***WHO SAID IT? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?***

**The excise law is an infernal (*evil*) one. The first error was to admit it (the tax) by the Constitution; the second, to act on [it]; the third and last will be, to make it the instrument (*tool*) of dismembering (*separating into parts*) the Union...**

**The information of our militia, returned from the westward is uniform (*the same*), that though the people there let them pass quietly, they were objects of their laughter, not of their fear; that their detestation (*hatred*) of the excise law is universal, and has now associated to it a detestation of the government.**

**…“Shall the general will prevail, or the will of a faction (*a small group within a larger group*)? Shall there be government or no government?**

**…You have then… decreed (*stated*) that your representatives in Congress shall have power to lay excises (*taxes*). Your representatives in Congress… have laid an excise. You have acquiesced (*agreed*) in it; it has gone into general operation; and you have actually paid more than a million of dollars on account of it.**

**But the four western counties of Pennsylvania undertake to rejudge and reverse your** [**decrees**](http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/decree) **(*an order having the force of law*)… They say, "It [the tax] shall not be collected. We will punish, expel, and banish the officers who shall attempt the collection… The sovereignty (*authority*) shall not reside with you [the government], but with us. If you presume to dispute the point by force, we are ready to measure swords with [fight] you…”**

**“Is the cotton-grower in Georgia punished by this unlawful tax? Not a penny… Does the blacksmith in Boston see his profits garnished (*taken*) from this excise? I should think not! This excise places an unfair burden on the shoulders of the Pennsylvania farmer. Blood was spilled by the patriots of this country to decry (*speak out against*) tyrannical taxation. Even if it must be by the musket, a fight against tyranny is always a worthy one.”**

**… "under the circumstances of the case, to take measures for calling forth the Militia . . . and I have accordingly determined to do so, feeling the deepest regret for the occasion, but withal, the most solemn conviction (*firmly held belief*), that the essential interests of the Union demand it." All persons "being insurgents (*rebels*), as aforesaid," were commanded "on or before the first day of September next, to disperse and retire peaceably to their respective abodes (*homes*)."**