

Jan 4, 1990

"REFLECTIONS ON REVOLUTIONS"

FROM AN ENGLISH PUB

WHEN THE POSTMAN DELIVERED MY GREEN CARD FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE ATHENAEUM SOCIETY ANNOUNCING THAT MY TIME WAS RIPE FOR MY 13TH PERIODIC PAPER, I RACKED MY BRAIN FOR AN APPROPRIATE TOPIC. SINCE THE NEWS REPORTS ABOUNDED WITH ACCOUNTS OF THE CELEBRATIONS RELATING TO THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND I WAS HEADED TO PARIS, WHAT COULD POSSIBLY BE A BETTER SUBJECT THAN "REFLECTIONS ON REVOLUTIONS."

ARMED WITH A HASTY RE-READING OF CHARLES DICKENS, "A TALE OF TWO CITIES," A REVIEW OF MY NON-EXISTENT FRENCH AND 'SHE WHO MUST OBEYED', WE HEADED FOR THE CITY OF LIGHTS, TO CONDUCT BASIC RESEARCH.

IT HAD NOT OCCURRED TO ME WHEN I STEPPED UP TO THE CAB STAND AT PARIS' DEGAULE AIRPORT THAT I WAS DRESSED IN A, SHALL WE SAY, NOTEWORTHY FASHION. YES, I WAS WEARING A DEERSTALKER CAP AND A PAIR OF L.L. BEAN RUBBER-SOLED HUNTING SHOES; YES, I HAD A FURLED BLACK UMBRELLA NESTLED UNDER ONE ARM AND LEATHER PATCHES ON THE ELBOWS OF MY NATTY TWEED JACKET. BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL THE CABBY LIFTING MY BAGS STATED IN IMPECCABLE ENGLISH, "GOING DUCK-HUNTING, ARE WE?" THAT I THOUGH I MIGHT HAVE TAKEN THE GUIDEBOOK'S

WARNINGS ABOUT THE FRENCH WEATHER A BIT TOO MUCH AT HEART.

IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE REVOLUTION WAS ABOUT TO START ALL OVER. THESE THOUGHTS OCCUPIED MY MIND DURING THE DRIVE FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE HOTEL. ALONG THE WAY I DID MAKE A FEW RESOLUTIONS. ONE, I SHEDDED THOSE WATERPROOF BOOTS FROM BEANS. TWO, I THREW THAT SHERLOCK HOLMES HAT OUT THE WINDOW AND THREE, I VOWED NEVER AGAIN TO MAKE FUN OF TOURISTS.

THE WORST OF TIMES, THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS HARD NOT TO FEEL THE THRILL WORDSWORTH FELT WHEN CONTEMPLATING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, "BLISS WAS IT IN THAT DAWN TO BE ALIVE/ BUT TO BE YOUNG WAS VERY HEAVEN!" OF COURSE, WORDSWORTH LIVED TO REGRET IT. BUT THERE WILL BE TIME FOR THAT LATER. NOW IS THE TIME TO THRILL.

THE BEST OF TIMES ALREADY SEEM AT HAND FOR I. M. PEI'S GLASS PYRAMID IN THE COURTYARD OF THE LOUVRE WHICH AT FIRST WAS SCOFFED AT BY ART CRITICS AND DEPLORED BY THE CITIZENS BUT NOW THOUSANDS WAIT IN LINE TO DESCEND ESCALATORS INTO THE NEW ENTRANCE.

WE HEADED FOR THE BASTILLE ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT IT HAD BEEN RIPPED OUT AND REPLACED WITH PARIS' NEW OPERA HOUSE. TIME FOR A BIT OF REFRESHMENT AT POMAROY'S WINE SHOP WITH MADAME DEFARGE AND HER KNITTING NEEDLES IN TOW, WE OBSERVED THE PASSING SCENE OF YOUNG TURKS WITH T-SHIRTS EMBLAZONED WITH PERSONS WITH THEIR HEADS HACKED OFF, RUBBER FACE MASKS OF THE DOOMED KING AND QUEEN, AND WOOL SHAWLS INSPIRED BY THE SADISTIC WOMEN WHO KNITTED AND GOSSIPED AT THE FOOT OF THE SCAFFOLD WHILE HEADS ROLLED.

SINCE FRANCE ABOLISHED CAPITAL PUNISHMENT EIGHT YEARS AGO, NONE OF THE FOUR SURVIVING GUILLOTINES ARE ON DISPLAY, ALTHOUGH ONE RECENTLY SOLD AT AUCTION FOR \$40,000. BUT THESE SOUVENIRS RECALL "THE NATIONAL RAZOR THAT SHAVED CLOSE" AS CHARLES DICKENS CALLED THE INVENTION THAT DISPATCHED THE HEADS OF LOUIS XVI AND MARIE ANTOINETTE.

WITH THE RUMBLINGS OF REVOLUTION REACHING THE PARIS PRESS FROM CHINA AND EASTERN EUROPE, WE DECIDED TO TAKE LEAVE OF PARIS, AND HEAD FOR THE OTHER CITY IN THIS TALE OF TWO. AFTER ALL, I HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO SPEAK ENGLISH ON OCCASION AND BEER IS MY DRINK OF CHOICE. WHAT BETTER PLACE TO REFLECT UPON A REVOLUTION THAN AN ENGLISH PUB. I BOUGHT ANOTHER SHERLOCK HOLMES HAT , FETCHED MY WATERPROOF BOOTS AND LACED THEM WELL ABOVE MY ANKLE AND HEADED FOR HEATHROW.

WITH REVOLUTIONS RAMPANT THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, LONDON APPEARED TO BE THE SAFEST PLACE TO DRINK AND REFLECT. WE CHECKED INTO THE ST. ERMINS HOTEL IN KNIGHTSBRIDGE AND FEELING THE NEED FOR LIQUID REFRESHMENT, HEADED FOR THE **ALBERT**, A VICTORIAN PUB NEAR THE NEW SCOTLAND YARD BUILDING. THIS APPEARED TO BE A REASONABLY SAFE PLACE TO DO SOME SERIOUS RESEARCH. HOWEVER, I STILL DON'T KNOW IF THAT GUARD AT SCOTLAND YARD WINKED OR SMIRKED AT MY HAT, AS I PASSED.

THE WORD PUB COMES FROM "PUBLIC HOUSE," AND IN THAT PHRASE LIES THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF THIS WONDERFUL BRITISH

INSTITUTION, SO MUCH ADMIRER--AND SO UNSUCCESSFULLY IMITATED--IN ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD. YOU WILL RECALL THAT HOPKINSVILLE'S LAST PUB, THE **COBBLER'S LAST**, LOCATED IN A RENOVATED SHOE REPAIR SHOP, AT SEVENTH AND VIRGINIA, REMAINED IN BUSINESS LESS THAN SIX MONTHS.

THE BRITISH PUB IS A PLACE LICENSED BY THE GOVERNMENT ITSELF WHERE PEOPLE COME TOGETHER AND FREELY TALK. AND TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION, DRINK IS SERVED. ONE GIRDS YOURSELF FOR OPEN DISCUSSION AS THE GREEKS DID IN THE AGORA , THE ROMANS IN THE FORUM AND ATHENAEUM SOCIETY MEETINGS. HOWEVER SOMETHING WAS AMISS IN THE **ALBERT** BECAUSE I ORDERED MY DRINK AMID STARES AND STONY SILENCE. THEN I REALIZED I STILL HAD THAT SHERLOCK HOLMES HAT ON AND THOSE HIGH TOP BEAN SHOES. AFTER A FEW PINTS, EVERYONE MELLOWED AND THE DISCUSSION CENTERED ON THE BEER SERVED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, THERE WERE TWO TYPES OF BEER ON DRAFT IN MOST BRITISH PUBS: BITTER AND MILD. BITTER IS THE CLASSIC BRITISH BEER. ITS DISTINCTIVE TASTE COMES FROM THE EXTRA HOPS USED IN MAKING IT, BUT I WOULD CHARACTERIZE IT AS RICH RATHER THAN BITTER. ON THE OTHER HAND, MILD--DARK BROWN IN COLOR--HAS LESS HOPS AND A SWEETER FLAVOR.

THE BIGGEST CHANGE IN PUB DRINKING IN THE LAST FEW YEARS HAS BEEN THE RISE OF "REAL ALE." TWO DECADES AGO, THE TRADITIONAL SORT OF BITTER--MADE PURELY FROM MALTED BARLEY, HOPS, YEAST AND WATER--WAS THREATENED BY THE RISE OF BREWERY-CONDITIONED BEERS PRODUCED BY NATIONAL COMPANIES SUCH AS WATNEY'S RED BARREL, WHICH WAS FILTERED AND PASTEURIZED AND CONTAINED CHEMICALS TO IMPROVE

CLARITY AND EXTEND SHELF LIFE. TO DEFEND THE OLD WAYS, BEER LOVERS ORGANIZED THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE AND SPARKED THEIR OWN REVOLUTION. SO SUCCESSFUL WAS THEIR EFFORTS THAT NO PUB CAN DO BUSINESS WITHOUT SERVING REAL ALE.

THE REPORTS FILTERING IN FROM CHINA OF THE STUNNING UPRISING OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE MARCHING IN TIANANMEN SQUARE PASSING MAO'S TOMB, SOME CARRYING EFFIGIES OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND THE LATER MASSACRE LEADS ONE TO PONDER WHERE THE CHINESE REVOLUTION IS LEADING. DARTS ARE IN...THE KNITTING NEEDLES ARE CLICKING AGAIN...THIS IS NOT CHINA'S FIRST REVOLUTION, NOR WILL IT BE ITS LAST. ANOTHER PINT OF REAL ALE...

THE WILL TO FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT OF HUMAN NATURE. BUT SO IS THE WILL TO POWER. AND POWER IS INTOLERANT OF FREEDOM. SO, THE DRAMA OF TODAY'S REVOLUTIONS ARE THE CONTESTS BETWEEN THE TWO. THE CHANGES NOW SWEEPING OVER CENTRAL EUROPE ARE MOMENTOUS, IRREVERSIBLE AND TRULY EPOCH-MAKING. THEY MARK THE END OF THE STATUS QUO THAT HAS EXISTED IN MOST OF THIS REGION SINCE WORLD WAR II AND IN RUSSIA FOR SEVEN DECADES. WHATEVER ELSE MAY BE SAID OF THEM, IT IS SAFE TO SAY THAT EUROPE WILL NEVER AGAIN LOOK AS IT LOOKED SINCE WORLD WAR II. AND HOW THIS FUTURE EUROPE WILL LOOK IS GOING TO DEPEND UPON THE QUALITY OF STATESMANSHIP THAT THE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED ARE ABLE TO BRING TO THE SHAPING OF IT.

SOME PUBS HAVE NO MORE HISTORICAL PAST THAN A BEER STAINED PLACE MAT. OTHERS HAVE A REAL CLAIM TO FAME. TOM PAINE ONCE DESCRIBED THE **WHITE HART AT LEWES** AS "THE CRADLE OF AMERICAN

INDEPENDENCE" BECAUSE IT WAS HERE IN 1761 THAT HE FOUNDED A RADICAL DISCUSSION GROUP. FOR GRUESOME HISTORY, JOIN A PUB WALKING TOUR THROUGH THE HAUNTS OF 19TH CENTURY **JACK THE RIPPER** OR VISIT THE **MAGPIE AND STUMP**. SITUATED OPPOSITE THE FORMER SITE OF NEWGATE PRISON (NOW THE OLD BAILEY) THE PUB'S WINDOWS WERE LET AT HIGH PRICES FOR A GRANDSTAND VIEW OF PUBLIC EXECUTIONS. THERE'S MORE GORE AT THE **LAMB & FLAG**, ONCE KNOWN AS THE **BUCKET OF BLOOD**, BECAUSE OF THE CONSTANT FIGHTING BETWEEN CUSTOMERS. DICKENS LIKED IT HERE, BUT HIS FAVORITE PUB WAS **YE OLDE COCK TAVERN** IN FLEET STREET.

GOOD ALE, THE TRUE AND PROPER DRINK OF ENGLISHMEN. "HE IS NOT DESERVING OF THE NAME OF ENGLISHMAN WHO SPEAKETH AGAINST ALE," SAID GEORGE BORROW. IN THE MIDDLE AGES, THE RIVER THAMES PROVIDED THE EASIEST ROUTE FOR TRAVELLING FROM THE SEA INTO THE HEART OF SOUTHERN ENGLAND. MANY ANCIENT PUBS WERE FOUNDED TO PROVIDE HOSPITALITY TO SUCH TRAVELLERS, AND FLOURISH TO THIS DAY. INCLUDED IN THIS GROUP WOULD BE SUCH WATERING HOLES AS THE **LONDON APPRENTICE**, THE **THREE PIGEONS**, THE **YACHT**, AND THE **OLD SWAN**.

THE WORKINGMAN'S PUB WOULD INCLUDE THE **BRICKLAYERS ARMS**, THE **HOG IN THE POUND**, THE **BARLEY MOW**, AND THE **RUNNING FOOTMAN**. IT WAS AT THIS PUB THAT I ORDERED THE PLOUGHMAN'S LUNCH WHICH CONSISTS OF A CHUNK OF CHEESE, GRANARY BREAD, A SALAD AND CHUTNEY, TOPPED OFF WITH PINT OF MAGNIFICENT ST. AUSTELL TINNERS ALE. EVEN REVOLUTIONARIES HAVE TO EAT AND DRINK NOW AND THEN. IF YOU HAPPEN TO BE AROUND **SHEPHERD'S MARKET** AT NOON TIME, LET ME SUGGEST THE KIDNEY PIE AND A PINT OF LAGER. YOU CAN SKIP THE CARROT SOUP AT

THE **SLUG & LETTUCE** IN STRATFORD. HOWEVER, THE **DIRTY DUCK**, WHERE ACTORS OF THE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY REPAIR AFTER PERFORMING IS DELIGHTFUL, EVEN THOUGH ITS HALF-TIMBERED FACADE STARTS TO CURVE AFTER A FEW PINTS OF ALE.

THE RUMBLINGS OF REVOLUTION CONTINUE...MADAME DEFARGE CONTINUES TO KNIT, HEADS CONTINUE TO ROLL. GORBACHEV TOOK POWER IN THE SOVIET UNION IN 1985 AND SAID: "FREEDOM OF CHOICE IS A UNIVERSAL PRINCIPAL. EACH PEOPLE DETERMINES THE FUTURE OF ITS OWN COUNTRY...THERE MUST BE NO INTERFERENCE FROM OUTSIDE, NO MATTER WHAT THE PRETEXT." WITH THESE WORDS HE OPENED THE DOOR TO EPIC CHANGE IN SOVIET-DOMINATED EASTERN EUROPE AND GAINED **TIME'S** MAN OF THE DECADE AWARD.

IN POLAND, THE ONCE-OUTLAWED SOLIDARITY LABOR UNION GAINED POWER IN FREE ELECTIONS, IN EAST GERMANY, WITH CITIZENS FLEEING BY THE THOUSANDS, THE ENTIRE GOVERNMENT RESIGNED AND THE BERLIN WALL CAME TUMBLING DOWN, ALLOWING FREE TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE WEST. IN HUNGARY, A NEW REPUBLIC OF HUNGARY HAS BEEN FORMED DISSOLVING THE COMMUNIST PARTY. WITH THOUSANDS MARCHING IN THE STREETS OF PRAGUE, SOFIA, AND BUCHAREST, THE DEMANDS FOR LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY ABOUND. DARTS ARE OUT...DOMINOES ARE IN.

INDEED, THE RADICAL CHANGES OF EASTERN EUROPE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY PEACEFUL REVOLUTION (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ROMANIA) WHICH SHOULD BE CONTRASTED WITH THE MASSACRE IN BEIJING. OPPRESSION AND EXTERMINATION CAN REPRESS THE WILL TO FREEDOM FOR DECADES, SOMETIMES GENERATIONS, BUT INEVITABLY IT REAPPEARS. THE GENIE, ONCE OUT OF THE BOTTLE, SIMPLY CANNOT BE PUT BACK.

MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH DRINKING CLASS HAVE FELT SEVERELY DEPRIVED FOR THE PAST 72 YEARS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO DRINK BETWEEN THREE AND FIVE-THIRTY IN THE AFTERNOON. AFTER THE WEATHER, THIS WAS THE LEADING TOPIC OF CONVERSATION WHILE I WAS CONDUCTING MY PUB RESEARCH. THE HOME SECRETARY, DOUGLAS HURD, HAD JUST ANNOUNCED LEGISLATION LIBERALIZING THE LICENSING LAWS. "CHEERS! HURD UNVEILS ALL-DAY DRINKING PLAN" HEADLINED THE NEWS STORY IN THE **DAILY EXPRESS**, WHICH WENT ON TO ENDORSE THE NEW LAW IN AN EDITORIAL TITLED "DRINK A TOAST TO COMMON SENSE." THE PUNCHY SENTIMENT--"THE BRITISH WANT LIBERTY, NOT LICENSING LAWS" WAS EXPRESSED IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER BY SEVERAL PAPERS. AND "CHEERS TO FREEDOM" EDITORIALIZED **THE STAR**, WHICH ADVERTISES ITSELF AS "THE NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES IT TO YOU STRAIGHT" AND DID EXACTLY THAT WITH ITS HEADLINE "ALL-DAY BOOZERS ON THE WAY." THE VOICES OF APPLAUSE HAVE RESTORED THE DRINKING RIGHTS OF FREEBORN ENGLISHMEN. BETTER ENGLAND FREE THAN ENGLAND SOBER.

A QUAIN T LITTLE PUB CALLED THE **DIRTY DICK** FEATURED "GUEST BEERS," MADE BY SMALL BREWERIES AND CHANGED THE OFFERINGS EVERY WEEK OR SO. DURING MY VISIT, THE GUEST BEERS INCLUDED A PAIR OF HIGHLY REGARDED BUT HARD-TO-FIND BREWS, HALL AND WOODHOUSE **TANGLEFOOT** AND **MARSTON'S PEDIGREE**. THE REASON THE **DIRTY DICK** CAN SHUFFLE ITS BEERS AROUND IS THAT IT IS A FREE HOUSE. JOHN MILLIGAN, THE PUBLICAN, OWNS THE PLACE. BY FAR THE LARGEST NUMBER OF PUBS ARE OWNED BY NATIONAL BREWERIES OR TIED BY CONTRACT TO THEM.

IN ADDITION TO ITS REAL ALES, THE **FALKLAND ARMS**, NOT SHORT

ON MARKETING CREATIVITY, SELLS OTHER PRODUCTS THAT EVOKE THE COUNTRY PUBS OF THE PAST. THERE IS VINTAGE CIDER DRAWN FROM A WOODEN BARREL AND A RANGE OF COUNTRY WINES BY THE GLASS, INCLUDING APRICOT, ELDERBERRY, DANDELION, MEAD AND PARSNIP. IT ALSO STOCKS 50 DIFFERENT KINDS OF SNUFF, INCLUDING COPENHAGEN AND SHOAL, MADE BY U. S. TOBACCO, HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY.

BUT CAN THE TRADITIONAL ENGLISH PUB SURVIVE THE ONSLAUGHT OF CHEAP WHITE WINE DRINKERS, MARKETING EXPERTS, AND ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGNS? IT ALL BEGAN INNOCENTLY ENOUGH. FIRST CENTRAL HEATING, THEN THE PADDED CHAIRS, THEN THE CLEAN PADDED CHAIRS. BUT WHEN THE PIPED-IN MUSIC AND HANGING PLANTS ARRIVED, BRITONS KNEW ONE OF THEIR MOST HALLOWED INSTITUTIONS WAS UNDER SIEGE. MUCH OF THE NEW MARKETING FRENZY IS AIMED AT THE 18-30 SET. ONE PUB EVEN TURNED ME AWAY BECAUSE I LOOKED TOO OLD! OH, NEVER MIND. BUT THESE DAYS, A VISITOR WHO INNOCENTLY WANDERS INTO A PUB LOOKING FOR A DART BOARD, A WARM FIRE AND A GOOD PINT MAY BE GREETED WITH GARISH PINK WOODWORK, A BLARING JUKEBOX AND FOOD PREPARED IN THE TRADITIONAL, OLDE-ENGLISH MICROWAVE.

SOBRIETY WILL NEVER CATCH ON IN A BIG WAY IN ENGLAND OR IN ANY OTHER NON-MOSLEM COUNTRY, FOR, AS LORD BYRON OBSERVED IN **DON JUAN**, "MAN, BEING REASONABLE, MUST GET DRUNK." BYRON MUST HAVE BEEN RIGHT, FOR, AS WE ALL KNOW, THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF REASONABLENESS AROUND FOR A LONG TIME. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED IN **GENESIS** THAT NOAH WAS INCLINED TO TAKE A DROP TOO MUCH AND, DESPITE THE CIRCUMSTANCES, NEVER WITH QUITE ENOUGH WATER.

JOLLY THOUGH THE MELLOW STATE MAY BE, IT IS NOT INFREQUENTLY

FOLLOWED BY A CONDITION KNOWN AS A HANGOVER. THIS TOPIC IS OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF THIS PAPER (THANK GOODNESS!) BUT THE INSPIRED LISTENER IS REFERRED TO CLEMENT FREUD'S AUTHORITATIVE WORK ENTITLED, **BOOK OF HANGOVERS**. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE HANGOVER HAS NOT INSPIRED A RICH AND PLENTIFUL LITERATURE. HOWEVER, I DID COME ACROSS THE ABOVE WORKS WHICH IS AS ENTERTAINING AS THE SUBJECT WILL PERMIT. CLEMENT FREUD IS THE GRANDSON OF THE GREAT SIGMUND FREUD, A FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, A SOMETIME SUPPORTING ACTOR IN A TELEVISION COMMERCIAL FOR DOG FOOD, AND, IN THE MOST RECENT HONORS LIST, THE RECIPIENT OF A KNIGHTHOOD. AT HEART, THE BRITISH ARE LIVING UP TO THE FAMOUS WORDS OF LIBERAL CLEMENT FREUD WHO SAID: "IT IS NOT TRUE THAT GIVING UP DRINKING WILL MAKE YOUR LIFE LONGER; IT MERELY GIVES YOU THE FEELING THAT IT WILL NEVER END."

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY...

"IT IS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT IS THE WORST OF TIMES..."

HAIL FREEDOM, LONG LIVE THE PUB!

--WENDELL H. RORIE

ATHENAEUM SOCIETY

JANUARY 4, 1990