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## A Countryman I (Hugh Hughes)

*New York Journal*, 21 November 1787 (excerpts)

. . . In the first Place then, most unfeignedly do I wish, and that for the Sake of Humanity, that the Convention never had existed; and, for the Sake of our old illustrious Commander in chief [George Washington], I wish, as they have departed from their Institution, that they had offered a Constitution more worthy of so great a Character. But, as he has acted entirely in a Ministerial Capacity, so I wish to consider him, whenever I am obliged to mention his venerable Name, or allude to it. Not that I think any Name, however great, can justify Injustice, or make Slavery more eligible than Freedom, and beg to be so understood.

Yet, when I consider the original Confederation, and Constitutions of the States which compose the Union, as well as the Resolutions of several of the States, for calling a Convention to *amend* the Confederation, which it admits, but not *a new one*, I am greatly at a Loss to account for the surprizing Conduct of so many wise Men, as must have composed that honorable Body. In fact, I do not know, at present, whether it can be accounted for; unless it be by supposing a Predetermination of a Majority of the Members to reject their Instructions, and all authority under which they acted.

If this be the Case, the Transition to prostrating every Thing that stood in their Way, though ever so serviceable or sacred to others, was natural and easy.—However, I do not even wish to think so unfavorably of the Majority; but rather, that several of them, were, by different Means, insidiously drawn into the Measures of the more artful and designing Members, who have long envied the great Body of the People, in the United States, the Liberties which they enjoy. . . .

But, as I have often told you, such is the unfortunate Lot of Humanity, that there are a Thousand brilliant Characters, to one that is always consistent, and, of this, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. John Dickinson, are two recent Examples among the Many. . . .

. . . Will not such Conduct leave these Gentlemen Monuments of much departed Fame? As I have several of their Publications by me, which, I imagine you never saw, I purpose in my Next, to let them speak for themselves, if you have no Objection.

I am, Dear Sir, very respectfully, yours, A COUNTRYMAN.

November 10, 1787.

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