

ISSN 0049 813

**JOURNAL  
OF  
RADICAL HISTORY**

Incorporating the Bulletin of the  
Thomas Paine Society



Vol. 7. No. 4. Spring 2005

**THE JOURNAL OF RADICAL  
HISTORY**  
(Formerly the TPS Bulletin)

ISSN 0049 813

**Volume 7. Number 4. Spring 2005**

**Editor: Robert Morrell.**

Printed and Published  
by  
**The Thomas Paine Society,  
43, Eugene Gardens,  
Nottingham, NG2 3LF,**

**All communications in respect of this journal and of  
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above.**

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# PAINE'S RIGHTS OF MAN, SWEDENBORGIANISM AND FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN SWEDEN: A PUBLISHING ENIGMA OF 1792

Peter C. Hogg

A copy of the earliest Swedish translation of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, recently acquired by the British Library, illustrates the old tag that 'books have their fates'. The item is a slim octavo volume in plain grey board covers entitled *Menniskans rättigheter* and bearing the imprint *Stockholm, tryckte hos Controlleuren C. G. Cronland, den 11 Julii, 1792* (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The text is an abridged version of part one of Paine's best-seller, first published in London in February 1791. The translator-adaptor was Finnish-born Swedenborgian publicist Carl Fredrik Nordenskiöld (1756-1828).

Such precise dating is most unusual in Swedish imprints of that period, but the significant point is the date itself, which is that on which a draft of an edict restoring relative freedom of the press was signed by Carl, Duke of Södermanland, acting as Regent since the assassination of his brother King Gustav III in March. The actual edict was not promulgated until four days later.<sup>2</sup> This circumstance, together with the fact that S. G. Cronland was a government printer, suggests that the publication of the book played a part in one of the most melodramatic political shifts in modern Swedish history. An examination of the careers of the translator and printer in relation to the events of 1792 strengthens this hypothesis.

The root cause of the crisis was the increasingly autocratic rule of Gustav III since early 1789 when, in the middle of a ruinous war with Russia, he had persuaded the three lower estates of the Diet (Riksdag) to grant him dictatorial powers. When the estate of nobles protested against this diminution of their political role its leaders were arrested, the ancient privy council abolished and commoners were granted certain privileges previously reserved for noblemen. A year later the King made peace with Russia and threw himself into orchestrating a counter-revolutionary crusade

against France. In the autumn of 1791, after the failure of the attempt to rescue the French royal family,<sup>3</sup> he concluded a secret alliance with Russia in preparation for the forthcoming war. Next, in order to raise the revenue need for his foreign policy, he summoned another diet early in the following year. The strict security adopted on that occasion was regarded as a further insult by the nobility and brought to a head a conspiracy organized by its most radical elements, which ended in the mortal wounding of the King at a masked ball in Stockholm opera house on 16 March 1792.

The fact that the King lingered on for a fortnight before dying foiled the coup that had been planned. A regency council consisting of the senior serving officials was installed under the King's more liberal-minded brother Duke Carl, and a number of the conspirators were arrested and interrogated. As soon as the king died, however, the Duke stopped the police investigation, which was threatening to compromise the entire nobility. Although the actual assassin was executed in April, the remaining prisoners were treated with remarkable leniency and almost all pardoned and exiled four months later. While the Regent's chief adviser during this phase was Baron Carl Bonde, his closest friend Baron Gustav Adolf Reuterholm, a spokesman for the nobles at the Diet of 1789, was recalled from exile in Italy. The supporters and placemen of the former regime, led by the dead King's favourite, Count Gustav Mauritz Armfelt, saw the writing on the wall. Both sides prepared for a showdown.

In May an envoy of the French government, Raymond Verinac de Saint-Maur, arrived in Stockholm and made contact with Bonde and the former ambassador in Paris, Baron Erik Magnus Staël von Holstein. The latter arranged a meeting between the Duke and Verinac on 24 June. By then the issue of whether Sweden should join or stay out of the coalition against France had divided the conservative 'royalists' and the liberal 'patriots' (including most of the aristocracy) into a 'war' and a 'peace' – or 'Russian' and 'French' – party. The Regent was clearly aligning himself with the latter.<sup>4</sup> A complicating factor was the impact of the democratic ideas emanating from France. The Swedish middle classes were becoming increasingly concerned with the privileges of the nobility, which limited their career prospects in the civil service and armed forces. These concerns were articulated in April by an anonymous pamphlet – widely attributed at the time to the philosophical radical

Thomas Thorild<sup>5</sup> but in fact written by his young acolyte L. M. Philipson – which argued, in true Painite spirit, that aristocratic privileges were an absurd anachronism. The royalists began, mistakenly, to associate the Regent and his inner circle with this 'jacobinism'.

The expected showdown began after the return of Baron Reuterholm to Stockholm on 3 July. As a condition for becoming the Regent's chief minister he insisted on a complete change of senior officials. Within five days he was given a cabinet post, and from then things unfolded with great speed. In a note to Reuterholm written on 9 July the Regent already described himself as 'your humble copyist', busy transcribing the former's draft of the edict on press freedom. The finished version as passed to the interior chancery a day later, when a list of ministerial changes were also drawn up. The edict was signed on 11 July and sent for printing the following day 'with strict orders not to reveal he matter to anyone'.<sup>6</sup>

At 3 p.m. on 12 July Bonde wrote an apprehensive letter to Reuterholm informing him of a plot, supposedly hatched by the conservative leaders in their 'clubs', to 'clip the wings' of the Regent, possibly within hours, and to incite 'the mob' to dispatch Reuterholm, Staël and himself.<sup>7</sup> The only solution, Bonde advised, was to expel the leaders of the 'gang' (*liga*) from the capital forthwith. Reuterholm passed this advice on to the Regent, who agreed to it the same evening. On 14 July, a symbolically loaded date at that time, the printed edict was approved by the Regent and distributed to the churches, where it was publicly read out at services the following day to great acclaim. Count Armfelt at once departed for Italy, while over the next few days the rest of the old guard were sent to take up new duties in distant provinces. Thus began the 'Reuterholm era', which was to last until the end of the Regency four years later.

In addition to these external details, the underlying motives for the edict on press freedom need to be understood before the significance of the printing of *Menniskans rättigheter* on 11 July can be assessed. The sudden reintroduction of a qualified freedom of the press puzzled generations of Swedish historians, some of whom attributed it a personal whim of Reuterholm or a desire on his part to mark the beginning of his regime with a striking act. Others saw it an expression of Bonde's radical anti-Russian

leanings, basing this on a report by the British chargé d'affaires Henry Wesley in October, or suspected that it was intended to encourage muckraking publications for the purpose of discrediting the old regime.

Private comments by persons close to the Regent in fact show that it had two basic aims, namely to win public support in the contest with the conservatives and, equally importantly, to bring extreme political views into the open in order to make it easier to suppress them. The florid preamble to the edict refers to the intention of the crown to prove its devotion to 'the sacred rights of mankind', at a time 'when most of Europe's rulers were busy fortifying their thrones against the people'. In similar vein Gustav III had told his privy council in 1774, before promulgating an earlier edict on press freedom (subsequently nullified by censorship regulations), that: 'A King is enabled by a free press to know the truth, which is so carefully and – alas! – often successfully concealed from him'.<sup>8</sup>

The reason given to the Regent by his ministers for issuing the edict of 1792 is indicated by an entry in the diary of his politically astute wife, the Duchess Charlotta:

What really hastened the proclamation of the regulations on freedom of the press were all the secret plottings that were promoted by the enemies of public peace and which the police proved unable to monitor. Both within the city and in its immediate environs there were disorders and provocative tumults by this gang...with Armfelt in the lead. It was thought that the surest way to uncover the truth, as well as to obtain information about plans to disturb the peace, was to grant freedom to everyone to write openly.<sup>9</sup>

This explanation is confirmed by the reaction of Baron Bonde to the curtailing of that freedom by a decree signed on 21 December 1792 to prevent the publication of subversive literature. A week later Bonde wrote to a friend still arguing, as in July, that instead of restricting press freedom 'one ought...to allow more rather than less to be printed, in order to make all possible discoveries of the intended plans of the Russians and the aristocrats'.<sup>10</sup> by which he meant the royalist party. His views, however, were now out of line with those of the Regent and Reuterholm, who had become rather more concerned about republicanism since the abolition of the French monarchy in October. The execution of Louis XVI in January 1793 decided the matter. From then on the Regency became steadily more conservative, though the policy of neutrality towards France was maintained.

The hidden agenda of the edict of July 1792 provides a context for the roles of those minor actors in the events of the month, the journalist Nordenskiöld and the printer Cronland. C. F. Nordenskiöld began his career as an enthusiast for promoting the ideas of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), but failed to circumvent the ecclesiastical censorship and thus, like other frustrated dissidents, welcomed the French Revolution as preparing the way for a new era of ideological liberty. As a result, he fell foul of the authorities early in 1790, when his journal *Medborgaren* ('The Citizen') was suppressed following the publication of an article with the same title as his later Paine translation.<sup>11</sup> After the banning of another journal a year later he went to England, where he spent the years 1783-6 overseeing the printing of works by Swedenborg.<sup>12</sup>

In England he joined other Swedenborgian compatriots, among them his own elder brother August (who had been employed as an alchemist by Gustav III until 1789 in vain attempts to make gold), the 'projector' Carl Bernhard Wadström and the botanist Adam Afzelius, a pupil of Linnaeus and acquaintance of Sir Joseph Banks. The first two were already members of the Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church in London's Eastcheap, founded by Robert Hindmarsh in 1789, which Afzelius also joined later. Applying Swedenborg's principle of 'the brotherhood of all men in Christ' literally, they all became involved in the British abolition movement and the project to found a settlement for freed slaves in Sierra Leone.<sup>13</sup>

The great publishing sensation in Britain in the early months of 1791 was the appearance of the first part of Paine's *Rights of Man*. Nordenskiöld began to translate the book in London that spring and completed the work at his family home in Finland before returning to Stockholm in the autumn. Before the end of the year a copy of the manuscript was in the hands of the elderly Baron Pechlin, leader of the radical conspiracy against Gustav III.<sup>14</sup> During February 1792 Nordenskiöld arranged for a Swedish version of the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* to be secretly printed in Copenhagen and smuggled into Sweden, where a strict ban now applied to all writings on 'the French matters'.<sup>15</sup> The same route had long been used to bring Swedenborgian texts into the country. He next emerges publicly as the translator of Paine's work in July. The interest in mysticism that he shared with Duke Carl and Reuterholm – he was also the

latter's exact contemporary and countryman, both hailing from Nyland (Uusimaa) province in Finland – together with his personal disenchantment with the old regime, suggest why Nordenskiöld was chosen at that time to play a small part in the transformation of the regency government by an administrative coup.

A few days after the promulgation of the July edict Nordenskiöld's publishing licence was restored to him but, whereas Philipson and others launched new radical papers within weeks, it was not until 6 October that he resumed publication of *Medborgaren*. It reappeared with a supplement containing reprints of the offending article on the rights of man from January 1790 as well as essays, including one 'On Despotism', that had been suppressed in February 1791. In a preface to these reprints Nordenskiöld described how shocked and horrified he had been by the assassination of Gustav III, which may be one of the reasons why he modified his libertarian views and decided to serve the Reuterholm regime.<sup>16</sup> In April 1793 he was instructed to discontinue his journal and take up a diplomatic post in Hamburg, the 'political observatory of Europe', where he remained until 1801. His confidential reports to the regency government and his scurrilous anonymous attacks on its opponents<sup>17</sup> show the extent to which he had become a political tool of Reuterholm.

To return to *Menniskans rättigheter*, a comparison of its text with that of the original reveals some significant differences. The quality of the translation was mercilessly criticized by Nordenskiöld's arch-enemy Johan Henrik Kellgren. In a detailed review of the book in December 1792 the latter charged him with reducing the impact of Paine's ideas by omissions from and distortions of the text, as well as by inserting illogical and contradictory footnotes.<sup>18</sup> Kellgren's strictures were perfectly accurate. Paine's 'Miscellaneous Chapter' and 'Conclusions', where he argues against hereditary monarchy in favour of a republic, are simply omitted from the Swedish version. Expressions such as 'The French Revolution' or 'the friends of the Revolution' are replaced with phrases like 'the ferment in Paris' and 'the Friends of Freedom'. Hostile references to monarchy and to aristocratic titles in the other chapters have been left out, while the translator has added two dozen 'explanatory' footnotes of his own. Where Paine discusses the sovereignty of the people, a notion Nordenskiöld himself had earlier propagated, one of the added footnotes now states: 'Neither the King nor the nation should possess the supreme power; that



belongs to God alone, or to his representation on earth, the Commandments of God, on which public law is founded,<sup>19</sup> Although consistent with Swedenborgian theism, this does, as Kellgren noted, continue the distinct concepts of secular and divine power.

Even more striking is the translator's repeated praise of his country's aristocrats, for instance in his introduction, purportedly written in May 1791. Here Sweden's noblemen are described as 'the enlightened part of the nation, the light and support of freedom', in plain contrast to Paine's contemptuous dismissal of all hereditary privilege. The Swedish aristocracy, Nordenskiöld declared, would 'prove far superior to the nobility of England and France were it only...to expel from its ranks its unworthy members', namely 'those who lend themselves to being the infamous tools of injustice and violence', who 'became treacherous accusers of innocent citizens, or transform themselves into despicable loungers in coffee houses and taverns where, in consort with thugs, they arm their cowardice with big words and stout cudgels'.<sup>20</sup>

This passage is of particular interest. The description of aristocratic agitators bears no relation to events in 1791 but directly recalls the atmosphere in Stockholm during the spring and summer of 1792. The denunciation of 'innocent citizens' must refer to the rumours circulating at that time regarding the complicity in regicide of various liberal aristocrats, not excluding the Regent himself. The final sentence reminds one of the scenario outlined in Bonde's letter of 12 July, where the main charge against his opponents was precisely at they were instigating the lower orders, like the King and Country mobs in England, to support the conservative cause by physical attacks on the leading advocates of reform. Such parallels between Nordenskiöld's alterations to Paine's text and the political objectives of the Reuterholm group, the clumsiness of the excisions and the muddled formulation of additional footnotes, all suggest last-minute consultations and hurried blue-pencilling before the manuscript went to press.<sup>21</sup>

For an understanding of the situation in July 1792 it is also necessary to consider the relationship between printers and the authorities under the aristocratic constitution of that period. Theological censorship was exercised by the church consistories, while political censorship was handled by law officers on a more

informal or discreet basis through a combination of persuasion, threats and bribes, occasionally backed by legal or administrative measures such as fines or the withdrawal of licences. The printer C. G. Cronland seemed to have had several such brushes with the legal authorities. In 1781, not long after becoming the proprietor through marriage of the Kumblin printing establishment, he had produced the early issues of Sweden's first genuine opposition paper, Pehr af Lund's *Wälsignade Tryck-Friheten* ('The Blessed Freedom of the Press', 1781-4). He ceased to print it after being fined for contravening the censorship regulations and was replaced by another printer. Nonetheless, when Thomas Thorild started a second radical journal in 1784 his first printer was again Cronland. Both men were called before the Lord Chancellor, Count Wachtmeister, and escaped prosecution only by apologising and promising to mend their ways. As before, Cronland then withdrew from the enterprise.<sup>22</sup>

At the time of the constitutional crisis early in 1789 Cronland printed at least one tract, *Medborgerliga friheten*, that supported autocracy. In October of that year he was appointed *contolleur* of the printing works of the new National Debt Office (Riksgäldsverket), which were set up exclusively to print bank notes. He would hardly have been employed in that position unless the government fully trusted his discretion in confidential matters, such as printing counterfeit Russian and Swedish currency for distribution during and after the war then in progress in Finland.<sup>23</sup> Alongside his official duties he continued to print commercially under the Kumblin imprint.

After producing *Menniskans rättigheter* in July 1792 Cronland reappears in connection with the curbing of the new press freedom in December, again together with Thorild. The ostensible cause of the decree of 21 December was the new preface Thorild had written for a memorial on popular sovereignty and freedom of the press which he had openly presented six years earlier. Its forthcoming publication had been announced since October.<sup>24</sup> The work was printed by Cronland, delivered by the author himself to a couple of bookshops on 20 December and confiscated on the Duke's order the following day, when the decree was signed and Thorild summoned before the Court of Appeal in Stockholm (till headed by Wachmeister), which was in itself a legal irregularity. On this occasion, unlike 1784, Thorild was committed for trial. At the initial hearing of 22 December, the day on which the new

decree was published, Cronland handed over the manuscript and proof sheets to the court and was then dismissed. The confident bearing of Thorild during the proceedings, which ended in February with a sentence of exile, and his leisurely departure in March for Swedish Pomerania, where he was later appointed university librarian at Greifswald, have given rise to the suspicion that this was an arranged trial. While Thorild himself may have been to some extent duped,<sup>25</sup> Cronland's part in the affair suggests collusion with the government and reinforces the impression that he had played a similar role before.

The Royal Library in Stockholm possesses three copies of *Menniskans rättigheter*, marked A-C. The first copy, identified in pencil on the title page as 'af Thomas Payne', may be the legal deposit copy submitted by Cronland, though the library's register of items received from him unfortunately breaks off in 1791.<sup>26</sup> Copy B bears the manuscript inscription 'Skänkt d. 1792' (presented by the author 16 December 1792) on the verso of the flyleaf, with the later ownership note 'Deleen' added inside the front cover. The former clearly relates to the translator, Nordenskiöld, while the latter in all probability represents Carl Erik Deleen (1767-1850).<sup>27</sup>

A few years afterwards C. E. Deleen was to lease Kumbin's (Cronland's firm) and began a long and successful career as a printer, but in December 1792 he was still serving as a law clerk in the Stockholm Court of Appeal and working on a translation of Locke's *Letters Concerning Toleration*, which C. F. Nordenskiöld helped him to have printed at the beginning of 1793, with an introduction in which Deleen addressed an appeal to the Swedish church authorities for complete religious freedom.<sup>28</sup> Like Thorild, Nordenskiöld and Wadström, Deleen combined deep Swedenborgian convictions with a radical political outlook. Unlike Nordenskiöld, he sustained the latter beyond 1792 and was later to publish many of Thorild's works and be repeatedly fined for printing politically offensive material in the early years of the following century, but in 1793 he petitioned Reuterholm for permission to set up as a printer. Although his request was turned down at that time, the petition itself suggests that Deleen may have expected a reward for some service, possibly connected with legal work on the Thorild trial.

The case of Nordenskiöld, as well as of Thorild and Deleen, illustrates the dilemma of religious and political dissidents in

Sweden, who felt compelled to collaborate with the autocratic regency government, with which they at least shared some ideological ground, in preference to the even more unpalatable alternatives. Their situation helps to explain the events of 1792, when such a powerfully symbolic text as Paine's Rights of Man, suitably doctored, could be used as a validating decoy in a covert political scheme, where the proclamation of freedom of the press would provide a disorienting context and an alleged royalist plot the immediate pretext for ousting the Gustavian old guard.

## References

- T.P. [i.e. Thomas Paine], *Menniskans rättigheter* (Stockholm: C. G. Cronland, 1792). 127 p.8°. Its BL pressmark is RB.23.a.4416.
2. *Kongl. Maj: ts nådiga förordning om en allmän skrif- och tryckfrihet. Gifven Drottningholms slot den 11 Julii 1792*. One contemporary, G. J. Aldereth (1751-1818), noted the coincidence: 'On the same day as the freedom of the press was issued [recte signed], a translation of Paine's *Rights of Man* appeared' (*Historiska anteckningar*, vol. ii (1857), p. 169). A later historian merely observed that the edict shared 'the same purpose and spirit as *Menniskans rättigheter*' (B. von Schinkel, *Minnen ur Sveriges nyare historia*, vol. iii (1853), p. 34).
3. The flight to Varennes in July was organised by the Swedish Count Alex von Fersen. Gustav III was waiting at Aachen to receive the escapees.
4. On 6 July 1792 Verinac reported to Paris: 'Je n'ai rien négligé pour conquérir a notre cause cette partie Suédois qui vont être saisis des rênes de l'administration' (A. Söderhjelm, *Sverige och den franska revolutionen*, vol. ii (1924), p. 83). This statement, referring to the 'triumvirate' of Reuterholm, Bonde and Staël, whom the Russian ambassador called 'le trios facardins' (corrupters of morals and religion) suggests foreknowledge of the events that were to follow (S. J. Boëthius, *Historisk tidskrift*, vol. viii (1888), pp. 105-6). Staël, married to Germaine Necker, had been recalled from Paris in December 1791 on account of his sympathy with the revolution.
5. Thorild spent the years 1788-90 in England, vainly hoping to promote a rational 'world government'. While there he published his Swedenborgian tract *True heavenly religion restored* (London: R. Hindmarsh, 1790).
6. C. G. Nordin (1749-1812), *Dagboksanteckningar* (1868), p. 287.
7. The letter is printed in the published diary of the Regent's wife, *Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok*, vol. iii (1907), pp. 505-6. The Duke was a superstitious man, and the following day would be Friday 13 July.
8. B. Åhlén, *Ord mot ordningen* (1986), p. 115.
9. *Hedvig Elisabeth Charlottas dagbok*, vol. iii, p. 518.
10. Söderhjelm, op. cit., vol. ii, p.226.
11. 'Menniskans rättigheter', *Medborgaren*, 23 Jan. 1790 (reproduced in Adlerbeth, op. cit., vol. ii, pp.26-9). From the identity of title between the book (n. i) and this article, which was reprinted on 6 Oct. 1792, arose the misconception, originating with G. Ljunggren (*Svenska vitterhetens häfder*, vol. ii (1877), p. 15), that the translation did not appear until October 1792.

Nordenskiöld had started his journal in 1788 as a discreet medium for Swedenborgian views but turned it into an organ of radical libertarianism under the influence of the French Revolution.

12. Before leaving Sweden Nordenskiöld had presented some of Swedenborg's ideas in the guise of an anonymous 'dream book' (*Oneiromantien* (Stockholm, 1783)). After his return in 1786 he founded a *Societas Exegetica pro Philanthropia* for the purpose of publishing Swedenborg's works. Despite the fact that it numbered Duke Carl among its members, the society incurred royal disfavour after a campaign against it by the rationalist publicist and court poet J. H. Kellgren in 1787 and it ceased to function by 1791.

13. All three had been members of the *Societas Exegetica*. In 1792 the Sierra Leone Company sent August Nordenskiöld (as a mineralogist) with Afzelius to Freetown where the former died in December. His companion spent the next four years there botanizing and seeking information on the pure religious community that Swedenborg believed to exist somewhere south of the Sahara (C. Fyfe, *A history of Sierra Leone* (1962), p. 42).

14. L. Krusius-Ahrenberg, *Tyrannmördaren C. F. Ehrensvärd* (1947), p. 171. Nordenskiöld's introduction to the printed version is dated: 'London, Winchester Row d. 28 Maji 1791'.

15. A copy of this declaration (perhaps extracted from Nordenskiöld's own Paine translation) held by the Royal Library in Stockholm was obtained by a Swedish diplomat in Copenhagen. Among the items confiscated from bookshops by the Stockholm police in March was François Soulès's translation of Paine's work (*Droits de l'homme* (Paris 1791)); at the same time 'an on-duty policeman sat with the bookseller Cleve to prevent reckless reading of French books about the revolution' (R. F. Hochschild, *Memoarer*, vol. ii (1907), p. 245).

16. Nordenskiöld is said to have offered to keep his journal noncontroversial in return for a government salary (R. Sundelin, *Swedenborgianismens historia* (1886), p. 272). The English Swedenborgians had already condemned 'republican and democratic principles' in April 1792 (C. T. Odhner, *Robert Hindmarsh* (1895), p. 90). Years later, as a private language teacher at Anklam in Pomerania (1801-7), Nordenskiöld adopted the name Wilhelm because, as he said, 'the Anklamites were Jacobins and hated the nobility' (L. von Engeström, *Minnen* (1876), vol. 1, p. 340).

17. *Gustav Moritz Armfeldts Landesverrätheey*, [Stralsund, 1795] and 'J. H. Kellgrens Leben und Charakter', *Allgemeiner litterarischer Anzeiger*, No. 31 (Leipzig, Oct. 1796). The first was also issued as *The Correspondence of Baron Armfelt and the other conspirators against the Swedish Government* (London, 1795).

18. Review in *Stockholms Posten*, 8 and 11 Dec. 1792; reprinted in Kellgren's *Samlade skrifter*, vol. v (1947), pp.618-28.

19. *Menniskans rättigheter* (1792), p. 85. Compare this with Hindmarsh's first principle of government (Minutes of the General Conference of the New Church, London, 1792): 'we believe and acknowledge that all power is derived from the LORD alone' and delegated to kings 'as representative of Himself'.

20. *Menniskans rättigheter*, f. A5v. These apologia for the 'patriotic' nobility may have been a response to the controversy begun by Philipson's Pamphlet in April 1792.

21. Nordenskiöld's final editing must postdate 8 July, when he complained to his eldest brother in Finland that Duke Carl no longer acknowledged his old friends (H. Lenhammar, *Tolerans och bekännelseväng* (1966), p. 308); very shortly after writing that he must have been approached on behalf of the Reuterholm group. Evidence that neither he nor Cronland had seen the text of the edict by 11 July is that the book is technically in breach of it, as the author's full name is not given but only his initials, 'T. P.' (at the end of the preface).

22. S. Boberg, *Gustav III och tryckfriheten* (1951), pp. 185f., 198-202.

23. This work was carried out intermittently during 1788-91 (under the supervision of the finance minister Ruuth) in the alchemical workshop at Drottningholm, using August Nordenskiöld's assistant, the Swedenborgian C. F. Bergklint, and two other persons.

24. The memorial was *Om det allmänna förståndets frihet* (On the liberty of general reason). In mid-August 1792, when the Regent faced serious criticism for pardoning the regicides, Thorild had published the essay *Mildheten* (Leniency), which argued the case for the pardons, and Philipson had supported it in his paper *Patrioten*. These timely contributions were no doubt inspired by the government (A. O. Holmberg, *Leopold och den reuterholmska tiden* (1957), p. 22). From October onwards the police chief Liljensparre had tried to convince the Regent that Reuterholm was preparing a revolution and that Thorild, Philipson and Nordenskiöld were all in his pay (M. Nylund, *G. A. Reuterholm under förmyndaretiden* (1917), p. 38). The latter may well be true; by December Reuterholm needed to disprove both allegations.

25. Thorild was in fact a protégé of Reuterholm and anxious to serve him. Before leaving Sweden he received a letter from the latter's private secretary informing him that the Baron sympathised with him but had been obliged to prosecute to deter others who were influenced by French jacobin writers and 'Paŷn's blind-man's buff leaps (Holmberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-4). The governor of Pomerania at the time, and chancellor of Greifswald university was Count Råuf, the former finance minister (n. 23).

26. From 1793 until his death in 1802 Cronland appears to have confined himself to printing bank notes.

27. I am grateful to Gunilla Jonsson, Gunnel Brodin and their colleagues at the Royal Library for information relating to the copies held there.

28. John Locke, *Bref om religionsfriheten* [Transl. C. E. Deleen] (Stockholm, 1793). The appeal had no effect.

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# Menniskans Rättigheter.



LUC. 12: 49.

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Stockholm,  
Tryckte hos Controlleuren C. G. CROWLAND;  
Den 11 Julii 1792.

The title page of *Menniskans rättigheter*.

## BOOK REVIEW

**THE TRANSATLANTIC REPUBLICAN, THOMAS PAINE AND THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS.** Bernard Vincent. 178pp. Paperback. Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2005. ISBN90-420-1614-0. €35.00

Professor Bernard Vincent is France's leading authority on Thomas Paine, and in this book he brings together a collection of his published essays on many of the ideas, work and influence of Thomas Paine. All but one originally appeared in English, the exception being 'La stratégie du temps dans *Common Sense*' which has been translated into English for this book under the title 'The Strategy of Time in *Common Sense*'.

The author provides a an interesting introduction entitled 'Storming the "Bastille of Words": Tom Paine's Revolution in Writing', in which he discusses Paine style of writing and expression, showing how he was able to express himself so easily, noting Benjamin Franklin's observation that "Others can rule, many can fight but only Thomas Paine can write for us the English tongue". Professor Vincent draws attention to the from which Paine drew his inspiration, for example the theatre with comments such as "the puppet show of state and aristocracy" and his description of "mixed government" as a "pantomimical contrivance". It is easy to overlook the fact that these comments may hint at Paine having an interest in the theatre, thereby adding something to what we know of him as an individual. Professor Vincent also describes him as "a Freudian before Freud."

Commenting on *The Age of Reason*, the author correctly points out that it was not the first critique of the bible to have been published during "the Age of Enlightenment", but it was, he states, the first to have been written in such simple and direct language, "larded with wit, humour, verve, cheek (with at times a touch of demagoguery), a clever mixture of popular common sense and scientific analysis that could easily be grasped by the mass of ordinary people - those precisely whom the Bible and the established Churches had always endeavoured to reach out to control". Here I might have gone further, for Paine's criticism of



Christian claims in particular was perhaps the most detailed since that of Celsus, in the second century, and as in the case of Paine's book the church sought to ban his *True Doctrine*.

The book is divided into two thematic parts, the first a series of essays with the general title of 'Paine America and France', the subjects being in addition to the translated French essay, 'Thomas Paine, the Masonic Order, and the American Revolution', which originally appeared in the *Bulletin of the Thomas Paine Society* in 1988; 'From Fact to Myth: The Americans in Paris during the French Revolution'; 'Paine's "Share" in the French Revolution'; 'Thomas Paine, the Louisiana Purchase and the Rights of Man', and finally, 'A National of Nowhere: The Problem of Thomas Paine's American Citizenship'.

The second part is on 'Paine and the Enlightenment', with essays on 'Thomas Paine and the Issue of Universal Suffrage'; 'A Quaker with a Difference: Tom Paine's Republican Rhetoric of War and Peace'; 'From the Rights of Man to the Rights of God: Thomas Paine's Ultimate Challenge' and 'A Pioneer with a Difference: Thomas Paine and Early 'American Studies''. This last I found of particular interest both in its discussion of the drift away from an emphasis in France on English, or British studies, to one on American studies, going on to compare four writers who had "studied America long before we (his emphasis) did or before 'American Studies' even existed, these being Crèvecoeur, Paine, Raynal and Tocqueville, with the conclusion that "only Thomas Paine stands out as a real pioneer or founder of what we now call 'American Studies'.

The scope of the book ensures that it prompts its readers to re-think at times their opinions on several of Paine's ideas, which is all to the good. For me not the least of these is the suggestion that *Rights of Man* is a religious book, made in the essay, 'From the Rights of Man to the Rights of God: Thomas Paine's Ultimate Challenge', and the extent to which religious imagery pervades Paine's writing from *Common Sense* onwards. The author holds that while *The Age of Reason* is depicted as a blasphemous work it is really "a book on blasphemy", a notion I would dispute in light of the framework into which blasphemy historically slots and the definitions involved. I suppose it all depends on what is meant by blasphemy. There is an error in this essay, for Paine was not charged with high treason but with seditious libel.

This book was both stimulating and a pleasure to read for the author writes extremely well, almost Paineite in style I am tempted to say. His essays are fully referenced with his notes being placed below the pages to which they apply rather than at the end of each essay, or, as is usually the case, at the rear of the book. I always find bibliographies of value as they alert me to other publications, and there is a good one in this book. There is also a very good index. If I have a complaint it is the use of the abbreviated 'Tom', which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was used as a means of insulting an individual, hence its use by several of Paine's critics in works attacking him as also in some of the Gillray caricatures.

R. W. Morrell.

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## THE BISHOP WOULD A SLAVER BE

R. W. Morrell

In June, 1797 an impoverished bookseller by the name of Thomas Williams was charged with blasphemy for having sold a single copy of Paine's *Age of Reason*, the prosecution having been initiated by an organisation with the grand title of the Society for Enforcing, the King's Proclamation against Immorality and Profaneness, better known by its critics as the Vice Society. Its president was one Beilby Porteus, the son of a retired Virginian plantation owner, and bishop of London, while its committee included two other Anglican bishops, several members of the nobility, a general and several members of Parliament who included William Wilberforce, later celebrated for opposition to slavery, except for workers in English factories.

According to Robert Hodgson's *Life of the Right Reverend Beilby Porteus, D.D.* (1811), it was under his "active and discreet direction (that) the licentiousness of the Metropolis had to a certain degree been checked", but then "a publication of such an infamous description, and calculated to produce such infinite mischief... made its appearance, and was disseminated with inconceivable industry through every town and village in the kingdom". The offending publication was Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* (p.125).

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## Correspondence

### Leo Bressler on 'Peter Porcupine and the Bones of Thomas Paine'

First let me say what a great pleasure it is to read the *Journal of Radical History* (hereinafter *JRH*). There is always a great deal to ponder and often a good deal of useful information and/or history. Thanks to the Thomas Paine Society for publishing it.

A recent article by Leo Bressler entitled 'Peter Porcupine and the Bones of Thomas Paine' gives pause to consider the nature of history; particularly the nature of good history.

1. Bressler says Paine "died in poverty". He most certainly did not. His friends visited and sat with him until the end and when he died he left a considerable estate valued at around \$7500.00 in liquid assets apart and aside from his 300 acre farm in New Rochelle. According to the Economic History Centre, and depending on how you compute it, that would equate in today's dollars something like this:

- \$111,518.92 using the Consumer Price Index.
- \$109,889.04 using the GDP deflector.
- \$1,084,791.78 using the unskilled wage.
- \$2,664. using the GDP per capita.
- \$110,106,191.02 using the relative share GDP.

Paine was no pauper. The testimony of those who knew him is that he was abstemious in personal habit but with the need generous to a fault.

2. Bressler describes Madame Bonneville as "a French Catholic whom Paine had befriended along with her children, when she was widowed". That statement is just as inaccurate as the previous. To the contrary, Paine resided with Madame Bonneville and her husband Nicholas and their family in Paris, from approximately 1797 to 1802. Nicholas was a prominent publisher, freemason and at the centre of the *Cerfe Social*... and a very close friend and associate of Paine's. He was placed under surveillance and virtual house arrest, his safety compromised and his press suspended under Napoleon's regime. Paine welcomed his wife and sons to shelter in America. He supported them and his Last Will and

Testament provided for the boys' education upon his death. Conway has it about right when he describes how Nicholas rejoined his wife in America after he was "relieved of his surveillance, hastened to New York, where he and his family were reunited, and enjoying the happiness provided by Paine's self-sacrificing economy" (Moncure Conway. *The Life of Thomas Paine*. Putnam & Sons, 1908).

3. Bressler's statement that "Cobbett had come first to the United States in 1792" is technically correct, but he leaves the wrong impression since Cobbett came to America for the first time seven years earlier in 1785 when he served in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick with a military regiment. He lived in America about four years on that occasion.

4. The editor of this journal has already properly observed that, contrary to Bressler's assertion, Cobbett was never flogged.

5. Bressler says that Cobbett "had become almost as much a crusader for human rights as Paine had been". There is no wish on my part nor would it be possible to detract from the influential and amazing career of Cobbett, but to compare him to Paine is a stretch. Even in his later more radical phase (he was a hidebound and antagonistic Tory apologist in his early years) Cobbett never achieved anything near the democratic perspective or influence of Thomas Paine. Cobbett ever looked to the somewhat chimerical "English Constitution" or the mythical Saxon one for precedent. Paine's radically democratic conception repudiated the Constitutionalism of Cobbett and others, has never yet been achieved, and still electrifies the mind today:

"There never did, there never will, and there never can exist a parliament, or any description of man, or any generation of men, in any country, possessed of the right or the power of binding and controlling posterity to the "end of time", or of commanding for ever how the world shall be governed, or who shall govern it;... Every age and generation must be free to act for itself, in all cases, as the ages and generations that preceded it. The vanity and presumption of governing beyond the grave, is the most ridiculous and insolent of all tyrannies... It is the living, and not the dead, that are to be accommodated... That which a whole nation chooses to do, it has a right to do". (Thomas Paine. *Rights of Man*, Part 1).

6. Bressler says that Cobbett "requested permission to disinter Paine's bones. After encountering some difficulty, he was granted permission in 1819". No such thing ever happened. First of all, no civil or statutory authority had the power to give that permission. With the proviso that, like Paine, I shall be happy to be proven wrong (and thereby learn and profit by experience). I should like to know where Bressler came up with this bit of fantasy; perhaps the grave robber's own self-serving account? Factually, Cobbett desecrated Paine's grave in the early hours before sunrise and fled to New York City with a Westchester deputy in pursuit.

7. Bressler states that "it took a great deal of courage for Corbett to bring the remains of Paine to England". Courage? More like shameless self-serving gall. Cobbett may be said to have violated every landmark of honour and propriety through his actions and additionally to have violated the last wish of the man he claimed to admire. Paine's Last Will and Testament stated unequivocally that he wished to be interred on his farm in New Rochelle and he never once gave the slightest inkling of any desire that his remains remain anywhere else but in America.

8. Bressler cites Cobbett's complaint that "Former friends shrugged their shoulders and looked hard in my face, as if in wonder". No doubt. They were doubtless shocked to find themselves in the company of a grave robber. As such, he was lucky any friends kept by him whatsoever. Many believed him mad; it seems reasonable to observe that he showed signs of derangement.

9. Bressler refers to "Cobbett's noble project". The phrase is shocking and bereft of common sense.

10. Bressler says that "three years after Cobbett's death the United States belatedly erected a monument to Paine in New Rochelle". Nothing of the sort. The modest marble column was erected through the efforts of publisher Gilbert Vale and a relatively small group of radical reformers and freethinkers with connections in the Working Men and Loco Foco/Equal.

Cobbett's grim folly not only fell predictably on its face, it resulted in the scattering and loss of Paine's remains.

The author concludes by saying "in some sense the monument was also a tribute to William Cobbett". If the essay's conclusions follow from its premises, we may well question the author's judgement.

Kenneth W. Burchell.

Coeur d'Alene,  
Idaho,  
USA.

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*THE BISHOP WOULD A SLAVER BE, continued from p.17.*

The Vice Society was outraged, in their opinion the book was "in point of argument .... perfectly contemptible, but what was worse, in the view of Porteus was that "it was addressed to the *multitude*, and most dexterously brought down to the level of their understanding. It compressed the whole poison of infidelity into the narrow compass of an essence or extract, and rendered *irreligion easy* to the meanest capacity." In other words, it was easy to read, as indeed it was and is.



Beilby Porteus (1731-1809)

The indignant bishop thus wanted to progress of the work "checked instantly", and while it was thought that bishop Richard Watson's "antidote" (*Apology for the Bible*) was "admirable", it is clear from what Hodgson writes that it was thought ineffectual.

It was thus decided that the man who had dared, "in violation of all decency" to publish Paine's book should have inflicted on him "some signal punishment", a statement that infers the outcome of the case had been decided in advance. So it was that Thomas Williams was prosecuted at the court of the King's Bench, Porteus

*Continued on p.25.*

# THOMAS PAINE AND THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION

Terry Liddle

The ideas of the French Revolution, ideas so eloquently advocated by Thomas Paine, were liberty, equality, fraternity and the rights of man. For Pope Pius VI and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church such ideas were evil and heretical. For them man had no rights only a duty to serve God in the situation in which the Almighty had placed him, obeying his masters and believing in and upholding the ideology of the Catholic faith.

By 1794 seditious literature, advocating the ideas of the French Revolution was circulating underground in the then Spanish colony of Mexico. The Catholic Inquisition alerted the viceroy and urged him to ban publication of Thomas Paine

*Rights of Man* and the reading in any college of any book about the French Revolution. The viceroy banned Paine's book and hearing that three hundred copies were being sent to Mexico from New Orleans, he ordered his customs officials to seize and destroy "this extremely abominable book" and assured the Inquisition that he would do all in his power to defend "the public tranquillity of these rich and precious domains where flourish the most tender and true sentiments of religion, love and loyalty to the King."

The viceroy was most upset when he discovered that the leading advocate of the French Revolution in Mexico was his French chef. When not cooking the chef was organising the distribution of revolutionary literature. The Inquisition found the chef guilty of advocating the abominable doctrine of liberty and irreligion. The chef, together with all Frenchmen, was deported.

In 1810, Mexico struck out for independence from Spain. The leader of the revolution was an apostate priest and Freemason Manuel Hidalgo who was shocked by the poverty and injustice suffered by the Indians who were his flock. Hidalgo was a social as well as a political revolutionary. He denounced the rich and demanded that their wealth be expropriated and divided between the state and the people.

After a six-month struggle, Hidalgo was defeated and captured. He was condemned as a heretic by the Inquisition, excommunicated and removed from the priesthood. It took the military three goes to execute him.

The Inquisition demanded that he be erased from memory. Anyone who had his writings or portrait was to be excommunicated. So effective was this ban that there are no known contemporary portraits of Hidalgo. The struggle was continued by Jose Morelos who in turn was shot in 1815. The Spanish Liberal Freemason Xavier Mina fled to Mexico where he aided the independence struggle. He was shot in 1817.

Mexico finally won its independence as the result of the coming to power of a Liberal government in Spain. A leading figure in this was Rafael del Riego. Having fought the French who came to influence his political ideas he was eventually hanged by Catholic reactionaries in a Madrid public square. *The Song of Riego* was a Republican anthem during the Civil war of 1936-1939. Those who came to power in Mexico were conservative reactionaries not Liberals.

The history of Mexico from then on was the history of a struggle between reaction backed by the Catholic church and the big landowners and progressives who wanted political and social democracy. One example was the struggle between the reactionaries who wanted to place the Hapsburg monarch Maximilian on the throne and the Indian lawyer Benito Juarez who led a successful guerrilla war.

In more recent times, we have seen the leaders of the democratic revolution of 1911 such as the Freemason and vegetarian Francisco Madero and the peasant revolutionaries Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata murdered and power fall again into the hands of reaction.

The end of the 20th century has seen the rising of Indian revolutionaries in South West Mexico who have named themselves for Zapata. They say they want to change the world but do not want to take power. A fascinating idea.



For all those fighting for democracy the ideas of Paine have provided a constant background of political thought.

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## The Bishop Would a Slaver be continued from p.22

and a colleague, the bishop of Durham, having prevailed on Thomas Erskine (who had defended Paine when e was tried for seditious libel) to prosecute on behalf of the Vice Society. Williams could not afford a defence so the outcome was inevitable, the outcome being inevitable and, as Hodgson states, "the Jury without a moment's hesitation" found him guilty. Throughout the case the judge, Lord Kenyon, made no secret of his support for the prosecution and openly showed his bias along with his support for the society.

However, prior to the sentencing of Williams, Erskine was enticed into visiting Williams's shop and what he saw there horrified him, Williams's wife and their three children, two of whom had smallpox, were destitute and starving. As a consequence of this at a full committee meeting of the society presided over by Porteus with two other bishops present and Wilberforce, which was held before Williams was due to be sentenced, Erskine described the situation the family was in and appealed to the committee to be lenient and allow him to plead for a nominal sentence, pointing out that mercy was "a grand characteristic of the Christian religion" and suggesting the society should be well satisfied with the punishment already inflicted on Williams, who had been in prison some time awaiting sentence. But the saintly Porteus (as Hodgson represents him) and the others present, were inflexible, not for them compassion or mercy. Disgusted at their stance Erskine refused to accept his fee and refused to anything further to do with the case, a fact Hodgson omits to mention in his book, where instead he praises Erskine's presentation of the prosecution's case. Williams was sentenced to a year in prison plus his own recognisance for £1,000.

It thus comes as no surprise to discover that Porteus supported negro slavery, making this all too clear in a lecture he gave before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1784 and later published as *An Essay Towards a Plan for the more effectual Civilization and Conversion of the Negro Slaves on*

*the Trust Estate in Barbadoes* (London, 1807). The estate, or plantation, was "stocked" (Porteus's own expression) with 300 slaves plus their innumerable slave children, and in his address the bishop was primarily concerned with how to coerce the slaves into becoming Christians, thereby "rendering them industrious, honest, sober, faithful, and obedient to their masters, as they are expressly enjoined to be in Scripture, under pain of eternal punishment in the world to come", which would "in a great degree remove the necessity of the whip", and secondly increasing the plantation's profitability by reducing costs. Something that has a rather modern ring to it.

He advanced several proposals that included compelling the slaves to undertake additional Christian propaganda on Sundays, a day they looked upon as their own, designed to make them more submissive, but allowing them an extra hour off on another day. He appreciates that this might appear to have a detrimental effect on profitability, but this would be minimal, indeed it might even have the opposite effect. However, it seems that the slaves were resistant to the attempts at conversion, so Porteus called for attention to be concentrated on their children, who should be, he maintained, placed under the charge of a catechist "as soon as they are capable of articulating their words, and their instruction must be pursued with unremitting vigour", but only until they were too young to work, for as they grow fit to labour", their attendance "must gradually lessen, till at length they take their full share of work with the grown Negroes". Here he was saying that profits came before Christianity, a familiar stance amongst Christian prelates throughout history and still conspicuous today.

To assist in the task of conversion, Porteus wanted the plantation's slaves to have as little contact with those from other plantations where owners had little interest in conversion. In addition contamination with heathen ideas brought in by newly imported slaves from Africa was to be avoided, for it was "always extremely difficult to make any religious impressions" on their minds. Instead, he suggests, giving "every possible encouragement" should be given to "the increase of the native Negroes", which could be done by granting "certain privileges and indulgences to those Negresses, who have large families; and if there are any who have brought up decently and creditably an unusual number of robust and healthy children" they could be given their freedom, presumably, though this is not stated, after they had reached an

age when having children would have been difficult. There would thus be "a constant succession of home-born Negroes" and, throwing altruism to the wind, not that it was ever there, this would ensure the slaves owners would "reap many substantial advantages", not the least of which would be to "save the heavy expense of frequent purchases" involved in re-stocking. Moreover, Creole slaves were "far superior in fidelity, obedience, docility, and industry to the African Negroes", and "young Negroes will be much more easily trained up in the Christian faith than those who come full grown from the coast of Guinea... Porteus could as well have been writing of cattle.

The bishop makes not the slightest reference to freeing the youngsters from slavery, but simply held the carrot of possible freedom to their mothers providing they produced children like rabbits. How the mothers would have felt on seeing their husbands and children remain in servitude was a matter the bishop did not address, but he did suggest that some Negroes who "distinguish themselves by a superior knowledge or more uniform practice of Christianity", for which they "might be rewarded with the privilege of *gradually working out their freedom*" (his emphasis), but aware of the "apprehensions" this might create, for it could be looked upon as having a detrimental effect on "the produce of the plantations, by lessening the number of slaves", he suggests "the privilege might be restricted to a very few in a certain number of years", while their places would be taken by the "natural increase" of the Negroes, by which one assumes he had in mind the breeding programme he had earlier argued for. Moreover, the "enfranchised should be obliged to continue for a stated time, as day labourers on the plantation, at a certain stipulated price", and by thus creating by degrees "a new race of free hardy labourers, who had been brought up in habits of industry, and accustomed to the heat of the climate (who) would do more work in less time, and at a much less expence (sic) to the society than any equal number of slaves". In short, slavery under another name, and when eventually the English government abolished slavery in territories under its control, and massively compensated the slave owners, but the lot of the former slaves who were theoretically free remained the same, the masters became employers with poverty replacing the whip as the means of making the former slaves work even harder but at far less expense to the plantation owners.

## BOOK REVIEW

**ANARCHIST IDEAS AND COUNTER-CULTURES IN BRITAIN, 1880-1914.** Matthew Thomas, Ashgate Publishing Limited, £47.50 ISBN 0 7546 4084 1

When Thomas Paine wrote: "that government is best which governs least" he was expressing an idea later held by anarchists who believed that the government is best which doesn't govern at all. Unlike Spain, where in the 1930s the CNT/FAI was a mass working class movement, Anarchism in Britain has always been a minority within the Socialist Minority. However, its history is none the less interesting and Mr Thomas sets out to explore in some depth the history of British Anarchism from the revival of interest in Socialism in the 1880s to the outbreak of World war in 1914.

Mr Thomas sees the event, which sparked off the rise of Anarchism in Britain as the result of a defence campaign of the German Anarchist editor Johann Most who was being threatened with prosecution by the British government. In the East End of London, these people formed the Labour Emancipation League. The LEL had affiliated to Henry Hyndman's Socialist Democratic Federation and when it split, the LEL went into the Socialist League of William Morris. The relationship between Morris and the Anarchists in the Socialist League was always difficult particularly when some advocated "propaganda by deed". Foolishly, the Anarchists removed Morris from his job as editor of the SL paper *Commonweal* which without him went into decline.

In 1886, the Russian Anarchist Peter Kropotkin came to live in Britain and founded the paper *Freedom*, which is still published. In East London, large numbers of Jews found refuge from Tsarism and they published *Arbeter Fraint*, a Yiddish language Anarchist paper.

Mr Thomas next looks at attempts by Anarchists to educate themselves other than through the state-provided system. In East London, the 13-year-old Nellie Ploschansky set up a Sunday School in the Anarchist club premises in Jubilee Street and this despite the opposition of the local Rabbi. It is interesting just how young some of the Anarchists were. When the Rossetti sisters set up an Anarchist

paper *The Torch*, one was 16 and the other 13. Amongst the educational material available was a poem by William Morris. There were other Socialist Sunday Schools too, the first being set up by Mary Gray of the SDF in 1892. The socialist educationalist Margaret McMillan used these schools as a forum for her advanced ideas. Classes in Esperanto which was seen as a future international language were popular. One is, of course, reminded of the later work of AS Neill at Summerhill.

The Anarchists not only set up schools they also tried to establish self-managed communities, little islands of libertarian socialism in a vast ocean of capitalism. The failure of an earlier generation of followers of Utopian socialists such as Fourier and Owen to establish such communities should have been a dire warning. Some of these communities were influenced by the religious ideas of Tolstoy. It is debateable if Tolstoy can really be considered an Anarchist. Other communities had their roots in such religious bodies such as the pacifist Croydon Brotherhood Church. The numbers involved in such communities were small and some socialists saw them as a diversion from the class struggle. Some tried to set up not agricultural communities but urban producer co-operatives. It was probably inevitable that such enterprises would fail. In the 1960s, there were again attempts to establish such communities and again they would mostly fail.

The next two chapters are devoted to Anarchism in the world of labour looking firstly at the new unionism amongst the unskilled such as dockers in the late 19th century and anarcho-syndicalism in the early part of the 20th century. Some of the ideas impacting on Socialists in this period, the Socialist Labour Party was founded in 1903, were those of the American Marxist Daniel DeLeon rather than those of European Anarcho-Syndicalism which would be so influential in Spain and France.

The American Industrial Workers of the World were also influential at this time and there were various attempts to set up a British IWW. Various approaches to this question were taken by various individuals such as Guy Aldred who tried to combine Marx and Bakunin

Tom Mann, once a leading light in the ILP, set up an Industrial Syndicalist Education League. He would end up in the Communist Party along with many members of the SLP. .

The penultimate chapter looks at Anarchist ideas on the politics of gender. Because it advocated the franchise, Anarchists were critical of the Suffragette movement. However, it should be noted that Sylvia Pankhurst's group which became the Workers' Socialist Federation would share many of the Anarchists' criticisms of the outcome of the 1917 Russian Revolution. Many of the questions of relations between the sexes and the place of women in society are still very much live issues.

In his final chapter, Mr Thomas draws his conclusions stating that Anarchism deserves more consideration than has hitherto been the case. The book is not without problems. JW Gott's *The Truthseeker* publishing a discussion on Nietzsche does not make it anything like an Anarchist paper. Also Mr Thomas should know better than to misquote the title of Dan Chatterton's paper twice.

It is almost inevitable that Mr Thomas's book will be compared with John Quail's *The Slow Burning Fuse* ( 1978 ) I think that Quail's book while it has less information is written with much more sympathy with its subject. Also, Quail's book was a cheap paperback. The high price of this book is more likely to keep it in the hands of academics, whose main interest in political movements is furthering their careers, rather than in those of today's generation of political activists who could make better use of the information it contains.

Terry Liddle

The editor is always interested in receiving papers and correspondence within the area covered by this journal with a view to publication

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