indeed, just like Paine who asked if it was better that the lives of the elderly be rendered comfortable, “or that vast sums of public money be expended on any one individual, and him often of the most worthless or insignificant character,” we might ask ourselves that very question as politicians continue to call for cuts to Social Security, all the while demanding bailouts for billionaire bankers and urging more tax cuts for the wealthy. One wonders what Paine would have thought of NAFTA and TPP which deprive ordinary Americans of jobs while funnelling yet more profits to corporations. Or what he would have thought of Republican governors like Scott Walker and Bruce Rauner and their attempts to deny workers the right of collective bargaining and decent minimum wages. The fact is that 21st-century America is crying out for not just another revolutionary new SUV, revolutionary new mascara, or revolutionary new sneakers but nothing less than another American revolution: a truly populist political revolution that Bernie Sanders demands—without any of the hateful, faux populism embodied by the likes of Sarah Palin, Donald Trump, and the Tea Party. It is time to feel the “democratic impulse and aspiration that he

[Paine] inscribed in American experience,” to use Harvey Kaye’s words from his wonderful *Thomas Paine and the Promise of America*. Like Paine, Sanders is aware that something is terribly wrong when the wealthiest and most advanced nation in the world harbours dire pockets of poverty—not to mention high rates of child poverty and hunger, “when 20 percent of the children in this country, the wealthiest country in the history of the world, are living in poverty” and “40 percent of African American children are living in poverty?” Like Paine who drew attention to the numbers of poor youth sent to the gallows, Sanders knows it’s terribly wrong when “51 percent of African American high school graduates between the ages of 17 and 20 are unemployed or underemployed” and that “the United States has more people in jail than China; a communist authoritarian country.” And again, much like Paine, Sanders knows that our system of taxation is anything but fair or equitable as the wealthiest pay the least proportion of taxes compared to those in the middle classes. For just as the 18th-century British economy was a rigged economy, designed to protect the interests of the landed elites, our economy, is an equally rigged one, and according to Sanders, one “designed by the wealthiest people in this country to benefit the wealthiest people in this country at the expense of everybody else.” Perhaps this explains the penchant of our 1% for Marie Antoinette and Downtown-inspired tea parties?

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Correspondence.

The *J.R.H.* (12.4) reached me three days ago.

I have already scanned and circulated a couple of items, from the *J.R.H.* to people in Australia and New Zealand who may be interested. I do not intend to circulate "The Thetford Paine", but I can see why you reprinted it. My memory is a mite rusty when it comes to my trip to Thetford in 1964 (with Elizabeth & Jesse Collins), but I seem to recall only one downpour of rain, lasting perhaps 20 minutes, which lasted long enough to deliver us all from a Castro-length speech by Joseph Lewis.

I certainly do not recall any "gasps" or other manifestations of horror when the statue was unveiled. And the National Secular Society. was neither in its "proletarian god-bashing period" nor the days of "academic" new humanism. It was in a process of transition with David Tribe as its new president.

Quite why Albert Meltzer bothered to go along, when he regarded everyone and everything at this event with disdain, is a bit strange. Maybe he had nothing better to do.

Meltzer's remark that Joseph Lewis "converted to Christianity" is sheer nonsense, as you say. And although I was not a linguist, and cannot be sure of Lewis's accent, I believe Lewis was born in Alabama, not Brooklyn (New York).

Oh! And the crowd certainly wasn't "small". I suspect Meltzer's ego and veracity were in inverse proportions to one another.

You also published the late Terry Little's article about Charles Bradlaugh and John De Morgan. When reading it, I was disappointed to find you had not picked up T.L.'s egregious error (p. 13) about Bradlaugh's "refusal to take a religious oath of loyalty to Queen Victoria". This nonsense has been refuted many times, so Terry (and you) should have known better. Bradlaugh would have preferred to affirm, yet was prepared to take the oath (and did take it), but a House of Commons committee ruled that he was ineligible to take either.

Nigel Sinnott.
Victoria,
Australia.

THOMAS PAINE SOCIETY

Secretary: David Ward.

The Thomas Paine Society was founded in 1963, its first president being Michael Foot. The aims of the society being:

to promote the recognition of Thomas Paine's contribution to the cause of freedom, and to spread a knowledge of his work and activities with a view to encouraging the growth of a similar spirit of constructive criticism in every aspect of public life.

For further details please contact the Honorary Secretary at
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The Thomas Paine Society UK Summer Symposium 2016

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Saturday, June 11, from 9.30am - 4.30 pm at 1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE. This address being that of the The Royal Society of Medicine

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Free to members of the Thomas Paine Society.

□

Entry fee is **£15** per delegate which will include the first years membership to the society.

£10 concessions.

- **Bill Speck**, chairman of the TPS, will open the proceedings at 9.30am. He is **emeritus Professor of History at Leeds University** and author of *A Political Biography of Thomas Paine* (2013).

□

Other □ speakers confirmed are **Professor Alasdair Smith, Professor Jonathan Clark, Professor Steve Poole, Professor Richard Whatmore and Paul Myles.**

