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THOMAS PAINE,
FREEMASONRY
AND THE
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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As it happens, it was through Thomas Paine that I became interested in early American Freemasonry. While working on my biography of Paine, 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, he jumped from his obscure humdrum existence in England where he worked as an Excise officer and a corset-maker onto the American literary-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 had become a Freemason and that, as such, he enjoyed, first in America, and then in England and in France, the kindly assistance of certain lodges or of certain individual Masons.

Some time before he left England in 1774, Paine met Benjamin Franklin in London - Franklin, the founding father of Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, and

future Venerable of the famous Lodge of the Nine Sisters in Paris where he was to preside over Voltaire's initiation on April 7, 1778. In his Revolution and Freemasonry, the French historian Bernard Fay goes so far as to say that it was Franklin himself who then converted Paine to the Masonic creed. But he does not give any factual evidence in support of his assertion. The only thing we know for sure is that on September 30, 1774, on the very eve of his departure from London, Paine was given by Franklin a letter of recommendation for his son-in-law, Richard Bache, himself a Mason and a wealthy businessman in Philadelphia. It was Bache who guided Paine's first steps in that city where he was to live until 1787 - and where he met, among many other colonial Masons, John Witherspoon, Frederick Mulhberg, Benjamin Rush, David Rittenhouse, William and Thomas Bradford - and, some time later, Henry Laurens, the Lee brothers, General Roberdeau, Robert Morris, Nathanael Greene (also a Quaker !), Joel Barlow, Thomas Jefferson (whose membership is not proven), and of course George Washington. And who were to become his friends in revolutionary France ? Danton, Condorcet, Lafayette, Sieyès, Brissot, La Rochefoucauld, Duchâtelet, all Masons. And where did he stay after his release from prison in Paris ? First with Nicolas de Bonneville and then with James Monroe, both of them known as notorious Freemasons.

Paine's interest in Freemasonry was such that toward the end of his life, in 1805, he wrote a lengthy piece entitled An Essay on the Origin of Freemasonry, in which he traces back the birth of Masonry to the ancient rituals of druidism.

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 - questioned because non-Masonic scholars cannot have direct access to English Masonic archives -, 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 that he was not a member of the order". Whether or not he was initiated, it is most unlikely that Paine ever became a member of a British lodge, if only because English Freemasonry was at that time closely connected with aristocracy and even with the king or his entourage : thus the Duke of Cumberland, Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge until 1790, was succeeded by the future George IV !

In France, although Philippe-Egalite and the future Charles X were also Freemasons, the situation was somewhat different. French lodges (and Paris had no less than 81 lodges) seem to have been socially and politically more open. During the Revolution the French capital even had an "American Lodge" (known as "la loge des Américains") which numbered no less than 143 members - but in whose records Paine's name never appears. Nor does it appear on any of the lists recently established by Alain La Bihan regarding the respective memberships of "le Grand Orient" and "la Grande Loge de France".

And yet Bernard Fay maintains that Paine was a Mason. And so do Dr. Kobinet in his Danton emigré, and Franck Alengry in his biography of Concorcet, and Brissot himself alluding in his Memoirs to his "friend Bonneville and Thomas Payne ... who pride themselves on possessing every single secret of the Order". But Brissot's remark is no proof : studying the secrets of Freemasonry, or even "possessing" them or some of them, does not necessarily imply that one is a member (I am not a member). In much the same way, Ignace Guillotin, the

humanitarian inventor of the guillotine, recorded in his diary that he "attended Lodge in company with Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Paine from the American states". But this again is no proof, for there were, and there still are today, two types of Masonic meetings : some open to non-members and others tiled (i.e. with the tiler, or warden, standing outside the outer door to keep off "cowans" (uninitiated people) and eavesdroppers and other unauthorized persons).

More convincing perhaps is the testimony provided by R. Le Forestier in his famous book on the Bavarian Illuminati, a subversive secret society founded in 1776 at Ingoldstadt by an enlightened and ambitious eccentric called Adam Weishaupt. Le Forestier writes that in 1794 (at a time when Thomas Paine was a member of the Convention in Paris), Count Lehrbach, imperial ambassador in Munich, sent to Vienna a list of illustrious Illuminati containing, among others, the names of "the Duke of Orléans, Necker, La Fayette, Barnave, Brissot, La Rochefoucauld, Mirabeau, Payne, Fauchet, for France". This is indeed an official document, but it is not the record of a specific Masonic lodge, and besides one could actually belong to the Illuminati without necessarily being a Mason. So, again, we are left with no satisfactory evidence.

My investigations in the United States have not been more successful. The name "Thomas Paine" does figure on several Masonic rosters of the Revolutionary period (in Boston, Albany or Providence), but there is no evidence whatsoever that the man thus listed was the historic figure whose memory we are celebrating today. Similarly local records do mention the creation in 1792 of a "Paine's Lodge N°27" at Amenia, N.Y., but at the time it was not uncommon for lodges to take the name of such or such famous man who had never been initiated. In 1809, when Paine died, the Grand Lodges of both Louisiana and

Georgia honoured his memory with solemn orations, while the Grand Lodge of South Carolina organized a mourning procession in the streets. But who was actually honoured in these celebrations : the hypothetical Freemason ? Or the apostle of Reason ? Or the champion of the rights of man ? We cannot validly decide.

If we are to understand Paine's intellectual itinerary, it is quite enough to know that, though he probably never belonged to any specific fraternity, he nevertheless actively sympathized with the Masonic movement and the philosophy it carried. Masonic thought had much in common with his own deistic outlook and his own cult of reason, and it was part of the great intellectual swirl of the age of Enlightenment wherefrom he derived most of his creeds as a rationalist. Therefore it was into ideas rather than into rituals that Franklin initiated his *protege*, inasmuch as he initiated him into anything. Paine's psychology is here more convincing than material evidence. A rugged individualist, Paine neither liked collective ceremonies nor secret practices ; he dreamt, instead, of an open form of democracy, of a see-through republic with a public life as transparent as a palace of glass. 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. "My own mind is my own church" : no words could describe, better than this key sentence of The Age of Reason, a man who could at best become a "fellow-traveller" as we say today, but whose real vocation was to espouse causes, not structures.

Why then bother, some might rightfully ask, about Paine's relationship with an organization to which in all probability he never belonged ? Well, just as

penicillin was invented by a scientist who was in fact looking for something else, so studying Paine in that context - i. e. against the background of Masonic organization and militancy - inevitably led me to widen the scope of my research - and of my inconclusive findings - to the role of Freemasonry in the American revolution at large. And the paradox is that, although I did not find much about Paine in terms of positive data, I discovered about the larger issue quite a number of interesting things that had hitherto been overly and unjustly neglected. Let me then lift for you at least one tiny corner of the veil.

While non-Masonic historians have, with very few exceptions, tended to overlook the underground role of lodges in the American revolution, the great majority of Masonic scholars have on the contrary been prone to overrate their real impact. One has, therefore, to be even more careful when dealing with so-called secret societies than when studying public data or duly archived history. Consider, for instance, the Declaration of Independence and its 56 signers : how many of them have been identified as Masons ? The answer varies considerably from one enumerator to another. William Grimshaw gives a list of 51 Masonic signers, as against 8 only in Henry Coll's Masonic Encyclopedia. William Boyden suggests 29 ; Ronald Heaton 9 ; Philip Roth 20 ; and the George Washington Masonic National Memorial Library 30.

The main problem here lies in fact with the unreliability of primary sources. The early lodges and Provincial Grand Lodges were careless about the keeping of records and minutes. In Colonial days, many lodges functioned for a short time only, leaving no trace whatsoever of their transient existence. And during the War of Independence there were many so-called "Army Lodges", which

conferred degrees, but kept no records or destroyed them for lack of a safe and steady place to store them in. Over the years a fair amount of Masonic records were destroyed as a result of warfare, or were lost by fire, or discarded by heedless holders through ignorance of their value, or done away with to prevent disclosure. On the whole, what characterizes the surviving vestiges of Masonic life in XVIIIth and early XIXth century America is that they are, more often than not, "gappy", or fragmentary, or confused, or all three.

Finding relevant Masonic documents is, then, hardly an easy task. Interpreting them may prove to be a risky venture, as is evidenced by the following anecdote. In his fairly reliable listing of "10,000 Famous Freemasons", William Denslow surprisingly identifies James Madison as a Mason, on the basis of a letter sent to him on February 11, 1795, by John Francis Mercer, governor of Maryland. The passage quoted by Denslow reads : "I have had no opportunity of congratulating you on becoming a Free Mason - a very ancient and honourable fraternity". If this was no proof, I thought to myself, what could be? Some time later, however, I was able to read Mercer's letter in its entirety, and found to my astonishment that his hint at Masonry was a mere joke, a play on words, a metaphor ; that in fact Mercer was congratulating Madison on his recent marriage ; that the "fair prophetess who has converted you to the true faith" was no other than his wife, Dolley Payne Todd ; and that the initiation into Masonry to which Mercer referred was nothing but an initiation into the bonds and mysteries of married life. Although an obvious source of error, this Masonic metaphor is nevertheless interesting and significant in that it shows how important Freemasonry was in the mental world of XVIIIth century Americans.

Although Freemasonry settled down in British America as early as 1730 -

four years before Benjamin Franklin printed Anderson's Constitutions (the "Bible" of the Masonic Order) originally published in London in 1723 -, it was only during the decade preceding the Revolution, and during the Revolution itself, that American Freemasonry thrived and grew in a spectacular way. Was there a relation of cause and effect between these two phenomena ? That is precisely the question to which I would like to address myself tonight, without of course going into too much detail.

Here are then some figures and a selection of events, some well-known, some less known, but the bulk of which is fairly impressive :

- Prior to the Revolution, there were more than 100 stationary lodges in the Colonies and upward of 50 travelling military lodges. During the Revolution about 25 additional military lodges were created (10 in the Continental army and 15 in the British ranks). The city of Boston had 6 lodges prior to the Revolution, and 10 lodges had been warranted in Philadelphia when the first Continental Congress met in 1774. The Masonic population of Philadelphia and vicinity at the time is estimated to have been upward of 1,000, i.e. about 3% of the total population, as against 2.5% in Boston. It has also been calculated that there were some 3,000 Freemasons in the thirteen United States in 1790 for a total population of 4 million, i.e. almost 1%.

- Freemasons were present and active in the very first stages of the rebellion. It was James Otis, a member of St John's Lodge in Boston, who in 1761 first took the now familiar view that taxation without representation is tyranny. In 1772 the burning of the Gaspee was organized and led by Abraham Whipple of St John's Lodge in Providence. The leaders of the Committees of Correspondence,

created that very same year, were most often Freemasons, as is shown by the records. And there is much reason to believe that the Boston Tea Party was headed and carried out by Bostonian Freemasons, although only nine of them actually took part in the attack on the tea vessels. The fact that the chief ringleader, Samuel Adams, was probably not a Mason did not deter Paul Revere, future Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, from declaring the very next day : "The Tea Party was as dignified a Masonic event as the laying of a cornerstone, as indeed in very truth it was".

- I have already mentioned the high proportion of Masonic signers of the Declaration of Independence. According to the best available sources, between one third and two thirds of the 39 signers of the Constitution were also Masons. In that connection, an original way of looking at the Constitutional Convention would be to view it as a meeting to a large extent organized according to Masonic rule, i.e. behind locked doors, with the proceedings held in camera, and George Washington himself elected to the chair - let alone certain similarities between the historic Federal document and Anderson's Constitutions. Be that as it may, the fact of the matter is that many, if not most, of the leading figures of the Revolution belonged to the Masonic Order - or to the "Craft", as it was then called. Such, in addition to those already cited, was the case of : George Washington, John Hancock, Peyton and Edmund Randolph, Henry Laurens, John Dickinson, Robert R. Livingston, John Paul Jones, Robert Treat Paine, Roger Sherman, William Hooper, John Marshall and, in all likelihood, Patrick Henry, John Jay, Richard Henry Lee, Robert Morris, Benjamin Rush, John Witherspoon, David Rittenhouse, etc.

- Of the 75 General Officers of the Continental Army, at least 33, and possibly

40 more, were Masons. According to Lafayette, Washington was always reluctant to appoint a general that was not a member of the Fraternity ; and when he heard that Benedict Arnold had betrayed the American cause, he turned to Henry Knox and Lafayette, both of them Masons, and said in words that have become famous : "Whom can we trust now ?" Montgomery, Greene, Sullivan, Wayne, Clinton, Parsons , De Kalb, etc. were all "brethren of the Mystic Tie", as also were Ethan Allen, the Ticonderoga hero, and George Rogers Clark, the conqueror of the Northwest. Quite unsurprisingly, the main protagonists at Yorktown were all Masons : Washington, de Grasse, Rochambeau, d'Estaing, Lincoln, Knox, Hamilton (?), Lafayette. - and Cornwallis himself !

- Not all Masons, or Masonic leaders, were Patriots. There were some Loyalist lodges, and Masonry as a whole was not left untouched by what was then known as "Toryism". It seems nevertheless that in most cases political dissensions within the lodges, or between lodges, did not prevent Masons of all persuasions from remaining on speaking, or even brotherly, terms - presumably because, and in the name, of their common principles.

I could go on and on with facts, but it is now time to try and account for this profusion of data and its historical significance. That Freemasonry was real is beyond doubt, but the question is : How real and how specific was its actual impact on the American Revolution ?

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The reality of revolution is so complex that it would be an error to study Freemasonry as an isolated agent of change. Masonic lodges were part of a larger intellectual, institutional, and international phenomenon. They contributed no, or very few, original ideas to the Age of Enlightenment whose ready-made philosophy catered to all their needs. It would be of little use,

then, to analyze the Masonic discourse of the time because, as we shall see, the medium was in that instance the message, and it was through rites and social behaviour that Masonic ideology was in fact produced. From an institutional point of view, lodges were one particular form amid a proliferation of clubs, salons, literary circles, reading associations, learned societies, scientific or philosophical academies - what we in French call "sociétés de pensée" : Franklin's "Junto", or the Philosophical Society, or the first Anti-Slavery Association in Philadelphia are well-known instances of this. In terms of social change, some of these active cells were more significant than others, and R.R. Palmer, author of The Age of the Democratic Revolution, was, I think, mistaken when he suggested that "reading clubs ... were more important than Freemasonry as nurseries of pro-Revolutionary feeling". At the time, instilling new attitudes was probably more subversive than propagating theories and doctrines. Palmer makes a good point, though, when he explains that the network of Masonry created across the Atlantic "an international and interclass sense of fellowship among men fired by ideas of liberty, progress, and reform". The Masonic ties between France and America were particularly strong, and the fact that Washington and most American leaders were Masons should not be neglected. On his arrival in Paris in 1777, one of the first things Franklin did to popularize the Revolution was to join the Lodge of the Nine Sisters ; and, with perhaps the exception of Jefferson and Silas Deane, all of the American negociators in Paris were Masons, as were most of their French counterparts. In those years common membership of the Craft worked, among these Republicans and Royalists of two different countries, as a kind of political esperanto, a higher language also understood and spoken in England by such illustrious Masons as Burke or Chatham or Wilkes.

But the Masonic "International" was, at the very most, an intellectual network, a shared language, a common mold ; by no means the instrument of some wilful conspiracy. Historically, the "plot theory" was formulated after the event, at the very end of the 1790's, and was nothing but an unsupported piece of counter-revolutionary polemic. The doctrine of an underground machination against "the Throne and the Altar" was originally put forward by Barruel in France and John Robison in Britain. Robison's ideas were peddled in America by leading figures of the New England Congregationalist establishment like Jedidiah Morse, minister at Charlestown, David Tappan, professor of divinity at Harvard, and Timothy Dwight, president of Yale. Not only were Masons accused of subverting social order and religion, but it was also proclaimed that they were manipulated by infiltrated agents, and that their own conspiracy was in fact secretly engineered by the international Order of the Bavarian Illuminati. Thomas Paine, who was then living in Paris, was one of Morse's favourite targets, his widely-circulated pamphlets being viewed as "part of the general plan to accomplish universal demoralization". Theodore Dwight, brother to Timothy, aimed even higher : "If I were to make proselytes to illuminatism in the United States, he wrote on Independence Day 1798, I should in the first place apply to Thomas Jefferson, Albert Gallatin, and their political associates". Uttered at the end of the century, these political attacks sounded like rearguard actions, but at the same time, with the myth of Masonic conspiracy serving as a pretext, they actually foreshadowed, and paved the way for, the anti-Masonic witch-hunt of the early 1830's.

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When one considers Freemasonry during the Revolutionary period, the difficult thing is to weigh the active, conscious, militant part it played, against its more genial role in favour of independence, human rights, or the

republic : a role and an influence that extended far beyond the bounds of the Craft itself and which, in spite of its diffuseness, or perhaps thanks to it, was an important factor of ideological and political transformation. Whether the political commitment of a Patriot should be ascribed to his being a Mason or to some other cause can hardly ever be proved. But what it did to an American to "attend lodge" and model his behaviour on its rituals is something whose impact can more easily be grasped and measured.

In all lodges, whatever their affiliation, an extensive though orderly and ritualized liberty of expression and discussion was the rule - much on the model of British Parliament -, together with a common practice of tolerance and open-mindedness. Therefore what American Masonry actually contributed to the Revolutionary movement was first and foremost an image of its own functioning, with its local cells operating as discreet schools of liberalism, as republics in miniature, as living laboratories of democratic and egalitarian values, as the palpable prefiguration of a new era. Belonging to a lodge was in itself a form of dissent, since the lodge worked, both in vitro and in vivo, as a social utopia experimented with against a background of universal tyranny.

While attending lodge, Colonial Masons normally divested themselves of their social differences so as to appear, if only for a limited time, on an equal footing with their brethren. An artificial form of equality was thus pitted against the social hierarchies of the outside world, with its oppressive pattern of age-old subordinations. To be a Mason was to usher in "a world turned upside down" and, as François Furet has pointed out, a Masonic lodge was, as a communauté de pensée, "characterized, for each of its members, by nothing but its relation to ideas, thereby heralding the functioning of democracy". If

Masonry was important in the American Revolution, it was not as the instrument of a mythical plot, but because, Furet goes on to say, it embodied more than anything else "the chemistry of the new power, with the social becoming political, and opinion turned into action". By and large, Masons tended to belong to social groups that were not miles apart, so that their abstract equality within lodges was not too difficult to achieve ; but what mattered politically and ideologically was the ritual itself as the living sign of a better world for all. And since 1% of all Americans belonged to the Craft, it may be inferred that the Revolutionary impact of Masonry was by no means insignificant. Although they debated new and sometimes subversive ideas, Masonic lodges were not regarded as dangerous institutions and no authority ever thought of banning them, at least during the Revolutionary period. What went then unnoticed was that Masons were, so to say, political mutants, with their lodges working in the dark as unseen vehicles of social change. Thomas Paine was not wrong in emphasizing the role of pre-revolutionary ideas and "the force of the mind ... by which revolutions are generated" ; but he missed the central point, which is to know how these ideas worked their way into society and gradually settled there as new dynamic forms of social practice.

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American Freemasonry was in many ways similar to its European equivalents, but it had features of its own that should not be overlooked.

Especially when contrasted with French Masonry, the American Craft of the time was original in that it never defined itself, and never was, anti-religious. Henry May has shown that Enlightenment figures in America were much less committed to rationalism and freethinking, much less cut off from religious traditions than their European counterparts. A parallel distinction should be

made: with regard to Masonry : religious tolerance, not to say ecumenical attitudes, was a striking feature of American lodges, although Deism, with its view of God as the great architect of the universe, fitted more neatly into the spiritual pattern of Masonry. One had to be a believer to become a Mason, and the Bible was used in all Masonic rituals. In America no Mason, however committed to republican ideas, ever dreamt of establishing a Civil Constitution of the Clergy, not to mention the enthronement of a Supreme Being as a substitute for the Christian god ! The anti-religious excesses of the French Revolution had, to say the least, a cooling effect on many a sympathizing Mason in America - and, to begin with, on George Washington himself.

During the whole Revolutionary period, American lodges also worked as centers of welcome and social integration for immigrants newly-arrived from Europe, for foreign soldiers serving in the Continental Army, and later on for French expatriates hounded out of their country by the Terror. Aliens were readily admitted into American lodges, and several foreign lodges came into being during the War. The first French lodge, known as "la loge de l'Amitié", was created in Boston as early as 1779. It soon got into trouble, however, as a result of financial misappropriations and, some time after, because its Right Worshipful Master was deservedly accused of bigamy : the ways of social integration are unfathomable ! For native Americans, Masonic lodges seem in many cases to have served as places of transit from social life to patriotic or political action. This may well have been the case for George Washington, initiated as a mere land-surveyor at the early age of 20, and for Franklin as well, who was made a Mason when he was 25.

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I don't have time to tell you about the anti-Masonic hysteria of the late

1820's. but, to put the whole matter in a nutshell, I will simply say that, as long as the American Masonic Order was part and parcel of Colonial society, as long as it survived, as it were, over the Revolutionary wave, or even guided it, it was not seriously challenged ; problems emerged several decades later when it shrank back into a separate brotherhood, seemingly cut off from the larger fraternity of the new nation.

Nor do I have time to tell you about the birth in 1775, and subsequent development, of a Black Masonic Fraternity called "Prince Hall Freemasonry" after the name of its founder. Even today, with its 5,000 lodges and 300,000 members, this American Negro Craft is still looked upon as "spurious, irregular, and clandestine" by all its caucasian counterparts in the United States. Prince Hall Freemasonry had no direct impact on the American Revolution, but it was ironically during the Revolution, and in its context, that racial discrimination became a bone of contention between men whose *raison d'être*, as either white or black Masons, was brotherhood.

I discovered all these things, and many more, thanks to Thomas Paine and the riddle of his relationship with the Masonic Order. Paine was not a Mason, but like all the American, British or French Masons with whom he used to mix, he was a builder : the builder of a democratic system or ideal based on freedom, equality, social solidarity, and brotherhood. He is usually hailed in the United States as one of the Founding Fathers. Perhaps it would be more appropriate, especially today, especially here, to celebrate him as a "Founding Brother".

A PORTRAIT OF THOMAS PAINE

Reprinted from an unknown source.

THE tale of the recent discovery of the portrait of the celebrated propagandist, Thomas Paine, painted by the "Patriot-Artist," Colonel Trumbull, for Thomas Jefferson—a picture which dropped out of sight over a century ago—is worth the telling in some detail.

The little portrait was first and last publicly exhibited in Boston two years after Jefferson's death, appearing in *A Catalogue of the Second Exhibition in the Athenaeum Gallery Consisting of Specimens by American Artists . . . May 1828*, under the notice, "The following are a part of the Collection formed by the late PRESIDENT JEFFERSON . . . [and] are for sale . . . [Item] 316—Thomas Paine,—an original on wood,—Trumbull." It then faded into oblivion. When the writer's *The Works of Colonel John Trumbull, Artist of the American Revolution*, was published in 1950 by the Yale University Press, it contained the following unsatisfactory entry: "THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809), Revolutionary pamphleteer, author of *Common Sense*; on wood, before 1809, once belonging to Thomas Jefferson; unlocated."

The Editor of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Julian P. Boyd of Princeton, was responsible for the first clue to the lost portrait. In March, 1955, he brought to the writer's attention both sides of correspondence which established the date of the sitting and reaffirmed the connection of the three principals, Paine, Trumbull, and Jefferson. The first letter (now in the Pierpont Morgan Library) was written by the Colonel from London to Jefferson in Paris, 19 December 1788:

By the Diligence which leaves town tomorrow morning, you will receive a Box cont'g your Harness & Saddles. The Box likewise contains what further Books of your list Payne has been able to procure . . . a little case with two pictures, one of which I hope you will do me the honor to accept, & the other I beg you to be so good as offer to Miss Jefferson:—I almost despair of its meeting her approbation, but it is all I can do until I have the happiness to see you again:—you would have rec'd both long since for the Vexation I have had with my larger picture, which has left me little Spirits to attend to anything else. . . .

Jefferson replied (letter now in the Princeton University Library) to Trumbull on 12 January 1789:



... I am to thank you a thousand times for the portrait of Mr. Paine, which is a perfect likeness, and to deliver you, for the other, on the part of my daughter. . .

The "larger picture," which was causing such vexation, was, most probably, the "Declaration of Independence," for which the preliminary sketch was prepared in September, 1786. The artist referred to this subject in these words:

I resumed my labors, however, and went on with my studies of other subjects of the Revolution, arranging carefully the composition for the Declaration of Independence, and preparing it for receiving the portraits, as I might meet with the distinguished men, who were present at that illustrious scene. . . . In the autumn of 1787, I again visited Paris, where I painted the portrait of Mr. Jefferson in the original small Declaration of Independence.*

From this original portrait in the "Declaration" the artist promptly made three replicas, all in miniature: the first, for Miss Jefferson, which has descended in the family and is now owned by the Estate of Mrs. Edmund Jefferson Burke and is on loan at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the second for Mrs. John Barker Church, daughter of Philip Schuyler, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and a third for Jefferson's friend Mrs. Richard (Maria Hadfield) Cosway, wife of the miniaturist, left by her to the Collegio Maria S. S. Bambina at Lodi, Italy. The first of these, one of the two pictures in the "little case" sent to Jefferson in December, 1788, for his daughter, offered, therefore, the best stylistic parallel for its companion, the lost Paine miniature. It should be noted that the present to Miss Jefferson was apparently painted rapidly and on an oblong piece of mahogany upon which the oval was inscribed. This is rather unusual; the sixty Trumbull miniatures at Yale are all cut in oval shape.

In 1947, through the good offices of Alexander Wahl, Director of the New-York Historical Society, Mrs. Arthur M. Greenwood brought to the writer's attention a loosely painted miniature, oval on a rectangular piece of mahogany, said to be of Trumbull's friend and companion-in-arms, Philip Schuyler. It was published in the *Works* (on p. 68), under "Unidentified Men" as a "Miniature of an

*The *Autobiography of Colonel John Trumbull, Patriot-Artist* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953) pp. 146-147, 152.

UNKNOWN MAN (?), (possibly PHILIP SCHUYLER; Estate of Dr. Arthur M. Greenway, Marlboro, Mass." (containing a mistake in transcription, for the name was Greenwood). And there the matter rested.

When the Trumbull-Jefferson correspondence was brought to the writer's attention, he searched his files of "Unidentified Men" and was immediately struck by the stylistic affinity to the "Unknown Gentleman," from the collection of the late Dr. and Mrs. Arthur M. Greenwood of "Time Stone Farm" (built in 1702), Marlboro, Massachusetts. The miniature had been acquired before 1912 by Dr. Greenwood from a family living in Concord, Massachusetts, who had kept it for years in a button box. Sometime in the past both eyes had been mutilated—done, possibly, by a child or by one who might have hated the rabble-rousing radical, atheistic Paine.

The writer, doubting the Schuyler attribution (Trumbull's one miniature of Schuyler, painted in 1792 at Philadelphia, is now in the New-York Historical Society), turned to the study, at the Frick Art Reference Library, of every known portrait of Tom Paine. The Greenwood miniature came closest to the destroyed portrait of Paine painted by George Romney in 1791-92, known through the fine engraving of 1793 by William Sharp. He next appealed to Colonel Richard Gimbel, United States Air Force, Retired, Curator of Aeronautical Literature at the Yale University Library, a great collector of Paine's work. After studying abundant prints, photographs of portraits, Paine's death mask, and even caricatures, and comparing them with the borrowed Greenwood miniature, the Paine attribution was more or less convincing. It should be mentioned, parenthetically, that Paine left America for England in 1787 and that it is a simple matter to get artist and sitter together during that and the ensuing year, and that all of Trumbull's miniatures, with but one exception are painted in oils on wood (mahogany).

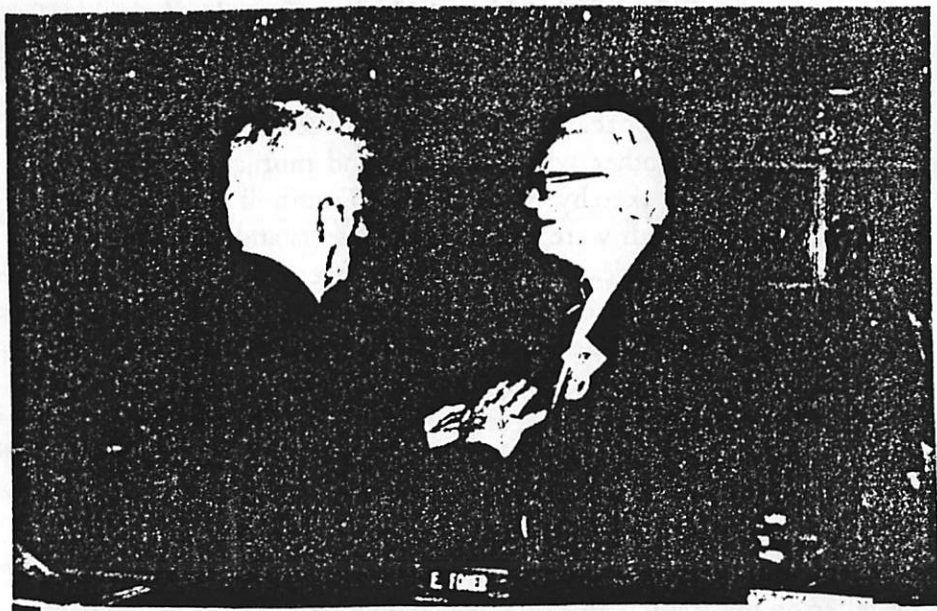
Still unsatisfied, Colonel Gimbel and the writer went to the Boston Museum and there laid the Jefferson family miniature alongside the still questionable Paine. They fitted like two peas in a pod. Both were painted on rectangular pieces of mahogany, (unusual for Trumbull), which appeared to come from the same plank, though the Greenwood one was on a slightly smaller piece. The painted ovals, how-

ever, were identical in size, $4\frac{7}{8}$ by $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Even the character of the stains on the backs were the same for both. Stylistically, both were identical, the pigment and the manner of handling it coinciding exactly, except that the Jefferson had been cleaned and newly varnished and the other was dirty, dry, and mutilated. Both were painted in a more sketchy manner than Trumbull ordinarily employed, but then both were intended as presents and were not to be incorporated in historical compositions (as were the sixty at Yale), which were ultimately destined to be engraved. The crackling on the surfaces of both—unusually large—was the same. Both were examined under the ultra-violet light—from the front, back, and sides; similitude was conclusively demonstrated. Greatly enlarged photographs were also studied. The writer is convinced that the Greenwood miniature—in oils on mahogany—is not only the work of Colonel Trumbull, but is the missing portrait of the political agitator, Colonel Gimbel concurring fully in this last. The “perfect likeness,” as Jefferson put it, of Tom Paine, which disappeared in 1828, has been found.

The little unframed miniature, which has the appearance of never having been framed, has been recently lent by Mrs. Greenwood to Colonel Gimbel. It is now on exhibition at the Yale Library, with the 1828 Boston Athenaeum catalogue and photostats of the letters in question, together with a small selection of Tom Paine’s celebrated pamphlets from the Gimbel Collection.

Colonel Trumbull, who was born at Lebanon, Connecticut, on 6 June 1756, was a proud, punctilious, and somewhat vain man, concerned alike with his mortal and posthumous fame. It is pleasing that the discovery of the charming little portrait of Tom Paine, long hidden away in a button box, coincides with the coming celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the “Patriot-Artist.”

THEODORE SIZER.



TPS President, Michael Foot and TPS Vice President, Paul O'Dowd, at the Paine colloquia in New York on December 10, 1987.

Michael Foot and TPS member Charles Francisco.



BOOK REVIEWS

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD,
ESSAYS ON THOMAS PAINE.

Edited by Ian Dyck.

Christopher Helm,
London, 1987, £14.95.

THIS very readable work is in a way a memorial to the late George Spater, a member of the TPS who wrote a very fine two volume biography of William Cobbett which was published in 1982. I may well have been during the research for that work, which took in what may be said to be the hate-love relationship of Cobbett towards Paine, which prompted Mr. Spater to commence research into writing a similar biographical study of Paine; unfortunately this project was brought to an end by his death in 1984. Had Mr. Spater completed his book it would, I suspect, have been an exceptionally good work, if the four chapters compiled from his notes by Professor Dyck, also a member of the TPS., are anything to go upon. Indeed it is thanks to Professor Dyck that George Spater's notes, manuscripts, etc., have been brought together the chapters on Paine which together with an introduction, also by Mr. Spater, which constitutes the first part, and one chapter in the second part, of this book.

George Spater writes in a style which is at once scholarly yet appealing to the non-academic readers who simply want an authoritative presentation of the facts of Paine's life and work. I do not think it can be said he adds anything new to what we know of Paine, indeed, he regrettably fell into the trap of

equating seditious libel with treason, for though many make the claim that Paine was charged with treason this is not historically accurate. In his introduction Mr. Spater poses various questions a historian approaching Paine's life and work must, or should, ask themselves. It was seemingly these questions that Mr. Spater intended to answer in his biography.

Mr. Spater examines briefly in his introduction the claim made by George Hindmarch that Paine wrote the articles signed "A Forester, which had appeared in a Lewes newspaper, but goes on to reject this, stating they had been written by the Rev. Richard Nichell, of East Dean, on the basis of a report in the same paper several years later which announced the death of the cleric and identifying him as author of the letters.

The four chapters on Paine by Mr. Spater are cover his early life, his life in America, his life in Europe and finally, his legacy, this last being the book's concluding chapter.

The second part of the book consists in addition to the already mentioned chapter by George Spater of three other chapters, "Thomas Paine and Millenarian Radicalism" by Professor J.F.C. Harrison, "Debts and Liabilities: William Cobbett and Thomas Paine" by Professor Dyck and, "Collaborators of a Sort: Thomas Paine and Richard Carlile" by Professor Joel H. Weiner. Each of

these constitutes well researched and quite fascinating contributions to understanding the influence of Paine on groups and individuals, but, as in the case of Professor Weiner's essay particularly, we come up against the antagonism Paine's influence generated in some circles and how much courage it took to combat the forces which sought to suppress not only his works but others which were seen as a direct challenge to the social order.

It is thanks to Richard Carlile, though not him alone, that Paine's works were eventually made available to the public without penalties, and I sometimes feel Carlile to be as much a neglected figure as Paine was. It is a pity there is no monument to him in Fleet Street, for he was a truly valiant campaigner for press freedom. We can see a parallel between Carlile's campaign to publish Paine's works in face of a vicious government campaign to suppress them and the contemporary campaign in Britain (and abroad) on the part of the government to legally suppress the book Spycatcher. Paine believed in the right to air freely views and information, and as in the Silas Deane affair, was willing to put himself at risk to expose scandal in high places. In respect to official bodies seeking to suppress material embarrassing to them, or to certain individuals associated with them, things do not seem to have changed all that much since the 18th century.

Citizen of the World is not just a valuable contribution to our

understanding of Thomas Paine but important in introducing readers to other aspects of his influence. The editor, Professor Dyck, says the volume is addressed equally to the reading public and to an academic audience, as both have contributed to our understanding of Paine. This is a valid claim, and I think both groups have much to gain by reading this very fine work, a work which is a fitting and lasting memorial to a fine scholar,

R.W.Morrell.

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THOMAS PAINE

OU LA

RELIGION

SE LA LIBERTE.

Bernard Vincent.

Paperback, Aubier,

Paris, 1987.

Fr.118.00.

THIS is the first major biography of Paine to be written by a Frenchman, Bernard Vincent being Professor of American Civilisation at the University of Orléans. One might therefore expect the book to be written from a French point of view with its emphasis on Paine's role in the French revolution, but this biography is outstanding for giving the same amount of attention to all phases of Paine's life in the three countries in which he lived - England, America and France.

His early years, up to the breakdown of his second marriage, are

described relatively briefly in the opening chapter so the reader can assess what sort of man it was who first disembarked at Philadelphia in 1774 at the age of 38. The subsequent years of Paine's life are dealt with in much greater detail, starting with the publication of *Common Sense* and its effect on the war between America and England, his editorship of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and his appointment as Secretary to the Department of Foreign Affairs and his dismissal because of his handling of the Deane affair.

Professor Vincent takes the reader step by step through Paine's life, giving attention to the failures as well as the successes. After taking a job as a lawyer's clerk, Paine was soon elected Secretary of the new Pennsylvania Assembly and received an honorary degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He expounds his theory that land is man's most valuable asset and is given some land in recognition of his services to America. He visits France twice - once to obtain financial and material aid for America's fight against England and once, in 1789/90, to try to sell a design for an iron bridge, but the French were not interested. Instead he ended up giving them advice on how to organise a revolution. He then went to England to try and persuade Burke to make parliamentary reforms in line with the French revolution; Burke published his, *Reflections on the French Revolution*, and Paine responded with *Rights of Man*. This great intellectual and ideological

battle had a reverberating effect and Pitt pushed Paine's fiscal reforms through parliament.

Professor Vincent reminds us that in the second part of *Rights of Man*, Paine advocated such revolutionary social reforms as maternity benefit, death benefit and salary negotiating rights. By the end of 1792 two hundred thousand copies of *Rights of Man* had been sold but a warrant was issued for the arrest of the author of this "seditious libel"; however, Paine just managed to escape to France where four Departments had elected him to the Convention. In London he was tried in absentia, accused of high treason, the book confiscated and Paine banned from England for life.

Meanwhile in the French National Convention, where he has chosen to represent Pas de Calais, Paine argued against the death penalty for Louis and for sending him to America where he would learn what a true democracy was like, but these views were unpopular and as a result all foreigners were requested to leave France. Paine would not comply as was imprisoned in the Luxembourg for ten months, where he finished writing *The Age of Reason*, the publication of which caused considerable opposition. In 1797 he published *Agrarian Justice*, giving the royalties from it to the inmates of Newgate Prison.

After his release from the Luxembourg Napoleon requested Paine's advice on how to attack England, but took offence at his suggestions and

had Paine watched by the police. Paine begged America to allow him to return there and as soon as Jefferson was elected President, he was invited back. However, a cold reception awaited him in the country he helped to found. There was no government post for him and few friends except Madame de Bonneville, the widow of his French translator. He died at her house in June 1809 aged 72.

I think the only new revelation that emerged from Professor Vincent's research is the fact that Paine attended masonic meetings in France and in America, although it is doubtful that he was actually a mason himself. Nevertheless this is a very readable biography, from which Paine emerges as an understandable and likeable person.

Jeanne Sheriff,

On the following pages appears a reprint of the programme of the Visionaries of World Peace Colloquia at the United Nations on December 10, 1987. The featured visionary being Thomas Paine. Speakers who are members of the TPS include: Michael Foot, Dr. Ian Dyck, Professor Eric Foner, Charles Francisco, Professor Bernard Vincent, Paul O'Dwyer and David Henley.

THE VISIONARIES OF WORLD PEACE SERIES OF COLLOQUIA
under the auspices of
UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE, UNITED NATIONS
in conjunction with
PEACE STUDIES UNIT, UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT
celebrate

THOMAS PAINE
The 250th Anniversary of His Birth
1737-1987

United Nations Headquarters, New York City
Thursday, 10 December 1987

VISIONARIES OF WORLD PEACE
Colloquium II is organized by
UNITED TEILHARD TRUST,
The Netherlands
and
The United States of America

VISIONARIES OF WORLD PEACE
Celebrating
THOMAS PAINE

President of the Colloquium: Dr. Rodrigo Carazo, former President of the Republic of Costa Rica, and currently President of the Council, University for Peace.

Host: United Nations Secretariat
Ms. Robin Ludwig, Chief, Peace Studies Unit

Inaugural Session:

Chairman: Dr. Rodrigo Carazo

Program Specialist: Professor Bernard Vincent

- 9:30-10:00 AM REGISTRATION
- 10:00 AM Ms. Robin Ludwig - WELCOME
- 10:05 AM Mr. Leo Zonneveld, President, United Teilhard Trust
"THE SERIES 'VISIONARIES OF WORLD PEACE'"
- 10:10 AM Dr. Rodrigo Carazo - OFFICIAL OPENING
- 10:15 AM Mr. Michael Foot, M.P., House of Commons
President, Thomas Paine Society, U.K.
"THOMAS PAINE AND THE DEMOCRATIC
REVOLUTION"
- 10:40 AM Dr. Ian Dyck, Asst. Professor of History,
University of Lethbridge (Alberta, Canada)
"THOMAS PAINE: WORLD CITIZEN IN THE
AGE OF NATIONALISM"
- 11:05 AM COFFEE/TEA BREAK
- 11:25 AM Mr. David Braff, Historian
(Owner, Braff & Company Public Relations)
"THOMAS PAINE: THE FORGOTTEN FOUNDING
FATHER"
- 11:50 AM Eric Foner, Professor of History
Columbia University, New York City
"TOM PAINE & AMERICAN RADICALISM DURING
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"
- 12:15 PM Mr. Charles Francisco, Actor/Author
"THOMAS PAINE: A MOST UNCOMMON MAN"
- 12:40-1:00 PM PANEL DISCUSSION: Rodrigo Carazo, Michael Foot,
Ian Dyck, David Braff, Eric Foner, Charles Francisco,
Florence Stapleton

1:00 - 3:00 PM - LUNCH BREAK

Plenary Session:

Chairman: Mr. Leo Zonneveld

Program Specialist: Dr. Ian Dyck

- 3:00 PM Bernard Vincent, Professor of American History & Civilization
University of Orleans (France)
**"FROM SOCIAL TO INTERNATIONAL PEACE:
THE REALISTIC UTOPIAS OF THOMAS PAINE"**
- 3:25 PM Mr. Clive Phillpot, Director of the Library
The Museum of Modern Art, New York City
**"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THOMAS PAINE:
HIS EARLY LIFE"**
- 3:45 PM Mr. Paul O'Dwyer, Civil Liberties Lawyer
(Winner of the 1987 THOMAS PAINE AWARD presented
by the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee)
"THOMAS PAINE NEVER DIED"
- 4:10 PM COFFEE/TEA BREAK
- 4:25 PM Sean Wilentz, Professor of History
Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey
"PAINE'S LEGACY"
- 4:50 PM Mr. David Henley, Researcher
"THOMAS PAINE: AN EMERGING PORTRAIT"
- 5:15 PM Dr. Robert Muller, former Assistant Secretary-General of the United
Nations, and currently Chancellor of the University for Peace.
**"REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE WORLD
INSPIRED BY THE PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS PAINE"**
- 5:40-6:00 PANEL DISCUSSION: Leo Zonneveld, Bernard Vincent,
Clive Phillpot, Sean Wilentz, Paul O'Dwyer, David Henley,
Robert Muller
- 6:00 PM Dr. Rodrigo Carazo - CLOSING OF THE COLLOQUITUM

Program supported by the Thomas Paine National Historical Association of
New Rochelle, New York, U.S.A., and the Thomas Paine Society in
Nottingham, U.K.

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