

Social Compact, Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 30 October 1787

I cannot but congratulate you, as well as every real friend to the interest of the United-States, on the great and promising prospects which the new, and I may say, perfect system of government promises to the federal union. I call it perfect, because it is perfectly adapted to our national distress. It is calculated to deliver us from that impotent and ignominious state of political wretchedness to which we are reduced, by restoring to us the rights of a free people, as these rights respect our internal policy, or the claims we have upon foreign nations. We are totally destitute of the rights, which a free commercial and enterprising people ought to claim. View that indigent and begging situation to which our commerce is reduced in every part of the globe.—Where is the port worth visiting, from whence we are not utterly excluded, or loaded with duties and customs sufficient to absorb the whole? Where is the port in the British dominions, which deigns to receive a wandering American? Wandering I say, because full of enterprize and yet unable to find an asylum from the storm of bankruptcy. Have we fought and bled, have we conquered and loaded ourselves with the trophies of this potent king, and yet shall we be by him condemned to beg our bread; while his subjects, in full sail, are entering every port, choosing their own market and carrying away the fat of the land? They are growing rich by our industry, and we poor, because unable to withstand their power. But why this depressed situation, so widely different from the promises of our former conquests? *Is it not because we have been divided*—Though weak when separate and jarring among ourselves, yet I trust we shall when united in this national plan, become a thirteen fold cord not easily to be broken. Did not Lord Sheffield,¹ long since say, that we were not and should not be, for a long time, either to be feared or regarded as a nation, I am sorry to say, that his prediction has proved too true—How have our enemies triumphed at our disappointment! How have they cast the fruits of exploits in our teeth! Have we not been obliged to bear it? Have we not been obliged to crouch under every burthen, and like the stupid ass, submit to the strokes of an insulting driver. But why so? Are those that conquer accustomed to bear the yoke?—Why then are we duped to the pleasure of every power, not half so mighty as we? Is it not because we have been divided in our national capacity? No doubt it is. But now in view of this rising star, we may hail the auspicious day—Welcome happy morn, auspicious to our national happiness and peace. Farewell to clashing interests, to jarring councils and impotence of laws—Farewell to the domineering brow of our conquered foes.—To the insults of sister States and the jealousy of all. Now we may shake hands in peace, and enjoy the rights which the God of nature hath given us. None have cause to fear, but the enemies of the United States, at home or abroad.—None have cause to fear, but those who trample on our rights, because we are incapable of defence.

Observe the caption of the constitution, every sentence is full of meaning, and of such import, that none but the violent and dishonest can oppose. It carries the marks of piety as well as policy. No good man will wish to oppose it, and I hope no wicked man will dare to do it. It is calculated to answer the exigencies of the times, and to unite in

one federal body the interests of all. A mighty empire may be formed upon this basis, which shall make its enemies to tremble. While it gently detracts from the liberties of each, it provides for the security of all. If any imagine that it detracts from an individual State more than from another, let it be remembered, it is but to bestow the benefit upon a sister or a brother, who have an equal claim to the benefit with themselves. Why should members of one and the same family clash, while the interests of the family are the same?

The plainest principles of right and wrong, justify and ensure a most cordial reception of the plan, and I hope none will be so abandoned and lost to every principle of social compact, as to militate against it.—This constitution stands upon its own bottom, and needs no encomiums: it justifies itself upon the surest, plainest, and most approved principles of unerring wisdom.—It ministers no fraud—it threatens no dangers, but promises ample and lasting reward to all its advocates—it holds out the olive branch—it is calculated to hush every hostile intention of designing men, and to secure to every honest man, the blessings and privileges of freedom and the rights of an independent nation.

The characters which devised the new empire of government add weight to its precepts—but in no degree is this system established as it is, by the authority of *Common Sense*.

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