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the Resolution of Congress

An Old Whig VII

Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 28 November 1787 (excerpts)

. . . It is true that the Continental Convention has directed their proposed Constitution to be laid before a convention of delegates to be chosen in each state, “for their assent and ratification,” which seems to preclude the idea of any power in the several conventions, of proposing any alterations, or indeed of even rejecting the plan proposed, if they should disapprove of it. Still, however, the question recurs, what authority the late Convention had to bind the people of the United States, to any particular form of government, or to forbid them to adopt such form of government as they should think fit. . . . Had the Convention any right to bind the people to the form of government they should propose? Let us consider this matter.

The late Convention were chosen by the general assembly of each state; they had the sanction of Congress. For what? To consider what alterations were necessary to be made in the Articles of Confederation. What have they done? They have made a new constitution for the United States. I will not say, that in doing so, they have exceeded their authority; but on the other hand, I trust that no man of understanding amongst them will pretend to say, that anything they did or could do, was of the least avail to lessen the rights of the people to judge for themselves in the last resort. This right is, perhaps, unalienable, but at all events, there is no pretense for saying that this right was ever meant to be surrendered up into the hands of the late Continental Convention. . . .

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