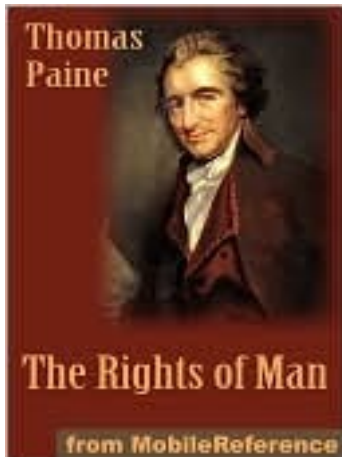


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# Thomas Paine

## The Rights of Man



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## Description

*Rights of Man* presents an impassioned defense of the Enlightenment principles of freedom and equality that Thomas Paine believed would soon sweep the world. He boldly claimed, "From a small spark, kindled in America, a flame has arisen, not to be extinguished. Without consuming ... it winds its progress from nation to nation." Though many more sophisticated thinkers argued for the same principles and many people died in the attempt to realize them, no one was better able than Paine to articulate them in a way which fired the hopes and dreams of the common man and actually stirred him to revolutionary political action.

### About the Author:

A participant in both the American and French Revolutions and in the governments that first arose from them, Thomas Paine is best remembered as the highly popular pamphleteer whose incendiary *Common Sense* was largely responsible for motivating the American colonists to declare independence. He was born in England on January 29, 1737, and his impoverished early life offered scant evidence of the qualities that would later elevate him to literary and historical prominence. Taking the first available opportunity to improve his lot, he moved to America in 1775, coincidentally arriving at the time when revolutionary fervor was just taking hold.

## Insightful reviews

Clint: "Democracy swept Europe with the sabre when it was founded on the Rights of Man. It has done literally nothing at all since it has been founded only upon the wrongs of man, or, more strictly speaking, its recent failure has been due to its not admitting the existence of any rights or wrongs, or indeed of any humanity." -G.K. Chesterton

Thomas Paine's tract on representative government is one of the essential works of political theory. Perhaps slightly too engrossed in Enlightenment-era idealism (as demonstrated by the Chesterton quote above, accurately summarizing both the strength of the work itself and how the flaws of modern society have become sadly less conducive to democracy), but nevertheless recognizes the fact that good government can only come from having a firm doctrine of human life. There's enough in here to enrage both liberals (emphases on minimal taxation and limited government) and conservatives (higher tax rates for the wealthy, strong social welfare programs for the poor and infirm). As relevant today as in 1791.

Sean Chick: Flawed but vastly superior to Burke. Paine relies more upon the argument that man has rights, than any form of historical tradition. Paine was right in that there is no "political Adam" from which all laws derive. People have a right to revolution, because government is a construct of man, not an organic system ordained by god and the dead hand of tradition. Also, the unity of man is an absolute and based upon natural rights, while nobles hold their position through coercion and war. He correctly sees that peace in Europe will come with democracy, and that the French Revolution is both a continuation of the American Revolution and the dawn

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of something greater. Those are just my scattered thoughts on this remarkable book.

Delilah: I read *The Social Contract* and *Rights of Man* one after the other.

As a fierce supporter of the books, not downloads, I will first review the aesthetics of these two books. Both works are quite light considering the heavy content. I bought these first hand, so the covers are smooth, and the pages firm and crisp. I enjoy Wordsworth Classics beige pages, which I find very easy on the eyes, compared to the reflective, stark whites of the computer I look at for 8 hours a day (plus blogging time). I enjoy the picture on *Rights of Man*, painting "Fighting at the Hotel de Ville" by Jean Victor Schnetz. It is very indicative of the fervour which is contained inside. However I can't help but feel the main subject's face seems apathetic to his victory. The image on *The Social Contract*, "A Review of the Guards de la Ville de Paris – the municipal militia - outside the Hotel de Ville", is set at the same location. It is simple, and straight to the point, but not altogether enjoyable or pleasing to the eye.

### Rights of Man

Paine's words in *Rights of Man* has a great intensity and fierce tone, which I suppose is fantastically enjoyable if you happen to agree with all his arguments. I, however, could barely get past his scathing remarks and snide attitude to find exactly what his case is. I would also recommend you figure out who this Burke character is, and read whatever it was he wrote that made Paine so gosh-darn angry before commencing *Rights of Man*.

I found Rousseau's arguments in *The Social Contract* easier to follow, and thus I found it a much more enjoyable read. Rousseau is quoted because he makes his points succinctly eg Might does not make right. Rousseau sets out his theories in a logical and rational manner, though there is still enough personal emotion not to put the reader to sleep.

I found the latter read more pleasurable as Rousseau was less prescriptive, and allows for the will of the people to choose. However, I found many of his methods for choosing a government are no longer applicable. Paine's passion and steadfastness against certain forms of government does not allow for as much flexibility, and so I often felt like a chastised child.

Paine seems in constant fear of being caught in his own contradictions. He does not give the reader enough to credit. Several times he accuses Burke's arguments of being so ill-founded and irrational that they do not warrant rebuttal. If the apologies and blank dismissals were cut out, the novel would be much shorter and to the point, and I would definitely be more sympathetic to his cause.

My overall winner is *The Social Contract*.

Rob Manwaring: i ponder if I had really learn this in the course of my undergrad days, i'd no longer have needed to re-submit my woeful essay on Shelley and Blake? Blistering piece of political pamphleteering! it is frightening and miserable to imagine how appropriate it

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nonetheless continues to be today. Paine's defence of democracy and assault at the Monarchy is insightful, angry, passionate, but additionally rational and clear-sighted. He has a nifty flip of word too, i admire his remark approximately Burke's sympathy for the French aristocracy, "He pities the plumage, yet neglects the death bird". how the heck Britain nonetheless keeps a Monarchy and an unelected condo of Lords is past me. I had no longer encountered Paine's views at the embryonic 'welfare state' either, and this was once fairly interesting. That said, I nonetheless learn such a lot pages with the Billy Bragg lyric, "I went out ingesting with Thomas Paine...he stated all revolutions aren't the same"...

Reformed Covenanter: whereas i don't totally accept as true with Edmund Burke nor do I quite like ancien regime France, nonetheless, this booklet mostly consisted of one zero five pages of ranting. He makes a few stable points, yet i assumed his previous work, universal Sense, was once a extra cogent, average argument.

Sidharth: an exceptional polemic at the inherent rights of human beings, and the adaptation among a state and government. along with being a truly enlightening little booklet that truly explains a lot of the philosophical foundation of the United States, Paine's witty assaults on Edmund Burke's safeguard of British and French aristocracy make it an pleasing learn as well. It is, of course, just a little chilling looking back to learn Paine's never-ending praises of the French Revolution, figuring out now that during quite a few years it'll all be undone by way of Napoleon. let alone the various extra years of horror that Europe must suffer sooner than the Spring he expected may come to be.

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