

A Patriotic Citizen, *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 10 May 1788

To the well-meaning few who are opposed to the new plan of federal government.

...Finding this constitution proof against all attacks, by argument, they have cautiously avoided reasoning on the subject; but have asserted, in plain English, that the framers of it, and those who have ratified it, are all villainous conspirators, and consequently that this plan of governments is calculated to enslave the people of America, to make them hewers of wood and drawers of water, and to force them to make bricks without straw. What an insult to the freemen of America! "They chose delegates to the federal convention who are traitors and conspirators against their liberties!—They are abettors of the treason in approving of the conspirators conduct!" The degrading insult has been felt, and has rendered the incendiaries infamous in the eyes of many, who were at first wavering, but are now decidedly federal. Shortly after the promulgation of the constitution, one of the anti-federal champions, in this city, poured forth a whole torrent of abuse against the federal convention, and particularly pointed his calumny at their illustrious president: the citizens of Philadelphia, to their immortal honor be it told, were fired with a manly resentment, and burned with indignation against the slanderers of their beloved Washington. One prudent step was taken by the incendiary party—They perceived that they had trespassed too far on the patience of the people, who had not yet forgot the tribute of gratitude due to their worthy chief; for this reason, in their German translations, which they circulated through the back counties of this state, they took care to leave out their infamous slander of this truly great and good man...

... So glaringly absurd has their slander been, that it has operated in a manner directly contrary to what they intended, and has prevented due faith being given even to their probable assertions, agreeably to the old adage—*A liar, tho' he speak truth, is not believed*. This may be the cause why no person has thought worth while to refute such charges. But it may not be amiss to examine, what foundation the incendiaries had for applying the appellation of conspirators to the members of the federal convention.

Much might here be said of the patriotisms, integrity, abilities, and past services, of almost all the gentlemen who were honored, by their respective states, with seats in that august assembly; but as gratitude for past services is rather unfashionable, and the "authority of great names" is no authority, let us consider them independent of their patriotic bravery in asserting the rights of mankind, of freedom, and their country.

Let us remember that they are citizens, possessed of a considerable share of property in the United States, their security for the peaceable enjoyment of which, must rest upon the just administration of an equitable and well established form of government. Such men are seldom Catalines in any country: conspiracies are usually formed and executed by desperate and abandoned wretches, who have neither fortune nor reputation to lose, but may perchance gain something, by such an event.—Let us consider them as men, who have, in common with their fellow-citizens, their respective connections in society, their circles of friends, and a rising offspring, all of whom must

inevitably participate in the miseries of their country; and say, what motives could induce such men to conspire against the liberty and happiness of all who are near and dear to them, and to consign them to endless misery.—Let us consider them as fellow-citizens, not one of whom may, perhaps, ever be elected to a seat either in the federal senate, or in the house of representatives, and, if he should, that he may be speedily removed, be forced to share in the general calamity, and obliged to wear those galling chains he had forged for others. Common sense, self-interest and self-preservation, independent of every other motive, must certainly have prevented such men from meditating the overthrow of American freedom, when they well knew that, like Sampson, they must be crushed by the fall and perish in the runins...

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