

A Federal Centinel, *South Carolina Weekly Chronicle*, 9 October 1787

To the Printer of the Weekly Chronicle.

Sir, Conceiving it to be my duty as a citizen of these states, to admonish the people in general of certain combinations which are now hatching, against the establishment of the federal constitution; and being impressed with a just abhorrence of such atrocious proceedings, silence would be unpardonable at so perilous a juncture,—for on the adoption of this admirable system of government the national existence of America depends. A swarm of paltry scribblers, possessing posts of high emolument, under the legislatures of individual states,—the confirmed tools and pensioners of foreign courts,—and a certain description of men interested in securing a monopoly of our markets and carrying trade, are uniformly conspiring against the majesty of the people, and are at this moment fabricating the most traitorous productions which human depravity can devise. Presuming that certain clauses of the federal constitution (how salutary soever such clauses may really be, in the security and extension of civil liberty to the person and property of every citizen) will militate against their respective interests and designs, they have formed the diabolical intention of effecting their sinister purposes in scurrilous, colloquial invectives,—in desultory gazette publications,—and in pamphlets deceptively written, to decry the wisdom of that august body, and the plan of government they have so judiciously arranged for the tranquility, happiness and glory of this country.

Many of those latent incendiaries fill honorable departments, to which they are conscious the impartiality and superior discernment of the federal head will deem them unequal; they are therefore determined to frustrate the best measures which the wisdom of the united councils of America could suggest. The true American,—the sagacious and enlightened federal citizen, will easily see through the selfishness and designs of such productions. He will perhaps, from circumstances of unequivocal designation, discover those very scribblers of interestedness and self exaltation; he will guard his fellow citizens by liberal arguments and writings, against the pestilent tendency of those publications; and he will (instead of consigning them to the hands of a hangman) nail them up to the more opprobrious gibbet of popular execration, odium and infamy.

Cite as: The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-03-13-02-0147> [accessed 11 Jun 2012]

Original source: Commentaries on the Constitution, Volume XIII: Commentaries on the Constitution, No. 1