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Federalist and Antifederalist: The Origin of the Terms > Opponents of the Constitution  
Resist Being Labeled Antifederalists

Sidney

*New York Journal*, 4 December 1788 (excerpt)

. . . That the advocates for this new constitution have had the advantage in starting, is no new thing. I suppose it ever was, and always will be the case, that those who are for subverting the government (their movements being preconcerted<sup>(b)</sup>) have at first the advantage of those who are for supporting it. They choose their epithets, or ketch-words—the confederation is a rope of sand—trade and credit abroad—the worse the better: of late they have covered themselves under the term federal, while they were undermining and annihilating the confederation. But that these circumstances should be adduced to prove that we are distanced, and not warranted to proceed, and that we ought cheerfully to submit, is so great a perversion of reason, and so entirely unwarranted by the real state of things, that common sense stands aghast at the idea. . . .

(b) “The dark councils of the Cabal, though from the first they gave anxiety to all men of reflection; were not thoroughly known but by the event.” Absalom, under the cloak of serving the Lord, attempted to dethrone his father David.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XXIII: New York [5] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2009), 2480–86.