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Federalists and Antifederalists

Louis-Guillaume Otto to Comte de Montmorin New York, 26 November 1787 (excerpt)

. . . The debates. My Lord, for and against the new Constitution continue to absorb public attention and while the individual States are preparing to call conventions in order to adopt or reject this new plan, the two parties abuse each other in the public papers with a rancor which sometimes does not even spare insults and personal invectives. As in these sorts of political commotions, the men and the issues usually disguise themselves so as to become unrecognizable, the partisans of the innovation are called *Federalists* and the others more commonly *Whigs*, although neither of these names has a direct relation to the object in question. This spirit of argument is even pushed to intolerance in regard to foreigners and they absolutely want us to take a side for or against the new Constitution. Some politicians trying to be shrewder than others have even suggested that this Constitution was bad since it was approved by foreign Ministers. According to one side Despotism will be the necessary consequence of the proposed Constitution; according to the others the united States will reach the summit of glory and power with this same Constitution. Indifferent Spectators agree that the new form of Government, well executed will be able to produce good results; but they also think that if the states really had the desire to be united the present Confederation would be adequate for all their needs. . . .

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