

Centinel I, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 5 October 1787

In the use of personal invective, “Centinel” was perhaps unequalled among both Antifederalists and Federalists. He considered the members of the Constitutional Convention to be “*conspirators*” (No. XII). The supporters of the Constitution were described as “crafty and aspiring despots,” “avaricious office—hunters,” and “false detestable *patriots*” (Nos. II, VI, and XVIII). “Centinel’s” personal invective extended even to George Washington and Benjamin Franklin. He declared that Washington had been duped in the Convention and that Franklin was too old to know what he had been doing.

MR. OSWALD, *As the Independent Gazetteer seems free for the discussion of all public matters, I expect you will give the following a place in your next.*

TO THE FREEMEN OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Friends, Countrymen and Fellow Citizens, Permit one of yourselves to put you in mind of certain *liberties* and *privileges* secured to you by the constitution of this commonwealth, and to beg your serious attention to his uninterested opinion upon the plan of federal government submitted to your consideration, before you surrender these great and valuable privileges up forever. . . .

The late Convention have submitted to your consideration a plan of a new federal government—The subject is highly interesting to your future welfare—Whether it be calculated to promote the great ends of civil society, *viz.* the happiness and prosperity of the community; it behoves you well to consider, uninfluenced by the authority of names. Instead of that frenzy of enthusiasm, that has actuated the citizens of Philadelphia, in their approbation of the proposed plan before it was possible that it could be the result of a rational investigation into its principles; it ought to be dispassionately and deliberately examined, and its own intrinsic merit the only criterion of your patronage. . . .

These characters flatter themselves that they have lulled all distrust and jealousy of their new plan, by gaining the concurrence of the two men in whom America has the highest confidence, and now triumphantly exult in the completion of their long meditated schemes of power and aggrandisement. I would be very far from insinuating that the two illustrious personages alluded to, have not the welfare of their country at heart; but that the unsuspecting goodness and zeal of the one, has been imposed on, in a subject of which he must be necessarily inexperienced, from his other arduous engagements; and that the weakness and indecision attendant on old age, has been practised on in the other.

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