

# T.P.S. BULLETIN



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## THOMAS PAINE, WOLFE TONE AND IRELAND

### Terry Liddle

THIS year sees the bicentenary of the Irish rebellion, part of a world historic process which started in America in 1776, continued in France and included such events as the slave revolt in San Domingo and the struggle of Paine's colonies in the South American struggles for independence. Starting with high hopes of uniting a Protestant middle class in search of political rights and a land hungry Catholic peasantry, breaking the connection with England, emulating America and France and establishing a republic of liberty, equality and fraternity, it ended with the rebels being shot down with musket and cannon and slashed down with yeomanry sabres in unequal battles such as that at Vinegar Hill in Wexford. Pikes and courage were no match for the redcoats fire-power. To their cost, the Scots had discovered that at Culloden. For the Scots the price of rebellion was the Highland clearances, for the Irish it was *An Gorta Mor*, which English history calls the famine.

The influence of Paine's political thought on the Irish rebels cannot be underestimated. In the Ireland of 1790 many minds were fixed upon the French Revolution. For Burke, Ireland was either a strong dike to keep Jacobinism out or a broken bank to let it in. In was in reply to Burke that Paine wrote *Rights of Man*, a work which many in Ireland read with enthusiasm. For Protestant Dissenters in Belfast, *Rights of Man* became their Koran. Influenced by their fellows who had been in the forefront of the American War of Independence in which Paine himself played a major role, they formed, in Wolfe Tone's words, '...the flower of the famous volunteer army of 1782 which extorted from the English minister the restoration of which is affected to be called the constitution of Ireland'. At a time when when the nation was fairly divided into two great parties, the Aristocrats and the Democrats, *Rights of Man* not only influenced the middle class Dissenters but also the Catholic peasantry; indeed it sold more copies in Ireland than in England and Wales together. From Connaught to Wexford, peasants in market places and taverns discussed *Rights of Man*. A teacher was exposed as a rebel spy when a copy of *The Age of Reason* was found on him and there were reports of the book being sold in Mayo. For many inspired by Paine liberty and equality were no mere slogans and the republic more than an end to rents and taxes. What they wanted was a social revolution.

Wolfe Tone, the son of a coachmaker, had studied law. Despite obtaining a degree, he claimed he knew as much about law as he knew about necromancy and turned his hand to political pamphleteering. Tone's work struck a chord and after a celebration of the French

Revolution, a Society of United Irishmen was formed in Belfast to be quickly followed by a Dublin society. Paine was made an honorary member. The United Irishmen complained that at a time when '...the Rights of Man are ascertained in Theory and that theory substantiated in practice...when unjust governments are falling in every quarter of Europe... we are ruled by Englishmen and the servants of Englishmen...' Their remedy was '...an equal Representation of all the people in Parliament'. It was proposed that the country be divided into 300 constituencies with a vote for every man. There was even a proposal that women be given the vote. Other proposals included annual parliaments, no property qualification for public representatives and payment for members of parliament. Thus the United Irishmen anticipated the demands of the Peoples' Charter by nearly half a century.

Echoing Paine, Tone wrote, 'The greatest happiness of the greatest number. On the rock of this principle let this society rest; by this let it judge and determine every political question, and whatever is necessary for this end let it not be accounted hazardous, but rather our interest, our duty, our glory and our common religion. The Rights of Man are the Rights of God and to vindicate the one is to maintain the other'.

The United Irishmen maintained contact with similar radical societies in England and Scotland. In Margate, Arthur O'Connor and Father Quigley were arrested in possession of a large sum of money and incriminating documents, one of which was allegedly an invitation from English Jacobins in France to stage an invasion. It was thought they were en route to a meeting with the United Britons. At their trial O'Connor was acquitted, Quigley was sentenced to death. He was hung and then beheaded. Among the literature being distributed by English Jacobins at this time was Paine's *Agrarian Justice*. When the Irish rebellion broke out, the London Corresponding Society issued a supporting address which called upon British soldiers to refuse to act against the Irish. The authorities ordered a general crackdown and in 1799 most leading English Jacobins were behind bars, often being held in the most appalling conditions.

In Scotland the government had struck much earlier. Thomas Muir, a young advocate, received fourteen years transportation for participating in a convention of Scottish reform societies. His "crimes" were circulating Paine's works and reading an address from the United Irishmen. T.F.Palmer received seven years for encouraging the reading of Paine and membership of a Dundee society. Back in England, Thomas Hardy of the London Corresponding Society had been luckier. Charged with high treason in that he had expressed sympathy with the French revolution and distributed Paine's works, he was found not

guilty. Everywhere *Rights of Man* struck terror into the ruling class and it reacted accordingly.

In Ireland repression drove the United Irishmen underground, transforming it from a society of constitutional reformers into a revolutionary movement and Tone went into exile. He first went to America and then to France. In Paris he met Paine, who was already on friendly terms with James Napper Tandy of the Dublin United Irishmen. While describing Paine as vain and critical of his drinking habits, Tone wrote of Paine, 'He has done wonders for the cause of liberty, both in America and Europe, and I believe him conscientiously to be an honest man'.

Tone managed to enlist the aid of the French for a landing in Ireland. A first attempt in 1796 had to be aborted when foul weather scattered the ships and prevented the troops getting ashore. Paine, who was still advocating a French invasion of England as late as 1806, noted. 'The suspicion that England governs Ireland for the purpose of keeping her low...will always operate to hold Ireland in a state of sentimental hostility with England'. Paine commented on Irish events in *Le Bein informe*, one issue of which detailed his friendship with Thomas Muir.

In Ireland the authorities had unleashed a reign of terror. Martial law had been proclaimed and the yeomanry, a kind of territorial army in which many members of the sectarian Orange Order had been enrolled, on the pretence of searching for arms wrecked and burned homes and carried out floggings and even hangings.

In Dublin in May 1798 despite the loss of many arms, the arrest leaders such as Edward Fitzgerald and a disrupted organisation riddled with informers, the United Irishmen decided to rise. The signal for the rising was to be the interception and burning of the mail coaches. This went off at half cock. In many areas the rebels failed to muster and where they did often had not a clear plan of action.

In some areas the people were panicked into rising. The activities of the yeomanry who flogged, tortured and even murdered anyone thought to be a rebel spread fear of an Orange pogrom. A desperate people, sometimes led by their priests, resisted with scythes, spades and stones, anything that came to hand. Atrocity was answered with atrocity.

Where the rebels managed to form something like an army, they marched to the tune of the Marseillaise. Officers wore a green cockade on red regimentals and other ranks a green or white hatband.

In Wexford Ireland's first republic was set up. Liberty and equality as well as *Erin go Bragh* were the watchwords. Officers were elected, a committee of public safety established, food rationed and paper money put to practical use as pipe lighters and musket wadding. A new

anthem, *God Save The Rights of Man* replaced *God Save the King*. Many politically minded artisans looked to the abolition of a ruling class who 'consider the people an inferior and degraded mass'.

In August, a small French force led by General Humbert had landed in Mayo. By September it had surrendered. It was in Mayo that month that the last battle of the rising was fought. By October 2nd., the English were celebrating victory.

Tone himself had again set sail for Ireland but after a hard fought sea battle in which he commanded a battery of guns, he was captured by the English. Back in Dublin he was sentenced to be hanged despite requests to be shot. History records that he took his own life, many think he was murdered.

Irish history since 1798 is well known - failed risings, civil war, partition and a thirty year struggle in the six counties. At the time of writing,\* a fragile peace has been broken by riots in Portadown triggered by an Orange march. Sectarianism has mostly been triumphant, Protestant and Catholic only rarely uniting in a common cause. Ireland, it seems, has a long way to go before the democratic, republican ideas of Paine and Tone are realised.

*\*The manuscript was received in June.*

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## **BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REVIEWS BOOK REVIEWS**

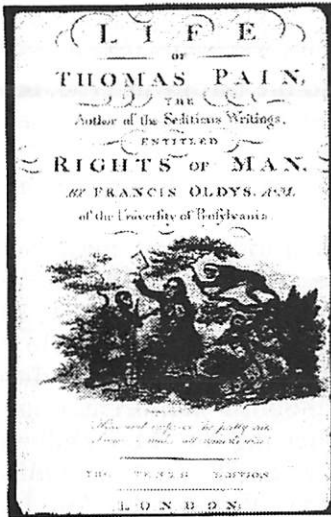
***THOMAS PAINE: THE CASE OF THE KING OF ENGLAND AND HIS OFFICERS OF EXCISE.*** George Hindmarch. 95pp. Paperback. Purley, published by the author, 1998. ISBN 0 9531981. Unpriced.\*

THIS short essay is unquestionably a major contribution to Paine studies, though likely to be considered rather on the controversial side in that it casts Paine in a role few, if any, of his admirers would have thought even remotely possible, for it is the belief of the author that Paine was 'an undercover agent' for George III (p.56) and wrote his *Case of the Officers of Excise* in support of him as well as on behalf of his excise colleagues (p.51). This was his first political publication, the promotion of which 'was the apprenticeship Paine served as a political propagandist' (p.37), however, those who he believes were behind Paine, or as he puts it, 'the high dignitaries who stood in the obscurity of Paine's shadow', had no intention of revealing to 'the majority of the readers to whom it was selectively addressed' the pamphlet's 'main

purpose' (p.11). And this 'purpose'? According to Mr.Hindmarch it was to promote the king's case for an increase in the Civil List, which had been set at £8000,000 annually when he came to the throne in 1750, but because of inflation it had become insufficient to cover his expenses, which included paying the salaries of excise officers.

Mr.Hindmarch draws upon many sources for evidence to support his thesis, including the archives of the Customs and Excise Department, which most Paine scholars have curiously tended to neglect, numerous economic and historic studies and, of course, Paine's own works, in particular his excise essay. Taken as a whole this impressive volume of material provides him with a solid foundation from which to work. He is the first researcher to recognise the difficulties Paine would have had to overcome had he been alone in attempting to mobilise support amongst the nation's 3000 riding officers as well as collecting the three shilling voluntary donation each had been asked to give. The author rightly refers to 'undistinguished writers' (on Thomas Paine) who fail 'to research into his background' thus perpetuating 'a number of serious misrepresentations' (p.9), a point also made by the late Audrey Williamson (cf. Thomas Paine, His Life, Work and Times. Allen & Unwin, 1973. chapter 3). Working alone Paine would have been unable to overcome these problems, however, he had the active backing of a recently appointed Excise Commissioner, George Lewis Scott, who was supported by his fellow commissioners (the author rejects the claim of previous biographers about the Excise Board being hostile to Paine's activities (p.36)), and it was Scott who co-ordinated the circulation of officers and arranged the collection of their 'donations', for unlike Paine he would have had access to the essential address list and the authority to apply pressure on subordinates (p.38). It is not without significance that Scott was an intimate of the king, having been his tutor in his youth. Mr.Hindmarch contends it was Scott's role 'to persuade Parliament that changes in the king's static civil list arrangements were necessary in the national interest', using a 'forceful cogent argument from the principal fund-raising Department - the Excise. The much-hated excisemen were to lead the campaign...' (p.30).

On the debit side is the fact that Paine never acknowledged publicly or privately any involvement in a scheme to help the king, which would have made him, in effect, 'an undercover agent of the king', or that such a scheme was part of his brief when writing his Case of the Officers of Excise. It is difficult to understand why he remained silent if he had been caught up in the operation of a hidden agenda. After he was outlawed he had nothing to lose by keeping silent. The same is true of the government, once Paine was known as being the author of *Common*



Title-page image of the 10th. Edition of George Chalmers *Life of Thomas Paine* (London 1793)

away by the author as being due to him not wishing to embarrass the king and government, the latter having not only paid him £500 to write the book but also accorded him maximum assistance to gather information.

There is what may be a reference by Paine to his involvement in a scheme such as postulated by the author. It occurs in his letter to Oliver Goldsmith, which accompanied a copy of *The Case of the Officers of Excise* he sent unsolicited to the playwright. Although he reproduces the letter in its entirety Mr.Hindmarch appears to have overlooked this comment, perhaps because of it's ambiguity. However, *it might* (my emphasis) constitute evidence. Paine writes of acting in the humble station of an officer of excise, adding, *though somewhat differently circumstanced to what many of them are...* A strange comment indeed, but it could just provide an important missing piece of the jigsaw.

For the present it would be premature to draw any firm conclusions one way or another in respect of Mr.Hindmarch's thesis, even though there is much to be said in it's favour, as I have sought to show. Considerable further research and discussion is certainly required so

*Sense*, to have revealed him as having acted as an agent for George III may well have created suspicions amongst his revolutionary colleagues about his trustworthiness and reliability, thus politically harming the colonial cause. Then there is George Chalmers, author of the first attempt at the character assassination of Paine, which he wrote under the fictitious name Francis Oldys. He could have used the information in his book, published in 1791, which would undoubtedly made Paine suspect by his French as being a potential agent for the English government, in other words, it would have paid the English authorities a dividend to have revealed the secret if there had been one. But Chalmers, who Mr.Hindmarch believes to have known all the details, remained silent. This is explained



George Chalmers ("Francis Oldys") Portrait by H. Edridge



what I would suggest is that anyone with a serious interest in Thomas Paine obtain a copy, assuming any are available, for I understand it was issued in a limited edition primarily for private circulation, to enable them to study the author's thesis in detail.#

**R.W.Morrell.**

*\*Inquiries as to availability and price should be addressed to the author at 141, Brancaster Lane, Purley, Surrey, CR8 1HL. Please include return postage.*

*#With the approval of the author it may be possible to reprint the work in parts in the TPS Bulletin.*

***BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY, MEMOIRS OF AN EXCISE MAN.***

Horace Sheppard, M.B.E. Illustrated. 424pp, Brighton, The Old Museum Press, 1998. ISBN 1 84042 012 X. £15.99

ALTHOUGH this is not a work about Thomas Paine, or specifically associated with him, not that he goes unnoticed by the author, it is written by an individual who has a connection with him by virtue of having been an excise officer, although unlike Paine he remained in the excise for the better part of his career. The author was born in Chatham in 1906 and accepted into the Customs and Excise as an 'Unattached Officer' in 1927 at the age of twenty-one, retiring in 1969 after having served forty-two years.



The Author & his wife at Buckingham Palace in November 1964 when he received the M.B.E.

This book is essentially a record of his life and experiences in the excise, though well larded with reminiscences of his family and social activities, which seem to have included collecting antiques and antiquarian books, whether these included books on Paine is, however, not stated.

Thomas Paine accompanied by Robert Burns turns up in chapter twenty, the four and a half pages making up this part of the book being devoted exclusively to them. It rapidly becomes clear from what the author writes that he holds both men in very high esteem. It has to be said there is nothing new in this chapter, but Mr. Sheppard does repeat

the all too common error about Paine having been charged with treason, whereas in actual fact it was one of seditious libel. Burns, of course, was an admirer of Paine, although he tended to be rather circumspect in regard to the radical ideas he shared in with him; his personal copies of *Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, which he would have had to conceal, are still extant.

There are many fascinating and amusing incidents recorded in the pages of this book and though tempted to mention some. I will resist doing so, leaving the reader to find these for themselves (it is a great pity there is no index). If pressed to identify any feature giving the book a degree of importance which removes it from simply being a recreational read, I would point to material in it which social historians will find of great value, although this is expressed in an entertaining manner rather than in terms of what one would expect in a scholarly treatise. Whether it was the intention of the author to give his work this measure of importance is doubtful, but whatever be the case he has done so in the most pleasurable manner.

This is a book to be taken to bed, but be warned, once you start reading it you may find it difficult to put down and become so absorbed in it that you will suddenly discover it is time to get up!

R.W.Morrell

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## CHURCH DISESTABLISHMENT - PAINE'S VIEW Andrew Stevens\*

IT GIVES me the greatest pleasure to pen an article for the *Bulletin* of the society dedicated to honouring one of England's finest radicals. Although not necessarily to be accredited with being the first to question religious privilege and accepted wisdom in spiritual affairs, Paine was undoubtedly their most fierce critic in his day and *The Age of Reason* articulates the disdain for and the contempt in which he held all-powerful religion, in both the constitutional and rational sense. I believe this was meant to complement his thinking on the subjects for which he normally receives more credit and recognition for today, namely popular rights and government. However, admirers of Paine often choose to revere these two concepts and ignore or give diminished consideration to his thinking on religion. It would be folly somewhat to imagine or argue that Paine's radicalism and life trajectory followed some conscious logical progression and applied this to his

output - Paine was not a scholar, nor did he enjoy the privileged upbringing of most seminal theorists of his day and nor did he hold any great public office. His works were, in the main, written to contend with contemporaneous events. However, it can be argued that in retrospect we can view Paine's collective output as being consistent. He did not vacillate in his opinions during his life (unlike Locke for instance), the themes of each work corresponding with the others. Therefore, religious privilege can be viewed as deserving the same consideration as representative government and political liberty, the three having the same effect on man's progress - this being as significant upon the politics of spirituality in the late eighteenth century as the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, and J.S.Mill's *On Liberty* in 1859 was in the mid-nineteenth century. Whilst Mill and Darwin's work ushered in an age of active nonconformism, anti-state church agitation and a belief that man's progress and social reform lay in the hands of man himself and not the Christian church, Paine's publication of *The Age of Reason* was met with the derision and fury of Christian both in Britain and America that would suggest that it was Paine himself that nailed Christ to the cross! To criticise the actions of men in their earthly affairs and dealings with one another was one thing but to challenge the accepted wisdom and belief of the Christian view of the world was above mere reproach.

Paine's sane and rational perception of the unchallenged tenets of Christianity, as startling as their originality in his time remains, offers us little in an age where even the Papacy accepts evolution, over one-hundred years after Darwin and where the empirical work of scientists reduces the bible to a superstitious document of mythical events. However removed from the misconception of Paine being an atheist, his deism can be seen as perhaps an attempt for religion to circumvent the growing anti-clericalism and antipathy towards the church and was something of a precursor to Unitarianism. However, somewhat redolent of our own age perhaps, the prevailing view on Christianity and how the church should conduct itself was that articulated by the arrogant and sanctimonious forces of conservatism. We all know how Paine wrote *Rights of Man* as a spirited defence of the French revolution and the common liberty immediately after reading Burke's, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Thus it has been and remains so to some extent, that Burke and Paine are viewed as being the antithesis of one another - the advocate of the wisdom of the ages, reverence of the preceding order and of the stabilizing virtues of aristocracy, versus that of reason, the rationalism of man and society's progress and revolutionary zeal. Indeed Burke in the *Reflections* wrote:

‘To them (the citizens), therefore, a religion connected with the state, and with their duty toward it, become even more necessary than in such societies where the people, by the terms of their subjection, are confined to private sentiments and the management of their own family concerns’.

Let there be no doubt or scope for misapprehension, Paine would disapprove of the established Church of England as much today as when he conceived an “age of reason” should prevail, perhaps more so given the length of time we in Britain have had at our leisure, and in much more tolerant times, to contemplate and resolve to liberate the Anglican faith from its stately captor. Whilst many a Tory could quote Burke verbatim and the publications offered for sale by Labour include Paine’s first two works, it is Burke’s view that prevails as rigidly and virtually unchallenged now as in 1789 as far as the established church is concerned. As asserted earlier, the pursuit of true representative government and the common liberty of all is bound to the belief in man and society’s progress alone, free from the dogmatic intrusion of either the superstition and myths of Christianity or the Burkian conservative and arbitrary national religion of the establish church. However, to agitate for this is not to deny either Christians or their Protestant adherents the right to enjoy and practice their faith, it is merely to defend it whilst giving it parity with other denominations and faiths that they rightly deserve, altogether free of state involvement. The right to the free exercise of religion and worship, to to refrain from doing so altogether, is *sine quo non* in a representative democracy based upon the principle of liberty. As progressive democrats we possess the humility, something Christianity stresses so much, to allow others to advocate the curtailment of liberty, even though fundamentalist Christians would gladly snatch that very right alone from under our noses!

As the Thomas Paine Society we are dedicated to both constructing a perspective on the problems and issues we face in our own time and towards honouring Paine’s great work and memory. However, whilst Burke stressed the importance of ‘the three prejudices’ which today could be construed as monarchy, parliamentary government and established church, as opposed to Paine’s common sense, the rights of man and the age of reason, it is Burke’s view of which that our Labour Prime Minister believes in so strongly. Thus, whilst in our age Paine would not have effigies burned in his absence nor condemned to an undignified existence during the rest of his days for articulating such anti-established church sentiments; the chances are that they would fall upon the deaf ears of the unaware, unconcerned public (Burke’s ‘swinish multitude’) and a muted political reform movement that once

sought to challenge vested interests and arrogant assumed wisdom with such unflinching recidivist conviction. Whilst Paine is not with us today (unless you are a Buddhist perhaps), his words resonate so clearly and audibly that he might as well be: 'Let every man follow, as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers'.

*\*The author is director of The Campaign for the Separation of Church and State, which can be reached at 56, Wolviston Road, Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5ET, or on the World Wide Web at <http://www.angelfire.com.pa/> or via e-mail: [stevens.cscs@mailcity.com](mailto:stevens.cscs@mailcity.com)*

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## THOMAS PAINE AND THE POLISH REVOLUTION

Zofia Libiszowsk

(University of Lodz)

POLAND in the 18th century was in decline. The first partition of the country among its three neighbouring powers occurred in 1772 without contradiction on the part of Europe and with England's acquiescence. Thomas Paine could have been aware of this because the English press published information about it and even satirical engravings appeared illustrative of this unprecedented event which violated the principle of the balance of power (*equilibre European*).

However, the first partition gave rise to the awakening of the Polish nation. In order to save the state and its endangered independence fundamental reforms were to be undertaken and all social power and activities activated. The privileges and habits of magnates had to be curbed and parliamentary anarchy overcome. In Poland the last quarter of the 18th century the splendour of the enlightenment was glorified in an attempt to overcome the country's backwardness in comparison to Western Europe.

The reforms of the Four Years Diet (1788-1792), which is called the Great Diet, amongst the best known being the Constitution of May 3, 1791, were a result of these endeavours. Next to the Constitution of the United States, the Polish Constitution was in advance of even the French Constitution of September 1791. The most important article of the May Constitution was the law of towns which gave civil rights to the burghers. This gave birth to the Tiers Etat in Poland where the nobility voluntarily renounced part of their privileges and the peasants given the protection of the law. In place of an hereditary monarchy an elective monarchy was introduced and the elector of Saxony, Frederick

Augustus was elected heir to the Polish throne with his daughter having the possibility of becoming his successor.

Decisions were taken concerning the security of the state and financial measures adopted to pay for the defence forces. The Constitution was for the most part based upon Anglo-American models which aroused admiration although it also roused doubts and opposition. The Polish court was following European attitudes and attitudes resultant upon the publicity changes had brought, as are recorded in newspapers as well as diplomatic and private correspondence.

Amongst English politicians it was Edmund Burke's eulogy which resounded the loudest and was included in his pamphlet *Appeal to the New Whigs*, a polemic against Thomas Paine and his radical supporters. Within the context of polemics Paine's name appears for the first time in Poland, where his ideas soon gained support. During his time in the United States Paine had met Tadeusz Kosciuszko and it may be he also met other Polish volunteers taking part in the War of Independence, although no information on this reached Poland, where lengthy extracts from Paine's, *Common Sense*, were published in translation in the Polish press (*Gazeta Warszawska*, May 25, 1776), although it was wrongly ascribed to John Adams' *Manifesto*. Large parts from *Common Sense* also appeared in the Polish translation of Abbe Raynal's work (1783). I can be presumed that the Polish press also reprinted excerpts from the *Crisis* papers, although these are not easy to identify as the Polish press printed many comments and opinions about the American Revolution.

Following his return to Europe Paine travelled between France and England. In Paris he associated with a circle of friends which included Jefferson and La Fayette and through these he came into contact with the Poles Princess Lubomirska, S.Potoki and S.Piattoli. He also became acquainted with Americans agents working for the Polish king, Stanislaw Augustus Poniatowski such as Lewis Littlepage and Philip Mazzei. He was also familiar John Adams' *Defence...* (1784), which has a critical chapter dedicated to Poland. Paine also took an interest in the Polish monarch, Stanislaw Augustus, described as 'le Roi Philosophe' or 'Citizen King', and told Thomas Christi that although being an enemy of monarchy he would like to take away much of the power from existing kings and hand it over to Stanislaw Augustus (T.Christi to the Polish king, May 22, 1791. Mss. Czart,Krakow, No.938- pp.633-655). To judge by this letter Christi not only told the king about Paine's, *Rights of Man* but also included a copy along with his own pamphlet replying to Burke. S.Piatolli purchased a copy of *Rights of Man* for the library of Ignatius Potocki the leader of the Polish Patriots. There is, however,

no reference to Polish changes in the first part of *Rights of Man*, although the Deit was in full session when it was written.

In England news about the new Polish Constitution was well received, and because of the events in France excited much interest. To conservatives the Polish Law of Government was considered a different reform to what was taking place in France and was considered to be based on the British parliamentary monarchy (Burke), while the left Whigs as well as the radicals considered it as a revolutionary step and another step in the process began by the French Revolution.

The Polish ambassador in England, Francis Bukaty, reported that Paine was unpopular with the English government and steps had been taken not to ban any celebration of the anniversary of the outbreak of the French Revolution, festivities for which had been announced for July 14, 1791 and in which Paine was to have participated. Despite government hostility around 900 supporters of the Revolution gathered together at the Crown and Anchor tavern to celebrate. Amongst the many toasts proposed was one expressing 'good wishes to the Polish revolution'.

Paine does not refer directly to changes in Poland in Part Two of *Rights of Man*, but he does state that in contradiction to a hereditary monarchy 'Poland, through an elective monarchy, has had fewer wars than those which are hereditary', adding, 'and it is the only government that has made a voluntary essay, though a small one, to reform the condition of the country'. A few pages further he characterises features of a republic and considers Poland a country which have effected to style themselves a republic. 'Poland called itself a republic, which is an hereditary aristocracy, with what is called an elective monarchy'. And that is all which was written about Poland in transition.

Although Thomas Paine did not say much about Poland he was regarded there as a supporter of the Polish Constitution, probably because of the words of praise for it from his circle of friends. Paine's name was also associated with celebrations and demonstrations commemorating Polish Constitution. When the first anniversary of the Constitution was celebrated in London on May 3, 1792, the participants were supporters of Paine, though the Polish ambassador, who was invited to the gathering at the Mitre Court tavern, anxious not to upset the court and the government, apologised for not attending because of official duties. The meeting also supported the notion of universal revolution and Burke came in for condemnation for his political blindness. Revolutionary songs were sung and the author of *Rights of Man* toasted. The last demonstration at which such slogans were expressed occurred when the third anniversary of the French Revolu-

tion was celebrated at a time of Russian military intervention in Poland was occurring and war was taking place with France. The demonstration was supported by the extreme radicals and Thomas Paine cheered and the desire expressed that the 'Revolution in France and Poland be a challenge to all despots on earth'.

The last gesture of friendship of the English nation towards Poland was a goodwill subscription with support from representatives of governmental and parliamentary circles, merchants and businessmen as well as the radical opposition (letter of T.Christi to the Polish king, AGAD Warsaw. 2b. Popiel Coll. 206. 3 August,1792), as the latter were supporters of Thomas Paine they preferred anonymity in order not to evoke the animosity of the bitter enemies of the French Revolution. In a long letter to the Stanislaw Augustus, Thomas Christi characterised the feeling at the celebration as being of general sympathy for the Polish cause and the wish to help it (August 3. 1792. AGAD Warsaw. Popiel Coll. 206). The May 3 Constitution was abolished in Poland following the second partition of the country by victorious despots.

Thadeus Kosciuszko, who took part in the American War of Independence and, like Paine, an honorary citizen of France, did not give up the struggle for independence. With the support of the then Girondistic legislature he set off the insurrection as a last fight to save, if not the country, then at least it's honour and dignity.

In the days when Thomas Paine fell victim to Jacobinic terrorism the Polish people struggling for their rights had recourse to his ideas. This idea came from "Polish Jacobins" and from the leaders of the insurrection and, one can suggest, from Kosciuszko himself. A German edition of *Rights of Man* had been prepared in Poland. The editor of *The Free Warsaw Gazette (Gazeta Wolna Warszawska)*, the newspaper of the insurrection, stated that: 'The work of Thomas Paine *Rights of Man* had reached in a short space of time nine editions, 50,000 copies of which had been bought with enthusiasm in England alone, it will always remain for mankind of inestimable value and for despots a fearful act'.

Paine's later works, *The Age of Reason* and *Agrarian Justice* also found their way to the libraries of Polish statesmen. Paine's close friendship with Kosciuszko was renewed after his captivity. R.R.Palmer, the author of the fundamental work, *The Age of Democratic Revolution*, says Paine considered the possibility of applying for Polish citizenship, although no confirmation of this can be found.

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