THE DISSENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA MINORITY

The Dissent of the Minority of the Convention of the State of Pennsylvania to their Constituents, 18 December 1787 (excerpts)

. . . We offered our objections to the convention, and opposed those parts of the plan, which, in our opinion, would be injurious to you, in the best manner we were able; and closed our arguments by offering the following propositions to the convention.

1. The right of conscience shall be held inviolable; and neither the legislative, executive, nor judicial powers of the United States shall have authority to alter, abrogate, or infringe any part of the constitution of the several states, which provide for the preservation of liberty in matters of religion.

2. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, trial by jury shall remain as heretofore, as well in the federal courts, as in those of the several states.

3. That in all capital and criminal prosecutions, a man has a right to demand the cause and nature of his accusation, as well in the federal courts, as in those of the several states; to be heard by himself and his counsel; to be confronted with the accusers and witnesses; to call for evidence in his favor, and a speedy trial by an impartial jury of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent, he cannot be found guilty, nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; and that no man be deprived of his liberty, except by the law of the land or the judgment of his peers.

4. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel nor unusual punishments inflicted.

5. That warrants unsupported by evidence, whereby any officer or messenger may be commanded or required to search suspected places, or to seize any person or persons, his or their property, not particularly described, are grievous and oppressive, and shall not be granted either by the magistrates of the federal government or others.

6. That the people have a right to the freedom of speech, of writing and publishing their sentiments, therefore, the freedom of the press shall not be restrained by any law of the United States.

7. That the people have a right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and their own state, or the United States, or for the purpose of killing game; and no law shall be passed for disarming the people or any of them, unless for crimes committed, or real danger of public injury from individuals; and as standing armies in the time of peace are dangerous to liberty, they ought not to be kept up; and that the military shall be kept under strict subordination to and be governed by the civil powers.

8. The inhabitants of the several states shall have liberty to fowl and hunt in seasonable times, on the lands they hold, and on all other lands in the United States not enclosed, and in like manner to fish in all navigable waters, and others not private property, without being restrained therein by any laws to be passed by the legislature of the United States.

9. That no law shall be passed to restrain the legislatures of the several states from enacting laws for imposing taxes, except imposts and duties on goods imported or exported, and that no taxes, except imposts and duties upon goods imported and exported, and postage on letters shall be levied by the authority of Congress.

10. That the house of representatives be properly increased in number; that elections shall remain free; that the several states shall have power to regulate the elections for senators and representatives, without being controlled either directly or indirectly by an interference on the part of the Congress; and that elections of representatives be annual.

11. That the power of organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia (the manner of disciplining the militia to be prescribed by Congress) remain with the individual states, and that Congress shall not have authority to call or march any of the militia out of their own state, without the consent of such state, and for such length of time only as such state shall agree.

That the sovereignty, freedom, and independency of the several states shall be retained, and every power, jurisdiction, and right which is not by this constitution expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.

12. That the legislative, executive, and judicial powers be kept separate; and to this end that a constitutional council be appointed, to advise and assist the president, who shall be responsible for the advice they give, hereby the senators would be relieved from almost constant attendance; and also that the judges be made completely independent.

13. That no treaty which shall be directly opposed to the existing laws of the United States in Congress assembled shall be valid until such laws shall be repealed, or made conformable to such treaty; neither shall any treaties be valid which are in contradiction to the constitution of the United States, or the constitutions of the several states.

14. That the judiciary power of the United States shall be confined to cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls; to cases of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; to controversies to which the United States shall be a party; to controversies between two or more states—between a state and citizens of different states—between citizens claiming lands under grants of different states; and between a state or the citizens thereof and foreign states, and in criminal cases, to such only as are expressly enumerated in the constitution, and that the United States in Congress assembled shall not have power to enact laws, which shall alter the laws of descents and distribution of the effects of deceased persons, the titles of lands or goods, or the regulation of contracts in the individual states.

John Armstrong, Sr. to Benjamin Franklin, Carlisle, 25 December (excerpt)

You must be so tired of various and perverse speculation on the new Constitution that I must not add to the common trespass but as little as possible. I confess I am far from pretending to know what is the best system of government, and ready to question whether any man knows it, otherwise than by a general knowledge of human nature and the particular circumstances of the people for whom it is framed. The people of best discernment this way instead of caviling are rather amazed that so many states with their different prejudices have been brought to meet on so good ground. Dr. [Charles] Nesbit, with great strength of reason is clear for adopting it, keeping in view such amendments as experience and a fitter time shall point out. And indeed when we consider our situation at home (on the confines of anarchy) and our need of reputation abroad, it appears to me in the light of moral certainty, that immediate adoption is not only our wisest course, but also the shortest and safest mode to obtain such amendments as may either be found to be really salutary in themselves, or only calculated merely to please. In this view my small support shall not be wanting; more apprehensive as I am of a failure in the duty of the people, than of any early encroachment of a new Congress—nor would the body of the people but by undue influence give any opposition. Stale and careless jealousy, or prejudice and private motives, have thrown too many men into a political phrenzy, which in Pennsylvania we now have to regret. Your last speech in the Federal Convention, being just up, will be in our paper tomorrow. It is come in good time, and I think can scarcely fail of some good effects.

The tenor of the minority's Dissent and particularly a few explicit [sentences?] appears to have a wild and pernicious tendency! We must not pray God to reward them according to their works, but beseech Him to restrain the residue of their wrath, to still the tumults of the people

which they seem to provoke; and forgive their abettors for the Mediator's sake, for they either care not, or know not what they do.

TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE CARLISLE RIOT

An Old Man, Carlisle Gazette, 2 January 1788

As the riot on Wednesday last [26 December], and the burning of the effigies of two of the most distinguished characters in the state, in the public streets of Carlisle, by a mob on Thursday, has already made a considerable noise in the county, an impartial spectator desirous of furnishing the public with a just and true state of facts, to enable them to form a proper judgment of the conduct of the parties concerned. . . .

About five o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, public notice being given by ringing the bell and beating the drum, a number of persons met at the public square, to testify their approbation of the proceedings of the late Convention, in the most decent and orderly manner. A piece of artillery having been brought to the ground, and materials collected for a bonfire; a number of men armed with bludgeons came in regular order from one quarter of the town, while others sallied forth from different streets armed in the same manner. Major James A. Wilson (having been appointed with two other gentlemen, to make the necessary arrangements for the occasion), was preparing to have the gun loaded, when he was ordered by many of the armed party to desist, and many threats thrown out against any person who would attempt to kindle the bonfire; to which the Major replied, that those who were not disposed to rejoice might withdraw; and that he hoped people so pregnant with liberty as they appeared to be would not wish to hinder their neighbors to show marks of joy, when they were pleased. Immediately after a number of barrels and staves were thrown at him, one of which struck him on the breast. He then sprung forward to the persons who threw at him, and struck one of them with a small pine stick, to which a piece of match rope was fixed; he was then beat down by a number of blows from six or seven persons with bludgeons, who continued beating him after he fell. They would have taken his life had not a trusty old soldier thrown himself on the Major and received the blows aimed at him; a general confusion took place. Mr. Robert Miller, Jr. was attacked by a person, who with both hands wielded a massy bludgeon, and while he was engaged with the first, received several blows from one who stood behind him. The persons met for the purpose of the celebration, altogether unprepared for such an assault (being even without walking canes), were forced to return. The armed party having accomplished their premeditated designs of preventing the public rejoicing, proceeded to spike the cannon, and having made a large fire, committed to the flames the cannon and its carriage, together with a sledge on which it had been drawn to the ground. They then sent for an almanac, containing the Federal Constitution, which was formally burned. Loud huzzas were repeated, with damnation to the 46 members, and long live the virtuous 23.

On Thursday at 12 o'clock, I understood that the friends to government intended to carry into execution their resolution of the celebration of the event from which the evening before they had been so violently prevented. I went to the place, found them at the courthouse armed chiefly with muskets and bayonets; they discovered every pacific disposition, but at the same time the most determined resolution to repel, at the risk of their lives any attack which might be made on them. A bonfire was made, and the ratification of the Constitution by this state was read, accompanied by the acclamation of all the people present, repeated volleys of musketry and firing; of cannon.

I cannot help giving my praise to the good order and coolness and determined spirit with which the business was conducted, although the mob made their appearance in several places, armed

with guns and bludgeons, and even came close to where the Federalists were firing the cannon, and used threatening language, which was treated with every possible contempt, and no violence offered to them. The Federalists remained 2 hours on the ground, testified their joy, with every appearance of harmony and good humor, and returned without any disturbance to their homes. Immediately after, a drum beat—the mob gathered—collected barrels, and proceeded to the courthouse with noise and tumult, when there was brought from an adjacent lot two effigies with labels on their breasts, THOMAS M'KEAN, Chief Justice and JAMES WILSON the Caledonian. They formed in order, had the effigies carried in front, preceded only by a noted captain of militia [Joseph Frazier], who declared he was inspired from Heaven, paraded the streets, and with shouts and most dreadful execrations committed them to the flames. It is remarkable that some of the most active people in the riot of Wednesday evening, and the mob of Thursday, have come to this country within these two years—men perfectly unknown, and whose characters were too obscure to attract the notice of the inhabitants of this place, and others who but lately have stripped off the garb of British soldiers. I think it improper to prejudice the public by naming the persons concerned in these atrocious riots, as prosecutions are about to be commenced in the name of the state against them. Every lover of good order must lament the wound the dignity of the state has received in burning in the public street, in one of the largest towns in open day, the effigy of the first magistrate of the commonwealth. Proceedings of this kind are really alarming, directly tend to the dissolution of all governments, and must receive the reprobation of every honest citizen.

I was invited, being an old man, to spend the evening with the Federalists, at Mr. Joseph Postlethwait's tavern, where an elegant supper had been prepared. A number of the respectable inhabitants of Carlisle convened there and spent the evening with the most perfect harmony, good humor, and conviviality. After supper, the following toasts were drank.

1. The Federal Constitution.
2. General Washington, and the Federal Convention.
3. The states who acceded to the Federal Constitution.
4. A speedy accession and ratification of the Constitution by all the states.
5. The patriotic forty-six.
6. The president of the state.
7. The chief justice of Pennsylvania, and member of the late Convention.
8. The Hon. James Wilson, Esquire of Philadelphia.
9. Major James Armstrong Wilson.
10. An increase of the agriculture, manufactures, and commerce of America.
11. May the flag of United States fly triumphant in all the ports of the world.
12. Our friends in Europe.

One of the People, Carlisle Gazette, 9 January 1788

AN OLD MAN, who pretends to be an impartial spectator, has taken upon him to furnish the public with a state of the facts, respecting what he calls "the riot on Wednesday the 26th of December last; as also of the burning the effigies of two of the most distinguished characters in the state." The vein of misrepresentation and falsehood that runs through this production renders its legitimacy very dubious. From its complexion and features it appears to be the brat of some attorney, who durst not father it himself; therefore procured the old sage to act as sponsor. However, as his respectableness has pledged himself for the truth of what is there represented, I shall consider him as the parent, and treat him accordingly. After having pledged himself for the truth of what he represents, he says, "About 5 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon, public notice being

given by ringing the bell, etc." But I would ask his gravity, if a town meeting was called to consult the people, whether they approved of the measure or not? Without this precaution, their public notice was to no purpose. It is unknown to the borough charter, and therefore the intended rejoicers were an unhallowed riotous mob. This impartial spectator has neglected to take notice of a subscription paper that was handed about the same day, binding the subscribers to illuminate their windows, with a menace, that such windows as would not be illuminated should be broken. This was one great cause which induced the people to oppose the rejoicing; and an order of time ought to have been narrated before the ringing of the bell, etc. if the spectator had acted an impartial part; but perhaps the old man was not trusted with the secret; for tho a very good spy, he may be a bad secretary. A man cannot be expected to possess talents suitable to every sphere of life. It is necessary to observe as we go along, that when it was remonstrated to the intended rejoicers, by a number of respectable inhabitants in the most peaceable manner, that their conduct was contrary to the minds of three-fourths of the inhabitants, and must therefore produce bad consequences if they persisted; their reply was, "They would fire the cannon in spite of any who would oppose them; and if they would not clear the way, they would blow them up in the air." Such imperious language was too grating for the ears of freemen, and produced a short conflict which ended in the total rout of the new Federalists. The old sage further says, "that three gentlemen were appointed to make the necessary arrangements"; in this business they employed a certain John Rinn, and promised him five shillings for his service, but ran away without paying him; to revenge which he collected such of the rabble as the intended rejoicers had gathered together to assist them in hauling the cannon from Mr. Forster's tavern to the courthouse (but deserted them when they were defeated), and with their assistance burnt the sledge and cannon carriage, contrary to the express prohibition of such of the inhabitants who opposed the rejoicing as were then present. This old man says, "The persons met for the purpose of the celebration were altogether unprepared for such an assault, being even without walking canes." True, but they had much more formidable weapons, viz., muskets and fixed bayonets and bludgeons, so that all the preparation they wanted was spirit and courage (Major James A. Wilson excepted) for they had weapons, and numbers more than sufficient. He says again, "that loud huzzas were repeated, with damnation to the 46 members, etc." Here his gravity has pledged himself for a palpable falsehood; for no such words were used as "damnation to the 46 members."

He again adds, "that the friends of government intended on Thursday at 12 o'clock to carry into execution their resolution of rejoicing." Why the old man cannot be serious! What spirit possessed him, when he called them friends to government? Pray what government do they befriend? They are determined enemies to the government of Pennsylvania, to the Confederation of the United States, and to every government that ever existed in the world (a despotism excepted). The government which they are so enthusiastically fond of is as yet an ideal phantom, a chimera, a mere theory detested and execrated by every true friend to government. He again tells us, "he went to the courthouse, found them armed, chiefly with guns and bayonets, that they discovered every pacific disposition, but at the same time, the most determined resolution to repel at the risk of their lives, any attack which might be made on them." What a palpable contradiction is this, "they were armed with guns and bayonets" (he ought to have added, they were loaded with powder and musket ball, as has been proven on oath) "determined to repel all who should oppose them at the risk of their lives, and at the same time to discover every pacific disposition." I appeal to common sense, if they could possibly have discovered a more hostile disposition; however their disposition appeared more pacific upon hearing the militia drum beat. They immediately left the ground, after firing three discharges of cannon; whereas their original declaration was, that if the devil should come from hell to oppose them, they would fire thirteen. Our old man again says, "although the mob made their appearance in several places and used threatening language which was treated with every possible contempt, and no violence offered to them." Was it not violence to draw a sword, and present a

loaded gun and fixed bayonet at an unarmed man, for no other reason, than treating them with a little irony, which it was difficult for any person of a moderate share of vivacity to forbear on this occasion; for the whole transaction had every appearance of a funeral ceremony awkwardly performed, but not the least resemblance of rejoicing. He further tells us, "there are prosecutions about to be commenced in the name of the state, against the persons whom he is pleased to call rioters." Tis very well to be prepared, but would advise, that the prosecutions be deferred, until the new Federal Constitution is adopted, where they may have a trial at a federal court, without the detestable interference of a jury. He says again, "that every lover of good order must lament the wound, the dignity of the state has received, in burning etc. the effigy of the first magistrate of the commonwealth." This is the first time I heard of this transaction, I presume it owes its origin to the inventive genius of the old man; for my part I took His Excellency Doctor Franklin to be the first magistrate of the commonwealth; and I never so much as heard a reproachful word spoke of him. But perhaps he meant the Chief Justice, to whom no indignity was offered in his judicial character, but his conduct in the late Convention has given the State a much greater wound, and justly merits the resentment of the People. The old man observes, "it is remarkable that some of the most active people in the riot of Wednesday and the mob of Thursday have come to this country, within these two years, men perfectly unknown and whose characters were too obscure to attract the notice of the inhabitants of this place." Some of these characters, however, are so obvious as to be noticed with an envious eye, even by the old man himself, and several others of his party, but does the old man think newcomers are to be deprived of their rights as men? But in this his spirit is exactly similar to that of their darling Constitution, which has laid newcomers under many legal disabilities and given all the discourgement that it durst safely do, by empowering Congress to lay a tax of ten dollars on each immigrant.

The old man talks of some who opposed the rejoicing, that had but lately stripped off the garb of British soldiers; here he is mistaken again, but I suppose he means the wheelbarrow garb which Rinn, their artillery man, had so lately been stripped of. He again exclaims, "proceedings of this kind are really alarming, and directly tend to the dissolution of all government." Now of all others, the new Federalists ought to be silent about the dissolution of governments, for they professedly avow the dissolution of all governments, and is endeavoring to establish an unheard of monster on their ruins. He tells us further "that being an old man, he was invited to spend the evening with the Federalists (or rather incendiaries) at Mr. Joseph Postlethwait's tavern."

What! has our impartial spectator degenerated into a palpable partisan, by his own confession at the banquet of wine? However he might have saved himself the trouble of the declaration, as any person who reads his narrative would have easily discerned his cloven foot without the help of spectacles; but it seems he was invited, indeed, it would have been the basest ingratitude of the new Federalists, if they had not invited their faithful spy, who had watched the motions of their opposers with such unwearied assiduity, that day and the preceding evening. I would recommend thus much to the old gentleman (if it is not profanity to call him so) should his vanity prompt him to father another bastard of this kind, to beware of inserting such palpable falsehoods, for mankind has not as yet refined so much upon good breeding as to pass them by unnoticed, out of deference to his antiquated genius. I shall therefore dismiss his gravity, with an old proverb, "old people are twice children."

CAMPAIGN FOR PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATIVE REJECTION OF RATIFICATION

Petition Against Confirmation of the Ratification of the Constitution, 2 January 1788

To the Honorable the Representatives of the Freemen of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly Met.

The petition of the subscribers, freemen and inhabitants of the county of _____, most respectfully showeth, That your petitioners are desirous that order and good government should prevail, and that the constitution of this state should not be violated or subverted.

That as the members of your honorable body are all sworn or affirmed to do no act or thing prejudicial or injurious to the constitution or government of this state as established by the convention [of 1776], they look up to you as the guardians of the rights and liberties therein secured to your petitioners, and pray that they may be protected therein.

That your petitioners are much alarmed at an instrument called a Constitution for the United States of America; framed by a Convention which had been appointed by several of the states, "solely to revise the Articles of the Confederation, and report such alterations and provisions therein as should when agreed to in Congress, And confirmed by the several states, render the Federal Constitution Adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the Union" inasmuch as the liberties, lives and property of your petitioners are not secured thereby.

That the powers therein proposed to be granted to the government of the United States are too great, and that the proposed distribution of those powers are dangerous and inimical to liberty and equality amongst the people.

That they esteem frequent elections and rotation in offices as the greatest bulwark of freedom.

That they conceive standing armies in times of peace are not only expensive but dangerous to liberty, and that a well-organized militia will be the proper security for our defense.

That the liberty of the press, that palladium of freedom, should not be insecure or in danger.

That the rights of conscience should be secured to all men, that no man should be molested for his religion, and that none should be compelled contrary to their principles and inclination to hear or support the clergy of any one religion.

That the right of trial by jury should be secured both in civil and criminal cases.

That the government as proposed would be burthensome, expensive, and oppressive, and that your petitioners are averse from paying taxes to support a numerous train of offices erected thereby, which would be not only unnecessary but dangerous to our liberties.

That your petitioners conceive the majority of the deputies of the General Convention, who have been appointed by this state, have exceeded the powers with which they were delegated, that their conduct is reprehensible, and that they should be brought to account for the same as the precedent is highly dangerous and subversive of all government.

That your petitioners observe this proposed Constitution hath not been approved by the Congress of the United States as directed by the Articles of the Confederation; and your petitioners desire that it may not be confirmed by the legislature of this state, nor adopted in the said United States, and that the delegates of Congress from this state be instructed for that purpose.

Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal,* 19 March 1788 (excerpt)

Every hour the new Constitution loses ground in this part of the state. I find too, from the information of travelers from the counties adjacent to the Delaware, that the most of the inhabitants of those counties are with us in sentiment; and that the advocates of this system are confined chiefly within the city, the majority of whom are under the influence and direction of the Bank [of North America]. I wish you may write me soon on the subject.

In the counties this side the Susquehanna, we are pretty well in unison, determined to oppose the chains forged for us by the Wellborn. I shall endeavor to give you some idea of the situation of the proposed Constitution in the counties this side of the river. . . .

A [Fayette] county meeting was called, and a numerous concourse of the inhabitants having assembled at the courthouse, the matter was discussed, and the thanks of the county unanimously tendered to their delegates; and after much search and inquiry, it was found that there were two men in the county who advocated the system. . . .

I am told that the 33 friends of the Wellborn in the county of Westmoreland consist of shopkeepers, packhorsemen, half-pay officers, Cincinnati, attorneys-at-law, public defaulters, and Jews. . . . Scarce a farmer is to be found in this country in favor of this system of military power. . . .

Valerius, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 4 April 1788

I observed in some late newspapers remarks upon the smallness of the number of the petitions against the new Constitution. It is well-known this measure was started by an individual in Franklin County, who took this step notwithstanding he was desired to desist by the party who oppose the new Constitution; and with his sole exertions in the counties of Franklin and Cumberland procured the signatures of above four thousand of the freemen of those two counties; and, if we may be allowed to judge from the tenor of the petitions of the temper of the people, they exhibit a strong picture; for they not only petition and remonstrate against the Constitution, but desire that the deputies from this state to the Federal Convention be called to account. Some few of the same petitions had, indeed, come in from other counties; but those were obtained by straggling copies of those from Franklin, and had begun so late that the Assembly adjourned before they could make any head. All the counties beyond the mountains, it is well-known, are unanimously against the Constitution, and not a single petition came from there; no, it was against the advice of the party in opposition. For it is well-known if they had adopted this measure universally in the state, they could have procured the names of above forty thousand of the inhabitants to petitions against the Constitution, but other measures much more solid are on the carpet, and which, I make no doubt, will procure the desired amendments, and so restore peace and concord to this distracted land.

THE HARRISBURG PENNSYLVANIA CONVENTION, 1788

Cumberland County Circular Letter, 3 July 1788

East Pennsborough, Cumberland Co. 3d: July 1788

Sir[,] That ten States have already, unexpectedly, without amending ratifyed the Constitution proposed for the government of these united States, cannot have escaped the notice of the friends of Liberty.—That the way is prepared for the full organization of the government, with all its foreseen and consequent dangers, is too evident, and unless prudent Steps be taken to combine the friends to amendments, in some place in which they may confidently draw together and exert their

power in unison, the liberty of the american Citizens must lie at the Discretion of Congress, and most probably, posterity, become Slaves to the Officers of Government.—

The means adopted and proposed by a Meeting of Delegates from the Townships of this County for preventing the alledged Evils and also the calamities of a civil War, are, as may be observed in perusing the proceedings of the said meeting herewith transmitted to request such persons as shall be judged fit within the Counties respectively, to use their influence to obtain a meeting of delegates from each Township to take into consideration, the necessity of amending the Constitution of these united States, and for that purpose to nominate and appoint a number of Delegates to represent the County, in a general conference of the Counties of this commonwealth, to be held at Harrisburg on the third day of September next, then and there, to devise such amendments, and such mode of obtaining them, as in the wisdom of the Delegates shall be judged most satisfactory and expedient.—

A Law will no doubt be soon enacted by the General Assembly for electing eight Members to represent this State in the New Congress. It will therefore be expedient to have proper persons put in nomination by the Delegates in conference, being the most likely method of directing the views of the Electors to the same Object and of obtaining the desired End.—

The Society of which you are chairman is requested to call a meeting agreeably to the foregoing design, and lay before the Delegates the proceeding of this County, to the intent that the State may unite in casting off the Yoke of Slavery and once more establish Union and Liberty—

by order of the meeting

I am, with real Esteem Sir
Your most obedt. Servt—

Benjamin Blyth Chairman

Thomas McKean to Robert Magaw, Philadelphia, 28 August 1788 (excerpt)

It is reported here, that there is to be a convention at Louisburg [i.e., Harrisburg] on the 3d. of next month relating to the new Constitution. The motives for this I have not learnt. I have some apprehensions, that such meetings may prove injurious to good order, and therefore wish that they may not be drawn into practice, nor ever had but upon great and necessary occasions. Persons thus assembled are too apt to work themselves up to an opinion that they are a public legal body, instead of so many individuals collected together; and sometimes assume and exercise actual authority, which must always have a tendency to weaken if not disturb the regular government. May their zeal be tempered with prudence.

Pennsylvania Gazette, 3 September 1788

A Correspondent has furnished us with the following curious paragraph, extracted from a letter which was forwarded to three gentlemen in a respectable township, by a very active promoter of *The Antifederal Conclave* intended to meet this day (3d September) at Harrisburg—

"If you should *apprehend* the people *will not* call a town meeting for the purpose, that you will, *as we intend here,* write or call on *a few* of the most *respectable* people of your township to attend at this *general* meeting, as they *intend* to do at Philadelphia, *if they cannot accomplish their purpose* the other way."—

Thus we see that these kind gentlemen, knowing *the people at large* are opposed to their scheme, intend that "*a few* respectable" *well-born* people shall carry it on for them.—Our Correspondent observes further, that it appears this "*general* meeting" is to be made up of "*a few*" particular persons. The circular letter, which was enclosed in the above-mentioned, plainly talks of "*a civil war*," and proposes that the eight federal representatives for Pennsylvania shall be put in nomination by *the Conclave* of "*the respectable few*" at Harrisburg.—These obliging Volunteers, we presume, mean to save all the trouble of *free elections* in future;—for it seems, if the people do not come into their scheme, they intend to accomplish their purpose in another way.

***Pennsylvania Gazette*, 10 September 1788**

By a gentleman, who passed through Harrisburg a few days ago, we learn that the anti-fœderal conference had met, and appointed Blair M'Clenachan chairman of their meeting, and George Bryan and Charles Pettit, with some others, a committee to bring in a string of amendments to the new constitution—that they were much disappointed in meeting no deputies from several of the most respectable counties in the state—and that of the deputies who were there, many of them were so hampered with moderate instructions, that they could do nothing with them—that the whole squad of Malecontents was dull and dissatisfied, as there appeared to be no chance of kindling a civil war in the United States—and that the opinion of all the considerate men in the neighbourhood of Harrisburg was, that the persons met would be much better employed in mending *themselves*, than in trying to mend a government which was framed by the wisest and best men in America.

A Word to the Wise, *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 13 September 1788

To the Electors *of* Pennsylvania.

The enemies of the new constitution having failed in their attempts to prevent its establishment, are now busily employed in endeavoring to *overset* it in a constitutional way.—For this purpose they have held an electionering conference at Harrisburgh, the design of which is to fill all the elective posts of the state and federal government with anti-federal characters. It becomes the friends of the constitution to *keep a good look-out*, and thereby prevent any such persons from seizing the helm of our fœderal barque, in order to run her ashore within sight of the port of liberty and safety.—The times are difficult and critical. Let the wisest and best men, therefore, be fixed upon to compose our representatives in Congress, and in the assembly. It is not enough that they should be men of integrity and fair characters. They should be men of abilities, and perfectly acquainted with the principles of government. They should understand, in a particular manner, the *place* and *use* of every peg in the Fœderal Constitution. Such men will never be imposed upon or surprised by *side motions* or resolves in favor of amendments, which, in the present state of this country, cannot fail of involving us in ruin.