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## George Mason to Thomas Jefferson Gunston Hall, Fairfax Co., Va., 26 May 1788 (excerpt)

. . . I make no Doubt that You have long ago received Copys of the new Constitution of Government, framed last Summer, by the Delegates of the several States, in general Convention at Philadelphia.—Upon the most mature Consideration I was capable of, and from Motives of sincere Patriotism, I was under the Necessity of refusing my Signature, as one of the Virginia Delegates; and drew up some general Objections; which I intended to offer, by Way of Protest; but was discouraged from doing so, by the precipitate, & intemperate, not to say indecent Manner, in which the Business was conducted, during the last week of the Convention, after the Patrons of this new plan found they had a decided Majority in their Favour; which was obtained by a Compromise between the Eastern, & the two Southern States, to permit the latter to continue the Importation of Slaves for twenty odd Years; a more favourite Object with them, than the Liberty and Happiness of the People.<sup>1</sup>—

These Objections of mine were first printed very incorrectly, without my Approbation, or Privity; which laid me under some kind of Necessity of publishing them afterwards, myself.—I take the Liberty of enclosing You a Copy of them. You will find them conceived in general Terms; as I wished to confine them to a narrow compass. . . .

1. Under this compromise, Congress could not prohibit the importation of slaves before 1808 and commercial legislation could be adopted by a simple majority of both houses of Congress, not two-thirds as favored by the Southern States. In his objections, Mason attacked both aspects of the compromise.

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