

## 🇺🇸 THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN'S SOULS – THE AMERICAN CRISIS

Published by Thomas Paine 🇺🇸 December 23, 1776

George Washington ordered this be read to his Continental Army on Christmas Eve, 1776. The next night they crossed the Delaware River, and on the morning of December 26, they conducted a surprise attack on the enemy encamped at Trenton, NJ.

Portions reprinted by Stephen L. Bakke 🇺🇸 December 24, 2013.

*On December 23, 1776 Thomas Paine published his now famous pamphlet introduced by the words: "These are the times that try men's souls ....." His intent was to implore Americans to not give up the fight! The next day, Christmas Eve, as Washington and his troops gathered on the banks of the Delaware River, our future president ordered that the pamphlet be read to the weary soldiers to provide inspiration when it seemed the Revolutionary War was almost lost. The night of December 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> was cold and miserable, yet they crossed the river before a surprise attack on the Hessian troops at Trenton, NJ. It was immensely successful and almost all of the enemy soldiers were killed or captured, with minimal casualties for Washington's Continental Army. It effectively inspired Americans, enlistments improved, and many consider it a turning point in the long and bloody battle for American independence.*

**The American Crisis** is a pamphlet series by the 18<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Thomas Paine, and was originally published from 1776 to 1783. There are sixteen pamphlets in total. Paine signed the pamphlets with the pseudonym, "Common Sense." Throughout most of his life, his writings inspired passion, but also brought him great criticism. He communicated the ideas of the Revolution to common farmers as easily as to intellectuals.



Washington



Paine

## THE AMERICAN CRISIS By Thomas Paine December 23, 1776

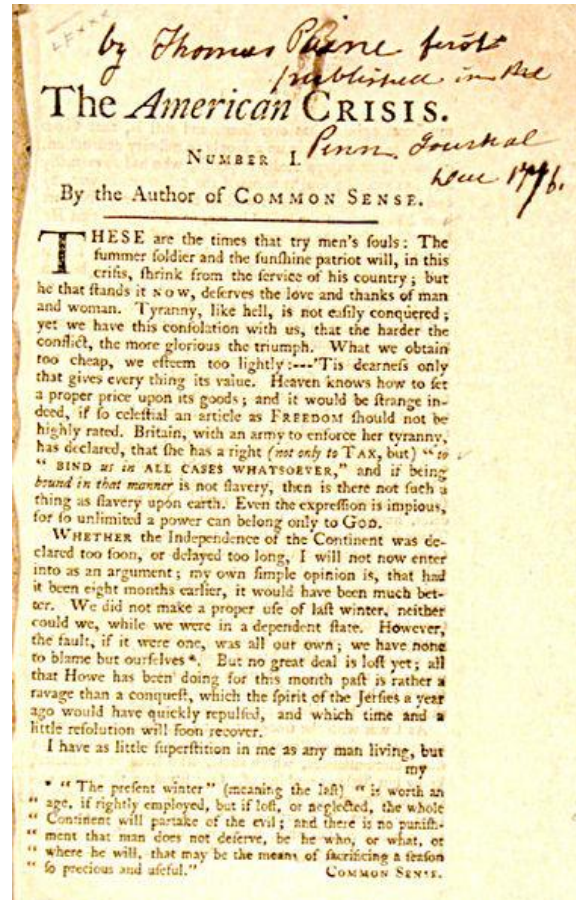
These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation

with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be highly rated .....

Let it be told to the future world, that in the depth of winter, when nothing but hope and virtue could survive, that the city and the country, alarmed at one common danger, came forth to meet and to repulse it. Say not that thousands are gone, turn out your tens of thousands; throw not the burden of the day upon Providence, but "show your faith by your works," that God may bless you. It matters not where you live, or what rank of life you hold, the evil or the blessing will reach you all. The far and the near, the home counties and the back, the rich and the poor, will suffer or rejoice alike ..... I love the man that can smile in trouble, that can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. 'Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death .....

There are persons, too, who see not the full extent of the evil which threatens them; they solace themselves with hopes that the enemy, if he succeed, will be merciful. It is the madness of folly, to expect mercy from those who have refused to do justice; and even mercy, where conquest is the object, is only a trick of war; the cunning of the fox is as murderous as the violence of the wolf, and we ought to guard equally against both ..... I bring reason to your ears, and, in language as plain as A,B,C, hold truth up to your eyes.

I thank God, that I fear not. I see no real cause for fear. I know our situation well, and can see the way out of it ..... Once more we are again collected and collecting; our new army at both ends of the continent is recruiting fast, and we shall be able to open the next campaign ..... By perseverance and fortitude we have the prospect of a glorious issue; by cowardice and submission, the sad choice of a variety of evils — a ravaged country — a depopulated city — habitations without safety, and slavery without hope — our homes turned into barracks and bawdy-houses for Hessians ..... Look on this picture and weep over it! and if there yet remains one thoughtless wretch who believes it not, let him suffer it unlamented.



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