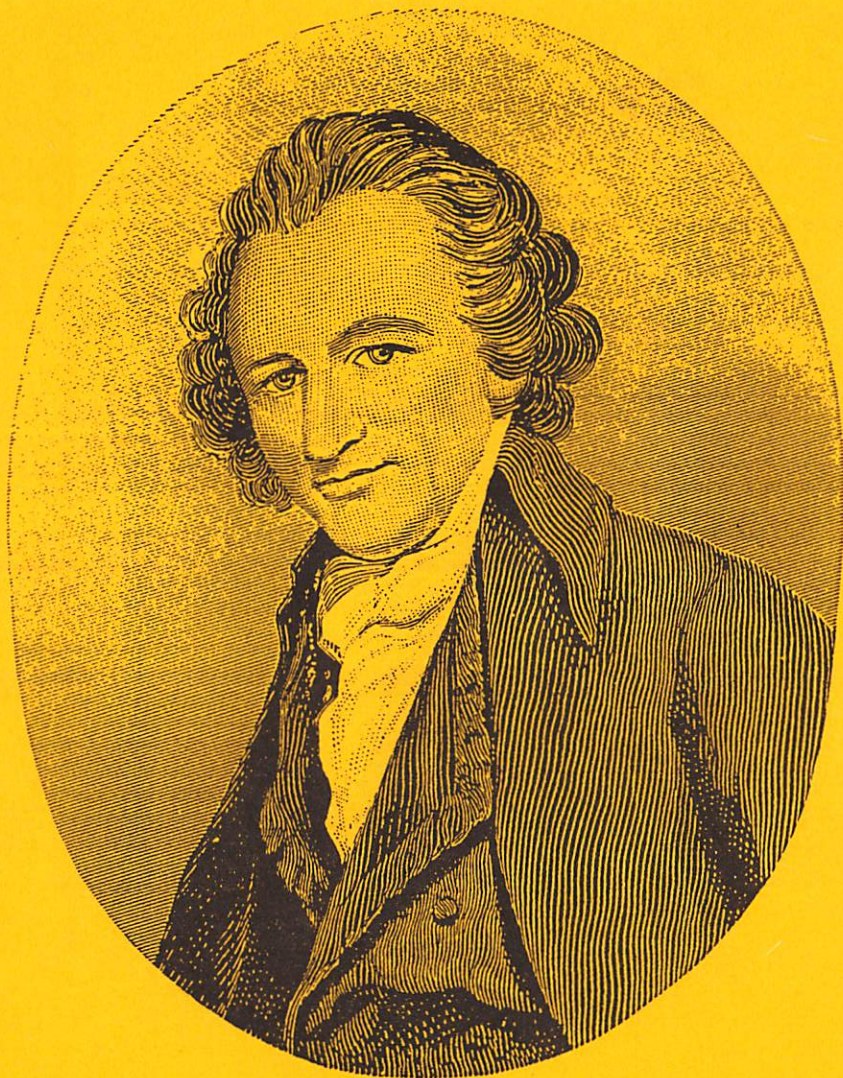


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FROM THE *IRISH WORLD*, 1990.

Contributed by Pádraig Ó Conchúir.

EDITORIAL

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THOMAS "CLIO" RICKMAN, POET, BOOKSELLER AND RADICAL PUBLISHER

Edmund and Ruth Frow

THOMAS RICKMAN, who was dubbed an eccentric in one journal, at an early age was accorded the title, "Clio" by his literary friends in Lewes. Many of his youthful effusions were signed "Clio" and he subsequently used it as one of his names.

Rickman was a classical scholar who had travelled widely. He was given the accolade of "Citizen of the World" for "having made truth the object of his discovery, and man that of his affection, sees the vices and errors of every country, and loves virtue in all."

Thomas Rickman was born into a Quaker family at Cliff, near Lewes, on 27th. July, 1761. He was the son of John Rickman (c.1715-1789) and Elizabeth nee Peter. He was educated at the public school at Coggenhall in Essex, where he studied the dead languages but stole away to read the more congenial Telemachus and Homer.

His literary talent blossomed early and at the age of ten he sent his first essay to the *Monthly Ledger*. At thirteen he was apprenticed to his uncle, a surgeon in Maidenhead, where he remained for five years. During this time he read extensively, Bolingbroke, Hulme, Shaftsbury, Voltaire, Rousseau and Helveticus. He continued to write both prose and poetry for periodic publications.

While in Maidenhead he met and married Miss Maria Emlyn of Windsor, the third daughter of an architect. Sadly she died after only eleven months marriage in 1784. Grief stricken, Rickman returned to Lewes to join his father and brother in a mercantile business. He left the Quakers although he had only been a nominal member. Unable to settle he went to London where he led a restless life. He then went to Holland and Catalonia in Spain.

On his return to London in 1785, he set up in business as a printer and bookseller, first at 39, Leadenhall Street, then at 7, Upper Marylebone Street, "where all Periodical Publications are regularly served, and Newspapers franked to any part of England - Copper plates elegantly engraved - Printing and Bookbinding done in the best manner - an extensive Circulating Library." He wrote and published, *A Fallen Cottage*, the list of subscribers testifying to the wide support for his work.

In 1792, he met Thomas Paine with whom he had frequently corresponded. They soon became firm friends and Paine benefited from Rickman's knowledge of languages and classical education. Paine lived with Rickman and his second wife and whilst there he completed the second part of *Rights of Man*. On the small table on which it was written, Rickman later affixed a plaque with a commemorative inscription. This is now in the National Museum of Labour History.

Rickman and Paine joined The Society for Constitutional Information which, after reaching a low ebb had been revived. Rickman's membership of the society was proposed by Paine and seconded by Home Tooke on June 22nd. 1792. He was formally elected on the 29th (Minute Book S.C.1 T.S.11/962, 103r, 115r, 91r, 93r). It met at the Crown and Anchor tavern and members included Lord Dare, Sir James Mackintosh, Home Tooke, Thomas Holcroft, William Sharp, the engraver, Joseph Gerald, John Richter, the publisher and Capt.Perry, publisher of *The Argus*. Rickman describes friends that he shared with Paine. They moved in radical circles with Joel Barlow, Mary Wolstonecraft and Joseph Priestly, among others (Rickman. *Life of Paine*. pp.100-1).

The government, anxious to keep an eye on Paine, sent a spy, Charles Ross, to watch the activities in Rickman's house. Paine, already awaiting trial, was alerted to the danger he was in and fled to France. Two Bills were found against Rickman, for publishing the second part of *Rights of Man* and *The Letter to the Addressers*. To avoid imprisonment, Rickman joined Paine in France and did not appear publicly in England for two years. His life in France is described in detail in his *Life of Paine* (pp.123-169).

In 1794, Rickman returned and resumed his work in London. His wife had kept the business going in extremely difficult circumstances.

When the Corresponding Society sent two delegates, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald to assist the reformers at their convention in Edinburgh, the authorities arrested them, and after a mockery of a trial, sentenced them to fourteen years transportation. Rickman did not forget Margarot and in 1814 wrote a tribute to him: *Elegiac Lines to the Memory of Maurice Margarot*.

Thus, thus have fared the BEST in every clime,
Witness the records of revolving time;
And such, intrepid MARGAROT, they fate,
The victim of a blind misguided state
The friend of JUSTICE and of TRUTH you stood,
Hurling defiance to Oppression's clan,
And nobly labouring for the *RIGHTS OF MAN!*

Worse followed. The passing of the Two Acts at the end of 1795 prohibited seditious assemblies and made it a treasonable offence to incite to hatred or contempt the king or the constitution or government by speech or in writing.

Many reformers fled to America. Others, like Thelwall, left London. But Rickman found ways of using the limited legal scope available, avoiding imprisonment by slipping across to France when things became too hot. He continued to write and publish and in 1800 he hit back at the government in a poem, *Mr. Pitt's Democracy Manifest*. In 1801, the authorities tightened security and checked Rickman's overseas mail.

In 1802, Rickman crossed the Channel and spent a week with Paine at Havre to help his friend prepare for his journey to America. On his return to London, he suffered a major tragedy and lost his desk containing three thousand original manuscripts.

In 1803 he wrote and published *An Ode to the Emancipation of the Blacks in San Domingo*.

In 1804 he published a few copies of a pamphlet for his friends. It was entitled, *Thomas Paine to the People of England on the Invasion of England in 1804*. The authorities managed to trap Rickman, sending a policeman in disguise to his shop and he was given a parcel of the pamphlets for delivery to Eastburn in Leeds. Rickman was arrested and his books and papers seized. Although the Attorney General dropped the prosecution after nine months, Rickman and his family suffered considerably. By then Mrs. Rickman had presented her husband with seven children, the boys having been blessed with the names, Paine, Washington, Franklin, Rousseau, Pentarch and Volney. The seventh was probably a girl and her name is not recorded.

Rickman did not let the situation pass without retaliation. He published a poem on *Corruption* which had an extensive sale as a broadsheet.

When dire Corruption devastates the land
 And Whigs and Tories (each a factious band)
 When slaves of pow'r each cursed plan pursue,
 The Rights of Man and Nature to subdue;
 When gaunt oppression fearless holds her course,
 And Vile Hypocrisy is leagued with force,
 Each energy and feeling to destroy,
 That gives man comfort, every joy;
 Banish Corruption from our once blessed shore,
 And wield the scourge of tyranny no more.
 Be to the People faithful, firm, and true -
 And such will ever be their conduct toward you.

Rickman was always ready to respond to current events. In 1806 when William Pitt died, he wrote:

Reader! with eye indignant view this bier;
 The foe of all the human race lies here.
 With talents small, and those directed, too,
 Virtue and truth and wisdom to subdue,
 He lived to every noble motive blind,
 And died, the execration of mankind.

When Thomas Paine died in 1809, he left Rickman a legacy of half the proceeds from the sale of North Farm.

In 1818 Rickman and a few other friends of Paine, induced Richard Carlile to issue a cheap edition of *The Age of Reason*. This had not been sold legally in Britain since 1797. The following year, Rickman published his *Life of Thomas Paine*, an impressionist account. This led to controversy with W.T.Sherman, whose own biography of Paine had appeared in July 1819. Sherwin relied largely on correspondence between Paine and his many friends and acquaintances.

By 1820, Rickman was in reduced circumstances and ill. He was forced to sell his house in Carnaby Street. So difficult were his circumstances that Francis Place sent him a gift of £3 in March, 1832. Rickman died on 15th. of February, 1834, aged 74, and was buried at the Friend's Burial Ground at Bunhill Fields.

Rickman was one of Thomas Paine's closest friends. He wrote one of the first sympathetic biographies of him. His poetry, usually published under the name of Clio, was ephemeral. He responded to situations as they arose and often composed on journeys or walking or even skating. Well received at first and often set to music and sung in taverns and at radical meetings, they were soon forgotten.

His courage as a publisher and bookseller in the period of the radical reform movement give him a place in history beside Danial Isaac Eaton, Thomas Spence and Richard (Citizen) Lee.



TPS secretary, Eric Paine with Chad Goodwin, chairman of the society, standing before the statue of Thomas Paine at Thetford, after he had completed a 227 mile sponsored cycle ride in aid of Amnesty International, and to mark the 200th Anniversary of the publication of Paine's, *Rights of Man*. The journey was made via Lewes and Islington.

DEMOCRACY, WAR AND THE RIGHTS OF MAN

John Keane

ARE dictatorships more bellicose than democracies? Is democracy therefore a way of reducing the incidence of war, or eliminating it altogether?

These questions are today so topical that it is forgotten just how recent and unusual they are. Until quite recently, war had been regarded by those who studied it as a sad necessity. Although there had been a long string of laments for the destructiveness of war, discourses on the nature of war, and even a category of books, such as Homer's *Iliad* and Tacitus's *Germania*, that inspired wars, war was treated as human fate. The roots of war in the fabric of social and political life, and the possibility of avoiding it, not just postponing it to a more opportune moment, remained obscure. War was considered as natural as thunder and lightning, an inevitable part of the lottery of human life on earth, a sticky web that the gods had spun to trap men and women into periodically experiencing the dubious joy of victory mixed with pain and defeat.

During the eighteenth century, a revolution erupted in the western understanding of war. War began to be studied by writers who distinguished between the causes and pretexts of war. They regarded war as a thoroughly human affair for which there are thoroughly human remedies and, most radically, some of them proposed that a global fight for democratic institutions is the best antidote to war. Thomas Paine's, *Rights of Man*, was the first great, shocking exploration of this latter idea.

Others before Paine had certainly suggested the connection between democracy and war. But Paine examined this link with a degree of fire and intellectual energy unknown to his predecessors. The originality and thunderous impact of *Rights of Man*, as well as its massive sales - it is the biggest selling political book ever published in the English language - mark it off as the masterpiece of English political thinking. *Rights of Man* has lost none of its relevance as the centuries change. It still unsettles our times, in part because Paine was a grand master of sparkling, diamond hard prose. He had genius in his fingers. He was the first modern democrat to hammer out a colloquial style avoiding purple passages, sentences without meaning and general humbug. War and democracy were for him too serious a matter to be entrusted to armies and governments. The fight for democracy and against war required a new style of writing, a fresh syntax of politics which could be spoken and understood by the most humble citizens. 'As it is my design to make those that can scarcely read understand,' Paine once wrote, 'I shall therefore avoid every literary ornament and put it in language as plain as the alphabet.' That remark was perhaps overdrawn, but *Rights of Man* undoubtedly bubbles with directness, clarity and force. It assumed knowledge of no authority but the Bible. It side-stepped Latin and French phrases (or provided simultaneous translations in the rare passages where they were employed). It deployed imagery from the daily life of commoners and reduced pompous language designed to impress cultivated readers. Paine designed *Rights of Man* to appeal to individuals like himself - a mass public audience of artisans, working people and lesser professionals - and wrote it in a tone full of impish confidence, jovial ferocity and disrespect for bellicose power accountable only to itself.

Paine drafted the book during the winter months of 1790-91. He had returned to his native England from America three years earlier to visit his aging mother in Thetford, to mourn the recent death of his father and to publicise his plans for the world's first single span, wrought iron bridge. Even before *Rights of Man* Paine had won an international reputation as a citizen extraordinary. His arrival in England had understandably attracted

intense excitement, alarm and loathing. Paine had burst onto the stage of international public life as an authentic commoner. His manners were rough and ungracious. He was a burping misfit and farting rebel in an age cut by knife-sharp divisions of courtly respectability, wealth and power. In his early years in England he had been employed as a corset-maker, ship's hand, exciseman and teacher. He later displayed brilliance as an inventor and self-educated scientist, and during the American Revolution he had excelled as a soldier, diplomat and provocative pamphleteer.

Living dangerously on the reputation attracted by all these achievements, and angered by Edmund Burke's recent vicious attack on the French Revolution, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Paine lodged at the Angel Inn in Islington in early November of 1790. He no doubt had wanted to write in peace and quiet. Islington village, tucked away from the bustle and filth of central London, seemed to offer that, although Hogarth's painting of the inn, with its clutter of barking dogs and whinnying horses, laughing children and drunken gentlemen, suggests that Paine's residence there was anything but tranquil. In an age of rootlessness, Paine had a high regard for anniversaries. He began writing on or around the 4th of November, the anniversary of the Glorious Revolution, whose pompous centenary celebrations three years before had convinced him that England remained in the grip of despotism. From under his hotel room window, Paine would have heard the chants of the ragged-trousered street children, with their 'Please to remember, the fifth of November'. Peering through his window, he would have seen the effigies of Guy Fawkes, which within two years his own effigy was to replace.

Working feverishly, often at night by flickering candlelight, Paine crafted over 50,000 words in less than three months. The pace of his quill matched the utter seriousness of his subject. *Rights of Man* portrayed the world of the late eighteenth century as a bleak house of despotism. With the notable exception of America and France, Paine complained, the world is bullied by irresponsible, unaccountable power. Unelected despotic governments encourage mutual suspicion and fear among citizens, who are consequently driven away from themselves and from each other. The public exercise of reason is treated as treasonable. Citizens are thought of as ignorant and submissive, as mere dumb animals. Their liberties, properties and lives are put up for grabs. They are subjected to the whims and designs of the governing class which, being driven by private greed, corruption and the will to survive, tries everything under the sun to exploit its citizens. Since the power of this class is unchecked by public criticism, the age of despotism is stuffed full of bellicose epithets. It is a reckless and miserable age of war - an Augean stable of secrecy, dissembling, plots, gun-running, armies and showers of blood. War, wrote Paine, is 'the art of conquering at home', and this is the greatest of its tragedies: the reign of war is self-perpetuating and the accession of democracy is inevitably postponed. Despotic governments make war in order to better extract public support and reap taxation harvests from their populations; in turn, constant wars between these governments force them to arm themselves to the teeth, and this increases their ability to govern and, hence, their lust for power over their citizens.

Paine refused to see this weeping mass of despotism and war as inevitable. He was convinced that the boil of despotism would burst. He sensed, correctly, that war is the greatest of all agents of change in modern times, that it wipes out banalities, speeds up all processes and, above all, brings realities to the surface. The remaining question for him was whether the approaching democratic revolutions in modern government could be made through 'reason and accommodation' rather than blind 'convulsions'. Pointing to the example of the American Revolution, Paine stressed the need for peacefully resisting

despotic government and democratizing its power. He proposed the seemingly naive but entirely original idea that if citizens in sufficient numbers keep their nerve, stand erect and claim their dignity, then military power loses its authority, its force becoming ineffective, even laughable. Paine saw that military governments cannot rest on the tips of their bayonets. He also argued that citizens in democratic republics are unlikely to want to go to war, since they have too much to lose. When the rulers of a state act as if they own the state and its citizens it is the simplest thing in the world to declare war on other states; by contrast, when citizens themselves are required to decide whether or not war is to be declared and then pay for it personally with their money and their lives, it is only natural that they think twice and recoil from war.

This reasoning explains why Paine rejected the old monarchic doctrine of Charles Stuart and others that all the people had to with laws was to obey them. In prophetic lines which remain pertinent today, he warned of the necessity 'at all times to watch against the attempted encroachment of power, and to prevent its running to excess.' And he insisted, in language much more radical than any previous or subsequent English political writer, that government is legitimate only when it is based on the active consent of the governed. Citizens, wrote Paine, are never to be confounded with their governments. All individuals, male and female, black and white, are born with equal natural rights. These rights (to free speech, public assembly and religious worship, for example) predispose citizens of all countries to act freely and peacefully and to respect each other as equals. Rights are the Archimedean point, the 'fixed and steady principle' for measuring the legitimacy of governments and the comfort and happiness of citizens. Natural rights, by definition, cannot be relinquished, transferred or divided up, and - here Paine savages Burke and other monarchists of his day - no generation can deny them to their heirs. Every generation must be free to act for itself. The presumption that it can govern from beyond the grave is despotic, a ridiculous relic from the time when kings and queens assumed their immortality by disposing of their crowns and their subjects by will upon their death-beds. 'The idea of hereditary legislators', wrote Paine mockingly, 'is as inconsistent as that of hereditary judges, or hereditary juries and as absurd as an hereditary mathematician, or an hereditary wise man; and as absurd as an hereditary poet-laureate.' The dead and the unborn have no authority. In politics tradition counts for nothing. Only the living can exercise rights to freedom and equality. States are therefore democratic, he argued, only when they are based on the active consent of naturally free and equal citizens, and when their consent is expressed continuously through parliamentary representative mechanisms that are protected by a written constitution. Government without a written constitution is nonsense.

Paine harboured no illusions about the efficacy of written constitutions, despite their vital importance in controlling state power by specifying such matters as the duration of parliaments, the frequency of elections, freedom of the press, the powers of the judiciary, the conditions under which war can be declared and the prohibition of taxation without representation. Written statements do not by themselves secure the rights of citizens. That is why Paine argued, in wholly original and strikingly contemporary terms, that the distinction between civil society and the state is fundamental. He thought that democracy requires the state to govern civil society neither too much nor too little, and that while a more democratic order cannot be built *without* state power it also cannot be built *through* state power. The weakening of despotism and the strengthening of democracy involves limiting the scope and power of modern governments, as far as possible, in favour of citizens organizing themselves across national boundaries in households, markets, clubs, working places, churches and community organisations. Paine recognised, again with

brehtaking insight, that the leap towards democracy is perilous. Despotisms have a nasty habit of ruling from their graves; their mischief is more easily begun than ended. Despotism divides citizens into rich and poor and accustoms them to living in toadish ways. Paine therefore concluded that democratic governments are obliged to protect and empower their citizens. The warfare states of his time would require conversion into democratic welfare states. Citizens would need to be provided with transfer payments which would be 'not of the nature of a charity, but of a right'. Funded through general taxation, these welfare measures would be targeted on the elderly, the widowed, the poor and unemployed, disbanded soldiers and other specific groups of citizens disadvantaged by despotism.

Paine completed *Rights of Man* on his fifty-fourth birthday, January 29th., 1791. He celebrated his release from weeks of knuckle-grinding writing in a downstairs lounge room of the Angel Inn, with several bottles of wine, followed by brandy, with his closest friend, Thomas Rickman, a bookseller. Well after midnight, Paine clambered upstairs, collapsed into bed, and snored his way through to noon. Shortly after waking he resumed his quill for the last time on the manuscript, sketching an elegant dedication to his friend George Washington. Paine had a habit of writing satirical dedications, but this one to Washington, alongside whom Paine had fought in the campaigns against the British, was decidedly reverent in tone:

SIR,

I present you a small treatise in defence of those principles of freedom which your exemplary virtue hath so eminently contributed to establish. That the Rights of Man may become as universal as your benevolence can wish, and that you may enjoy the happiness of seeing the New World regenerate the Old, is the prayer of

Sir,

Your much obliged, and
Obedient humble servant,
THOMAS PAINE

Next day Paine passed the manuscript to the well-known London publisher, Mr.J.Johnson, who set about printing it in time for the opening of Parliament and Washington's birthday on 22nd. February. As the bound copies piled up in the printing shop, Johnson was visited repeatedly by government agents. Fearing the book police, and terrified by the prospect of arrest and bankruptcy, he decided to suppress the book on the very same day of its scheduled publication, and to destroy his entire stock. A few copies had already passed into private hands, and only several of these have survived. The British Library has a copy on its shelves, bound in burgundy leather and wedged ignominiously among an assortment of unrelated pamphlets by other authors. Two hundred years on, it is almost impossible to imagine the public fuss that was aroused when this small book appeared in another three-shilling edition three weeks later on March 13th., 1791.

Rights of Man made Paine the greatest political figure of his generation. It refuted the myth that the English are incapable of writing or reading political philosophy, and it proved to be one of those rare books of great political insight and originality which outlive their time and place of birth. It is easy in retrospect to spot its flaws of argument, but its thesis that despotism breeds war just as war breeds despotism, remains

compelling, and its defence of democracy as a remedy for war has been indirectly proved by the fact that in modern times no two democratic republics have ever declared war on each other. *Rights of Man* created a sensation. Its attempt to defend the French Revolution and to beard the British lion in its den sparked the fieriest ever public debate about political principles. It provoked nearly five hundred published replies. During the years 1791-93, Paine and 'Paineites' were constantly discussed in London newspapers - for the most part unfavourably. No book ever sold like it. Several hundred thousand copies were distributed before the government of Pitt decided to suppress the book, the author and the agitation he excited. At first, according to his friend, Thomas Rickman, Paine tried hard to ignore the noise and to lead a quiet, uncluttered life. 'Mr. Paine's life in London was a quiet round of philosophical leisure and enjoyment. It was occupied in writing, in a small epistolary correspondence, in walking about with me to visit different friends, occasionally lounging at coffee-houses and public places, or being visited by a select few... At this time he read but little, took his nap after dinner, and played with my family at some game in the evening, as chess, dominoes, and drafts, but never at cards; in recitations, singing, music; or passed it in conversation.

Rights of Man gradually shredded this routine. The Pitt government reacted hysterically. In the middle of 1792, after the publication of a sequel to the book, it issued a proclamation against 'wicked' and 'seditious' writings. Without saying so directly, the proclamation was in fact designed to suppress the book. Paine's publishers and booksellers were harassed, arrested and condemned. Paine was executed and burned in effigy in hundreds of communities throughout Britain. Paine himself was detained on trumped-up debt charges. His daily life became ever more peppered with gossip, legal threats and government-sponsored meetings called to denounce *Rights of Man*. The constant threat of bailiffs, constables and gaolers and the hostility of local magistrates, squires, parsons and other members of the respectable classes convinced him that reform of British politics was for the time being impossible. His friend William Blake also convinced him that the reign of panic and terror would soon make him 'a dead man'. Paine fled into permanent exile, to France for a while, and then to America.

Paine never made money from *Rights of Man*, donating the royalties to various citizens' causes. He spent his final years living alone in poverty in taverns, shops and other shabby rented rooms in Greenwich Village. His health worsened daily, and during his final months he was confined to bed. His political interests were kept alive by friends, who read newspapers to him each day. But his pen withdrew from public service and his figure quietly slipped below the horizon of public life. Paine died in the early hours of June 8th., 1809, and was buried the following day in New Rochelle. A handful of people attended - a Quaker watchmaker, a Frenchwoman and her two little boys, two blacks and six Irishmen.

The author of *Rights of Man* suffered the condescension of posterity in many ways. He had known virtually every leading contemporary political figure in America, France and England, and yet not one of them publicly praised him after his death. An obituary in the leading New York newspaper described how 'he lived long, done some good, and much harm.' A few months later, James Cheetham's biography appeared, reinforcing the politicians' image of Paine as a hot-blooded leveller and drunken atheist. And one cold winter's night in 1819, the famous English journalist, William Cobbett, travelled to New Rochelle, dug up Paine's bones and shipped them in a crate to England where he tried, unsuccessfully, to raise money for a monument to 'the common sense of a great man'. Cobbett kept the skeleton until his death in 1835, bequeathing it to his son. That son

went into bankruptcy and the skeleton was seized along with his property, but the Lord Chancellor refused to consider it an asset. For several years the bones were kept by a day labourer. They then passed into the hands of a furniture dealer. Their whereabouts are today unknown. It was left to Paine's successors to piece together his remains, to cultivate his appreciation of democracy, and to reconsider why he came to be so loved, but also so hated for voting against war and for democracy.



"Oh, I'll print it all right, Mr. Paine—but a title like 'Common Sense' isn't going to appeal to very many people."

City resident urges visit to Paine exhibit

To the Editor:

The photo shows the details of Thomas Paine's Iron Bridge that was designed here in Bordentown. The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in Washington, D. C. has a display showing the iron segments design used on Paine's Bridge.

The design was approved by France's Academy of

Sciences and the England's Royal Society also. He was granted patents in both nations.

In England, Peter Whiteside backed a bridge company making Paine his partner. The Walker Iron Works in Yorkshire was to cast the bridge parts for the 90-foot span model.

Mr. William Yates, foreman at Walkers was in charge of the whole

operation finally erecting the 90 foot span in London. They charged a fee to walk over their bridge, but they were hoping to sell the design to landowners and government leaders too.

In October 1789, Paine was imprisoned due to debts of 620 pounds and he was released by friends. No buyers came forward for the bridge and it was dismantled. The Walker Iron Works returned it to Rotherham Yorkshire where, in 1793 Rowland Burdon engaged the Walker Works to construct iron parts for a bridge with a 236-foot span. He used all of Paine's designs and

improved on many.

Mr. Robert Stephenson, who built our John Bull Locomotive, said the bridge built by Burdon was "a structure, which as regards it's proportions, and the small quantity of material employed in its construction, will probably remain unrivaled."

Paine was now involved in the French Revolution and did not bring legal action that his patent was being used by Burdon.

The 29th of January will be the 255th birthdate of Thomas Paine.

George W. Earle, Jr.
Bordentown

REGISTER-NEWS

Combining the Bordentown Register and
Florence Township News
ESTABLISHED 1845

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE PRESENT DAY BRITISH MONARCHY AND TITLES

Eric Paine

AS I sat listening to the speeches at the *Sunday Observer* 200th Anniversary of their own foundation and of the publication of *Rights of Man*, my mind wandered as Princess Anne was giving the Thomas Paine Lecture, to his thoughts on titles. 'Titles baffle even the powers of fancy and are chimerical nonsense', he wrote. However, it was particularly appropriate for *The Observer* to link their own anniversary with that of *Rights of Man*, as Paine and Paineites were in the vanguard for the fight for freedom of the press.

There were eight of us present from the TPS, by kind permission of the newspaper, to hear Princess Anne, Donald Treford, Editor of *The Observer*, and Edward Du Cann speak. The princess clearly respected Paine, albeit in a slightly whimsical manner, and it was great to hear his name mentioned so often with admiration. Our rather ambivalent feelings at being there at all were eased by the fact of the event being in aid of Save the Children Fund, of which the princess is president.

However, I could not bring myself to call Princess Anne, "your Royal Highness", when introduced to her (I think Thomas Paine may have got on well with her as both liked horses), good egg as she obviously is, in a haughty sort of way. I cannot see justification for the very high class social security that royalty and its hangers on receive. Probably to most people in Britain the continuance of royalty, or not, is hardly a burning issue, but glancing through *Whitakers Almanac* recently made me realise how strongly feudal elements remain in this country, and how much is shelled out to archaic remnants.

The Queen's annuity, tax free, of course, is approximately four and a half million pounds. She has fifty-eight household staff, twenty-seven in the Privy Purse and Treasurer's office. The Lord Chamberlain's office has sixty-five people, the Royal Collection office twenty. Her ecclesiastical household numbers fifty-nine people and there are thirteen medical staff, while the Master of the Household has a staff of twenty. There are also household staffs for each of the other royal households. No doubt the dubious origins of the Queen's private estate pays for some or most of this, but Thomas Paine would not be amused to find that after 200 years many amusing and quaint offices still exist. These include, Women of the Bedchamber, Ushers, Keeper of the Jewel House, Keeper of Swans, Clerk to the Closet, Apothecary, Bargemaster, etc. There is little merit in the Queen paying for her horses and their upkeep from her private estates when we reflect on how they fell into her lap.

The Queen Mother receives approximately half a million pounds, the Duke of Edinburgh three quarters of a million, the Duke of York, £189,000, Princess Anne, £154,000, Margaret, £148,000. The Duke of Kent gets £161,500, Princess Alexandra £154,000, the Duke of Gloucester, £119,000, Prince Edward, £20,000. Add to this the twenty-five other dukes, 220 earls, 150 viscounts, 900 barons (420 hereditary) plus thousands of baronettes, knights, privy councillors, members of ancient orders such as Garter, Thistle, etc., and the holders of Empire Crosses (though we no longer have an empire), which together constitute a formidable bulwark for the continuation of monarchy and social divisions. Having a vested interest in it's continuation, they operate a kind of superficially soft-sell KGB to maintain the status quo. Because, thankfully, Communism has collapsed in Russia, we should not ignore the abuses of the opposite extreme.



The new Paine monument at Islington, London

The unelected House of Lords, which Thomas Paine attacked, is still there and likely to remain so until we have a proper written constitution, Bill of Rights, proportional representation, etc. 'The first thing is that every nation has a right to establish a constitution', said Paine. The sums paid to those attending the House of Lords daily when it sits must be collectively considerable, added to which is the administrative and other costs. This is a waste of tax payers money, considering how little real power the Lords has. Peers daily allowances (1988 figures) are as follows: overnight accommodation £57, day subsistence and incidental travel, £21, secretarial expenses, £22, and they have the right to recover travelling expenses, probably 1st class, between their estates or homes and London.

In December 1988 there were twenty-six bishops (including two arch-bishops), 784 hereditary peers, 379 life peers (65 female) entitled to attend. At this time twenty-one lords were members of the government, which speaks volumes about the evils of Thatcherism. There were also 84 peers without writs, 169 on leave of absence and 12 disclaimed for life. Average daily attendance in 1987-88 was said to be 333.

One wonders if they were all in committee when the House of Lords is shown on TV. No doubt there are some really good public spirited members of the Lords, but Thomas Paine's sweeping assertion that nobility meant NOABILITY, is probably true for the majority.

As to monarchy and its residual powers, with full Europeanisation nearly upon us, something which Thomas Paine would have endorsed if properly constituted, the time is long overdue for a referendum on whether the House of Lords should continue or not. This masquerade should have long been over.

A LETTER FROM ERIC PAINE TO THE DAILY MAIL

FOLLOWING publication of some hostile references to Paine in a feature written by Dermot Purgavie published in *The Daily Mail*, TPS secretary, Eric Paine wrote a letter replying to the article. The editor of the paper saw fit not to publish it and only after Eric Paine had threatened to take the matter up with the Press Complaints Council was a truncated version of his letter published. The text of the edited version is given below.

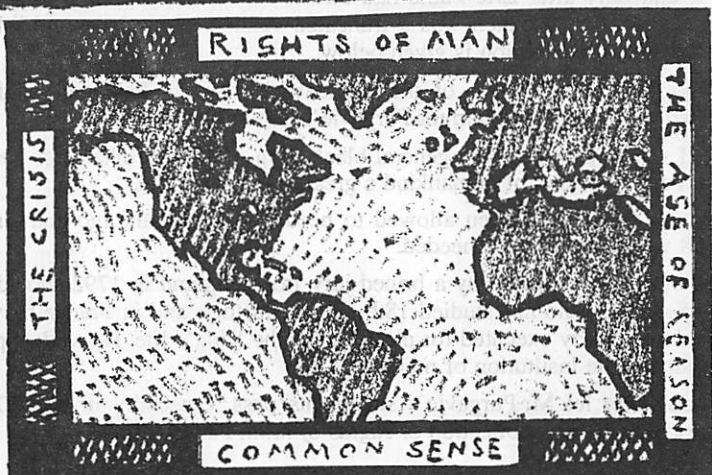
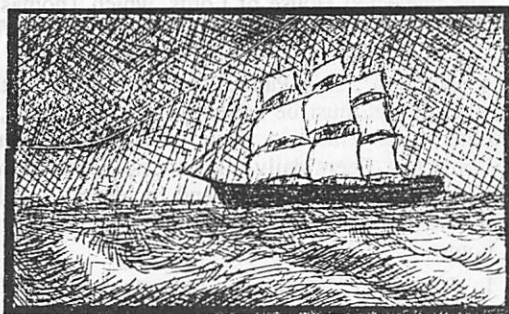
'It was good to see mention of the birthday of Thomas Paine, the radical political writer in the Mail (Dermot Purgavie's column).

However I was appalled by the general blackening of Paine's character by Mr Purgavie. Paine was one of humankind's greatest benefactors.

If the British people had been allowed to heed him 200 years ago and since Charter 88 would not now be needed.

The reason he was outlawed by a bribed jury from England in 1792 should be obvious to anyone who has studied 18th century history, and in France he was imprisoned and nearly executed for pleading for the King's life. He said: 'Spare the man but kill the institution of monarchy.'

I felt I could not let Mr.Purgavie's statements pass, especially in this 200th anniversary year of the publication of *Rights of Man*, Part II.'



UNRECOGNISED PROPHET

Pádraig Ó Conchúir

AN article about Thomas Paine was published here (the Irish language column of the *Irish World*) a couple of years ago. He was born in Thetford, Norfolk, of Quaker stock in 1737. After passing time as a corset-maker and as a Customs officer he emigrated to New England. When dissension arose between the government and the colonists he sided with the colonists. The authorities might perhaps have taken the opportunity to kill the revolution with kindness.

It has to be admitted that Paine's pen was mightier than a sword. His dispatches encouraged the colonists in revolt. His *Common Sense* helped strengthen their republicanism.

On this side of the Atlantic, Edmund Burke argued in favour of the colonists and advocated reform of the system in New England. As a result of that when he (Paine) returned to England he was friendly towards that Irishman.

Before this, Washington's army had won and a republic was set up - the United States. Marquis de Lafayette had helped the Americans. Those Americans had given an example and before long a republic had replaced the monarchy in France. When the French king and queen were beheaded, Burke wrote a book condemning the revolution. This, in turn, prompted Paine to compose an answer, *Rights of Man*.

In the north of London was a coaching inn, The Angel, and it was here that Paine wrote the first part of his book. The book frightened the government. Would it not spread revolution in the United Kingdom, not to speak of Ireland? It was eventually banned and ordered formally to be burned by the common hangman, and Paine had to escape to France. The government made a determined effort to prevent publication of Paine's book, however, *Rights of Man* was widely read, particularly among Presbyterians in the north of Ireland. In 1798, the discovery of a book by Paine in a peasants cabin automatically confirmed the possessor was a Republican, in so far as the official terrorists of Dublin Castle were concerned.

Paine was not the bloodthirsty monster as depicted by government propaganda. When he went to France he had the reputation of being the sage of republicanism, and was elected to the National Assembly. Later he was imprisoned and would have been executed if Robespierre had not been overthrown.

1991 marked the Bicentenary of the publication of *Rights of Man*. The Angel no longer exists, but has given its name to a tube station serving the Northern Line and adjacent districts. A fine new building has been erected near the inn's site, and the developers, hearing of the inn being the place where the first part of the celebrated book was written, and sponsored a competition for a Paine monument. The successful entrant was Kevin Jordan, whose bronze obelisk was erected in the interior court at a cost of £50,000. Very little publicity was given to the unveiling, and while the mayor of Islington, Joan Herbert (an Irish lady) along with the local Member of Parliament were present, the unveiling was basically a non-event.

In my view it was comparable to the 1916 Easter Rising commemoration in Ireland. Presumably the US Embassy had agreed that either the ambassador or some other dignitary would participate, but had second thoughts and pulled out, perhaps for fear of offending the royal family. An imaginary scenario? I do not think so. The non-event establishes that Paine is still recognised (negatively) as a dangerous subversive, although he has been dead almost two centuries!

FROM THE *IRISH WORLD*, 1990.

Contributed by Pádraig Ó Conchúir.

A LITTLE while ago this column was dealing with the Trojan War. Undoubtedly trade and power figured in that war, but according to Homer it began because Helen had left her husband Menelaus. It was a war over markets, but nominally to enforce extradition.

Closer to Britain, Fergus Mac Ri fled from Ulster to Connacht. The cattle raid had begun and Fergus accompanied the Connacht army before the king of Ulster had an opportunity to seek his extradition by Queen Mauve.

That king of Ulster, Conchubhar, had many troubles, including difficulties with Deirdre and the sons of Uisne. That woman and the three sons fled to Scotland. The king did not try to have them extradited, but sent a messenger to entice them back to Eamhain Mhaca near Armagh.

Towards the end of the Year of the French (1798), James Napper Tandy landed in County Donegal from a French ship. At the time he was a senior officer in the French (revolutionary) army. At all events he heard that Wolfe Tone had been captured and that the Dublin Castle authorities had been victorious. Accordingly he left by boat for Scandinavia and went from there to Hamburg.

From the Middle Ages until the 19th century Hamburg had been a free city belonging to the Hanseatic League. The English put pressure on the authorities there to extradite Tandy, and they did so. The authorities, though, appeared to have been ashamed of their act, and were everywhere regarded with disfavour. When an official letter from the city was sent to Napoleon he refused to accept it because of their treachery in respect of Tandy.

Thomas Paine wrote to Lord Cornwallis, who was in Ireland at the time and who had taken part in the war against the American revolutionaries. He reminded Cornwallis of the Andrade affair, and the fate of Major Andrade, plus the fact that British officers may have been held by the French, resulted in the release of Tandy and his return to France. During this time Tandy was much better known than Wolf Tone. In Dublin, where for a time he was mayor, he was known as a great orator, however, in 1798, while he was still in Hamburg, his name was removed from the list of Freemen of the city. He is forgotten now, apart from the song, "The wearing of the Green", which is probably banned from Radio Teiléifis Eireann.

EDITORIAL

R.W.Morrell.

IT was not my intention to include an editorial in this issue, indeed I have tended to avoid them in the past because they usually amount to "letting off steam", so to speak, and I used to do enough of this in the *TPS Newsletter*, in correspondence to the press and such like. However, I felt it to be timely to make a few brief comments on our distinguished president, Michael Foot.

Mr.Foot has been president of the TPS since it was founded in 1963, and I am more than happy to say he remains so to this day, and hopefully for a long time to come. However, with the end of the current Parliament he is to retire from the House of Commons, of which he has been a member since 1945. I would like to wish him well on his retirement, and I am certain all members of the TPS will join me in doing so. Over the years I was secretary, Mr.Foot helped me in many ways in forwarding the aims of the TPS, and I am sure he will continue to do so for our present secretary, Eric Paine.