Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 5 May 1788

The opposition to the new constitution in Maryland, says a correspondent, labored under many disadvantages, and the little exertion they made, early evinced that the others had stolen to the windward of them. In the first place, the press was not free till the people were generally prejudiced in favor of this mysterious system, by the artful management of its advocates; and when *Mr. Martin's* information was published, it was only in one newspaper at Baltimore (the extremity of the state); which could be seen by few in the country. (We find it had effect in the town and in the counties adjacent.) In the next place, the *aristocratic* party in that state is considerable, and devoted to the nod of its leaders. And the very idea of *Mr. Martin's* being connected with the *opposition*, was sufficient to prejudice the *tories* (who are another considerable part of the state) in favor of the system; Mr. Martin being very unpopular among that class of citizens owing to the office he holds. Thus the *tories* and *aristocratics* united, together with the wish of *all* to grant farther powers to Congress, the example of the other states in adopting the system, the industry of the advocates of it in circulating sophistical publications, and delusive and electioneering falsehoods among the people, and promising to recommend the necessary amendments with the adoption of it, procured the great majority they had in convention. And here again, they excluded all debate, fearing it would open the eyes of the deluded members; (does not this shew the badness of their cause?) And being thus deluded we find that this body of men as implicit to the direction of their leader ([James] McHenry) as the majority of our packed convention was to *Mr. Wilson*; and does not the conduct of these leaders fully shew the *designs* of the junto on the continent, who are endeavoring to take from us our liberties? Have they not been amusing us with an idea of procuring amendments, and that, like Massachusetts, the states should recommend amendments with the adoption? But has the convention of Maryland (alias McHenry and his sticklers) recommended any amendments? No, they have not! This should teach those who have been annoyed with such fallacious hopes, that such ideas were only held out by the junto for the moment to carry their point; and that, like the Maryland convention, our new Congress once vested with unbounded sway, will never relinquish a single item, will never listen to the calls for amendments or the least security of our rights and privileges, which are intended to be laid at their feet! No, while they have a military force to back their despotic decrees, they may laugh at the people? But it is to be hoped this treachery in Maryland will be a lesson to the *six* remaining states, and teach them to *reject* and *then amend*. Secure your invaluable rights and liberties, and be not swayed by the insidious arts and practices of the designing or the mercenary cries of the deluded: Ye sons of Virginia, of the Carolinas, ye honest sons of New-Hampshire and New-York; the blood of thousands of your virtuous brethren who

fell in the late glorious cause of liberty, cry aloud to you, to preserve and hand down to your posterity those rights and privileges in defence of which they fell martyrs!

A correspondent says, that there is now a fair opportunity of settling the prosperity and happiness of the United States, upon a permanent foundation. The state of Rhode Island is now willing to accede to the five per cent impost, demanded by Congress, and will also give the power of regulating commerce, with whatever shall be thought reasonable for the general interest of the country, provided there is no consolidation of the several states into one national government. If, therefore, the Congress will be content with what was at first demanded, we may be an united and flourishing people; we may pay off, before long, our foreign debt, establish our national credit at home, build a navy, raise and pay troops, whenever they shall be found necessary, for the land service, encourage emigration, promote agriculture, manufactures, arts and sciences, and rival the greatest powers of the globe. Whereas, if a spirit of pride and obstinacy should induce to force down the new constitution upon the people, Rhode Island perhaps will be supported in her opposition to it, by the greater part of the state of Massachusetts, by the people of New-Hampshire, by half of the people of New-York; nor will the people in the back part of the state of Pennsylvania, be very ready to march to dragoon the Rhode Island men into compliance, whom they begin more and more to esteem. It is an eternal truth, which should be indelibly impressed upon our minds, that, "a kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand" [Mark 3:24].

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XVII: Commentaries on the Constitution, Public and Private [5] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 1995), 385–87.