

Thomas paine's common sense



"Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one..." (Common Sense, 3). This quote, from the opening of Common Sense, basically states what was on Thomas Paine's mind during the uprising of the revolution. Common Sense played a huge part in the start of the Revolutionary War but raised a few questions such as: How did Thomas Paine's background influence his ideas? Does it matter that he was new to the colonies when he had written his arguments? Why did he think it was best for America to break away from Britain?

What were some weaknesses in his arguments? What arguments can go against the colonies? Thomas Paine was born in England in January 29, 1737 to a Quaker father and an Anglican mother. He received little education and left grammar school at the age of thirteen for a three-year apprenticeship in his father's shop as a corset maker (Thomas Paine, 1). He then established a business in his trade and married. His wife died within a few months, and he took on a job like his father-in-law as an officer of the excise. This occupation was a poorly paid occupation (Aldridge, 15-16).

It seems as Paine attained Quaker habits in "rejecting accepted ways and opinions" (Aldridge, 13). Particularly, there was even one point in time where Paine had fought to see if the Parliament will consider increasing the pay raise. He wrote out pamphlets named The Case of the Officer of Excise and handed out 4,000 copies to members of the parliament and other citizens of Britain. Paine was then dismissed from the excise office in the spring of 1774. He then meets Benjamin Franklin, who suggested him to leave from Britain and head to the colonies.

He also bestowed him information of the foundation of the colonies preparing to unite (Thomas Paine, 1). It is not significant that an English immigrant composed this patriot cause for the separation between the colonies and Great Britain. The book was named Common Sense for a reason. Thomas Paine basically stated what he saw during that time and put it together so the common people would open their eyes and see. His experience in England prepared him for his greater florid endeavor by him living under the government in Great Britain and publishing articles, such as The Case of the Officer of Excise, to make his voice be heard.

Paine specifically pointed reasons on why it was in America's best interest to break away from Britain. The first reason to be found was that people would be much happier if they were responsible for the creation of the laws that rule them. He gave an example that states people were placed on island that was cut off from the rest of society. They eventually develop ties with one another, and basically lawmaking becomes impossible not to do (Paine, 3). This seems like a familiar situation we are aware of.

The people of Europe migrated to this "New World" hoping to get away from their homeland for what reasons they have. The people in the "New World" eventually agree on certain boundaries for each other and Britain never interfered. It was as if the "New World" is a child and Britain is their mother. It seems as if the mother has stepped back and watched what the child has done and helped when it was needed. The second reason found was colonies have little to gain from remaining attached to Britain. He argues that the recent situations will only repeat itself in the future if they were to remain with Britain.

He believes that the colonies had grown too large to be managed from Britain (Paine, 19- 25). Another reason found was that the colonies lack respect from other nations. In other nations eyes they are seen as teenagers rebelling against their mother. The colonies can't really form any alliances since they are considered under Britain. He also believes that in order to prosper they need to be independent (Paine, 36). The last reason found was that America would eventually separate from Britain. So why not now? It is a perfect timing.

He states that the colonies have a large number of men ready to fight and the force and will to break free (Paine, 44). People have noticed all the push he made towards independence, but did the famous philosopher make any mistakes in his arguments? Paine is human like us all, and was writing in the "heat of the moment." It seems like he made it point that could be only war or peace, nothing in between. Britain and the colonies could've made a compromise in between the war and peace. He also doesn't make a logical sequence at some points. For example, he goes from taxing to slavery.

Also, his argument that the colonies would only be happy if they break away has a few holes and no concrete reason like the other arguments (Paine, 37). An argument that could've been on the Britain's side was that Britain wasn't doing really anything wrong. They were just simply asking them to pitch in a little to help out their motherland from a huge that was caused from a war just fought. British just needed help just like the colonies would need help at some points. The colonies should also take in point that they weren't really paying a lot compared to the people who lived in Britain.

Common Sense, a pamphlet that sold nearly 10,000 copies in 1776, opened the eyes of so many people in the colonies. Let's close this essay with a quote that ended the pamphlet that changed history. "And here, without anger or resentment I bid you farewell. Sincerely wishing, that as men and Christians, ye may always fully and uninterruptedly enjoy every civil and religious right; and be, in your turn, the means of securing it to others; but that the example which ye have unwisely set, of mingling religion with politics, may be disavowed and reprobated by every inhabitant of America" (Paine, 58).