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Fabius

Albany Journal, 18 February 1788 (excerpts)

To the PRINTERS of the ALBANY JOURNAL.

From this self evident truth, I am led into a consideration of the proceedings of the antifederal party in this city. . . . This junto, I am informed, originated from a few persons, who are as well known for their loose principles in private life, and low bred arts, as they are for their erroneous ideas of order and good government.—Despicable for their attachment to self-interest, self-consequence, and an unbounded popular influence—with every principle of dissimulation and treachery, they are fitter to become the leaders of a gang of Shayites, than members of a peaceable administration—with consciences as black as hell, I am informed, they have beat up for volunteers to join in their foul-hardy undertaking; and, that in consequence thereof, not less than an hundred of them have secretly convened for the purpose of devising ways and means of preventing an adoption of the proposed federal government. . . .

It is well known, sirs, they have never attended to the principles of the new Constitution, insomuch, that they have on many occasions prohibited the reading of it, so as to be able the better to inculcate their own falshoods—that they have not deliberated upon its expediency, or in any degree attended to the reasons that have been, or might be alledged in its defence, is also very certain—on the contrary, they conceived it would give energy to government, and therefore destroy popular influence, and promote men of merit. To oppose the reasons given in its defence, they have propagated the most paltry lies and misrepresentations, that ever were circulated amongst a people. In fact, there never was a question of such national importance, on which were parties, where the one side has been so miserably defended, and where its advocates have been driven to such poor, cowardly, equivocating schemes.

Divested of reason, justice, patriotism, and public spirit, and driven from every laudable retreat; they now find it expedient, as their dernier resort, to coop themselves up in the retired part of an obscure tavern—there unknown and unheard of, to project their malevolent plans.

That licentiousness and enthusiasm are their ruling principles, cannot be doubted—by their false alarms of offended justice and endangered liberty, they assume the right of corrupting each other, and like fanatics in religion, working themselves up into an enthusiastic zeal—giving full scope to wild imagination, and to turbulent and discontented passions—who can doubt but such must inevitably produce the most desperate, and at the same time, the most wicked and imprudent of plans. So that what they cannot prevent by fair means, they are determined by force to resist. The objects of their standing committee, under the direction of a GUY FAUX, are, I

presume, as numerous, as they are illegal and unwise—to appear formidable to their neighbors, may be one motive; and when they cannot coolly persuade, to threaten and terrify is their manifest intention. . . .

Wicked machinations ever require privacy and caution; and thus far they are really consistent, for it is easier to baffle ignorance, in the retreats of iniquity, than by open and public attempts, where reason cannot fail of success, and virtue rise triumphant over every obstacle.

I therefore conclude, that the Private deliberations of those desperadoes, on the public affairs, are as illegal, as they are injurious, and wholly incompatible with the interests of the state—that they do but alienate the affections of the citizens from their country, and good government—that they create a contempt of every legal restraint or wholesome regulation, and turn good citizens into dangerous enemies.

But, sirs, let them, in time, consider, that though they are indefatigable in their exertions, and have framed leagues with the bad spirits in other counties, that they are but a handful of men; an inconsiderable few, and that few, remarkable for neither spirit or abilities—and, should they attempt an outrage, they may be swallowed up in a moment—there are not wanting a large majority of the people, who, when need requires, will exert themselves in their country's cause, and punish them for their baseness and temerity.

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