

**Compo: To the Head of the Wrongheads of New Haven County,
Connecticut Courant, 26 November 1787 (excerpts)**

...Had you argued against the new Constitution, I should have considered it, I should have left you to your own conscience; but the base attempts to slander John Adams, by misquoting and misrepresenting him, have made it necessary to detect you. You say, or rather insinuate, that he says the “wellborn ought to govern, and that the new Constitution is founded on his principles.” You would persuade the good people of this state that Mr. Adams has written a book which is calculated to enslave them and that the Convention have pursued his plan; with how much justice will appear by quoting the passage you have so basely misrepresented: “The rich, the wellborn, and the able acquire an influence among the people that will soon be too much for simple honesty and plain sense in a house of representatives. The most illustrious of them must therefore be separated from the mass and placed by themselves in a senate. This is to all honest and useful intents an ostracism.” Is it possible you could have read Mr. Adams—if you have, what a wicked unmanly perversion? If not, and you have taken it on trust from Mr. Copper [Joseph Hopkins], how mean and pitiful is your conduct? I defy you, sir, to produce one single sentiment in Mr. Adams’s volume of almost 400 pages that will bear such a construction as you have put on it; on the contrary, every part of it is calculated directly against such government as you are pleased to insinuate he is aiming to establish. And I earnestly recommend it to my countrymen to read Mr. Adams’s book; they will there find a true and correct history of all the republics, ancient and modern. They will there find that the causes of the fall of nations and the loss of their liberties has arisen from sources very different from what they have been told by you and your friend Copper. Your language and practice ever since your beginning to dabble in politics, and you began early, has been exactly such as was usual for the demagogues in the republics that have been destroyed; they excited jealousies against their rulers and by degrees robbed the government of all its energy—all its dignity—and fitted the people for the chains of a despot.

To add one more proof of your wicked insinuations against Mr. Adams, I shall quote a few lines more from his book. After describing the government of the aristocratical Canton of Soleure, he says, “The soil is extremely fertile, yet there is a want of hands for agriculture, and population decreases; although commodiously situated for commerce, they have none. These circumstances are enough to show the blessings of a government by a few noble families.”

There is hardly one of Mr. Adams’s letters in which you do not find him pointedly against a government in the hands of the wellborn, as you are pleased to insinuate. What can be more clear and explicit than the above quotation? You appear to me to be one of those people which Mr. Adams describes, to wit, rich, wellborn, or able. I will not accuse you of being rich, though it is no secret that you have been well paid as one of the Council of Safety, deputy, committee for settling the army accounts, etc., etc., and that you know how to obtain and realize your pay, though many others had not that knowledge. Neither will I overrate your abilities—they are certainly not of the first rate,

except in the article of obtaining places and pensions. Your promotion must then have arisen from your being wellborn, and this you certainly were in Mr. Adams's sense, which will be better understood by quoting a few more lines from his letters...

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