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Two American Jacobins Abroad, Joel Barlow and Thomas Paine, 1789-1801

Ginger Grigg Faber

Eastern Illinois University

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Two American Jacobins Abroad

Joel Parlow and Thomas Paine, 1789-1801

(TITLE)

BY

Ginger Grigg Faber

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
Master of Arts

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1973

YEAR

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Affectionately Dedicated

to my Husband,

Peter Faber,

and our Children.

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I

THE STAGE

American Unrest, 1789-1801

The last decades of the Eighteenth Century were trying ones in infant America. Internal problems plagued the country and threatened the newly-adopted Constitution. Revolutionary conditions in France intensified the anxiety. As a country born of revolution, America must, for consistency, recognize other Republican revolutions. Nonetheless, in late Eighteenth Century America, the formidable need for the security of the Constitution and the conflict surrounding it divided Americans. The human search for security had squelched some of the old revolutionary fervor. Unwittingly, however, America was thrust onto the world scene. Internal and external events, real or imagined, appeared threatening. Eventually chimerical phantoms seemed to stalk from within and without the toddling Republic. This is, thus, the story to be told. It is a 'torrential' tale of peaked tempers and passions, that throughout the brief period of 1789-1801, assaulted American political harmony.

America's opposing political philosophies were divisive. The lack of experience in political opposition created an explosive situation. As tempers flared, fear mounted; the opposing forces blasted forth a furor of charges, countercharges, and half-truths. Until ideas of the 'loyal opposition' became a part of the American political climate, the situation remained precarious. Looming larger than life during these maturation

years were two American Jacobins abroad. Their impact on the American scene was magnified by their alleged association with the revolutionary politics of France. How much influence they actually had on the French Revolution is a matter of debate; however, their influence with both the powerful and the powerless, at home and abroad, created apprehension and fear. Two of the most influential American Jacobins abroad were Joel Barlow and Thomas Paine. Although men of differing personalities, they, through their activities and writings, strove to ignite world revolution. Both might have settled into a mundane life after the American Revolution had it not been for the French Revolution. The explosion of 1789 gave both men a chance to continue their revolutionary hopes for a world-wide Republic. Although not acquainted during the American Revolution, Joel Barlow and Thomas Paine were destined to meet as they strove to make their Republican dream a reality.

In 1789 these American Jacobins were not lonely in their admiration for the French Revolution. In time, however, opinions changed while Barlow and Paine remained constant throughout 1789-1801. Initially there was great enthusiasm for the French Revolution; even Alexander Hamilton was enthusiastic for a time! After all, the French had been instrumental in the American Revolution and Maria Joseph Lafayette had fought for American freedom aside General George Washington. As one would expect, Thomas Jefferson, only recently home from his post in France, heartily applauded the Revolution.¹ Jefferson's stance, like Barlow's and Paine's, remained constant, but others altered abruptly. Conditions prompted

¹Jefferson is home from post as minister to France. Robert Ernst, Rufus King, American Federalist, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), pp. 181-182.

anxiety; contented souls feared that the French Revolution would give impetus to the unrest and instability in America and thus prompt a renewed revolution in the new republic.

Hostility to France increased as prestigious Americans were threatened with the possibility of further change. Jefferson accused men of high office and great wealth of turning away from France in order to emulate England.² Even more forcefully, Joel Barlow predicted that "general revolution" was at hand and nothing could stop it. Disavowing the traditions of England, Barlow rejected Edmond Burke and other writers and "readers of books" and put his faith in the "class of men" who can neither read nor write.³ In this zeal Barlow helped revolutionize American political thought. His provocative political ideals endangered the American reality. Barlow blasted comfortable Americans with--"it is the person, not the property that exercises the will and is capable of enjoying happiness; it is therefore the person, for whom government is instituted and by whom its functions are performed."⁴ Such conjecture stirred fear in the hearts of the Federalists as they jealously guarded the Constitution. While Barlow's dangerous ideas jeopardized the primary interest of the property-oriented Federalists, Paine's revolutionary ideas were even more well known than Barlow's. Barlow's Advice to the Privileged Orders contained, in a sense, the missing items in Paine's The Rights of Man. Thus, the two men were philosophically akin even though Barlow was known more as a dreamy poet and Paine as a practical revolutionist.

²Thomas Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, 12 vols., ed. Paul W. Ford, (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1904), letter from Jefferson to William Short, Philadelphia, (January 3, 1793), vol. 7, pp. 202-204.

³Joel Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, 2 vols. Prose, Poetry, (Gainesville, Florida: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1970), Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, p. 107.

⁴Ibid., p. 52.

However, the reverse may well have been nearer the truth. Regardless, their philosophies are similar even though their temperaments would give evidence otherwise. Their ideas, although voiced from England and France and in Barlow's case even the Algiers, were an active force in America as well as abroad. Their activities gave impetus to the proliferation of the Jacobin Clubs in America and abroad.⁵

Within a few years of 1789, Jacobin Clubs multiplied throughout the United States. While the clubs were considered revolutionary by many Americans, in reality most were conservatively created by middle-class reformers and "Patriots" whose prime purpose was discussion and education at the local levels.⁶ Realistically the clubs presented no great threat to the stability of the United States. Eventually, however, prominent citizens such as George Washington condemned the "self-created societies." Thus, political division began. Washington's reaction led many Americans to believe that he favored Alexander Hamilton's position over Jefferson's. Washington's overreaction as to the dangers of the clubs was premature and unnecessary because within a few years most Americans were critical of the French Revolution, even though the Jacobin Clubs did remain numerous and vocal. Notably, the urban areas fervently upheld the French cause. Edmond Genet's founding of the Philadelphia Society had set off the formation of some forty-odd societies. The "mother

⁵Jacobin Clubs originated in France at the onset of the French Revolution. In the beginning they conservatively favored a constitutional monarchy. As the revolution progressed they became more radical. The Jacobins assumed power after the fall of the Girondins. Robespierre is the most well-known Jacobin. The name Jacobin was derived from the Dominican Order which in France is known as the Jacobin order.

⁶Isser Wolock, Jacobin Legacy, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 3-4.

society" of Philadelphia gave a weak centralization to the clubs. Primarily, the groups were dedicated to the expiration of "aristocracy" and "monarchism"; secondary goals were to instruct Congressmen as to their duty to society and to inspire voters interest in elections.⁷ However, their existence created an irrational fear among the Federalists. Many of the Federalists were afraid of the new Republicanism and would have preferred to cling to the old English ideas of aristocracy; they were afraid to allow too much power to the unpropertied Americans. The societies only epitomized the possibility of this fear; the reaction was inevitable.

Opponents and proponents of the Republican societies clashed. A friend of National Liberty described the groups in The Jacobin Looking Glass as a "horde of malcontents," who were "sowing discontent" designed "to overthrow the present Constitution."⁸ Conversely, Jefferson, although heartsick at the fallen martyrs in France, continued to uphold the French Revolution. Jefferson stated that he would rather see "half the earth desolated" than see the Revolution fail. In the heat of the debate, Jefferson wrote that a world reduced to Adam and Eve is preferable to the failure of the great French experiment.⁹ Understandably, Jefferson's inflammatory rhetoric only added to the explosive situation.

The philosophical climate grew even more intense as the French Revolution progressed. When the French Jacobins became a part of the second

⁷John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1960), pp. 160-162.

⁸Charles Warren, Jacobin and Junto or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames, (New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 52.

⁹Wolock, Jacobin Legacy, p. 5.

phase of the French Revolution on 1792, many turned from the excesses of the Revolution, but Jefferson continued to support the more radical phase. He stated that the "whole earth" depended on the French experiment. Even though he realized that the Revolution was taking many innocent lives, he felt the means would prove worthy of the goal and that the innocent victims would eventually be exonerated of guilt and would, thus, contribute, through martyrdom, to a great human cause.¹⁰ Likewise, Joel Barlow continued to back the Revolution. In his Letter to the National Convention of France, he reflected his satisfaction and stated, "I shall feel myself happy in having rendered some service to the most glorious cause that ever engaged the attention of mankind."¹¹ Likewise, Paine's The Rights of Man directly encouraged revolution in England where the ideas became prevalent among the industrial workers.¹² Paine's enthusiasm led him to believe that the "Age of Revolutions," which would lift man from slavery, was at hand.¹³

Others were not so optimistic. Problems of the English/French War placed America in an unfavorable position. Neutrality became increasingly difficult. Relations between England and France placed America in a betwix-between position. A move toward either power would put America in a dangerous position. By the end of the Eighteenth Century many Americans were more afraid of France's friendship than her invasion;¹⁴ they were

¹⁰Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to William Short, Philadelphia, (January 3, 1793), vol. 7, p. 203.

¹¹Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 69-70.

¹²George Rude, Revolutionary Europe, 1783-1815 (New York: Meridor Books, 1964), p. 185-186.

¹³Thomas Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, 3 vols., ed. Moncure D. Conway, (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), vol. 2, pp. 382-389, 446.

¹⁴George Gibbs, Memoirs of Administration of Washington and Adams, 2 vols., (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971) Letter from James Watson to Barlow, Hudson, (October 26, 1798), vol. 2, pp. 112-115.

afraid that affinity with France would produce England's ire. Moreover, Americans, both the powerless and the powerful, were torn in moral allegiance. England was the Mother Country, but France had been an ally. Decisions had to be made; sides were chosen and lines drawn. The situation was perilous and irrational. Americans were in a transitional period. Opposition was feared, not welcomed. Nonetheless, by 1800, after years of epithets of "Jacobin" and "aristocrat," political conflict was formalized. Opposition hence became a legitimate part of the American political process.¹⁵ This legitimacy was hard won. The period of 1789-1801 proved to be the "dangerous years," and Joel Barlow and Thomas Paine were an intricate part of these years. Allegedly they were a part of the opposition that would destroy the Constitution and bring renewed revolution and chaos to America. America was in a state of change and uncertainty throughout these years. Symbolically, Barlow and Paine reflected the changes brought about by a changing world. Thus, they represented a part of the changing climate of America in the last decade of the Eighteenth Century. Although both were maligned to one degree or another their contribution to political, social, economic, and religious thought is immeasurable. Their writings appear as modern and applicable in the Twentieth Century as they did 'visionary' two hundred years ago. The two Jacobins remained true to the ideals of the American Revolution as the last decade of the Eighteenth Century brought a conservative reaction. Barlow and Paine would have given a democratic-republic to America, but their ideals were thwarted. They, thus, left posterity the unrealized dream.

¹⁵Wolock, Jacobin Legacy, pp. 272-273.

II

JOEL BARLOW

Friends and Foes

On March 24, 1759 in a Redding, Connecticut farm house a son is born to Samuel Barlow.¹ This squirming infant is named Joel. Who could foretell that after an orthodox youth, he would become an unwitting threat to the stability of the United States. There was not a more popular undergraduate at Yale than Barlow,² and the theological education he received at the college gave him a position in American intellectual society. Upon graduation, his innocent goal was to "love mankind" to the best of his ability. So great was his faith that he vowed to maintain this love "if it killed him." Later, perhaps regretfully, his philosophy turned toward a more Rationalistic principle.³ But while still in his youthful years he clung to Christianity and devoutly loved humanity. On September 13, 1782 Barlow was certified by George Washington as a chaplain to the Third Massachusetts Brigade. He was devoted to the revolutionary course and endeavored to combine his religion with the cause. Using his poetic abilities he wrote the following chorus during the American Revolution:

¹Arthur L. Ford, Joel Barlow, (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1971), Chronology, p. 12.

²Theodore Zunder, The Early Days of Joel Barlow, A Connecticut Wit, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 48.

³Leon Howard, The Connecticut Wits, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp. 293-294.

"Hail the day and mark it well;
 Then the scourge of Freedom fell,
 Then your dawning glory shone--
 Mark it, Freeman! 'tis your own."⁴

At this juncture there was no premonition that this man would eventually threaten the foundation of the internal and external security of the United States and even turn to atheism. George Washington could not foresee this turn of events when he wrote Barlow's introduction to Marquis De Lafayette in 1788. By Washington's own word, Barlow was considered to be a "genius," who held the key to the gates of immortality, as "Patriot," "Sage," and "Hero."⁵ In later years Washington would deny personal knowledge of Barlow, but for now Barlow is a respectable member of American society, one who serves Washington and the great American cause.

This respectability is later impeached by errors of judgments that wrought life-long enemies. In 1788, Barlow went to Europe to sell homesteads for the Scioto Associates. The plan was to sell land (unowned, but held under option) to Europeans desiring to emigrate to America. The economic, social, and political conditions in Europe invited the attempt. Many Europeans were prompted to look for a brighter future in America. The land schemes ultimately led to Barlow's innocent fraud. The land was sold to the Europeans, mostly French families of St. Honore and St. Germain, but the options were not purchased. Consequently, the immigrants came to landless farms; the situation was dire for a time until Congress granted

⁴Charles Burr Todd, Life and Letters of Joel Barlow LL.D., (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker, 1886), p. 30.

⁵George Washington, The Writings of George Washington, from original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799, 39 vols. ed. John C. Fitzpatrick, (United States: Government Printing Office, 1938), vol. 29, p. 506.

the land to the immigrants in 1795.⁶ This unethical, if not illegal, business deal left future land sales in disrepute. Consequently, the fiasco damaged Barlow's reputation and produced a formidable enemy.⁷

Gouverneur Morris was inflamed by the affair and continued to blame Joel Barlow. Rebuking the shameful and cruel Scioto enterprise,⁸ Barlow was condemned by Morris as one of the culprits who, with promises of a "salubrious climate and fertile soil," lured the unfortunate families to America.⁹ Aside from the moral aspects of the venture, Gouverneur Morris was concerned over Barlow's inability to pay a draft of 100,000 pounds. At this time both Morris and Barlow were in France, and Morris was informed of the draft and its outstanding liability. Morris ultimately spoke with Barlow concerning the matter. In a "stammering conversation" Barlow revealed that he had no means to retire the bill. The entire matter was troublesome to Morris.¹⁰ However, most important, was Gouverneur Morris' own financial interest. The Scioto fiasco hampered the future sales of American land and thus hampered Morris' business interests; hence Morris was to be a life-long adversary.

Throughout the turbulent years under examination, Barlow was to make many more enemies, but he also created substantial and lasting friendships. Friendships ranged from intimate relations with Thomas Jefferson

⁶Fred W. Wellborne, The Growth of American Nationality, 1492-1865, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1943), p. 258.

⁷Gouverneur Morris, A Diary of the French Revolution, 2 vols, ed. Beatrix Cary Davenport, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1939), vol. 1, p. 187 n, vol. 2, p. 50.

⁸This settlement is Gallipolis on the Ohio River.

⁹Anne Cary Morris, The Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, 2 vols. (New York: DeCapo Press, 1970), vol 1, p. 261.

¹⁰Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 535-536, 581, vol. 2, p. 60.

to Thomas Paine. Thomas Jefferson respectfully lauded Barlow for his attempts to bring the "TransAtlantic world into the road of Reason." With Jefferson's interest in the advancement of natural rights, he congratulated Barlow for the first part of his Advice to the Privileged Orders.¹¹ They sustained their friendship through many trying years; it was to last until its denial by death.

New friendships also blossomed. On one of Barlow's many returns to the United States, he went to James Monroe's home where Thomas Paine was convalescing after his French imprisonment. This initial introduction to Monroe led to a long-term friendship and an intimacy that would ultimately lead to Barlow's appointment as Minister to France, 1811, by Secretary of State James Monroe.¹² Other friendships with prominent men, such as Robert Fulton,¹³ were long lasting.¹⁴ Fulton's association with this considered visionary¹⁵ led to his introduction to Barlow's close friend, Thomas Paine. This meeting led Paine to help Fulton perfect the new and innovating 'steamboat'.¹⁶ Both "Toot" and Paine were affection-

¹ Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to Barlow, Philadelphia, (June 20, 1792), vol. 7, pp. 122-123.

¹² James Woodress, A Yankee Odyssey, The Life of Joel Barlow (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1958), pp. 153-154.

¹³ Robert Fulton called 'Toot' by Barlow family. John Dos Passos, The Shackles of Power, Three Jeffersonian Decades (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1966), p. 164.

¹⁴ Indicating the close relationship between Robert Fulton and Barlow, an invitation from Charlotte de Villette was addressed to both Barlow and Fulton. The invitation is dated 22 Thermidor, (no year), it invites both to a "fete in which the King and royalty are to be Destroyed." (22 Thermidor was July 22, 1794?), many months after King Louis XVI (January 21, 1793) was executed. The "fete" was apparently a mock enactment of the execution. If the date is correct it is only a matter of days until Robespierre's execution. Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

¹⁵ Henry Adams, The Formative Years, 2 vols., ed. Herbert Agar (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947) vol. 1, p. 89.

¹⁶ W.E. Woodward, Tom Paine: America's Godfather, 1737-1789 (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1945), p. 301.

ately regarded in the Barlow household. Ruth Barlow (married, 1781)¹⁷ praised Paine for dispelling religious superstition and establishing a new religion of 'love'.¹⁸ The affinity between Paine and Ruth Barlow was such that Paine sent a poem to Ruth Barlow (following is an excerpt of the last stanza)--

"Let others choose another plan,
I mean no fault to find;
The true theology of man
Is happiness of mind." 19

Both Ruth and Joel Barlow were close to Paine; this affinity did not help Barlow's image; ultimately, both Jacobins were disavowed by influential men of government. For example, when John Adams was confronted with a letter from Barlow, he categorized both he and Paine as "worthless fellows." This indirect confrontation with the "worthless" Barlow occurred when George Washington forwarded a letter to John Adams. The letter asked that President Adams consider Barlow for nomination as Minister to France. Although Washington claimed 'no personal connection' to Barlow, he had acquiesced to act as an intermediary for him by forwarding a letter to Adams.²⁰ Ironically, evidence proves otherwise. Washington's introductory letter to Lafayette, which describes Barlow as a "Patriot," "Sage,"

¹⁷Todd reports that Ruth's social status was not as high as that to which Barlow's family aspired; consequently, Barlow's father refused consent to the marriage. They were married secretly in 1781; the marriage was not made public for a year. Todd, Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, LL.D., pp. 30, 56.

It is reported that Betsy Stiles, daughter of the President of Yale College, had her "cap set" for Barlow--but in vain. Zunder, The Early Days of Joel Barlow, p. 119.

¹⁸Woodward, Tom Paine: America's Godfather, 1737-1789, p. 283.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 284.

²⁰Washington, The Writings of George Washington, letter from Washington to the President of the United States, Mt. Vernon, (February 1, 1799), vol. 37, pp. 119-120.

Todd, Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, LL.D., p. 161.

and "Hero," belies Washington's complete disassociation with Barlow. Furthermore, Washington stated to Adams that he had never received correspondence from Barlow (October 2, 1798). However, a letter to introduce the Marquis de Marnasen on April 24, 1790, denies the validity of Washington's statement.²¹ Washington's denial of personal knowledge of Barlow indicates that, by 1798, association and knowledge of Barlow was, if not dangerous, at least, uncomfortable.

Barlow's poetry, political writings, and maneuvers throughout the world made Barlow an influential, and to some, a dangerous personage. Although Barlow's poetry proved to be mediocre, it is important because it was a part of newly-emerging American letters and was typically American. With insight, after Barlow finished "The Hasty Pudding" in 1795, he decided that he was better suited for prose. Some contemporary critics judge this to have been a "sensible" decision.²² Ultimately, his prose did prove to be superior to his poetry, but it caused great agitation also. Barlow, as a private citizen, sought through his prose to give advice to public officials. This 'helpfulness' proved to be a source of resentment and bitterness. Moreover, his movements within alien countries and among alien officials exaggerated his influence and power. In addition, his ability to fluxuate as conditions change did not enhance his reliability. Nowhere was this change better exemplified than in "The Vision of Columbus." When originally published, the poem was dedicated to Louis XVI; however,

²¹Washington, The Writings of George Washington, pp. 119-120 and a letter from Washington to Marquis de Lafayette, Mt. Vernon, (May 28, 1788), vol. 29, p. 506.

²²Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 306-307, 318-319.

after Louis' untimely demise, the poem was revised and the dedication and all references to Louis were deleted.²³ Too often, Barlow's antagonists felt that his political ideals could be revised as easily as his poem. To an extent this appears to be true; Barlow had a 'flexibility' that moved with a changing world. Nonetheless, Barlow did remain loyal to the French Revolution, even though he lived to fear its extremes. Notwithstanding this, in his later years, which are not within the scope of this writing, he moved to a non-revolutionary position.

The Home-Spun Poet

Considered a Hartford wit in his early years, Joel Barlow became an outcast after the French Revolution. He was recognized as a despicable Jacobin and little better than a French atheist.²⁴ French was hardly an apropos definition; Barlow was the product of America and remained such throughout his life. "The Vision of Columbus" (1787) stands as a monument to Barlow and America. Its illustrations and typography illustrate its Americanism.²⁵ Also in this and other early works, Barlow's Christianity is as apparent as his search for freedom. This representative excerpt reflects Barlow's attempt to coordinate faith and freedom.

"While faith and freedom spread a nobler charm,
And toils and dangers every bosom warm.
See other hosts and chiefs, in bright array,
Full pinions crowding on the watery way;
All from their different shores, their sails unfurl'd,
Paint their glad streamers to the Western world." 26

²³Ibid., pp. 318-319.

²⁴Adams, The Formative Years, vol. 1, pp. 52-53, 104.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Vision of Columbus," vol. 2, p. 248.

Although Barlow's poetry is not as Miltonian²⁷ as his own ego led him to think, it did arouse both respect and appreciative laughter. His conceit only made him more entertaining.²⁸ Paradoxically, Barlow's image of himself as a man of letters was also recognized by others.²⁹ In England he was received as "the American Poet."³⁰ "The Hasty Pudding" (1793), his best poem,³¹ gave credence to this distinction. It is unique in its Americanism. Although the poem itself lacks Barlow's early religiousity, it reflects a faith comparable to his earlier poems.

"The Hasty Pudding" uses a minute and apparently insignificant theme to illustrate the abstract idea of freedom. Speaking the tongue of America, Barlow sings the praises of the Ideal American life.³² With great emotion, Barlow describes the simplicity and strength of democracy. When the Hasty Pudding "rages, roars, and boils," it reflects the virility of the simple and natural life, an existence that gives fellowship to human and animal alike. In this regard, Barlow indicates his hostility to the slaughter of animals and his faith that life sources are provided by nature. His optimism portrays a genuine deep love for nature and its abundant gifts.³³

²⁷Zunder, The Early Days of Joel Barlow, p. 219.

²⁸Adams, The Formative Years, vol. 1, pp. 103-104.

²⁹A copy of a note written to Helen Maria Williams regarding her poem "Ode to Peace." Miss Williams had sent Barlow a copy for his judgment. Barlow wrote several stanzas of his own and returned them to Miss Williams hoping they would be published with her own. The note indicates Barlow's reputation as a poet as well as his opinion of his own work. Dated 25 Brumaire 10 (October 25, 1802). Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

³⁰Howard, The Connecticut Wits, p. 275.

³¹Todd, Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, LL.D., p. 99.

³²Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Hasty Pudding," vol. 2, pp. 87-88.

³³Ibid., vol 2, pp. 96-97.

"Blest Cow! thy praise shall still my notes employ,
Great source of health, the only source of joy;
How oft thy teats these pious hands have prest!
How oft I've fed thee with my favorite grain!
And roar'd, like thee, to find thy children slain!" 34

Accompanying this grandiose view of nature, Barlow foresees democracy. With America as the initial force, Barlow envisions 'swells of democracy' pervading the countries of the world.³⁵ These ideas are not new to Barlow, but spring from his earlier more religious works. Although prior works picture "Christ as Captain and King," they also speak of equality among the "bond and free," "the fool," and "the beggar."³⁶ While these early religious poems are faithful to "God's holy Word," they also warn of "Satan's chains of slavery."³⁷

In "The Conspiracy of Kings," Barlow judged the "rights of nature" to be the "gift of God" and rebuked one who "treads down friends when frightened by his foe."³⁸ This poem introduced Barlow's political tendency toward democracy and Republicanism. Inspired by the French Revolution, Barlow wrote the poem "to celebrate the past achievements and promised happiness of" France. Writing a note to a friend to introduce himself and his poem, Barlow stated that he hoped the Revolution would "give life and happiness to a considerable portion of the human race."³⁹ Although, certainly inspired by the French Revolution, Barlow's heart remained in

³⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 97.

³⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 96-97.

³⁶Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "Meditations on Death and the Grave," vol. 2, pp. 58-63.

³⁷Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 63-64.

³⁸Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Conspiracy of Kings," vol. 2, pp. 67-74.

³⁹Copy of a note from Barlow to Madame la Comtesse de la Villebague, Paris, (January 22, 1790). Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

America.

For Barlow, America becomes the cradle of this political philosophy. In this regard, Hasty Pudding is synonymous with democratic ideals.

"Dear Hasty-Pudding, what unpromised joy
Expands my heart to meet thee in Savoy!...
For thee thro' Paris, that corrupted town,
How long in vain I wondered up and down,... 40

Hence, Barlow cannot find the beauty of democracy elsewhere than America. It must be acknowledged, however, that Barlow does not advocate unrestrained freedom. He sought a balance of freedom and restraint. With simplicity and rhyme this democratic poet speaks of the necessity of equitable laws and insists that empiricism and necessity are the 'a priori' of the Law. In poetic form he advises that mistakes will be made, but experience is never wasted--one must merely try again.⁴¹

With similar enthusiasm Barlow praises agrarianism. For Barlow, the love of nature is synonymous with the love for an agrarian life. He glorifies the farmers role in nature--"She loves the race that courts her yielding soil..." and works hard to guard against the birds and worms. It not only enhances man's relationship to nature, but increases his affinity to other men who share his field!⁴² In comparison, other pursuits, although more sophisticated, are of less importance than the simple and natural agrarianism.⁴³ Throughout the poem, Barlow exhibits a genuine love for nature and democratic ideals, an affection that disavows ideas of aristocracy.

⁴⁰Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Hasty Pudding," vol. 2, pp. 89-90.

⁴¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 98.

⁴²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 93-94.

⁴³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 92.

With an affection for the "meaner" sort, Barlow defiles the "pigs" of the aristocracy. He urges that the bounties be shared among all men. He denies that a generous government produces lazy and inept men; concurrently, however, he chides the "pampered" aristocrats. With his usual democratic fervor, Barlow reiterates that it does not rob one man of his right to assure another man his.⁴⁴ In this regard, Barlow appears to say 'each according to his ability and need'.

"Then check your hand: you've got the portions due,
So taught our sires, and what they taught is true..."

....
"Is that small section of a goose-egg-shell,
Which in two equal portions shall divide
The distance from the centre to the side." 45

With similar flair he says let the raccoon and squirrel steal their stores-- but let man share his. Feverishly, this humanitarian cries for a new democracy that will destroy the nexes of the past.⁴⁶ With loathing he speaks of courts and kings. He condemns these "vampires" that nurse at nature's spoils. Vehemently, Barlow advocates shaking the "tyrants from their thrones and cheers the waking world." Demanding that "freedom rise," he calls for equality, the wisdom of empiricism, and the union of "Liberty and Laws."⁴⁷

Searching for the 'delicate balance' necessary to 'his' democracy, Barlow scorned the pomp and circumstance of a charismatic government. As an iconoclast, he encouraged laws that would rely on natural instincts and

⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 90-91.

⁴⁵Ibid., vol. 2, p. 98.

⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 95.

⁴⁷Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Conspiracy of Kings," vol. 2, pp. 80-84.

the basic 'goodness' of man. Always the egalitarian, Barlow equalized the "servant and the lord" and admonished those who would inhibit individualism and nonconformity.⁴⁸ With his zeal for liberty,⁴⁹ this democratic poet never really lost his belief in the egalitarian ethics of Christianity. Even though Barlow was probably nearer an atheist than Ethan Allen or Thomas Paine, he was always careful to distinguish between Christianity and the established church.⁵⁰ Brotherhood and humanity appears throughout Barlow's writings. He never abandoned his early Christian training; he only modified it and applied it to the human condition of a democratic society. Consistently, Barlow spoke optimistically of the beauty of nature, simplicity, brotherhood, and democracy. His basic love of mankind led him to a radical form of Republicanism. He could not follow Rationalism completely because he fought for a security that denied the *laisse faire* of the rationalists. In his idealism he swirls within reason and romance.

Ideas of the Eighteenth Century rationalism are undeniably present; however, they merge with a genuine love for the nation. This affection attempted to spread the American ideal throughout the world. In this regard, Barlow retained the universalism of the rationalist. Nonetheless, he must be considered a "bridge" between rationalism and romance. The emotional fire of his writings contradict the sterility of pure reason. Hence he can be judged as a classicist--but an American classicist. His home-spun democracy must be distinguished from European classicism.

⁴⁸Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Hasty Pudding," vol. 2, p. 92.

⁴⁹For Barlow's interpretation of Liberty, see Eugene Perry Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800, (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), p. 22n.

⁵⁰Howard, The Connecticut Wits, p. 324.

Staunchly, Barlow stands among the first purely American authors. Undoubtedly, European conditions influenced his writings, but his perspective mirrors American's love of nature and freedom while it defies the inequality wrought by European aristocracy. Flavored with missionary zeal, the former Christian minister preached a philosophy that both amused and annoyed his opponents.

Social Democrat

Barlow was consistent in his respect for the American Revolution. At a Fourth of July celebration in 1787, the emphatic orator stated that while other revolutions were prompted by chance only the American Revolution burst from reason as well as passion. Reason is the prerequisite to revolution when the populace is 'enlightened', said Barlow, because such a populace will not be moved by passion alone. In the speech, Barlow expressed gratitude for French aid during the Revolution and reminded Americans of their responsibilities to the world. He contended that the success of the American Revolution obligated each free citizen to become a legislator for one-half of mankind.⁵¹ Later, Barlow continued the same philosophy, as he witnessed a different revolution.

In a letter to his wife, Barlow told of the "sudden and glorious" Revolution that had taken place in Paris. He was excited to be a part of what he felt was the second revolution in favor of liberty. No matter how "cruel," "horrible," "just," "noble," or "memorable" it proved to be, Barlow approved. He was sure that it would bring "happiness to millions

⁵¹Joel Barlow, "Fourth of July Oration delivered at the North Church in Hartford at meeting of Constitutional Society of Cincinnati," (July 4, 1787). Microcard E286, H32, (Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois), pp. 1-8, 10-12.

of human creatures."⁵² Shortly after this first thrust of revolution in France, Edmond Burke attacked the revolution in Reflections on the Revolution in France (1790). Both Paine and Barlow were quick to reply. Paine answered with The Rights of Man and Barlow with the Advice to the Privileged Orders (February 4, 1792).⁵³ Perhaps Barlow's conceit is apparent in the title of his dissertation; however, Barlow felt qualified, as a past revolutionary, to advise the nations of Europe. Although Barlow's effort was not as highly-regarded as Paine's, it is his "most important and lasting work." Upon its completion, Barlow became a full-fledged radical and a member of the English Constitutional Society,⁵⁴ an organization that stirred fear of revolution in the hearts of men like Edmond Burke. The height of the fear reached was unwarranted, but nonetheless effected decisions and ideas.

Barlow's Advice to the Privileged Orders and other writings presents a detailed analysis of his political philosophy. Innate knowledge is of prime importance throughout the social democrats' philosophy. He relies on man's basic instincts and goodness. This 'a priori' influences all of Barlow's social, political, and economic philosophy.

On the social scene, Barlow had definite ideas on what constitutes justice. Forever the idealist, this American Jacobin had specific ideas concerning crime and punishment. According to Barlow, the government is

⁵²Letter to Ruth Barlow from Joel Barlow, Paris (July 28, 1789). Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

⁵³Barlow, through his writing, is becoming more and more associated with Paine and his ideas. Paine's Rights of Man is short on law and religion; Barlow picked up omissions in Advice to the Privileged Orders. Victor Clyde Miller, Joel Barlow, Revolutionist: London, 1791-92, (Hamburg: Friederichsen de Gruyter and Company, 1932), pp. 7, 21.

⁵⁴Ford, Joel Barlow, p. 29.

obligated not only to "refrain" the vices of men, but to prevent them. Thus, the "state has no right to punish a man, to whom he has given no previous instruction." Likewise, guilt must be proven and not presumed.⁵⁵ The general conclusion almost indicts 'society' as the cause of all crime; consequently, there is some doubt that society has a right to punish crimes. It appeared to Barlow that each punishment was a new crime! Hence, the humanitarian advocated that correction replace punishment. Although he made an exception of war and revolution, his basic ideal rebuked capital punishment. Barlow intended this axiom to apply to individuals as well as parties within the government.⁵⁶ Astutely, however, Barlow realized that men cannot know the limits of society and the law without education. Consequently, like Jefferson, he supported public education.

It is "absurd" and impossible to compel performance to law without knowledge and understanding, warns Barlow. Ideally, of course, laws "command respect," not "terror," because they stem from the majority of the governed.⁵⁷ However, even when ideally formed by the majority of the populace, the laws must be understood completely. Concurrently, the citizens must be educated to preserve their right to have a voice in the law. Thus, with the aid of public instruction the system of government can improve and preserve the "morals of mankind." Barlow objects to the old maxim "that ignorance of the law is no excuse to the offender." He re-

⁵⁵Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, pp. 173-175.

⁵⁶Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 74-78.

⁵⁷Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, p. 210.

gards it an an apology for tyranny and a maxim that should not "disgrace a national government." Emphatically, he insisted that "knowledge is the foundation of obedience and laws have no authority, but where (unless) they are understood."⁵⁸ In order to accomplish this goal and educate the populace, Barlow suggested that elected, salaried teachers teach the science of liberty and happiness. Although Barlow would not eliminate religion from education, he suggested that education must refute the alleged supernatural powers of the church hierarchy. Accordingly, elected teachers would prevent the creation of an educational hierarchy⁵⁹ that could be as tyrannical as the religious hierarchy. As the product of an age of uncertainty our social democrat had intense feeling about tyranny and applied and versed them freely.

In A Letter to the National Convention of France, on the Defects of the Constitution of 1791, Barlow's political philosophy is comprehensively outlined. First he advises that, even though the Constitution is presently adjudged perfect, it should allow citizens to make alterations and each new legislature should be able to propose, adopt, and ratify amendments.⁶⁰ Without further discussion it is readily apparent that Barlow is suggesting changes commensurate with the American Constitution.

Reflecting additional concern for the legislature as well as a safeguard against tyranny, the political theorist demands a specific written constitution. One of Barlow's indispensable demands was "that

⁵⁸Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 78-88.

⁵⁹Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, pp. 129-145.

⁶⁰Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 87-89.

every public salary should be restricted to a sum not more than sufficient to reward the officer for his labor." This sum of course would be determined by the legislature. Such a safeguard would avoid "pomp," which Barlow saw as an insult to public office.⁶¹ Concurrently, annual popular elections would avoid the retention of unpopular legislators. Moreover, Barlow suggested that representation be according to population not territory or property.⁶² To avoid misunderstanding on this point, Barlow recognized the local responsibility of the representatives and argued against virtual representation. He advised representatives to represent their constituents and necessarily be in close contact with the populace represented.⁶³ Barlow did not stop with this advice to the legislature. He continued his sweeping political dialogue.

His dissertation included advice on military and international affairs. Barlow censured the French Convention for maintaining a peacetime army. There is no need for an army in peacetime, chided Barlow; its maintenance only increases the danger of invasion; therefore, the "strength of the army is the weakness of the nation." A truly dedicated citizenry, admonished Barlow, will defend their nation when called upon to do so. If the citizens are not allowed to be a part of this 'probable necessity', their personal allegiance will diminish and they will not be an integral part of the nation and its protection. Furthermore, the citizen will constantly worry about the intrigues of the army and its leaders.⁶⁴

⁶¹Barlow does not spell out salary, merely says amount to make them equal to the task. Government was to improve morality, not for "pomp."
Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 64-71.

⁶²Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 52-53.

⁶³Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 71-73.

⁶⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 85-87.

Barlow's advice was typical of one who desired a spiritual unity within a nation. One can readily see that Barlow, in this area and others, was tinged with romance. However, his rather 'mystical spirituality' was based on rationalistic ideas of Liberty. Even though the Liberty was bridled, it remained an intrinsic value.

Later in his comprehensive discourse, Barlow recommended commercial and internal liberty. Explicitly, a Maritime Convention was suggested; a meeting that would define and declare maritime rights and create a chancery consisting of one delegate from each power. To maintain the authority of the Maritime regulations, Barlow recommended a "ban" on the "commerce" of non-members and violators of the regulations.⁶⁵ To insure internal liberty, our political philosopher exhorted that the government take an active interest in many aspects of life. He advocated that the government stay out of debt, tax moderately, and make an annual altruistic call for money. Barlow's optimism was extreme in this notion. He expected citizens to voluntarily contribute money for the maintenance of the government, sustenance that would include roads and canals to connect and assimilate people.⁶⁶ Barlow's prime interest was a cohesive United States, but for the purpose of unity and morality, not economic advantage.

Our Christian minister's background was reflected in this and other political philosophy. His over-riding aim was morality in political institutions. Hence, he disavowed public lotteries as an exploitation of the populace. Leaving reality to "chance, destiny, and fate," exclaim-

⁶⁵Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, One Letter to General Washington, vol. 1, pp. 443-458.

⁶⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 458.

ed Barlow, diverted man from his innate drive toward 'industry'.⁶⁷ Similarly, debtors prison appeared self-defeating and vengeful to Barlow.⁶⁸ Men cannot pay debts in prison! More importantly, perhaps, debtors prisons could be used to stifle one's enemies. Firmly, Barlow uncategorically stated that a man should never lose his liberty because of debt. Apparently the French Convention of 1792 allowed detainment for debt, but exempted officials of government from this possibility. Believing that laws apply to all equally, Barlow censured the exemption as well as imprisonment for debt generally.⁶⁹ It is easy to see from this brief analysis that Joel Barlow left a comprehensive political philosophy to posterity. His propositions were generally based on natural rights and humane restrictions, which he felt would ultimately produce moral laws, moral liberties, and moral men. Unfortunately, emphasis on liberty in the Eighteenth Century is an unpopular accenuation which is maligned and feared.

The English considered Advice to the Privileged Orders a seditious work. Although Barlow was not indicted or convicted for libel, as was Paine for his The Rights of Man,⁷⁰ he was considered a danger to the established order. When Thomas Jefferson wrote to Barlow he was concerned as he related the "heresies" against reason in the United States. However, with the magnanimity peculiar to Jefferson he hoped that those who attack

⁶⁷Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 80-81.

⁶⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Neither Barlow nor his publisher was blamed nor was the work banned. Woodress, A Yankee Odyssey, pp. 119-120.

the liberties of France will "attain theirs."⁷¹ The similar philosophies of Jefferson and Barlow accounted for their long-lasting contact and friendship. Of course, one can find differences as well as similarities, but it is fair to say that both Jefferson and Barlow were greatly influenced by the French Philosophs.

Barlow placed great emphasis on the environment of man. Society and its laws became extremely important. Consequently, he accepted at least part of the "necessitarianism" of the Philosophs, and was, concurrently, fairly well acquainted with Joseph Priestly and Jonathon Edwards. This explains, at least in part, his great regard for popular education.⁷² J.J. Rousseau's influence is also notable in his work. Rousseau's Social Contract ideas appear throughout Advice to the Privileged Orders.⁷³ Although Barlow was reserved on materialistic ideas, he mirrored Baron d Holbach's disdain for church authority. Reminiscent of Holbach, Barlow blamed the medieval church for proliferating a "habit of thinking" which allowed for or sustained feudal authority.⁷⁴ In the last analysis, Barlow is a 'classic idealist'. His denial of the practicality of perpetual peace, as espoused by Henry IV and later by J.J. Rousseau,⁷⁵ qualifies his idealism.

As he turned to law to insure rights and happiness, he embraced

⁷¹Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to Joel Barlow, Philadelphia, (June 20, 1792), vol. 7, pp. 122-123.

⁷²Howard, The Connecticut Wits, p. 278.

⁷³Paul Merrill Spurlin, Rousseau in America, 1760-1809, (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1969). p. 62. Also see Howard, The Connecticut Wits, p. 287.

⁷⁴Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 279-281.

⁷⁵Spurlin, Rousseau in America, p. 85. Also see Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 304-305n.

the form and morality of classicism. In summary, however, one must recognize Barlow's budding nationalism. He cannot be considered in the same category as the Nineteenth Century nationalist, but his nationalistic pride is apparent. Although his international or missionary zeal sometimes denied it, he truly loved America and its founding ideals. Barlow never considered himself a Frenchman even though he did gain French citizenship. In 1799, he writes that the French Revolution is thus far a failure because it lacks the representative democracy and federalization of the United States.⁷⁶ Hence, Barlow is never a threat to the United States per se. His threat is to those who have moved away from the ideals of the American Revolution, ideals that attempted to crush the aristocracy and replace it with an egalitarian Republic. With time, the Federalists had moved away from this original ideal and thus separated themselves from Barlow and his 'humane' idealism. Or perhaps, they were never really a part of the drive to create a new system of government that would epitomize human rights over property rights. Possibly it is correct to say that the conflict of 1789-1801 was merely a continuance of old debates. Was the United States to be a land of human rights or property rights?

Citizen of the World

Joel Barlow, throughout the years 1789-1801, must be called a citizen of the world. His excursions took him from the United States to Paris, to London, to the Algiers, and back again to Paris and the

⁷⁶Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 304-305.

United States.⁷⁷ Having impact on the internal and external policies of all the countries mentioned, it was little wonder that the American government feared Barlow's influence. His practical interest in the world and its citizens had appeared as early as 1787.

With his usual oratorical grace Barlow gave an American invitation to emigrants from the rest of the world. His goal was to fill the "empire" with the "worthiest and happiest of mankind."⁷⁸ The Federalists would eventually rue this universal invitation. The Alien Acts of 1798 indicated hostility to the 'emigrating republicans'.⁷⁹ However, in 1787 the future animosity was not envisioned. Its manifestation would wait until the 'alien threat' became allegedly dangerous and ominous to the Federalists. However, Barlow consistently favored emigration both to the United States and abroad.

On the question of immigration and citizenship, Barlow rebuked France for her policy. France should, with fraternity, says Barlow, accept anyone who declares a desire to reside in France. Moreover, these persons should possess the same rights as other Frenchmen. Thus, France would set an example of liberality. Our citizen of the world refuted France's diverse means of revoking citizenship. Barlow stated that, if the United States policy were as it is in France, he would be disenfran-

⁷⁷Mrs. Barlow did not accompany Barlow to Paris. In this letter he urged Mrs. Barlow to come to Paris. Apparently she was reluctant due to the distance involved. He wrote to urge her departure, "many wives have done the same thing--that is, to come to Europe to their husbands." Letter to Ruth Barlow from Joel Barlow, Paris, (December 9, 1789). Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

⁷⁸Barlow, "Fourth of July Oration," (July 4, 1787), p. 20.

⁷⁹Alien-Defedition Acts 1798, four acts, Naturalization Act, Alien Act, Alien Enemies Act, Sedition Act.

chised from the United States.⁸⁰ In addition, he advised that the French National Convention increase their 'active citizens', and advocated twenty years of age as the sole prerequisite to voting. Barlow chastised the Convention and said that in some respects the new government of France was reminiscent of the old destroyed government.⁸¹ Although a staunch defender of the French Revolution, Barlow never failed to criticize and advise. He wanted the new government to abandon the ideas of the old one.⁸² Urging the abandonment of French colonies, he sought revolution and self-determination for all nations.⁸³ Barlow was especially interested in Savoy. With forbodence he spoke of the war between the Italian principalities and France; he suggested that it would continue until the Italian despots were overthrown.⁸⁴ By this point in time most Americans have turned against the French Revolution; there had been an 'about face' at least as early as the French Reign of Terror.

Nonetheless, in America, the early years of the Revolution were enthusiastic. Even the Federalists approved. When Barlow spoke on the floor of the French Convention, he was applauded. Ezra Stiles and James Watson⁸⁵ warmly wrote of Barlow's contribution. They congratulated him. Events changed moods; however, Watson lived to regret his congratulations,

⁸⁰Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 55-57.

⁸¹Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 53-55.

⁸²Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, pp. 310-311.

⁸³Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the National Convention of France, vol. 1, pp. 82-85.

⁸⁴Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the People of Piedmont, vol. 1, pp. 355-357.

⁸⁵Ezra Stiles, see "Infra" p. 12, n. 17." James Watson, see "Infra" p. 6, n. 14."

while Ezra Stiles, dead within two years, did not live to see Barlow's fall from grace in the United States.⁸⁶ At the time, however, Barlow was considered "a real friend of liberty." His dual citizenship, which he obtained in 1791, only enhanced his image in the United States, by making him a friend of the French Revolution.

In the early years of the Revolution he worked with Edmond Genet.⁸⁷ Genet sent him, along with three others, to Louisiana as a member of a revolutionary expedition.⁸⁸ The purpose was to spread republican ideas in the Louisiana colonies. A military attack was envisioned, but never materialized. None of the agents were suited to their revolutionary purpose.⁸⁹ Barlow's revolutionary fervor had its limits. He was more of a philosopher and theorist than a pragmatic man of action. However, the excursion did not enhance Barlow's reputation as either a 'peacemaker' or a revolutionary. Although Barlow never abandoned the French Revolution, it at one point spurned him. Our idealistic theorist lived in fear of his life during the Reign of Terror. He and Ruth saw many of their friends succumb to the guillotine. Joel was never passive throughout this difficult period, however. He testified before the

⁸⁶Wooddress, A Yankee Odyssey, pp. 131-132.

⁸⁷Edmond Genet, French Minister, who arrived in America April, 1793, came at the same time as the news of France's declaration of war against Great Britain and Holland. Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations Washington and Adams, vol. 1, pp. 94-95.

⁸⁸Wooddress, A Yankee Odyssey, p. 137.

⁸⁹Also Stephen Sayre, a banker adventurer (American) and two Frenchmen. Francis Philbrick, The Rise of the West, 1754-1830, (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1965). p. 187.

Revolutionary Tribunal in defense of Francisco de Miranda.⁹⁰ As a faithful friend, Barlow helped him and many alleged revolutionaries (American and French Revolution) escape the guillotine. When Paine was threatened, Barlow again remained faithful. After Paine protested the execution of Louis XVI, his arrest was inevitable. When the certainty occurred, Barlow gave assistance.⁹¹ One can never say that Barlow abandoned his friends any more than he abandoned his faith in the French Revolution and republicanism.

His political interest in Italy, France, and the United States continued throughout the period. In 1793, he campaigned as a delegate to the National Convention of Savoy. It was at this time that he wrote A Letter to the People of Piedmont. In defeat, he contemplated a retirement that would allow him to write a History of the French Revolution.⁹² In a letter to Oliver Wolcott, the defeated candidate told his friend that he could write an objective report of the phenomenon.⁹³ The thought never materialized. Although never idle, Barlow became too involved with world affairs to undertake such an extensive literary effort.

On February 20, 1793 John Parish, an English subject, was confirmed by the Senate. As Consul at Hamburg, the Englishman proved unsatisfactory. The United States government eventually sought an 'Ameri-

⁹⁰Francisco de Miranda was in the French army and ultimately was tried for desertion. He was acquitted of the charge in 1791, but later he was deported after being arrested for his relations with the Girondins (1793). Morris, A Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 1, p. 511n.

⁹¹Woodress, A Yankee Odyssey, p. 139.

⁹²Ford, Joel Barlow, pp. 31-32.

⁹³Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Barlow to Wolcott, Hamburg, (November 6, 1794), vol. 1, pp. 160-161.

can' to represent America.⁹⁴ At this juncture there were several trusted men in Hamburg. Among these men was Joel Barlow.⁹⁵ Before his arrival in Hamburg, Barlow had written James Monroe to tell him that treaty relations there were precarious.⁹⁶ These letters reflected Barlow's interest in the post. Subsequently, Barlow became Consul to Algiers,⁹⁷ but not before he had once more returned to Paris. James Monroe was pleased with the appointment; he wrote Timothy Pickering (acting Secretary of State) that the trust of two Republics, America and France, was now in the hands of a citizen of both. In the same letter, Monroe advised Pickering that Barlow would leave for the Algiers immediately upon receipt of money for expenses.⁹⁸ Money was forthcoming, and Barlow set sail from Marseilles. After three sea-sick weeks on an American brig, Barlow arrived in Algiers. Loaded with gifts for the chief-of-state, he set about to fulfill his mission.⁹⁹ With his usual confidence, Barlow later wrote that United States affairs in Algiers were in a troubled state. Still contemplating writing the History of the French Revolution, our wandering philosopher said he had written the Secretary of State (Pickering) to advise him of the need for commerce treaties with the Algerian principalities. Barlow

⁹⁴James Monroe, The Writings of James Monroe, 7 vols., ed. Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899). vol. 2, p. 325n.

⁹⁵Ibid., letter from Monroe to Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, Paris, (July 6, 1795), vol. 2, pp. 325-327.

⁹⁶Ibid., by editor, vol. 2, pp. 489-490.

⁹⁷Morris, A Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 1, p. 87n. David Humphrey was instrumental in appointment. Also see Monroe, The Writings of James Monroe, vol. 2, pp. 368-369n.

⁹⁸Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Barlow to Wolcott, Algiers, (October 14, 1795), vol. 1, pp. 375-378.

⁹⁹Monroe, The Writings of James Monroe, author's summary of letter (February 23, 1796), vol. 2, p. 487.

had already prepared a detailed plan for a treaty between Tunis and the United States. The plan included at least twenty-two articles. The first articles dealt with the actions of both countries if either should be at war. These articles would insure that one country would not give aid to the other's enemy. Other articles allowed for the examination of cargo to insure that no contraband was boarded. A latter article allowed six months time for either party, in event of war, to evacuate parties and property from the respective countries.¹⁰⁰ Hopefully, he desired Washington's permission to make similar treaties and establish a "friendly footing" with the Turks and the Italian states.¹⁰¹ Washington acquiesced. Washington wrote he was pleased that Barlow was cordially received in Algiers. The President was confident that Barlow's travel and political career would make him an adequate negotiator for United States trade agreements.¹⁰² Subsequently, agreements were completed to the satisfaction of Washington¹⁰³ and the United States and Barlow left his consul post after two years of service.¹⁰⁴

Returning to Paris, Barlow was faced with uncertainties. Hostil-

¹⁰⁰Notes on possible treaty entitled Project of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the Dey and Subjects of Tunis and the United States of America. Undated. Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

¹⁰¹Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Barlow to Wolcott, Algiers, (April 27, 1796), vol. 1 pp. 333-334.

¹⁰²Washington, The Writings of George Washington, letter from Washington to Secretary of State, Mt. Vernon, (August 1, 1796, vol. 35, pp. 161-162.

¹⁰³Letter from Oliver Ellsworth to Oliver Wolcott, Senator, Philadelphia, (March 8, 1796), states that terms, which amounted to a payment to insure peace, were humiliating. Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, vol. 1, p. 306.

¹⁰⁴A Note of Articles belonging to the United States left in their chancery at Algiers, April 1797 and notes (undated) indicating that Barlow had trouble getting reimbursement for expenditures incurred in Algiers. Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

ities between the United States and France continued. The Jay Treaty of 1795¹⁰⁵ renewed animosities after a brief stalemate.¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, the XYZ affair of 1797 brought renewed and violent bitterness. The United States and France were on the brink of war.¹⁰⁷ Under this cloud of gloom stood Joel Barlow, citizen of France and the United States.

Barlow was concerned. The XYZ affair severed relations between France and the United States.¹⁰⁸ His Letters from Paris,¹⁰⁹ reflected anxiety and attempted to sooth relations between the two countries. Diplomatically, Barlow relayed peace overtures from the French Directory to the United States government. However, they were not well received. The French Revolution had become a great part of the propaganda against the Anti-Federalists. Even Washington had lost his unconcerned "coolness" toward the Anti-Federalist.¹¹⁰ Hence, when Barlow tried to make peace between the two powers, his words often fell on doubting ears. Barlow's overtures emphasized France's desire for peace. He wrote James Watson that France wanted a meeting between a French and American minister and would meet without an apology from Adams for his inflammatory oratory in the XYZ affair. Fatally, Barlow claimed that if this condition was

¹⁰⁵Adams, The Formative Years, vol. 1, pp. 159-162

¹⁰⁶Jay's Treaty 1793, to regulate commerce and navigation. Wellborn, The Growth of American Nationality, pp. 347.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 353.

¹⁰⁸The French suggested that a loan and a bribe were the terms of negotiation. This created strong resentment against France and hurt the Republicans politically. Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹Barlow wrote in pamphlet, Two Letters to the Citizens of the United States and One to General Washington, 1799.

¹¹⁰Gouverneur Morris once described Washington's concern over the Anti-Federalists as "cool." Louis Martin Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1960), pp. 291-292.

not met it would be equivalent to a declaration of war.¹¹¹ This letter was forwarded to Oliver Wolcott, while a similar one was written to George Washington who relayed it to John Adams, now President of the United States. Adams published Washington's letter.¹¹² The apparent ultimatum of a minister to France--or war--caused a furor.

While Barlow was merely trying to soothe relations between the two nations, his motives were questioned. In reality the letter only attempted to squelch the misunderstanding between France and the United states because in Barlow's mind both powers wanted peace, but each feared that the other contemplated war. Barlow later published the letter himself with the following appendix,

"I write but few private letters on political subjects; but as the one which has given occasion to the foregoing has been made public in such imperfect form, I am induced to subjoin the copy of another, which possibly might otherwise meet a similar destiny. Not that I apprehend that the person to whom it was addressed would adulterate, or even publish it, but accident may throw it into other hands." 113

In this letter from Paris, published with two letters to the citizens of the United States, he beseeched Washington to use his influence to calm the situation.¹¹⁴ This plea was, however, met with distrust; Barlow was adjudged to be a 'dupe' of Charles Talleyrand,¹¹⁵ French Foreign Minister.

¹¹¹Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Barlow to James Watson, Paris, (July 26, 1798), vol. 2, pp. 111-112.

¹¹²Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, author's resume of letter from Barlow to Washington, Paris, forwarded to Adams, (October 2, 1798), vol. 2, pp. 189-191.

¹¹³Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, One Letter to General Washington, (1799), vol. 1, p. 395.

¹¹⁴Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 395-401.

¹¹⁵Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, p. 301.

Hence, Barlow's affinity to the French Directory, thwarted his attempt toward peace. As a citizen of both nations, his duality mitigated his effectiveness as the 'peacemaker'. The mistrust was unfortunate; however, one can not be sure that Talleyrand's intentions were as innocent as Barlow's. In any event, Barlow showed honest interest and concern for the future of both nations while his other activities had shown equal concern for all of Europe and England. Thus, he can be termed a citizen of the world. This citizenship, both mental and physical, only confused America's conception of him. When this ambiguous allegiance was coupled with the 'Federalist fears,' his motives were suspect and his reputation in jeopardy.

Joel Barlow-American Jacobin

Early in his career, before his foreign excursions, Barlow was numbered among the 'Hartford wits'. His colleague, John Trumbull,¹¹⁶ was correct, however, when he wrote, Barlow is "lost to us." Barlow's self-enforced exile from the United States only ended with his death. When Trumbull quipped that he contemplated writing, "The Vision of Barlow" as a sequel to Barlow's "The Vision of Columbus," he did not realize how apropos the endeavor would be.¹¹⁷ Barlow's associations with the French Revolution and its cause made him an 'alien' American especially in the eyes of the Federalists.

¹¹⁶John Trumbull, literary notable, was a long time friend of Joel Barlow; they attended Yale College together. Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 37-78.

¹¹⁷Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from John Trumbull to Wolcott, (December 9, 1789), vol. 1, p. 17.

Barlow became a part of the horrors of "Jacobinism." To the Federalist the Republican Societies¹¹⁸ that erupted after 1789 were the precursors of this revolutionary disease. The societies were accused of plotting to overthrow the United States government by force. Throughout the period the clubs were associated with all the problems of the youthful American government. George Washington chided the clubs and their members.¹¹⁹ In defiance, Jefferson took another view. He considered the Jacobins merely Republican patriots who disavowed a hereditary monarchy.¹²⁰ Thus, the important government personages disagreed on the danger and definition of Jacobinism. Hence, the abyss between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists widened as explosive rhetoric and wit permeated the atmosphere. One renowned revolutionary villain was Thomas Paine. Although Barlow considered Paine a "luminary of the age" and "one of the greatest benefactors of mankind,"¹²¹ Washington believed otherwise. This adverse opinion did not go unchallenged by Barlow; his notebook reflected his disdain via a quatrain.

"Thomas Paine's direction to the Sculptor who
should make the statue of Washington"

"Take from the mine the coldest hardest stone,
It needs no fashion, it is Washington;

¹¹⁸Republican is often used interchangeably with democratic; both became synonymous with Jacobin.

¹¹⁹Blamed for the Whiskey Rebellion. Miller, The Federalist Era, pp. 160-161.

¹²⁰Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to Short, Philadelphia, (January 3, 1793), vol. 7, pp. 202-204.

¹²¹Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, vol. 1, p. 221

But if you chisel, let your strokes be rude,
And on his breast engrave Ingratitude." 122

Barlow's overt witticisms were not always received with a smile in eighteenth century America. However, his satire was not unwarranted.

When Thomas Paine was arrested in Paris, Washington refused to intercede with French officials. This failure to negotiate Paine's release from prison¹²³ gave Barlow good reason for bitterness. As was previously stated, Barlow aided Paine as best he could, much to the consternation of the Federalists who considered Paine a scurrilous pamphleteer. As a consequence of this opinion, they were not grateful when Barlow saved Paine's manuscript of The Rights of Man. Nonetheless, it was preserved. Ultimately, Barlow received Paine's writing and took it to the publisher. At this time Paine was in fear of his life and wanted to safeguard his manuscript. It was only through a quirk of fate that Barlow was able to secure the valuable cargo. The story is an interesting one and worth relating.¹²⁴

On the floor of the French Convention, Paine spoke against the execution of Louis XVI; thereafter, arrest was imminent. When Paine was arrested, he was asked about the rumored manuscript. Procrastinating, he claimed that the manuscript was at Barlow's residence. Unbeknownst to the officers, the work was on Paine's person. Upon arrival at Barlow's home, Paine attempted to slip the manuscript to Barlow. The covert move did not go undetected. Paine was seen by the police and the manuscript confiscated. Fortunately, however, the French officers could not read English. After a brief inspection of the work they adjudged it to be no

¹²²Note from Barlow's Notebook Box 18, Harvard University. Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, p. 196.

¹²³Ibid., p. 196.

¹²⁴Woodward, Tom Paine: America's Godfather, 1737-1789, pp. 256-258.

more than an innocent religious tract. Hence, the manuscript was saved for publishing.¹²⁵

The Federalists did not thank Barlow for retrieving the revolutionary dissertation. They considered it just another ill-founded action. It was another disparagement to be added to Barlow's dubious reputation. Likewise, the importation of 'alleged' revolutionaries or, at least, Republicans added to the charges.

The Scioto fiasco has been mentioned in relation to Gouverneur Morris;¹²⁶ however, the frightening effect of these and other immigrants has not been discussed. A brief resume will suffice. Initially, all the French colonies were approved by the French National Assembly but Barlow was responsible, to a large extent, for their success. Moreover, he was working under the auspices of Citizen Genet,¹²⁷ the reputed agitator-father of the 'Jacobin Clubs'. Consequently, from the onset, at least partly because of the reputations of those responsible for the settlement, the colonies were viewed with disdain and mistrust. The Federalists may well have thought the French Revolutionaries were moving their headquarters! When judging the immigration one must consider the "revolutionary seeds" of the undertaking and the immigrants themselves in order to understand Federalist reaction. For illustrative purposes, imagine a French colony. Visualize one hundred Frenchmen arriving in America with national cockades in their hats. These men are thoroughly convinced of their rights and freedom. They begin to cull trees for a living. Trees that are sometimes, by legal ownership, not theirs! Admittedly some thought the immi-

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶See "Infra, p. 9."

¹²⁷See "Supra, p. 31."

gration a "great event,"¹²⁸ but others feared the impact of so many 'freedom lovers'. As the immigrants shouted, "the principle of liberty and independence,"¹²⁹ the Federalists reared further revolution or, at least, placed the 'libertarians' in the Anti-Federalists camp. Consequently, legally or by revolution, the boisterous Frenchmen, if seen through the eyes of a Federalist, were a threat to the existing United States government. This feeling was intensified because they had grown from a bad seed. Early in the decade, Genet had considered himself "at war with Washington" (George).¹³⁰ In addition there were rumors that Barlow and Paine wanted to wrench the Western lands from Spain and turn them over to France. There were even rumors that Barlow was working on plans to attack Louisiana!¹³¹ True or no the rumors intensified the furor of fear surrounding the freedom-loving immigrants. Barlow's political writings and activities throughout the period only added fuel to the flames of suspicion.

Barlow, now residing in London,¹³² sent his work to all who might

¹²⁸Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Wolcott to Washington, New York, (April 14, 1790), vol. 1, p. 46.

¹²⁹Philbrick, The Rise of the West, 1754-1830, p. 187.

¹³⁰Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, p. 196.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 134.

¹³²Note to Dr. Warner in England indicates that Barlow is leaving for England. He apparently is disappointed with the events in France. Dated July 16, 1791, Paris. Barlow Papers, Yale University Library. The enclosed poem reflects his dissatisfaction:

"Who taxes the bliss that virtuous sages claim,
Securely blest with fortune as with fame
Sublime in boundless thought expands his mind
O'er all that prompts and all that waits mankind
Marks in each dark scene of human life
What worked the woes or gives the joys of life..."

be influenced. Writing to the Constitutional Whigs, Independents, and Friends of the People, Barlow enclosed A Letter to the National Convention of France and Advice to the Privileged Orders. He asked the societies to review and reflect on these writings, which he considered to be based on "truth and reason." Barlow's purpose was to show "the present disposition in Europe toward general revolution in the principles of government." Chastising those who would thwart the revolution, Barlow wrote that "it is the duty of every individual to assist, not only in removing the obstructions that are found in the way of revolution, but in ascertaining with as much clearness as possible the nature of the objects to be aimed at, and the consequences to be expected from their attainment."¹³³ Barlow's goal was apparent--revolution. Meanwhile, on the floor of the French Convention, Paine presented the Connecticut Jacobin's Letter to the National Convention of France. The presentation may have persuaded the Frenchmen to grant Barlow French citizenship, perhaps not. In any case the Letter was printed, sent to various countries, and read avidly. The governments were alarmed. The Letter was considered so dangerous that it was used in later sedition trials in the United States and England.¹³⁴ A Letter to the People of Piedmont proved equally frightening to the established powers.

Overthrow the "Pope and other Italian despots," shouted Barlow. The People "are the sovereigns in your...country." Barlow's anti-monarchical stance understandably frightened the existing monarchs. His answer to charges of abuse throughout the French Revolution was even more

¹³³Letter to the Society of Constitutional Whigs, Independents, and Friends of the People from Joel Barlow, London, (October 6, 1792). Barlow Papers, Yale University Library.

¹³⁴Woodress, The Yankee Odyssey, pp. 129-130.

frightening. When other writers cited the fatal excesses of the French he quipped, the "cruelty" and "crimes" are only equal to the "wickedness" they have to "combat."¹³⁵ Simultaneously, feared abroad and chastised at home, Barlow answered his United States critics in the preface to Two Letters to the Citizens of the United States and One to General Washington. He said he had not changed; he was the same 'democrat' that fought in the American Revolution. If old friends and comrades in the United States now despised him, it is because they had changed.¹³⁶ As hostilities mounted against him in the United States, this 'citizen of the world' only created more havoc abroad.

As a member of the London Society for Constitutional Information, he watched his fellow members face trial for sedition.¹³⁷ Although this society was conservative as compared to the one Paine embraced, it was considered dangerous. Burke assailed the Society for Constitutional Information and numbered Barlow among those "who threatened to lay our capitol and constitution in ruin."¹³⁸ Barlow did not allow such charges to go unanswered; with satire he responded to Burke:

"Oh Burke, degenerate slave! With grief and shame
The Muse indignant must repeat thy name
Strange man declare--since at creations birth,
From crumbling chaos sprang this heaven and earth." 139

.....

¹³⁵Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, A Letter to the People of Piedmont, vol. 1, pp. 324-334.

¹³⁶Ibid., Preface, Two Letters to Citizens of the United States and One to General Washington, vol. 1, pp. 361-363.

¹³⁷Horne Tooke and James Mackintosh, sedition trials, England, 1794.

¹³⁸When the Reign of Terror rocked France, Barlow and his cohorts are said to have "recoiled" and "hugged" France desirous of a return to the conservative stage of the Revolution. Woodress, A Yankee Odyssey, pp. 123-124.

¹³⁹Barlow, The Works of Joel Barlow, "The Conspiracy of Kings," vol. 2, p. 75.

"The eternal word, which gave, in spite of thee
Reason to man, that bids man be free." 140

The rhetorical battles continued when Barlow was specifically critical of the English government. Editing John Trumbull's "M' Fingal," Barlow wrote an anonymous preface to the poem. Pretending to be a pro-American Englishman he ridiculed and chided the English government unmercifully.¹⁴¹ Meantime, reports on Barlow's activities and orations ran amuck; some were true; some were false; most were exaggerations of the truth.

William Cobbett had become an avid critic of Barlow and all alleged "Jacobinsim." Critically, he reported the following as our Jacobin poet's latest offering:

"God gave the Guillotine
Till Englands King and Queen
Her Power shall prove
Till each anointed knob
Affords a clipping job,
Let no vile halter rob,
The Guillotine." 142

In the same pamphlet, Cobbett accused Barlow of favoring the execution of Louis XVI. Using Barlow's narrative poem that described "How Capet fell," Cobbett blasted Barlow. He asked, how could anyone want the head of the absolute power that helped America gain her independence?¹⁴³ The question went unanswered, but it is doubtful that Barlow actually condoned Louis XVI execution although he may have condoned it after the fact.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁴¹Howard, The Connecticut Wits, pp. 289-290.

¹⁴²William Cobbett, Society of United Irishmen, Dublin, A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats. Observations on a patriotic pamphlet entitled Proceedings of the United Irish, (1795). Microcard, E311, C65, (Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois), p. 16.

¹⁴³Ibid., pp. 17-18.

However, it was believable to his contemporaries who would not only believe but also print detrimental rumors about him. Barlow was labeled everything from "radical revolutionary" to "atheist." The latter charge was alleged by Henri Gregoire, who claimed that Barlow publically renounced his religion in a speech before the French National Assembly.¹⁴⁴ True or untrue, many believed the multiple charges against Barlow. Not the least of his enemies was John Adams. Adams could not endure 'Jacobin' Barlow. Adams feared that 'Jacobin' Americans would side with the French against the United States government.¹⁴⁵

Mr. Adams was skeptical of even receiving the French minister but upon reflection decided to be 'respectable'.¹⁴⁶ This instance exemplified the intense situation within the United States, a nation that had not yet established a deep feeling of national pride and identity. Ultimately in 1798, the Federalists took action against the radical threat. The Sedition Acts were hurried through Congress. They forbade persons to write, print, alter, or publish false, "scandalous," or "malicious" writings against the government. Emphatically, a challenge was made, and the Jacobins accepted Joel Barlow's action as the catapult when Matthew Lyon threw down the gauntlet.¹⁴⁷

In 1798, after the Sedition Acts were pushed through Congress, Lyon decided to test their effectiveness. Either by theft or subterfuge

¹⁴⁴Henry Jones Ford, Washington and His Colleagues, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), pp. 124-125.

¹⁴⁵John Adams, The Life and Works of John Adams, 10 vols., ed. Charles Francis Adams, (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850-1856), vol. 9, p. 225.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 9, p. 241.

¹⁴⁷Woodress, A Yankee Odyssey, pp. 194-195.

he obtained a fictitious letter from Barlow to President Adams (not actually sent to Adams, but written by Barlow and sent to another). The letter was subsequently published by Lyon. In the letter, Barlow stated, it is a wonder that Congress does not send Adams to the "madhouse."¹⁴⁸ Thus, Joel Barlow's letter became an integral part of Lyon's indictment for libel.¹⁴⁹ Adams did not forgive. In a future letter to Washington he reiterated his disrespect for Barlow. With disdain he said that Barlow betrayed many with his "blackness of heart."¹⁵⁰ Adams' statement reflected his general repugnance for Barlow and the Jacobins, and to some degree it reflected the feeling of most of the Federalists. The decade of 1789-1801 was a hurricane of uncertainty and agitation. In the eye of debate, fear, and hostility was the American Jacobin--Joel Barlow.

The Dust Settles

This brief discussion of Joel Barlow describes a man and a time of crisis. The new Constitution and its stipulations were not yet legitimized. The Federalists feared its failure. With an inexperienced new government, the turmoil of the years 1789-1801 was probable if not inevitable. The first generation revolutionaries still lived and as with most revolutionaries held diverse ideas. The ideas were akin to those in the French Revolution; they covered a spectrum from Constitutional Monarchy to Anarchy. The compromise of ideas that was accomplished by the United States Constitution lay near the center, but considerably closer

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801, p. 236.

¹⁵⁰Adams, The Life and Works of John Adams, vol. 8, pp. 624-625.

to Constitutional Monarchy than Anarchy. Therefore, the liberal Democratic-Republican cause was thwarted for a more conservative Republic based on property-rights. One is tempted to surmise that once Barlow and his friends, including President Jefferson in 1801, are legitimized in public office there will be a liberalizing movement, especially in the area of universal suffrage. However, this was not the case; when the Democratic-Republicans assumed power there were no radical changes. America continued to follow an evolutionary pattern toward a Democratic-Republic. The goal was not attained and became more illusive and evasive as new circumstances and conditions arose.

The 'Jacobins' of the last decade of the Eighteenth Century failed. Their rugged individualism was at least part of the reason for their defeat. There was no real oneness of mind among the men. Although some were pragmatists, most were visionaries who foresaw a luminous Utopia. Barlow stood as both a visionary and a man of action. Ultimately, however, his actions proved more frightening to the Federalists than his visions. His unofficial involvement in foreign government created questions regarding his loyalty to the United States.

There is no question that Joel Barlow loved America. However, he also loved France and the ideal of a Democratic-Republic, although it appears that in economic matters he would go beyond the French Revolution and reach for a Social Democracy. In this regard, Barlow was truly a visionary and an important political theorist, one that resembles men of the latter Nineteenth and Twentieth Century. Furthermore, Barlow's ideals indicated his romanticism; notwithstanding his great respect for reason, he cannot be called a Rationalist. It may well be that the very mixture of ideas within Barlow, when applied to the society as a whole, were the

basic cause for the conflicts of the decade. Ideas that are unstable, ambiguous, or conflicting generally produce a similar social atmosphere. The conflicting ideas within each individual when manifested in society as a whole produce a cloud of ambiguity and mistrust among men. Once the ideas are proliferated, once the ideas are uttered, it appears that a temporary synthesis occurs, a composite that allows the growth of nationalism, legitimacy, and stability. The chance for such a synthesis, however, is made even more difficult when infant nations must withstand the external pressure of new or alien ideas. When isolation becomes impossible, the conflict of ideas intensifies and prolongs synthesis.

Eventually, the dust settled in the United States. After a decade of irrationalism, Federalist fears and anti-Federalist hopes subside.¹⁵¹ Joel Barlow exemplifies this change. Initially a man of great hope and vision, he moved to a more conservative position when hopes could not be realized. A brief survey of the highlights of Barlow's contribution will explain the evolution.

In 1787, Barlow foresaw an 'Age of Philosophy' and an American Empire of Reason, an era that would shed old superstitions and the pagantry of court. He praised the United States Constitutional Convention and was confident that Americans could create this paragon!¹⁵² For years hence Barlow was hopeful, but tensions mounted and solutions were difficult. Hopes were dashed and ideals faded as the Great French Experiment turned from its goals.¹⁵³ Practicalities proved difficult. Poetry and

¹⁵¹Vernon Parrington's assessment of ideas of Radicalism and Conservatism.

¹⁵²Joel Barlow, "Fourth of July Oration," (1787), pp. 11-12, 19.

¹⁵³Howard, The Connecticut Wits, p. 305.

Prose would have been an easier course. Barlow never wrote the History of the French Revolution. He ultimately turned to the realities of life and to his own pecuniary enhancement.¹⁵⁴ Barlow never left public life, but his visionary spirit was dampened. Even as poet laureate of Jefferson's administration, he questioned the "thorough goingness" of Jefferson's democracy. He was fearful that the administration would not bring a 'new course'. He asked, will Jefferson boldly change conditions in order to build a great America?¹⁵⁵ The question was lost when Barlow became a legitimate part of the established government as Minister to France. Although his reputation had been damaged by his past actions,¹⁵⁶ Jefferson was able to secure his position. He thus continued his days in service to the United States. The old revolutionary ideas were dead. The visions dashed. The dreams of a great America built on home-spun affinity, sharing, and altruism were a part of his more youthful past. Barlow sank into the mundane problems of his day. The 'dream' was lost to Barlow. The 'dream' was lost to America. The cloud of legitimized power blinded the visionary to the yellow rays of hope. Short-run goals prevailed, while the Ideal slept.

¹⁵⁴Dos Passos, Shackles of Power, pp. 19, 100.

¹⁵⁵Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 174n, 207n.

¹⁵⁶Dos Passos, Shackles of Power, pp. 192-194.

III

THOMAS PAINE

American Patriot

Theodore Roosevelt could not have been more wrong when he called Thomas Paine a "filthy little atheist."¹ Paine was never an atheist. On the contrary, throughout his life he held a staunch faith in a supreme being and in humanity. This faith is reflected throughout his life in his writings and actions, both of which mirror his deep-seated faith in God and man. His writings were often misunderstood and taken out of context, however. This made him a prominent adversary, quoted and misquoted, during the last decade of the Eighteenth Century.

Writing was second nature to Paine. He was writing meaningful prose and poetry when he was yet a boy of eight. The following exhibits this youthful wisdom as Paine writes an epitaph for a crow:

"Here lies the body of John Crow,
Who once was high, but now is low;
Ye brother crows take warning all,
For as you rise, so must you fall." 2

This early poetry ultimately led Paine to the mastery of prose, which, eventually, influenced America and the world. When his ideas are reviewed today they appear as modern in the Twentieth Century as in the Eighteenth Century. As Crane Brinton stated, the "Big Questions" go unanswer-

¹Moncure Daniel Conway, The Life of Thomas Paine, 2 vols., (London: Watts and Company, 1909), vol. 2, p. 5 (ed. preface).

²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 5.

ed.³ Paine not only asked the big questions, but attempted to answer them. Although hated by many of his contemporaries he remained constant in his search for truth. Bombarded with criticism, he kindled hope in America and the world. His life cannot go unnoticed, his impact was too great.

Thus the world must see January 29, 1736 as a memorable day. Paine's birth began a life of impact and importance. As the son of Joseph and Francis Paine, Thomas received a Quaker education that influenced his life and philosophy. It is said that Paine's father was "a reputable citizen and though poor, an honest man" while his mother was "a woman of sour temper and eccentric character."⁴ The description of the parents describes the son. Paine was without denial an eccentric; however, he was equally as honest. He remained true to his ideals throughout his life. He seldom compromised for self-interest or otherwise. Affluence was far from his goal; his humanity was his dream. He rose to eminence and subsequently fell into disrepute, but throughout his life in Europe and America he remained true to his humane responsibility.

Paine first looked toward America after meeting Benjamin Franklin in England. When he decided to leave his native land he left with high spirits and empty hands. Turning all monies and property over to his creditors, Paine set sail for America with only his clothes. He sailed on the London Packet to Philadelphia in September 1774. After an illness-ridden voyage he arrived in America. He sought and secured employment,

³Crane Brinton, Ideas and Men, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950), p. 10.

⁴Conway, The Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 2-4.

with the aid of Richard Bache,⁵ at the Pennsylvania Magazine.⁶ This timely migration and influential position made Paine an integral part of the American Revolution. He gained a prominence and reputation that allowed him to influence the French Revolution and the political and moral philosophy of the world. Writing on almost all aspects of life, Paine did not withdraw from controversy.

Paine held strong opinions on the salient issues of the day. An avid opponent of slavery, Paine described the practice as "monstrous." "The slave traders," wrote Paine, "should be called devils, rather than Christians." He described the purchase of slaves as a "heinous crime."⁷ He could find no defense whatsoever for the practice. As a man who professed the sanctity of human rights, Paine proclaimed of the slaves, "these inoffensive people are brought into slavery, by stealing them [and] tempting kings to sell [their] subjects, which they have no right to do."⁸ In a short essay on "Independence 1775" Paine decried the cruelties and famine in the East Indies. He accused the British of sacrificing religion to "luxury and pride." Pleading for the cessation of the importation of Negroes, he argued for their freedom. Denying the missionary worth of slavery, he accused slavers of tempting passions and taking ad-

⁵Richard Bache married Benjamin Franklin's daughter, Sarah. As the head of an import/export business he was a man of means and excellent reputation. Woodward, America's Godfather, pp. 50-59.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Thomas Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "African Slavery in America," ed. Richard Emery Roberts, (New York: Everybodys Vacation Publishing Company, 1945), pp. 4-7.

⁸Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 33.

vantage of the ignorance of those sold into bondage as well as those who sold their bretheren.⁹ Paine's abhorrance of slavery was so great he wanted it written into America's Declaration of Independence.

Normally, Paine is not recognized as a prime participant in the Declaration, but he was. In early drafts of the document his anti-slavery views were expressed and so written, but withdrawn. There is evidence that the anti-slavery clause was deleted by Jefferson in order to please Georgian and South Carolinian slavers and the Northerners who profited from supplying the slaves. Thus Jefferson's early compromise led to later difficulties that could have been averted under Paine's anti-slave proposal.¹⁰ After William Cobbet's conversion to the worship of Paine, he declared that Paine was the true author of the Declaration of Independence. He pointed to the Quaker principles of the document and its humanizing aspects. Other deletions from the Declaration reflected Paine's harshness toward England and George III's role in slavery. "He [George III] has waged cruel war," alleged Paine, "against human nature itself." Indicting George III, he charged a two-fold crime; he accused him of "paying off former crimes committed against the LIBERTIES of one people with crimes which he urges them to commit against the LIVES of another." Accordingly, Paine denounced George III for encouraging slave trade to enrich Americans, and thus, secure their loyalty to the British Crown.¹¹ A devout believer in human and natural rights, Paine's equality went beyond slavery and men and embraced 'Womens Rights'.

⁹Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "Independence 1775," p. 4.

¹⁰Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 33-34.

¹¹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 33-34.

Like many men of the era, Paine spoke of the savage treatment of women all over the world. Speaking through a female third-person he described women as those "who soften the savage rudeness" and should be honored, accordingly. On the contrary, he said, women are denied public honor in many countries. Those who are most highly respected are those who speak the least.¹² Paine would have enthusiastically included women in emerging America; however, as his anti-slavery paragraph in the Declaration went unheeded so did his position on Womens Rights. He was more fortunate with other aspects of the American Revolution and was an inspiration as well as a soldier. Although certainly more inspiration than soldier.

Throughout the American Revolution, Paine strove for victory. The following prayer is credited to his pen.

"The American Patriots Prayer"

"Me from fair freedom's sacred cause
Let nothing eer divide;
Grandeur nor gold, nor vains applause,
Nor friendship false misguide." ¹³

Paine the patriot had still another message that became the rallying call for a new nation. At the 'right' psychological time he published "Common Sense."¹⁴ The pamphlet encouraged the patriots to fight on and told them what they were fighting for. As the flag symbolized the nation to come, "Common Sense" symbolized the struggle.

¹²Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "Womens Rights," pp. 1-4.

¹³Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 48.

¹⁴Alfred Owen Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, (New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1959), p. 35.

The hopeful outcome of the struggle was very explicit in Paine's mind. Inspired by Enlightenment ideas of freedom, Paine sought a weak government. This was understandable after the stringent controls of a mercantilist state. "Society in every state is a blessing" says Paine, "but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil, in its worst state an intolerable one..."¹⁵ These words gave heart to those who felt oppressed and wanted to break the chains of English domination. The message did not go unchallenged, however. Old nexes are difficult to sever; many sought to keep the Colonies bound to England.

England was of course the mother country, and many people held strong emotional allegiance. Letters from "Cato" appeared. Written anonymously by Dr. William Smith, the letters were published in the Pennsylvania Gazette. As the Provost of the College of Philadelphia, Smith spoke for the colonial aristocracy as he attacked "Common Sense." Paine accused Cato's rhetoric of being "gorged with absurdity, confusion, contradiction, and the most notorious and willful falsehoods." However, with words befitting his egalitarian nature, Paine said that "all men are republicans by nature and royalists only by fashion."¹⁶ Paine's goal was to turn men from the fashion of self-interest to the democracy of a 'Republic'. To insure the Republic and independence from England, Paine sought to inspire the Revolution, in time of weakness.

Numerous tracts appeared throughout the four year struggle. When the diatribes were needed, they were supplied. Noteworthy were "The Crisis" letters that appeared when the outcome of the war of rebellion was in

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Thomas Del Veccio, Thomas Paine: American, (New York: Whittier Books, Inc., 1956), p. 47.

doubt.¹⁷ Moreover, Paine attempted to make France's role in the Revolution public, perhaps to encourage France to give even more help or to intimidate England.¹⁸ In either event, Paine never missed an opportunity to support or argue the merits of the American Revolution. In September 1782, Abbe Raynal, a renowned French Philosopher, ridiculed the American Revolution. He mocked the pretensions of France and exulted Britain. Paine gave a scorching answer in a Letter to the Abbe Raynal.¹⁹ An excerpt exemplifies the heat of the battle. Paine stated,

"if we take a review of what part Britain has acted we shall find everything which should make a nation blush. The most vulgar abuse, accompanied by that species of haughtiness which distinguishes the hero of a mob from the character of a gentleman; it was equally as much from her manners as her injustice that she lost the colonies." ²⁰

With equal enthusiasm Paine wrote of the "master stroke of generalship" displayed by General Washington. Paine was to live to retract this statement, but for now Washington was both a hero and a friend of the American Revolution and of Paine.²¹ As Washington distinguished himself on the battlefield, Paine did likewise in print. When the Revolution ended Paine was, for a time, at a loss for a purpose as he looked to more peaceful pursuits.

However, as a man of varied interest he had no real problem finding an outlet for his intellectual energies. "The biographers of Paine,"

¹⁷Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 37-48.

¹⁸Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 48-56.

¹⁹Frank Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1938), pp. 97-101.

²⁰Thomas Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," (1782), 3 vols., ed. Moncure Daniel Conway, vols. 2 and 3, (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), vol. 2, p. 77.

²¹Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "Retreat," pp. 42-43.

wrote Joel Barlow, "should not forget his mathematical acquirements and his mechanical genius."²² After the American Revolution, primarily from 1787 to 1789 and the onset of the French Revolution,²³ Paine designed an iron suspension bridge which was a great innovation for the time.²⁴ This occupied his time until the turmoil of the French Revolution distracted him,²⁵ but he always took pride in the bridge and encouraged Gouverneur Morris to visit the site although the latter consistently refused.²⁶ Paine's interest in the bridge decreased, however, when rumors of Edmund Burke's publication on the French Revolution spurred Paine to promise French leaders that he would champion the French cause.²⁷ As a result of this promise and subsequent actions he became a renowned Republican.

His writings were to lead him from respect and prominence to insult and obscurity. In France, during the early stage of the French Revolution, he was presented the "Key to the Bastille" which he forwarded to the leader of the American Revolution, George Washington.²⁸ Moreover, his tract on The Rights of Man, brought him added notoriety. The first part was considered rather innocent, but the second part, considered a 'precursor to revolution' in England,²⁹ continued to upset the established

²²Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 99.

²³Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, pp. 168-172.

²⁴Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 1, pp. 588-589.

²⁵Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, pp. 168-172.

²⁶Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 1, p. 571.

²⁷Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 127.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 157.

governments. Going even further in The Age of Reason, Paine became a target of severe criticism and bitterness, yet he continued. There must have been a trace of masochism within Paine that prompted him to continue his writings. He may have preferred to be maligned rather than unnoticed.³⁰ Of course, this is mere supposition. It is more likely that his ideals were so important to him that he was willing to take the consequences of their propagation.

Revolutionary Pamphleteer

Thomas Paine, the pamphleteer, quickened the hearts of the men of this era. Although a professed Deist, he wrote with the faith of a humble and humane Christian. His early writings during the American Revolution, notably the Crisis discourses indicated this simple faith. Paine yearned for a Human Republic not merely an American Republic. In this respect he was a universalist, like so many other children of the Enlightenment. Nevertheless, he recognized America as the first sprout of this Human Republic. Budding America, thus, had a very special mission. Paine prophetically stated that "Devine Providence intends this country to be the asylum of persecuted virtue from every quarter of the globe."³¹ With this beginning America was to be the fetus of Paine's goal. In his most idealistic dream he foresaw all of Europe formed into one great Republic. A very special Republic, one where each individual was to be free of the whole, yet simultaneously a part of the whole. Paine believed that man was incapable of fulfilling all his needs alone. Consequently, he was compelled to unite with others into a society. At

³⁰Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 221.

³¹Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, Vol. 2, pp. 238-239.

the same time he believed man's individuality had to be maintained. The object of this delicately balanced Republic was a simple one--happiness. While Paine earnestly believed that people could easily live together in peace, forming a peaceful state or government was more difficult. Paine's first proposition was one prominent with rationalists, but somewhat optimistic. One of Paine's skeptical contemporaries made a similar judgment.

Occasionally, Paine appeared naive. While Paine was aptly recognized by the translator of The Rights of Man as a "friend of freedom," he was also gently accused of not truly understanding the "artful ways of the court." In this regard the translator was referring to Paine's great respect for Lafayette, who ultimately quit the revolutionary cause.³² This translator may be quite correct in this assessment of Paine, but Paine, too, would quit a revolution if and when it became harsh and inhumane. Paine would not condone unrestrained freedom or brutality. Notwithstanding Paine's malice toward inhumanity, he also understood the need for restraint in less dangerous aspects of man's life, even though he was a lover of freedom.

Paine, at least in part because of his avocation, showed great interest in the press. In Paine's essay, "Liberty of the Press," he said that a "licentious" press was equally as dangerous as a "restrained" press--one cannot report, while the other cannot be believed. Although Paine most assuredly sought freedom of the press, he felt that the press had no more rights than any individual citizen. In this regard Paine determined that a jury should establish where rights begin and end with respect to

³²Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, translator's note, vol. 2, pp. 406, 453-454.

an individual or to the press.³³ This was, of course only a small part of Paine's analysis of freedom.

Paine's dream of freedom went far beyond the press. It involved hopes that would not cease until they were known and accepted throughout the world. As a great believer in "Reason" and "Liberty," when referring to the two abstractions, Paine said that "Had we a place to stand upon we might raise the world."³⁴ Paine hoped that America would be a part of the bulwark on which to stand; a French Republic would certainly strengthen the platform. With this plan the success of both was extremely important. They were stepping stones to Paine's ultimate dream of a Human Republic. However, America was Paine's greatest hope prior to the proclamation of the French Republic in 1792. With great admiration for America, he praised her as the only Republic in existence, concurrently declaring that a republic could not exist with a monarchy.³⁵ Using unwarranted flattery he complimented the cordiality of the diverse peoples of America. Explaining the lack of "riots" and "tumults" in the United States, he claimed that the poor were poor, but unoppressed, while the rich were rich, but unprivileged. Both were, of course, spared the expense of 'court'.³⁶ This description of the classes ignored realities, but Paine was not in America, and, perhaps, wishful thinking temporarily overcame his perception. A better explanation is that Paine was looking for a glittering

³³Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "Liberty of the Press," pp. 372-373.

³⁴Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, vol. 2, pp. 401-402.

³⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 421-424.

³⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 410.

example to use for his own persuasive purposes. Paine subsequently learned first hand that America could oppress. Nonetheless, in the interim he attempted to provoke a world-wide revolution, depicting America as a shining example of republicanism.

Paine was very successful in his pursuit. The "Rebellious staymaker,"³⁷ as he was characterized by Thomas Carlyle,³⁸ shook the foundation of the monarchy. Drawing from the ideas popularized by J.J. Rousseau in Contrat Social,³⁹ the work answered practical questions of what became the "great debate."⁴⁰ Answering Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France, Paine accused Burke of fearing French-American friendship⁴¹ when he decried the horrors of the French Revolution. Paine answered charges of abuse philosophically, saying that the revolution occurring was a revolt against principles and not men.⁴² This was Paine's ideal; however, later the French Revolution appeared to negate this philosophical approach much to Paine's chagrin. Meanwhile, Paine did not foresee the overworked guillotine and remained optimistic about the Revolution and its progress toward Republicanism. He chided Burke for giving rights to dead men and held that the new or unborn generations have no obligation to the past generations. Paine advocated rights for the living, not the dead! This

³⁷A staymaker produced corsets, when Paine was unemployed he often returned to this occupation.

³⁸Nineteenth Century English historian and writer who wrote negatively about the French Revolution.

³⁹J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War, Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1971), pp. 14-16.
Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800, p. 104.

⁴⁰John W. Osborne, William Cobbett: His Thought and His Times, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1966), p. 77.

⁴¹Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 1, Preface to English Edition, vol. 2, pp. 269-271.

⁴²Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 283-287.

was completely alien to England's love for 'common law', thus Burke was accused of advocating a government of dead men.⁴³ In toto, he blasted Burke for proscribing an arbitrary government⁴⁴ of ancient institutions.

Paine believed the world had progressed beyond this anachronism. Quoting Dr. Price,⁴⁵ Paine exclaimed that England had now acquired three fundamental rights. Primarily, the people now had the right to choose their own governors and secondly, the people now had the right to chastise them for misconduct. The third and most poignant right was the right of the whole people to form their own government.⁴⁶ In this regard, Paine stated that the old established government had no rights in the formation of the new one. The decisions belonged only to the people. Shouting the praises of America, Paine said that this had been the case in America. It most assuredly had not been the case in America, but Paine may not have known all the details of the formation of the United States Constitution.⁴⁷ He sometimes depended on his own assumptions rather than facts, most of which went unchallenged. Regardless of the errors, Paine's The Rights of Man was well read and had great effect on England⁴⁸ as well as the rest of the world. Jefferson was pleased with

⁴³Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 278-279.

⁴⁴Ibid., vol. 2, p. 351.

⁴⁵Richard Price D.D., F.R.S., died April 19, 1791. He is described parenthetically by Paine as "one of the best-hearted man that lives." Ibid., vol. 2, p. 276.

⁴⁶Ibid., vol. 2, p. 276.

⁴⁷Actually, the old Congress asked the states to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, vol. 2, pp. 428-435.

⁴⁸Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 174.

the good reception of the work, he himself applauded the first part as the "good old faith."⁴⁹

A great part of what Jefferson referred to as the 'good old faith', was republican constitutionalism. Paine regarded 'precedent' as the "vilest" system of government because it allegedly either kept man in ignorance or believed that wisdom decreased through the centuries.⁵⁰ Paine was, of course, speaking of the English system of government and her unwritten constitution. Paine disassociated the people from this government and said that, even though the censored press did not reflect it, the people were disposed to revolution. Thus, Paine's hopes expanded as he strove to create an "enlightened world" not only in America and France, but also England.⁵¹ Completely rejecting monarchy, Paine believed that a Republic would give impetus to the genius of the people.⁵²

If given freedom to control their destiny the people would rise to their task. "Hereditary government over a people is...a species of slavery and representative government is freedom," said Paine.⁵³ Concurrently, he branded the English system of representation "absurd"⁵⁴

⁴⁹Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to Paine, Philadelphia, (July 29, 1791), vol. 6, p. 298.

⁵⁰Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, vol. 2, pp. 436-445.

⁵¹Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 1, vol. 2, pp. 272-274, 309-313.

⁵²Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, vol. 2, pp. 417-420.

⁵³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 446.

⁵⁴Ibid.

because it did not reflect the will of the people. In this regard, when Paine was confronted with Burke's charge of leveling, Paine was quick to answer. What could be more leveling than a hereditary monarchical system that judged all the same regardless of "vice, virtue, ignorance," or "wisdom" of the individual?⁵⁵ Paine indicated the decadence of such a system and society by describing the effect of the courts of France. The very gaudiness of the courts mesmerized men into humility and awe. They were blinded to their own dignity by the glitter of the court. Paine claimed that the only "spirit of Liberty" came from the French Philosophes.⁵⁶ Other remnants of the past were cruel and unjust. When Paine was faced with Burke's charges of cruelties and injustices in the French Revolution, he answered accordingly. He reminded Burke that England would hang, draw, and quarter, and "cut out" the heart. Likewise, even though the revolutionaries did put heads on spikes, it was not a "Revolutionary tactic," but had originated in the Old Regime.⁵⁷ While such actions could not be condoned, they could be understood, but would be eliminated when man's natural rights were secured.

Paine sincerely believed that man would follow a humane course if allowed to pursue his natural inclination and secure his natural rights. In a world evolved from its natural state into civilization, he logically concluded that civil rights were the manifestation of man's natural rights when he became a member of a society. However, these rights were applicable to all as individual rights and could not be subjugated to the ag-

⁵⁵Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 411-415.

⁵⁶Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 1, vol. 2, p. 333.

⁵⁷Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 292-298.

gregate⁵⁸ or any segment of the society. In this regard, hereditary and aristocratic rights were not natural rights, but unnatural rights. Speaking of the French Constitution he applauded France for forbidding a nobility. Paine considered the maintenance of a nobility as an uncivilized degradation that would bring "injustice" and "tyranny" to the "Human species."⁵⁹ Paine regarded titles, in themselves, to be harmless, but their effect humbled man when he should be exulted.⁶⁰ Again complimenting the French Constitution for its liberalism he cited rights similar to the American Bill of Rights. The first three rights in the French Constitution established the free and equal rights of all men, the natural rights of liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression. All rights were guaranteed under a sovereign nation.⁶¹ Paine's arguments against a nobility and for guaranteed rights were good ones, even Morris said there were good things in his answer to Burke.⁶² The diatribes gave hope to those who were so powerless that they had very little to lose.

The philosophy was very appealing to the fraternal instincts of men. All men equal under God and the state was only paralleled by Paine's universalism. Many relished Paine's prediction of an "age of Revolutions." Although somewhat premature, Paine foresaw a Confederation of Nations that would aid Republicanism.⁶³ Looking very far into the future one occurred, but within a close proximity of time the Congress of Vienna thwarted rather than aided republicanism. However, Paine could not fore-

⁵⁸Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 299-307.

⁵⁹Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 322-323.

⁶⁰Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 319-320.

⁶¹Ibid., vol. 2, p. 351.

⁶²Morris, The Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, p. 40.

⁶³Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 1, vol. 2, pp. 382-389.

see this stifling development, he optimistically thought the Confederation could be established. He wrote to Lafayette that he was assured that when France was surrounded by revolution, especially in the Germanies, she would be left in peace.⁶⁴ Paine yearned for a world engulfed in republicanism, one where all nations regarded one another as brethren and would defend the republican rights of all. The ideas of the Enlightenment had greatly influenced Paine and made him a progressive philosopher in a conservative era. However, the ideas were not completely original nor new. On the other hand the plan outlined in Agrarian Justice has great originality. It was an early, well-planned system of social security!

Admitting that he himself "cared little for wealth, he recognized that wealth was important for the "good" it could do. He suggested that the civil authorities had an obligation to eliminate suffering. Disregarding charity as a method or a goal, he sought to rid society of poverty in order to insure justice. His plan was detailed, but in essence would immediately give aid to persons over 50, and insure against future generations of poverty.⁶⁵ Land was to be the answer to the problem.

Paine viewed the ownership of land as a natural right. The process of civilization, however, had given land to some and none to others. Hence, some were denied their natural right. To correct the situation Paine proposed that a payment be made when land was transferred to an

⁶⁴Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, letter from Paine to Lafayette, London, (February 9, 1792), vol. 3, pp. 392-393.

⁶⁵Thomas Paine, Thomas Paine, "Agrarian Justice," ed. Harry Hayden Clark, (New York: American Book Company, 1944), p. 346.

heir. This payment would create a fund which would be used to ease the inequities of those denied their natural right of land ownership. The fund would be used to pay ten pounds per year to those 50 years and older, and fifteen pounds sterling to those reaching their majority of 21 years.⁶⁶ This plan was in opposition to the dominant economic philosophy of the time, but Paine had already disavowed Malthusian economics when he said there were not two classes of people, rich and poor, but really only male and female. Those who say otherwise, he continued, proliferate "nonsense" and "hypocrisy."⁶⁷ Basically, Paine's goal was to eliminate the misery civilization had wrought.⁶⁸ Paine's argument was that civilized society had bestowed property inequitably. Throughout history labor was sold so cheaply that a large segment of people could not acquire property.⁶⁹ Paine did not want to eliminate private property, but he did want to make it more readily available to all. Paine was not really interested in the wealth land could bring, but in the result of the wealth--dignity of man. His philosophy is always human, not really economic, actually he scorned wealth.

Paine recognized that his contemporaries had great reverence for affluence. It was his fondest wish to dispel such reverence and replace it with "disgust." However, until such time should arrive a plan concerning property was critical and the only way to achieve "justice."⁷⁰ This economic plan was only a part of his overall philosophy. He believed pover-

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 340-342.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 336.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 337.

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 347-349.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 350.

ty degraded man spiritually when natural law cried for his exultation and equality.⁷¹ It was in essence a part of his theophilantropic movement, a part that would readjust land ownership and allow each individual to achieve his just natural rights.⁷² This became a part of the religiosity of Paine and his humane Deism. His fervor subsequently led to the formation of a church in January 1797.⁷³

Joined by five families, Paine opened a small church on number 34 Denis Street in London. His writing helped awaken skepticism and new religious sects. The Age of Reason had the most influence, but other writings were also influential. Even though Paine was sometime labeled an atheist by his contemporaries as well as latter authors, Paine's actual religion labeled atheism as an enemy. His church pledged belief in God and the immortal soul.⁷⁴ Simultaneously, he denounces Christianity as the "age of ignorance."⁷⁵ In a Letter to Camille Jordan⁷⁶ he denounced the "hollow chatter" about the "comfort of religion." Defining priests as "the patrons of debauchery and domestic infidelity," he stated that "one

⁷¹Ibid. pp. 350-351.

⁷²Conway, The Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 259.

⁷³Ibid., vol. 2, p. 253.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Thomas Paine, The Age of Reason, part 1, ed. Albury Castell, (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1948), p. 39.

⁷⁶Camille Jordan was a Deputy to the National Assembly in France before the Reign of Terror; he fled to Switzerland. Harvey Mitchell, The Underground War Against Revolutionary France, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 220n.

schoolmaster is of more use than a hundred priests."⁷⁷ Statements such as this separated Paine from many people who would otherwise favor his republican ideas. They could not accept his alleged irreverence; consequently, he was severely criticized for his religious views. The criticism damaged his effectiveness as a political philosopher.

Even though Paine's The Age of Reason was less radical than Constantin Volney's Ruins,⁷⁸ the latter was never as maligned or as popular as Paine's work.⁷⁹ Judging by contemporary standards, however, The Age of Reason might even be adjudged radical today. Paine disavowed both Jesus Christ, as a savior, and the Bible as the 'Word of God'. Correlating himself with Doubting Thomas, Paine marked the Bible as a "pious fraud."⁸⁰ He assaulted revelations made by a third person. In argument he asserted that neither Joseph, Mary, or Jesus wrote of their lives.⁸¹ The only record of their lives was told by others. Paine's skepticism went to extreme lengths as he tested the logic of the Bible. If Christ were destined to die for the sins of man, Paine asked, why did he hide and why was his capture only possible because of Judas?⁸² This disbelief might well have been accepted as disrespect; nonetheless, this disbelief was balanced by Paine's respect for Jesus as a revolutionist.⁸³ He also realized that many good men led good lives under the myth of this religion and he really only wanted to extinguish the ideas of 'church', not

⁷⁷Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 284.

⁷⁸Ruins or Meditations on the Reval of Empires.

⁷⁹Woodress, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 219.

⁸⁰Paine, The Age of Reason, part 1, pp. 9-10, 51.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 7-8.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁸³Ibid., p. 11.

faith. As a result, he claimed that Jesus did not really establish a new system of religion, but merely called for moral virtue and belief in one God.⁸⁴

Paine expressed that he too, believed in one God. He coupled this belief with a faith in his own mind, saying that his church was his mind. Disbelieving in other churches, he charged that a state religion produced "mental lying" on the part of individuals. Paine thus denied both the established church and the Bible. He gave God as the "first cause," and accused Christianity of denying God with a belief in the writings of men who had no real knowledge of God's word.⁸⁵ Paine primarily chastised the use of religion as a political power. He claimed that the "debauchery" of the Bible had perpetrated the most "detestable wickedness," "horrid cruelties," and "greatest miseries" on man, and all had been done in the name of "revelation."⁸⁶ Making himself very clear, he later wrote that the Bible and the Testaments were both "impositions" and "forgeries."⁸⁷

On the other hand, although Paine was very specific and staunch in his own religious beliefs, he was also tolerant. Writing to Samuel Adams, who disagreed with the ideas expressed in The Age of Reason, Paine said that a man's religion was his own. However, any man who was a friend of man could not be far wrong.⁸⁸ In still another writing Paine described

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 21.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 5-7, 27-32.

⁸⁶Paine, The Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Rights of Man," part 2, vol. 2, p. 515.

⁸⁷Thomas Paine, Basic Writings of Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason," part 2, (New York: Willey Book Company, 1942), pp. 244-245, 256.

⁸⁸Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, letter to Samuel Adams from Thomas Paine, Federal City, (January 1, 1803), pp. 368, 370-372.

it very simply. Believing that God is Justice, Paine foresaw that those who served God by giving happiness, would be happy in a "hereafter."⁸⁹

Although these religious views are very humanistic, they are also anti-clerical and anti-Christian. People were often aghast at such a philosophy. Of all Paine's writing, his religious tracts were the most damaging to his reputation. If he had not strayed into this area he would have been more effective as a revolutionary. His Deism frightened many republicans.

Deputy Paine

Paine's role in the American Revolution and his political writings made him a revolutionist of world renown. As a result, he was invited to France to assist in the formation of the French Constitution. Ultimately, he pondered and voted on the fate of Louis XVI⁹⁰ and subsequently, fell victim to Robespierre's Reign of Terror. To a great extent Paine's The Rights of Man determined his future. After its publication he became a threat to Federalist America and was forced to flee from England where court proceedings were pending against him. Most of these events were the consequence of Paine's second part of The Rights of Man which was adjudged to be so radical as to threaten revolution in England.⁹¹ Once published, Paine sealed his fate and was driven from his birthplace into the frenzy of the French Revolution. Thus, in 1792, he once again returned to France. Upon his arrival he was made an honor-

⁸⁹Paine, Selected Writings of Thomas Paine, "After This Life," pp. 375-376.

⁹⁰Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, p. 339n.

⁹¹Del Vecchio, Thomas Paine: American, p. 162.

ary French citizen and chosen as a Deputy from Calais, thus obtaining a seat in the Chamber of Deputies.⁹² The move was not unwelcomed, Paine's past activities put him in good stead with France and the Girondins.⁹³

In prior years Paine had helped form Republican Societies in France. Madame Roland, writing to Bancol des Issorts, denoted the importance of these societies. She indicated the "noise" created by the societies and the numerous chapters Paine launched. In the early stage of the French Revolution, these chapters⁹⁴ were both valuable and dangerous--valuable because they organized the lower classes in Paris, dangerous because they eventually spurred the Revolution from the bourgeois phase to a more democratic and more brutal stage under Robespierre. Understandably, Paine could not foresee the danger of excessive brutality and was optimistic about the outcome of the French Revolution. On May 1, 1790, he wrote to Washington of his optimism concerning the Revolution, "I have not the least doubt of the final and complete success of the French Revolution..."⁹⁵ As a long time friend and admirer of George Washington, Paine at this time had no reason to doubt that Washington was as hopeful as he. Throughout 1790, Washington and Paine corresponded frequently. Paine had delivered to John Rutledge Jr. the "Key to the Bastille" to be presented to Washington. At this time the Revolution was in a moderate stage and Washington and Lafayette were

⁹²Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 368.

⁹³Louis R. Gottschalk, The Era of the French Revolution, 1715-1815, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), p. 86.

⁹⁴J.M. Roberts and R.C. Cobb, eds., French Revolution Documents, 2 vols., (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), vol. 1, document 20, p. 323.

⁹⁵Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, pp. 72-73.

in frequent correspondence.⁹⁶ All three were friends. Later, Lafayette would be forced to flee France and Paine would scorn Washington for his alleged role in Paine's imprisonment. However, for now he numbered Washington as a friend to both himself and the French Revolution.

Another friend in the early days of the Revolution was Gouverneur Morris. Prior to the publication of The Rights of Man, Paine made frequent visits to Morris. Morris evidently was more friendly when confronted with Paine than when recording the events in his diary. Otherwise Paine would not possibly have visited so often. One can say with some authority on this matter that Morris was a man of 'duplicity'. In the early years of the Revolution, 1789 and 1790, Morris recorded, in his Diary of the French Revolution, Paine's frequent visits. Paine dined⁹⁷ and had frequent conversations with Morris.⁹⁸ They discussed important events in the United States which included the plans and positions of Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and others who corresponded with Morris.⁹⁹ In addition, Morris acted as a messenger when Paine received money, probably proceeds of his early writings.¹⁰⁰ The two appear to have visited often, even though they had far different philosophies. On June 24, 1790, Paine and Morris visited a friend of the French Ambassador and spoke of the total abolition of the French nobility. One can completely agree that this would be one of Paine's goals; however, Morris wrote that he hoped that France would enter a foreign war, if need be, to prevent such an extreme.¹⁰¹ One wonders why Paine continued to con-

⁹⁶Washington, The Writings of George Washington, vol. 31, p. 80.

⁹⁷Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 1, pp. 329-330.

⁹⁸Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 358, 360, 367, 369, 374, 375, 407.

⁹⁹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 486.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., vol. 1, p. 540.

¹⁰¹Ibid., vol. 1, p. 549.

sider Morris a friend. On August 7, 1790, when Paine called on Morris to cash a check, Morris recorded Paine as a "troublesome fellow."¹⁰² Morris was even more perturbed when Paine called, complaining that he was too tired to go to the city, to borrow money. Grudgingly, Morris lent him three guineas and wrote in his diary that he knew it would not be speedily repaid.¹⁰³ This anxiety must have went unnoticed by Paine for their discussions and visits, apparently friendly, continued for a while longer.¹⁰⁴ However, an unreconcilable breach occurred when events brought notoriety to Paine.

When the first part of The Rights of Man was published Paine was in England. However, a subsequent visit to France once again brought Paine in contact with Morris. This visit revealed some of Morris' animosity toward Paine. Morris was convinced that Paine was overcome with ego. He described him as "inflated to the eyes and big with a letter of Revolutions"¹⁰⁵ (referring to Paine's publication). A few days later Morris' judgment was even more severe. When Morris went to visit Paine at his "wretched apartment," Paine had already left for England. However, in conversation with another lodger, Morris was told that Paine was a "little mad;" Morris concurred that this was not improbable.¹⁰⁶ Morris' critique of Paine's recent publication did not really reflect a belief in Paine's madness. Morris saw both good and bad points in Paine's diatribe; his primary concern was that the writing would encourage the

¹⁰²Ibid., vol. 1, p. 570.

¹⁰³Ibid., vol. 1, p. 572.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., vol. 1, p. 580.

¹⁰⁵Morris, Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, vol. 1, p. 429.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., vol. 1, p. 403.

municipalities to fall under the influence of the Jacobins.¹⁰⁷ Within a short time Morris' fear materialized, the Revolution did become a part of the urban centers, notably Paris. The first French Republic peaked over the horizon. The people, in late 1791, were becoming more forward looking and democratic than the French National Assembly. The emerging question was, hereditary monarchical leadership or a wholly Republican government,¹⁰⁸ not a combination of the two. Paine, of course, would strongly support the latter. However, for a time there was calm and all went well for Paine despite the first part of The Rights of Man. When it was published, Burke and the Tories were still strong in England and Louis XVI was still singing the praises of the happy Revolution in France and Europe. This 'happy Revolution' was one that would maintain the monarchy. However, by the time the second part of The Rights of Man was published in 1792, conditions had changed. Morris warned Paine that he was in danger, but according to Morris, Paine was so drunk with self-deceit that he ignored the riots and other events that brought reaction from the English and French conservatives.¹⁰⁹ However, Paine had some reason to be optimistic. Even though he was forced to flee England in 1792, he was accepted as an 'American hero' when he arrived in France.

Paine's literary career which was once described by Louis XVI as one of "ingenious and timely publications" now forced Paine to seek asylum in France.¹¹⁰ As a reward for his courage in serving liberty,

¹⁰⁷Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 156n.

¹⁰⁸Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, pp1 102-103.

¹⁰⁹Morris, Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, vol. 1, p. 515.

¹¹⁰Ernst, Rufus King, American Federalist, pp. 76-77.

the National Assembly, on August 26, 1792, conferred him honorary citizenship along with other notables such as Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, Jeremy Bentham, and Joseph Priestly.¹¹¹ Moreover, he was elected as a Deputy to the French National Convention. Concurring with the Girondins, he hoped to help frame a new French Constitution.¹¹² Unfortunately, new events made the Constitution secondary. The debate between monarchy and Republicanism came to a head when Louis XVI made his most fatal mistake.

Louis XVI flight to Varennes began a chain of events that would ultimately lead Paine to the steps of the guillotine. The King's flight brought indignation and mistrust. Many were convinced that the King, who had once strutted a revolutionary cockade, had now turned his back on the Revolution. Louis XVI was considered a traitor; his flight made him a problem to be reckoned with and ultimately proved to be his death warrant. Initially, the King's flight brought a furor from Paine and the Republican societies. Paine posted the first serious Republican manifesto on the door of the National Assembly; it demanded prosecution. Furiously, it was torn down by a royalist, but public opinion in Paris was turning against Louis XVI. It would eventually become more violent than Paine either expected or desired.¹¹³ Ironically, Paine unwittingly helped create the harsh turn of events. Paine's manifesto accused Louis XVI of betraying the Revolution. It stated that Louis' abdication of the throne

¹¹¹John Hall Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), document 67, pp. 317-318.

¹¹²Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 177.

¹¹³Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 21. Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, document 42, pp. 214-215.

was a foredrawn conclusion when he fled and deserted France. Answering questions in advance, Paine said he did not need to know Louis' motivation. He announced that whether it was Louis' decision or not--be he a fool or a hypocrite, an idiot or a traitor--either judgment proved him unworthy to be King of France.¹¹⁴

Ultimately, Louis' flight was condemned as treason. Paine himself had spoken of the "brutal luxury" of the throne and the possibility of less taxes without it. For Paine, the 'splendor of the throne' was a despicable thing--an unreal facade. Splendor for Paine came from intrinsic worth, not the gaudy facade of the monarchy.. At this time, however, Paine did not realize that the person of the King ~~was~~ in danger; Paine's goal was only to destroy the monarchy, not the King. He was sure that the French would not degrade themselves in order to punish the King.¹¹⁵ Paine's plan for the King was a humane one and, perhaps, a practical one. Morris' diary reports that Paine told him of the plan in confidence. The plan was to exile the King and his family to America. This confidential plan was reiterated via letter from Morris to Washington.¹¹⁶ The letter expressed Paine's sincere desire to prevent bloodshed. The proposed exile to America appealed to Paine and others as a way out for the Girondins. The plan was to board the King and his family, accompanied by Genet, on a frigate bound for the United States. This was to be done without approval by the Mountain.¹¹⁷ The plan was thus approved, but its

¹¹⁴Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, document 42, pp. 214-215.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 594.
Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 161.

¹¹⁷The Mountain refers to the most radical segment of the Assembly, in this case the Jacobins.

execution was suspended for three days. The three days was enough to allow the Mountain to gain control. Hence, the situation was ultimately out of the Girondins hands as Robespierre and the Jacobins pressed for trial and execution.¹¹⁸ The Mountaineers had their way. However, Paine consistently stood against execution, he said, "I voted against it both morally and politically."¹¹⁹ This position began a series of events that led Thomas Paine to despair and danger.

In Paine's eyes the execution of the King marked the failure of the French Revolution. He now relinquished his hope of spreading revolution throughout the world.¹²⁰ Paine's dream had been to show the magnanimity of Republicanism by sparing the King. The King's execution destroyed this dream and thus Paine's hope of an international Republic.¹²¹ The King's execution was not only a severe blow to Paine's hopes and dreams, but it also put him in a potentially dangerous position in France and strengthened the animosity against him in the United States. The Girondins lost their power as the French Jacobins assumed leadership in the French Revolution. As an opponent of the execution of Louis XVI, Paine lost favor with the Jacobins. Concurrently, the King's execution turned most Americans against both the French Revolution and Paine. Paine had been so completely associated with the Revolution up to this point that he was considered a part of the execution. He was not, of course, and the Jacobin reaction against him proved the point. However, this was not considered; thus, Paine stood alone with few friends and

¹¹⁸Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, pp. 595-596.

¹¹⁹Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 159.

¹²⁰Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 245.

¹²¹Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 161-162.

many enemies.

In 1793, while Paine's French political enemies plotted his destruction, most of his American friends abandoned him. Gouverneur Morris reported in his diary that Paine was "intriguing against him!" Although the charge was not true and completely out of Paine's character, Morris turned against Paine completely. Of course, evidence shows that Morris had for sometime held secret malice for Paine, but now it came to the surface. Morris wrote that Paine became drunk while visiting him and behaved in an unacceptable fashion. Moreover, Morris charged, without foundation, that Paine was 'drunk' most of the time.¹²² False rumors of Paine's scurrilous behavior, led men to fear his friendship. He became a man without a country. The American government abandoned Paine, as did the English government, while the new French Jacobins endangered Paine's freedom and very life. Paine's Girondin position in the French National Assembly in itself jeopardized him;¹²³ his vote against the King's execution sealed his fate.

The Reign of Terror in France began October 3, 1793. Twelve Girondin deputies were beheaded in Paris and six in Bordeaux. All Girondins were suspect; without evidence Paine was accused of being an English spy!¹²⁴ The charge was the result of the upheaval and fear in France. The war with England threatened from without while internal struggles created real dangers that were magnified into paranoia. Robespierre was now in command of the Revolution and attempting to rid the Revolution of 'enemies of France'.

¹²²Morris, Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, vol. 2, p. 48.

¹²³Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 237.

¹²⁴Ibid., p. 243.

Robespierre called Paine both a traitor and a hypocrite.¹²⁵ Paine was ultimately arrested and destined for death. An old decree found on Robespierre's desk at the time of his own deposal states the case fairly well. It read, "I demand that a writ accusing Thomas Paine be issued in the interest of America as well as of France."¹²⁶ Thus, Paine was imprisoned under Robespierre's order. Joel Barlow and others moved to his aid, but Washington and Morris were hopelessly silent.

During Paine's imprisonment, emotions in Paris reached a hysterical pitch under Robespierre's leadership. The earlier Jacobin leadership of Danton was more pragmatic and would probably have avoided the excesses of the Reign of Terror. However, Danton ultimately fell under the guillotine. Before his demise, however, Paine wrote Danton and advised that the capitol of France be moved from Paris and the Parisian mobs.¹²⁷ This was not accomplished, but Paine was correct in assuming that the mobs would act irrationally. Paris had always been, even before the King was ushered there as the Baker,¹²⁸ the heart of the most radical and unruly segment of the population. Now it was a hotbed of uncertainty and danger.

The story of Paine's arrest and Barlow's part in it has been reiterated. The money collected, perhaps from Joel Barlow, did not help Thomas Paine, but a trick of fate allowed him to survive while Gouverneur Morris clamored for his execution.¹²⁹ The doors of the cells in the pris-

¹²⁵George Rude, ed., Robespierre, Great Lives Observed, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), pp. 79-80.

¹²⁶Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 273.

¹²⁷Ibid., p. 244.

¹²⁸Refers to the crowd that brought the King and his family from Versailles to Paris in 1789.

¹²⁹Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, pp. 271-279.

on where Paine was held were marked if the occupants were to be executed that day. When the marker came to mark Paine's cell, the door was opened into the corridor. The open door went unnoticed by the officer and was marked. When the door was subsequently closed the mark appeared only on the inside, it could not be seen by the officers who came to take the prisoners to their execution. Hence, Paine was spared,¹³⁰ with no thanks to Morris or George Washington. Paine was understandably very bitter because Morris and Washington had not attempted to get him released, he even suspected that they plotted his incarceration.

The prime question all along was Paine's citizenship. Morris would not acknowledge Paine's American citizenship or give him the protection due an American citizen. Paine's role in the American Revolution should have afforded him the status of 'citizen'! At least, he was equally as much of an American citizen as any others who had fought for American independence. However, Paine's citizenship was questioned because of his English birth and his honorary French citizenship.¹³¹ In Paine's mind there was no doubt of his American citizenship and allegiance. With this in mind, he was merely a visitor to England and France. Hostility flowed from his pen when he wrote a scorching letter to George Washington on September 20, 1795. "I cannot understand your silence," wrote Paine, as he explained Robespierre's decree against him. Paine knew that the American silence gave credence to the charges against him.¹³² Robespierre apparently adjudged America's silence on the matter as an agreement with the assertion that Paine was an enemy of America

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, p. 200.

¹³²Ibid., p. 146.

as well as France. At least this was Paine's conclusion and one can assume that Robespierre might have relented on Paine's imprisonment if the United States had applied pressure. Indignantly, while in prison, Paine accused Washington of treachery.¹³³ Even though Gouverneur Morris may well have been more to blame than Washington, the ultimate authority was Washington's, thus, in Paine's mind, his responsibility was established. Paine's insulting, accusing, and bitter letter attests to Paine's belief in Washington's responsibility. One must consider, however, that shortly after James Monroe was appointed as Minister to France replacing Morris, Paine was released. Monroe quickly established that Paine was an American citizen and only a visitor to France.¹³⁴ It appears that Paine was in prison just as long as Morris could keep him there. Certainly, Morris was more responsible than Washington for Paine's mishap, but Paine left prison convinced that Robespierre, Morris, and Washington had intrigued for his imprisonment.¹³⁵ On the other hand, Monroe proved to be a constant friend to Paine and gave him shelter after his release from prison.¹³⁶

Deputy Paine had had a harrowing experience. His writings and actions in the National Convention when coupled with the hysterical condition of the French Revolution had endangered his life. The fear of further revolution in the United States only compounded his problem. Paine had become a man without a country for a time, if not for his constant friends such as Monroe and Barlow, he may well have died during the French

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid., pp. 214-215.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 308.

¹³⁶Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801, p. 194.

Revolution. Tho Revolution for which he had so much hope turned against the humanity which Paine loved so deeply.

American Jacobin

Paine was not a political radical by todays standards, but merely a rugged individualist. However, in the late Nineteenth Century he made many people furious¹³⁷ as he threatened the security of traditional ideas. On the other hand, many agreed with his ideas. He, like Barlow, whom he met in England in 1791, was considered by many as a mouthpiece for evil, while others called them patriots and heroes. The judgment depended to a great extent on whether one favored aristocracy or democracy. At least this would have been the simplified polarization according to Paine and Barlow.¹³⁸ Occasionally, however, some would agree with Paine privately, but thwart his efforts publicly. William Pitt wrote than many of Paine's opinions were correct, but if they were encouraged they would bring a bloody revolution.¹³⁹ Meanwhile, the American Federalists saw Paine as a "bogey--famous throughout Europe and America, for his hatred to all government, human and divine--with which to frighten good people away from the lure of Thomas Jefferson."¹⁴⁰ Consequently, Thomas Paine was even too radical for many of the Jeffersonians. This made him a fringe element to be reckoned with and ridiculed. Cobbett called him the "Prince of demagogues." When he commented on Paine's scorching letter to

¹³⁷Woodward, Thomas Paine, America's Godfather, pp. 197-198.

¹³⁸Miller, Joel Barlow: Revolutionist London, 1791-1792, pp. 4-5.

¹³⁹Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 139.

¹⁴⁰Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 308.

Washington concerning the former's imprisonment, he described the letter as a "base and wicked performance" which defiled a man who Paine had in earlier days praised. Cobbett made no attempt to refute Paine's charges and wrote that a man like Washington needs no defense.¹⁴¹ While the campaign of slander against Paine continued, The Rights of Man was popularized. By the end of 1793 over two hundred thousand copies were sold.¹⁴² Paine became, said Horace Walpole, concurrently, both the most hated and the most idolized man.¹⁴³

Paine's The Rights of Man, if published at another time, might have went unnoticed, but the answer to Burke occurred at too chaotic a time to pass into oblivion. As reiterated, the work ultimately forced Paine to flee from England to France in 1792 in order to escape a sedition charge.¹⁴⁴ It was during this fiery time in England that Paine first made the acquaintance of Joel Barlow whose own writings often complimented Paine's even though they were not as well read.¹⁴⁵ However, one must consider that Barlow was well known for activities other than his writing and was considered dangerous enough to be called a "fellow traveler" of Paine's. Both appeared menacing to the authorities in England and America; hence, governments strove to end their agitation.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹Cobbett, A Letter to the Infamous Thomas Paine, Microcard E311, P15, December 1796, (Booth Library, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois), pp. 1-2.

¹⁴²Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 220.

¹⁴³Miller, Joel Barlow: Revolutionist London, 1791-1792, pp. 4-5.

¹⁴⁴John Adams, The Adams-Jefferson Letters, 2 vols., ed. Lester J. Cappon, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 238-240.

¹⁴⁵Miller, Joel Barlow: Revolutionist London, 1791-1792, p. 4-5.

¹⁴⁶Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 159.

Paine's trial in England was postponed from June to December, 1792, which allowed Paine time to leave England, but emotions were so high that his writings were burned.¹⁴⁷ The famous English mystic of the time, William Blake, warned Paine not to return to England. He said, "you are a dead man if you come home..."¹⁴⁸ The essence of Paine's notoriety was his center position in the "great debate" between democracy and monarchy. Burke's stand favored the more conservative elements that would limit monarchical power yet maintain the monarchy; on the other hand, Paine would destroy it completely. Thus, the second part of The Rights of Man was fearfully received by the propertied classes in England and elsewhere. They saw Paine's radical writings as the wedge that could topple both the British monarchy and the established Church. Conversely, the diatribe was eagerly read by reformers, dissident Protestants, democrats, London craftsmen, and skilled factory hands.¹⁴⁹ Although the events in France during the period had nothing to do with Paine's philosophy, Burke used them to retort Paine and to stir up fear. Pointing out the excesses which Paine's philosophy would manifest, he referred to the September massacres in France and the execution of Louis XVI.¹⁵⁰ Both were excellent examples that there was much to fear from the revolutionary agitation of Paine and others.

Paine was of course found guilty when his trial did occur. It was a foredrawn conclusion that this would be the outcome. As Paine explained

¹⁴⁷Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 141-142.

¹⁴⁸Ibid., vol. 2, p. 143.

¹⁴⁹George Rude, Revolutionary Europe, 1783-1815, (New York and Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1964), p. 183.

¹⁵⁰September Massacres, September, 1792, execution of Louis XVI, January 21, 1793. Gottschalk, The Era of the French Revolution, 1715-1815, pp. 221-223.

the jury was nominated by the Crown! Paine expected conviction because he knew that the propertied Englishmen cared nothing for or understood nothing of what he had written in The Rights of Man. They only wanted to extinguish all literature that threatened their position in the English government. With the wit peculiar to the period, Paine described the English middle class.

"Talk to some London merchants," he said with humor, "about scriptures, and they will understand you mean scrip, and tell you how much it is worth on the Stock Exchange, ask about Theology and they will say they know no such gentlemen upon the 'change'." 151

Paine's sardonic wit did not go unparalleled, perhaps it was even outdone, as one critic writes a retort to Paine's The Age of Reason.

"That religion and miracles all were in jest,
And the devil in torment a tale of the priest.
Though Beelzebubs absence from hell I'll maintain,
Yet we all must allow that the Devils in Paine." 152

By 1793, many did believe that earthly devils occupied England. The atmosphere in England was so permeated with fear that neighbors were reporting neighbors for suspect activity. Paine was allegedly overheard conversing with a friend in French, they were talking about a visit to the British Convention. The conversation was reported and immediately a writ was drawn for Paine's immediate arrest, Paine was not even in England. The writ was withdrawn when the whole episode was proven to be a hoax.¹⁵³ Others were not so fortunate, Paine's first indictment served

¹⁵¹'Change' means stock exchange. Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, p. 263.

¹⁵²Ibid., vol. 2, p. 64.

¹⁵³J. Holland Rose, William Pitt and the Great War, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Publisher, 1971), p. 180.

as a warning to writers and publishers. The writers prosecution forewarned all, who were circulating the literature, to cease and desist.¹⁵⁴ All radical writers and their publishers became outlaws in England. Strangely enough, Paine had also become an outlaw in France for being too moderate. After Paine had fled to France one of his old letters appeared in the English Morning Herald on April 17, 1793 and it stated that, "If the French kill their King, it will be a signal for my departure, [from France] for I will not abide among such sanguinary men."¹⁵⁵ Paine did not know when he wrote the letter that his departure would not be his choice, he was arrested before he could flee. Regardless of his imprisonment his influence continued in England and America.

The Republican Societies in England were greatly influenced and inspired by Paine.¹⁵⁶ They were the most radical in England. There were Whiggish Clubs, of course, one was the Friends of the People, but they were not truly republican. They would go only so far and would not "rip up the monarchy by its roots and place democracy in its stead."¹⁵⁷ Paine's Republican Societies would. In 1792, The Rights of Man had awakened the Republican spirit and it grew throughout 1793.¹⁵⁸ As the societies expanded so did the hostility against them and it was compounded by the growing prejudice against France.¹⁵⁹ The ideas of the societies and the ideas of France became synonymous. As the situation in France became

¹⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 172-175.

¹⁵⁵Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 150-155.

¹⁵⁶Rude, Revolutionary Europe, 1783-1815, p. 185.

¹⁵⁷Rose, William Pitt and the Great War, p. 168.

¹⁵⁸Ibid., p. 167.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 50.

more dangerous and brutal the societies and their members were more severely prosecuted and persecuted. Notably, Paine and France became one. Even though he was imprisoned by the Reign of Terror he was accused of being one of its perpetrators. His influence was reported to have impact in very high echelons of the French government; during the French/English war he was accused of being an intimate friend of Talleyrand! Rumors of Paine grew and were expanded until his fame became almost legend. Consequently, it is difficult to decipher fact from fiction. However, Paine's great influence cannot be questioned. In the end, great Jacobin Clubs were formed wherever Paine's writings found reception. Thus, they were worldwide.¹⁶⁰ Paine's philosophy reflected the spirit of the masses or common people, ¹⁶¹ those who had been powerless for centuries. However, this bubble of hope only stirred fear in the hearts of the established government, church, and propertied classes. Paine became known as "the clumsy advocate of insurrection." Cobbett adjudged him to be worse than Citizen Adet.¹⁶² Cobbett mocked Paine while Paine was imprisoned by the French. He said that Paine should be cheerfully executed for the 'cause'. Why shouldn't Paine be included in the thousands to fall under Robespierre, Cobbett asked? Moreover, he chided Paine for the "whimpering story" he wrote to "treacherous" Washington. Cobbett was thoroughly amused at Paine's plight; he saw irony in Paine's imprisonment when he remembered Paine's idealistic words about the "democratic floor" of the French National Assembly. With his usual jibes, Cobbett continued to chastise Paine for the latter's criticism of the

¹⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 25, 51.

¹⁶¹Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁶²Citizen Adet replaced Fauchet as French Minister in 1795. Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, vol. 1, p. 206.

American Constitution. By the time Cobbett finished his dissertation, Paine became a traitor to Americans who held the Constitution "dear" to their hearts. According to Cobbett, Paine was a part of the villainy of a French "horde of savages, [who] are engaged in the work of destruction."¹⁶³ As a result of many brutal attacks and the seemingly atheistic The Age of Reason,¹⁶⁴ Paine's reputation was ruined; he was shunned and calumniated upon his return to the United States in 1802.¹⁶⁵ Paine was isolated, too liberal for some, too conservative for others; the latter was his position in France. Compared to the Jacobins, the Girondins, (Paine's faction) were quite conservative in thought and deed. Some historians have described the Jacobins as "communists" and "gangsters" with a sprinkling of intellectuals such as Robespierre, Marat, and Danton. This is probably an overstatement; however, it is true that their philosophy was much more radical than that of the Girondins. The Jacobins and Robespierre proved to be more prone to wholesale executions than were the Girondins and Paine.¹⁶⁶ Paine's prime concern was Republicanism, not the 'purification process' that plagued the Jacobins. Consistently, Paine dispised despotism and eventually called Napoleon the "French Charleton." He never saw anihilation as a mean to an end, no matter how ideal the end.¹⁶⁷ However, this was not the general impres-

¹⁶³Cobbett, A Letter to the Infamous Thomas Paine, E311, p. 15, (December 1796), pp. 7, 9-10, 18.

¹⁶⁴The Age of Reason was the most popular deist work of the period, it was in the eighth edition by 1794. At Bache's Philadelphia bookstores alone, 15,000 copies were sold. Russel Blaine Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation, (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 214.

¹⁶⁵Del Veccio, Thomas Paine: American, p. 163.

¹⁶⁶Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 237.

¹⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 300-302.

sion of Paine and his writing. Ultimately, he was considered rather an unworthy wretch by many Americans; this reputation was given impetus by his unfriendly relations with men of power and importance.

Morris was probably Paine's most formidable enemy. He worked to have Paine dismissed in 1790 as the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, a post he had held since 1779. Fostering violent attacks on Paine, Morris claimed that Paine damaged America's relations with "His most Christian Majesty," Louis XVI. The allegations came when Paine divulged that France was officially assisting in the American Revolution. Apparently Paine forgave Morris' attacks, or did not know of them, as witnessed by their apparently friendly relations during the early years of the French Revolution.¹⁶⁸ All appeared friendly until Paine's second part of The Rights of Man caused such furor in England. After this, it appears that Morris wanted to disassociate himself and his associates from radicalism. Thereafter, Paine was considered, by Morris, to be as far apart from Washington as "Common Sense" and "Nonsense." It became apparent that many of these old comrades had come to a parting of the ways.¹⁶⁹ In earlier days, Washington had rejoiced in the personal prosperity that Paine enjoyed as a result of The Rights of Man.¹⁷⁰ This pride was short-lived. Paine never heard from Washington after he accused Washington of treachery¹⁷¹ and this is understandable when one considers Paine's letters to Washington. The third one, for instance, charged that Washington

¹⁶⁸Morris, Diary of the French Revolution, vol. 2, p. 159.

¹⁶⁹Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, pp. 168-169.

¹⁷⁰Washington, The Writings of Washington, letter from Washington to Paine, Philadelphia, (May 6, 1792), vol. 36, pp. 38-39.

¹⁷¹Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 243.

"accepted as a present (though he was already rich) a hundred thousand acres in America," while he "left me to occupy six foot of earth in France."¹⁷² Although understandable, Paine's bitterness only hurt his already damaged reputation. By 1796, Paine was a notable opponent of Washington. Wolcott wrote Alexander Hamilton that Paine had published a book against the President, one that contained the most "infamous calumnies." Ardently, Wolcott asserted that Paine was systematically trying to destroy confidence in the American government.¹⁷³ Paine's letters also brought a retort from Cobbett in Porcupines Gazette. He writes:

"How Tom gets a living, or what brothel he inhabits, I know not...He had one all the mischief he can in the world and whether his carcass is a last to be suffered to rot in the earth or to dried in the air; is of little consequence... Men will learn to express all that is base, malignant, treacherous, and unnatural and blasphemous, in a single monosyllable--Paine." ¹⁷⁴

The fiery criticisms became more and more fierce and prevalent. Most harmful to Paine was his severe criticism of Washington; Washington was, after all, the "father of the country" and was above reproach or so thought most Americans.¹⁷⁵ When excerpts of Paine's critical letter were printed immediately prior to the election of 1796, they were intended to aid the Jeffersonians. However, the publication hurt Paine more than it helped Jefferson. The letter was truly a vehement attack, it accused Washington of "doing nothing during the American Revolution, while taking

¹⁷²Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 309.

¹⁷³Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations, Washington and Adams, letter from Wolcott to Hamilton, (December 8, 1796), vol. 1, p. 407.

¹⁷⁴Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 295-296.

¹⁷⁵Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 246.

the glory for the success of other generals." This, of course, was in opposition to Paine's earlier congratulations to Washington for his contributions to the American Revolution. Even though Washington never mentioned this contradiction or the original letter per se, he did speak of the "absolute falsehood" of this printed version of Paine's letter.¹⁷⁶

Washington had not been Paine's only target. The Federalists, in general, were attacked and John Adams in particular. Paine charged the Federalists with pro-monarchical tendencies. Paine accused Adams of having a head "as full of Kings, Queens, and Knaves" as "a pack of cards," as early as 1776. Paine stated that his greatest relief was that "John lost the deal."¹⁷⁷ After this and similar charges against Adams, counter charges began to appear under the name of "Publicola."¹⁷⁸

'Publicola' was the pseudonym for the young, 24 year old, John Q. Adams.¹⁷⁹ In the Philadelphia General Advertiser in 1791, Publicola ridiculed Paine. He stated that even Rousseau's "nation of gods" required unanimous consent which would be unobtainable in the United States.¹⁸⁰ Adams knew full well that unanimity was impossible in America and he also knew or suspected that Paine and others were being subsidized by the Federalist's primary political opponent, Jefferson.¹⁸¹ Since the American Revolution, Jefferson had feared the monarchical ten-

¹⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 245-246.

¹⁷⁷Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 308.

¹⁷⁸Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Jeffersonian Republicans, The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 12.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

¹⁸⁰Taken from Boston's Columbian Centinel. Spurlin, Rousseau in America, 1760-1809, pp. 61-62.

¹⁸¹Gibbs, Memoirs on the Administrations, Washington and Adams, editor's note, vol. 1, p. 377.

dencies of the Federalists.

Jefferson related this fear to Paine. In a letter he tells Paine that some of the highest and most important "characters" in the United States need a lesson in Republicanism. Jefferson, however, was not as pessimistic as Paine. Referring to The Rights of Man he said that it was not true that these "characters" were preaching "kings, lord, and commons" or "crown, coronets, and mitres."¹⁸² One can readily see that Jefferson was a man of moderation; he could never sanction the extremes of Paine nor did he want to be publically associated with Paine's extremes.

A "misunderstanding" exemplifies Jefferson's position. When Jefferson first received a copy of The Rights of Man from Paine's publisher, he wrote a short note on the copy and sent it back. The note praised Paine's work, but Jefferson did not foresee or intend its publication. However, hoping to increase sales, the publisher published Jefferson's note without Jefferson's approval. Subsequently, Publicola, much to the consternation of Jefferson, attacked both Paine and Jefferson. Showing his concern, Jefferson wrote Adams and begged that the two have no "misunderstanding" over the incident and explained that his note was not intended for publication. Jefferson did not want a potentially embarrassing breach between himself and Adams. At this time he believed that the elder John Adams was the author of 'Publicola'.¹⁸³ In the end, Paine took the brunt of the fierce criticism of his writings, propaganda

¹⁸²Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, letter from Jefferson to Paine, Philadelphia, (June 19, 1792), vol. 7, p. 121.

¹⁸³Note appeared in Boston's Colombian Centinel, June, 1791. Adams, Adams-Jefferson Letters, letter from Jefferson to Adams, (July 17, 1791), vol. 1, pp. 245-247.

which, in the long run, helped insure Jefferson's election to the Presidency.

Nonetheless, Paine was reviled unmercifully. Few men had the courage to defend him, even old comrades and friends. Remembering Paine's role in the American Revolution and his great contribution toward the cause of independence, one can easily understand why Barlow wrote of Washington's "Ingratitude."¹⁸⁴ Paine had to endure the vile slander that accompanies the furor of an irrational period. It is difficult to believe that those who were considered the "gentlemen" of the period could write and speak with such malice. The Federalists referred to Paine as a "loathsome reptile" and a "demi-human arch beast." Unsubstantiated charges became the rule not the exception. Paine was characterized as "that lying, drunken, brutal infidel," a man whose "abominable habits render him an object as offensive to the senses as his crimes make him abhorrent to the moral sentiments of mankind."¹⁸⁵ Paine surely must have generated fear in the Federalists; his threat must have seemed real, otherwise the criticism would not have reached such a fevered pitch. As time passed the fight, against the philosophy of Paine and Paine the man, became a worthy calling and a way of life.

Medals were forged to mock Paine. One example is the medal picturing a man hanging in front of a church; the caricature was, of course, Paine. Around the hanging man's neck hung a medal with a witty inscription peculiar to the period; one read, "The End of Pain," another, "The Wrongs of Man." As a variety of paraphernalia appeared, one medal pic-

¹⁸⁴See "Supra, p. 39."

¹⁸⁵Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 308.

tured a monkey dancing; it read, "We dance, Pain Swings." This severe ridicule has led some historians to believe that Paine craved notoriety and may have received some masochistic pleasure from his adverse fame. However, such a charge is merely speculation. Paine's malignment, however, was real and thriving. Inscribed beer mugs added to his defilement; one read,

"observe the wicked and malicious Man
projecting all the mischief that he can
when common policy will not prevail
He'll rather venture soul and all than fail." 186

At least this epigram can be recognized as partially true. Paine did risk all. His philosophy came first in his life and he could not compromise even though his search for truth prompted criticism and denial of old friendships.

Influential Americans turned against him. Many of "the best people" adjudged Paine to be an unprincipled troublemaker.¹⁸⁷ Even Monroe, who was his friend, asked him not to write about American affairs. Monroe was afraid that his own reputation, as Paine's friend, would be damaged or that American policy would be weakened.¹⁸⁸ Paine was not unaffected by this discord; he brooded over his dishonor in the United States. His remorse was intensified when there was jubilation over erroneous reports of his death. Such reports were widely publicized at various times. One of the most well read was written in the Philadelphia Aurora, January 14, 1796. The paper reported that Paine died of a fever

¹⁸⁶Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 218.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., p. 274.

¹⁸⁸Monroe told Madison, January 20, 1796, that he worried about Jay's Treaty. Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 239.

he contracted during his incarceration in France.¹⁸⁹ One can readily believe that many of the reports were known to be erroneous from the onset, but were continued because they stimulated interest among both the Federalists and the Republicans. Perhaps Paine was sorely used by both as he became a legend in his own time. As a 'maligned philosopher' Paine was greatly misunderstood. Ultimately, as the wave of fear and uncertainty subsided, he became an obscure character. The transitional period was drawing to a close. Some men, such as Barlow, would survive in the new era; others like Paine would drift into obscurity. The legitimacy of opposition weakened the effectiveness of the polarization, but many old hates survived. Thus, Paine became a victim of one of the most crucial periods in history.

Lost Bones, Lost Cause

In 1794, England believed Paine had been executed by Robespierre and the Reign of Terror. The rumor was that he stood upon the scaffold and confessed that all he had written and spoken were lies. This report was what the English government wanted to believe. It was, of course, untrue, but exemplifies how worrisome Paine was to the English. They would do whatever necessary to discredit him and they were successful to a great extent. The following is a nursery rhyme that was chanted by English children after the report of Paine's execution.

"Poor Tom Paine! There he lies;
Nobody laughs and nobody cries,
Where he has gone and how he fares,
Nobody knows and nobody cares." 190

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 243.

¹⁹⁰He was believed to have been executed September 1, 1794.
Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, p. 268.

Unfortunately, the rhyme foretells Paine's future to a great extent. However, for the time being, Paine survives to endure the bitterness of old and new foes. His only comforts are his old and new friends.

After Paine's narrow brush with death in France, he was released from prison in November, 1794.¹⁹¹ One would surmise that Paine would leave Paris, which he did, but he was back by 1796. Most of the former Girondins were not allowed in Paris, but the Directory gave Paine a special exemption.¹⁹² He ultimately stayed until his return to America in 1802. His stay in France did not go completely unnoticed. He remained a 'suspicious character'. A letter from Napoleon to the Minister of Police, Fouche,¹⁹³ contained the following message for Paine. "Lastly you are to inform M. Payne that the police have information as to his suspicious behavior and that on the first complaint he will be sent back to America, the country to which he belongs."¹⁹⁴ That Paine belonged to America was certainly true, although not widely admitted in the United States. However, Napoleon should have realized that Paine had influenced France also. His love of man and hatred of violence, although unheeded, attempted to prevent the brutality of the Reign of Terror. This was not acknowledged, however. As early as 1794, Paine was so feared and maligned that he could not get some of his more revolutionary writings pub-

¹⁹¹Napoleon I, Napoleon's Letters, ed. J.M. Thompson, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), letter 57, p. 87.

¹⁹²Aldridge, Man of Reason, The Life of Thomas Paine, p. 243.

¹⁹³Napoleon was a member of the Directory before declaring himself Emperor. Fouche, former orator and terrorist, had been Minister of Police since 1799.

¹⁹⁴Napoleon I, Napoleon's Letters, letter from Napoleon to Fouche, Paris, (April 5, 1800), letter 57, p. 87.

lished.¹⁹⁵

Yet, he continued to write. At the time of his death libel suits were pending. In a rhetorical battle he had characterized James Cheetham as an "ugly tempered man." Concurrently, Cheetham had accused Paine of "retreating" to the 'pen' during the American Revolution. Paine filed suit for this alleged libel and Cheetham's additional charge of drunkenness. Unfortunately, Paine died before the suit was brought to court.¹⁹⁶ Thus, until his death Paine remained in the shadow of discord and conflict.

On the other hand, Joel Barlow remained a faithful friend to Paine. Barlow wrote to Cheetham, whom he knew would disagree, about Paine's good character and qualities.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, Barlow always spoke of writing a biography of Paine; however, like most of Barlow's literary goals it did not materialize. The time was not yet right, said Barlow.¹⁹⁸ What Barlow meant by this can only be surmized; probably he meant that it would not be accepted by the public because Paine's reputation was so tarnished.

If so, how soon America forgot his part in her independence. One hopes that Barlow did not forget his debt to Paine. Barlow's work was, in a large part, a subsidiary of Paine's because many of his ideas were formed after reading Paine's writings.¹⁹⁹ Jefferson also owed much to Paine. There is no doubt that Paine proliferated the Republican ideas

¹⁹⁵Sears, George Washington and the French Revolution, p. 276.

¹⁹⁶Brought jointly against Cheetham and William Carver. Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, vol. 2, pp. 308-310.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., letter from Barlow to Cheetham, (August 11, 1809), vol. 2, p. 206.

¹⁹⁸Todd, Life and Letters of Joel Barlow, LL.D., pp. 200, 236-237.

¹⁹⁹Miller, Joel Barlow, Revolutionist London, 1791-1792, p. 63.

that helped elect Jefferson to the Presidency.

Jefferson's gratitude is ambiguous, but perhaps human. On March 4, 1801, Jefferson stated in his Inaugural Address, "we are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."²⁰⁰ This must have been a strange statement to Paine who was now regarded as a character to be avoided and feared.²⁰¹ His constant fight for Republicanism must have seemed useless when he heard Jefferson make Federalism and Republicanism synonymous. However, Jefferson both vindicated and jeopardized himself by befriendiing the out-cast Paine. When Paine dined with Jefferson in 1802,²⁰² it was not well accepted by many Americans. Morris wrote about the incident. Alluding to Paine as the "adventurer from abroad" he chided Paine's warm reception by Jefferson. Morris warned that such actions would surely arouse the pride and indignation of the country.²⁰³ It was remarked by another that Paine was "an object of disgust, of abhorrence, of absolute loathing to every decent man except the President of the United States."²⁰⁴ This last statement was not completely true, as a matter of fact one of Paine's oldest enemies did an about face and transformed Paine from a devil to a saint.

By 1804, William Cobbett was a reformer and a great admirer of Thomas Paine. After studying The Rights of Man and The Age of Reason,²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰Louis L. Snyder, Fifty Major Documents of the Nineteenth Century, (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Nostrand Company, Inc., 1955), p. 9.
Adams, The Formative Years, vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

²⁰¹Adams, The Formative Years, vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

²⁰²Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 307.

²⁰³Morris, Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris, vol. 2, p. 427.

²⁰⁴Smith, Thomas Paine, Liberator, p. 308.

²⁰⁵Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, pp. 327-341.

Cobbett was converted to Paine and his philosophy. Cobbett's papers leave a record of his admiration for Paine. He described Paine as an unaffected, frank, and witty writer.²⁰⁶ Cobbett eventually agreed with Paine on many aspects. Notably, Cobbett, as Paine, would not inflict the past on the present. As written in The Rights of Man, the present generation must not be governed by the dead.²⁰⁷ Cobbett's behavior upon Paine's death reflects his great change of heart and the fervor it produced.

Paine's death on June 10, 1809, ended many years of cruel lies. His obituary reflected ~~the~~ extent of the cruelties. The New York Post published a brief ambiguous account of Paine's death, it ends thus, "I am unacquainted with his age, but he had lived long, done some good, and much harm." His reputation was also reflected at the funeral; only six persons, none renowned, were present. Cobbett was abroad at the time and remained there until 1817. Upon his return he was determined to take Paine's remains to England and entomb them in a shrine. The disinterment was completed and met with much ridicule. Thereafter, Cobbett took the bones to England, where he encountered more ridicule and was unable to stimulate interest in a shrine. The bones ultimately passed, upon Cobbett's death, to his son. Later possession of the remains are unknown--never enshrined--never respected--their whereabouts are at present unknown. In death as in life, Paine endured ingratitude.²⁰⁸

Although scorned by his contemporaries, Thomas Paine was a great

²⁰⁶Conway, Life of Thomas Paine, p. 339.

²⁰⁷Osborn, William Cobbett, pp. 140-142.

²⁰⁸Woodward, Thomas Paine: America's Godfather, pp. 338-348.

influence on public opinion throughout his life. His contributions to the American Revolution must be remembered by posterity. Paine's greatest fault was that his writings were too reasonable and too effective. His philosophical abilities made him a worthy adversary for any and all comers. So penetrating were his ideas that many feared their very utterance. To refute them, men of affairs attempted to discredit Paine as well as his work. They were successful. Paine died a forgotten man. However, the aftermath is not as bleak as one might believe. Paine's ideas are now a part of the world and man, even Cobbett grew to understand their importance and truth. Paine left his ideas for posterity and they will not be forgotten. Paine's only error was his inability to accept an imperfect world. He could not compromise his ideals and ideas. Looking at his writings today they appear as modern as tomorrow. The Age of Reason might create, at least, a mild furor today. If it did, a resurrected Paine could withstand it, but he would once again feel the loneliness of an intolerant and unreasonable world.

IV

Denouement

Triumph in Defeat

The American Revolution was both an external and internal rebellion. Respectively, the external revolution accomplished its purpose; however, the internal conflict was not settled to the satisfaction of all individuals. As a result of these opposing forces two factions were created, notably the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists. These factions evolved, ultimately, into legitimized political parties. Nevertheless, the legitimization did not include the ideas of the most radical Anti-Federalists who were notoriously labeled 'Jacobins'. These republicans remained outside the mainstream of political thought. Thus, neither Joel Barlow nor Thomas Paine were really satisfied after 1801, but their dissatisfaction brought different reactions.

Joel Barlow did not live to see an American nation of sharing and fraternity. Nonetheless, because he had not been as maligned as Paine, he was able to continue his activity in government and accept the imperfection of American politics. The malicious attacks of the last decade of the Eighteenth Century did not destroy his effectiveness; he remained active and contributed to American politics until his death. Nevertheless, one can assume that he was disillusioned. The perfectibility of America and the world was doubtful; his dreams of a perfect nation were unfulfilled.

As a political and social philosopher Barlow's acumen befits a

Romantic. Even though he was a child of the Enlightenment, his ideas are more Rousseauian than rationalistic. The Rousseauian influence separated Barlow from many of his contemporaries who could accept a society of rigid classes and authority. His own position required an individual altruism that Americans of the period were, perhaps, incapable of fulfilling. In this regard Barlow was utopian and can be considered as a revolutionary cultural nationalist.

On the other hand, Paine was not a nationalist, but rather a universalist. His prime goal was to spread revolution throughout the world, using both America and France as models. The French model became too brutal for Paine while America remained too aristocratic; both Republics fell short of Paine's dream. However, he never gave up his dream of an international Republic. Even though he was disillusioned, Paine never lost his Republican ideas. The libellous assaults did not dampen his dreams, but he became ineffective and sorely abused after his final return to the United States in 1804. It was impossible for Paine to work within the American political structure. He was, of course, primarily a philosopher and literally could not function in practical politics, whereas Barlow could. Consequently, the two men were different in this real respect.

Nevertheless, their ideas were similar and the proliferation of these ideas frightened the Federalists and the power structures of Europe and England. These powers initiated brutal attacks. Allegations against the personal characters of Paine and Barlow became more important than their ideas.

Unfortunately, much of the stigma of the Eighteenth Century can still be seen today. Barlow is rather an obscure personage in American

history. Even though his poetry is mediocre, his ideas reflect early Americanism and deserve review. Moreover, his political and social philosophy are a worthy contribution to the ideas of the period, yet, they too, are forgotten. Paine is not forgotten, but his scurrilous Eighteenth Century reputation has followed him through the centuries. He is not yet recognized as one of the great leaders of the American Revolution and one of the great republicans. The ideas of both men deserve more recognition. These two American Jacobins helped spread the love of republicanism and democracy, even though their ideas were not successful until the Nineteenth Century.

Notwithstanding this temporary defeat, both men do triumph. They have added to the world of modern ideas and leave, in their Jacobin philosophy, a legacy of democracy, republicanism, and humanitarianism. Although the 'big questions' are still unanswered and the 'great debate' continues, both men did enter the arena and fight for their ideals. Fortunately, their ideas remain both in printed form and in the minds of man. In this way they continue to contribute to humanity. Although their lives were unfulfilled and in Paine's case ended tragically, their ideas could not be destroyed. In this regard they were successful; their aspirations were partially accomplished. They may still accomplish, in death, what they could not accomplish in life.

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