

Draughts of Old Bourbon

JAMES MONROE MADISON

For a SECOND WHISKY REBELLION

FOR the sake of both its present and its future, what this country needs is a rebellion. A real knock-down, drag-out, oath-hurling, skull-cracking rebellion. I'm not advocating such a rebellion, you understand: a man can get thrown into the oubliette now for suggesting violence toward the government of the United States. On advice of counsel I'm only *stating the need* for rebellion, not actually advocating it. But Americans are getting too tired, too old, too complacent; we need to revive our tradition of violence; we ought to demonstrate that we still can get mad.

The healthiest sort of rebellion always is one against taxes. Producers against the blood suckers. Free men against the dad-burned bureaucrats. Patriots against the revenuers. The Boston Tea Party.

The Virginia revolt against the Stamp Act. There is something fine and inspiring about a man grabbing his shillelagh and rushing out and beating hell out of a tax collector. This nation was born of such spirit.

And the best tax rebellions are those against whisky taxes. Whenever a free man no longer gets mad over a new whisky tax, he's losing his spirit; and whenever a free people no longer rebel against a new whisky tax, they are about ready for the Doo-chay and history's dustheap.

Scotland was important as long as Scotchmen were belligerent and made and drank Scotch whisky. Men won't suffer slavery — when they can sniff smoke from hickory logs burning under a pot-still on a Spring morning. But Scotchmen lost their souls whenever they let Englishmen tax their whisky to the point where

Scotchmen had to begin drinking beer.

The best American soldiers in both the First and Second Wars were those from the moonshine areas. Before Sergeant York was twelve years old he could knock the buttons off a revenue agent with a squirrel gun at three hundred yards. Men who make and drink their own whisky just naturally hate taxes and tyrants and love liberty.

There is something healthy, too, in men drinking whisky they make themselves. I attribute my own love of liberty and contempt for bureaucrats to the fact that I was twenty-one before I ever drank a drop of whisky that wasn't made by a member of my own family. Down in my home county in Alabama fifty-three stills were captured during 1951, and it's reassuring to know that for every one that was captured at least ten are in full production. My folks are keeping the home fires burning, beating off the competition of Kentucky whisky, and starting out every morning by looking straight into the rising sun and yelling: "Goddam the Yankees and Harry Truman!"

A STORY WHICH every American patriot should read every ten years is the story of the first whisky rebellion. It was 1794, and the East Coast was getting civilized. The Federal government had been care-

fully brought into being by free men who were suspicious of it, and the first bureaucrats were flexing their muscles. But out in Western Pennsylvania life was still grim for the frontiersmen. Rye delivered to Philadelphia brought forty cents a bushel, and a horse could carry only four bushels. The army at Fort Pitt paid forty cents a gallon for rye whisky which required a bushel and a half of rye to make. But a horse could carry twenty-four gallons of rye whisky to Philadelphia where whisky brought ninety cents a gallon. So the smart farmer made Monongahela Rye and hauled it East, risking Indian raids along the trails. Whisky was drunk by most everybody; and it was the principal unit of barter.

In 1791 Alexander Hamilton, the strong central government man who probably would have loved the New Deal, introduced a bill for the first federal tax on whisky — a tax of nine cents a gallon. Madison and Jefferson went along with Hamilton reluctantly, and the bill was passed.

The tax hit the frontiersmen hard, in three ways. First, it allowed revenue collectors to search a man's house for whisky: and this is galling to free men. If whisky was found, the farmer had to travel three hundred miles to Philadelphia to stand trial; and then, too, the government wanted the tax paid in cash, and farmers had little cash.

The farmers reacted as free men

should react. They held angry protest meetings and decreed that any man who accepted a position as tax collector would be ostracized. Then they proceeded to tar and feather all the collectors they could find.

By 1793 practically no tax had been collected, and that year the farmers became even more belligerent against the government out of sympathy for the French Revolution. As feeling ran high over the Citizen Genet incident, the farmers burned the barns of all sympathizers with the Federal government, raised "Liberty Poles" in front of their homes, and beat up any tax collector they could find.

On July 15, 1794, the first federal soldiers arrived in Western Pennsylvania specifically charged with enforcing the tax collections. A force of five hundred armed farmers met the soldiers, surrounded them, disarmed them, gave them all the whisky they could drink, and dispersed them. On July 26 the farmers robbed the federal mail to make certain that no names were being sent back to Philadelphia.

The rebellion failed later that year, however, when more federal troops were sent, and when the state took stern measures to support the federal government. Thereafter, the farmers had to pay the tax on all commercial quantities of whisky, and they could avoid it only on quantities for family or small community consumption.

IN THE 157 YEARS since then, the federal tax on whisky has increased from nine cents to \$10.50 a gallon. The cost of manufacturing a gallon of whisky has increased very little: a gallon of good bourbon now costs between .65 and \$1.25 to make, depending on whether it is aged in a charred barrel. But a drinking gallon of I. W. Harper for Christmas, 1951, cost \$34.50 in New York.

The modern liquor store is, first of all, an institution for collecting taxes, and only secondarily does it provide service for its customers. More than half of its receipts goes to pay local, state, and federal levies; and less than half goes to pay rent, salaries, transportation, and manufacturing costs. Each year since the repeal of Prohibition, there has been an increase in at least one of the different levies.

Where will it stop? The increase in taxation will never stop until there is a rebellion by the taxpayers; and today Americans have become so docile under taxation that the bureaucrats hold the taxpayers in contempt. Some future Gibbon may conclude that the failure of the first whisky rebellion marked the beginning of the end of liberty in America.



NATURE OF THE ENEMY:

The Soviet Army

J. M. Mackintosh

THERE can be no doubt that of all the instruments of policy at the disposal of the Soviet government at the present time, the army is the most imposing and formidable. Its impressive size, and its halo of victories over the German army during World War II, encourage the Soviet government in its present uncompromising attitude and enable it to maintain its hold over the countries of Eastern Europe. The Soviet leaders believe in force, and as the speeches at the Nineteenth Party Congress have shown, they intend to give their armed forces exceptional priority in the coming years.

But the Soviet army is more than just an exceptionally large and powerful military force. It has a dual character which is the key to its own strength and weakness. Defense

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of the Soviet Union is only one of its roles in the eyes of the government. Its victories are also intended to further the political aims of the ruling party. It has been the constant fear of the Soviet leaders that the army might come to question the identification of party and state. On the one great occasion when the party leaders persuaded themselves that the military chiefs had indeed begun to do so — in the years 1937–38 — they reacted with such violence that the purge resulted in the destruction of the entire army high command and some 15,000 officers. It is only when we remember that the Soviet leadership insists on army loyalty to the party first and to the homeland second that we can understand the Soviet army and the non-military factors which influence it.

Perhaps it is best to approach this subject from the viewpoint of the Soviet leaders. Having decided upon a peacetime standing army of three million men, their problem is how to ensure maximum military effi-