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An Old Soldier

Lansingburgh *Northern Centinel*, 10 September 1787

Messrs. PRINTERS, That every person who has been any way active in opposing British tyranny, and establishing the freedom, independence, and liberty of the rising EMPIRE of AMERICA,—has secret enemies, I believe is not doubted:—That there are scattered throughout the United States, private emissaries of Britain, in order to sow the seeds of division and discontent among the people, is generally acknowledged:—And Britain has not yet learnt to relinquish their favorite idea of subduing and reducing to abject slavery the free born sons of Columbia; they yet hope, by our folly and want of union among ourselves, to have an opportunity of subjugating us to their tyrannical sway.—A proof of this I observed in your Centinel, No. 16. in an “*Impromptu, on reading in a late Centinel of Gov. Clinton’s insurgency and anti-federalism*,” wherein the chief magistrate of this state is charged, by some incendiary, with an intention of treason against the United States; consequently to subvert a government he has uniformly, from the commencement of the late war, endeavoured, by every exertion in his power, to establish.—In the most gloomy hours of our warfare, who more readily drew his sword in our defence?—Who was more unwearied in his endeavours to defeat the vain attempts of our enemies to subdue us. Every one who knows his excellency’s character, and is in any way acquainted with his conduct, must be convinced that he has rendered this country great and essential services, both in his civil and military capacities; and I think it the height of ingratitude to villify a character, which ought to be esteemed, and even revered, for his services.—If he is guilty of the charge exhibited in the Centinel, or any other against the people, let the author step forth, as a freeman, and boldly make them good;—if he is guilty by our laws, let him suffer;—if innocent, and still the faithful servant of the public we have ever found him—for God’s sake let us not traduce a character so valuable to us, but by every means in our power, support him in all measures tending to the general good of our country, and let us ever detest those vile incendiaries, who (under British influence) secretly endeavour to sow the seeds of division, discontent and distrust among us.

Confidence in our rulers will make us a great and happy people; a want of it will be our ruin. Our magistrates are not elected for life—we can change them when they act inconsistent with our welfare; but let us weigh and examine well their conduct before we dismiss them, least we repent our change, on proving those who are untried.

Lansingborough, Sept. 7, 1787.

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