Poughkeepsie *Country Journal*, 11 March 1788 (excerpt)

The Triumphs of Reason,
Being a Dialogue on the New Constitution.

. . . B. [Antifederalist] True, but it is the despots that have brought these calamaties on us. Congress, I can see it plain, have been at the bottom of all this—they are the authors of all this mischief.—They have been for some time artfully preparing the minds of the young and ardent, for a reform in government.—They have seized the favorable moment when our public affairs are embarrassed by the distresses of the late war, and have had address enough to win the public credulity, and to carry the people to the very jaws of slavery.

A. [Federalist] Sir, I am astonished—I hardly know whether to believe you have the possession of your mind—let me advise you once more to be temperate in the discussion. Think what you have said—you condemn a whole body of men in the most unjust and arbitrary manner, without facts to support you or a trial to convict them. It is perfectly romantic to say no worse of it, to believe that all those symptoms of an expiring commonwealth, could have been anticipated and planned by any set of men, and much less by a whole body of our own countrymen, selected from us as the most worthy of confidence; and if planned that their mere schemes could have produced all these extensive effects—national dissolution, Sir, must proceed from disorders in the original frame of government, and not from the ill policy of those who administer it.

B. I may be wrong as to Congress, but no man can have the barefacedness to deny but the Convention was a parcel of as tyrannical usurpers as ever breathed the air of freedom. They have played on the weak side of Gen. Washington (who is no great politician, and they say very much of an aristocrat at heart) and seduced Doctor Franklin (a mere old woman) and with the splendor of these two names, they are palming their deep-laid project on the simplicity and zeal of the people.

A. You pay a very pretty compliment truly, Sir, to the good sense of America, to suppose it so easily duped; a people so simple would be little else than slaves under any government. But, pray Sir, where are your facts from whence you draw this harsh conclusion of the Convention? From their former conduct as citizens and as patriots? Surely not—If ever men are entitled to the confidence of their country, it must be those who on trial have given signal proofs of their integrity; a very great majority at least of that body have given such proofs, and yet you condemn them as you did Congress, on only the most unwarrantable suspicions, the most groundless jealousies: You pretend to advocate the cause of liberty, and yet, like an eastern tyrant, you would destroy the most respectable councils and characters, unheard, untried, and contrary to the most obvious formalities of justice.

B. The Constitution they have reported, is, I confess, all the proof I have, but it is the most convincing that ever was produced. . . .

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