

A Son of Liberty , *New York Journal*, 8 November 1787

Mr. Greenleaf, Having observed in your paper of the 25th ult. that a writer under the signature of *A Slave*, has pointed out a number of advantages or blessings, which, he says, will result from an adoption of the new government, proposed by the Convention:—I have taken the liberty to request, that you will give the following a place in your next paper, it being an enumeration of a *few* of the *curses* which will be entailed on the people of America, by this preposterous and newfangled system, if they are ever so infatuated as to receive it.

1st. A *standing army*, that bane to freedom, and support of tyrants, and their pampered minions; by which almost all the nations of Europe and Asia, have been enslaved.

2d. An arbitrary capitation or poll tax, by which the poor, in general, will pay more than the rich, as they have, commonly, more children, than their wealthy dissipated neighbours.

3d. A suppression of trial by a jury of your peers, in all civil cases, and even in criminal cases, the loss of the trial in the vicinage, where the fact and the credibility of your witnesses are known, and where you can command their attendance without insupportable expence, or inconveniences.

4th. Men of all ranks and conditions, subject to have their houses searched by officers, acting under the sanction of *general warrants*, their private papers seized, and themselves dragged to prison, under various pretences, whenever the fear of their lordly masters shall suggest, that they are plotting mischief against their arbitrary conduct.

5th. Excise laws established, by which our bed chambers will be subjected to be searched by brutal tools of power, under pretence, that they contain contraband or smuggled merchandize, and the most delicate part of our families, liable to every species of rude or indecent treatment, without the least prospect, or shadow of redress, from those by whom they are commissioned.

6th. The Liberty of the Press (that grand palladium of our liberties) totally suppressed, with a view to prevent a communication of sentiment throughout the states. This restraint is designedly intended to give our new masters an opportunity to rivet our fetters the more effectually.(a)

7th. A swarm of greedy officers appointed, such as are not known at present in the United States, who will riot and fatten on the spoils of the people, and eat up their substance.

8th. The militia of New-Hampshire, or Massachusetts, dragged to Georgia or South-Carolina, to assist in quelling an insurrection of Negroes in those states; and those of Georgia, to another distant quarter, to subdue their fellow citizens, who dare to rise against the despotism of government.

9th. The citizens of the state of New-Hampshire or Georgia, obliged to attend a trial (on an appeal) at the seat of government, which will, probably, be at the distance of at least five hundred miles from the residence of one of the parties, by which means, the

expenditure of suits will become so enormous as to render justice unattainable but by the rich.

10th. The states perpetually involved in the wars of Europe, to gratify the *ambitious* views of their *ambitious* rulers, by which the country will be continually drained of its men and money.

11th. The citizens constantly subjected to the insults of *military* collectors, who will, by the magnetism of that most powerful of all attractives, the *bayonet* extract from their pockets (without their consent) the exorbitant taxes imposed on them by their haughty lords and masters, for the purpose of keeping them under, and breaking their spirits, to prevent revolt.

12th. Monopolies in trade, granted to the favourites of government, by which the spirit, of adventure will be destroyed, and the citizens subjected to the extortion of those companies who will have an exclusive right, to engross the different branches of commerce.

13th. An odious and detestable *Stamp act*, imposing duties on every instrument of writing, used in the courts of law and equity, by which the avenues to justice will, in a great measure, be barred, as it will enhance the expences on a suit, and deter men from pursuing the means requisite to obtain their right.—Stamp duties also, imposed on every *commercial* instrument of writing—on *literary productions*, and *particularly*, on *news papers*, which of course, will be a great discouragement to *trade*; an obstruction to *useful knowledge* in *arts, sciences agriculture*, and *manufactures*, and a prevention of *political information* throughout the states. Add to the above enumeration, the severest and most intolerable of all curses—that of being enslaved by men of our own creation (as to power) and for whose aggrandizement, many of us have fought and bled. Men who will, perhaps, construe our most innocent remarks and animadversions on their conduct, *treason*, misprision of treason, or high crimes and misdemeanours, which may be punished with unusual severity; we shall then be in a most forlorn and hopeless situation indeed.

(a) *The Abbé Mably, one of the most sensible writers on government says, that the most despotic monarch in any nation whatever, if he had as many troops as the ability of the nation could support, would not long hold the reins of government, if the press was not shackled to prevent political disquisition.*

Orange-County, November 4, 1787.

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