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Philadelphiensis IX

Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 6 February 1788

(excerpts)

My Fellow-Citizens, Before martial law is declared to be the supreme law of the land, and your character of free citizens be changed to that of the subjects of a military king, which are necessary consequences of the adoption of the proposed constitution, let me admonish you in the name of sacred liberty, to make a solemn pause. . . .

The writers against the proposed constitution are denominated, by the aristocrats, incendiaries, and enemies to America, men whose writings tend to involve this devoted country in anarchy, and in all the horrors of a civil war. Now, in reply to this charge; let me ask the friends of this government, Is that man an incendiary who advocates the unalienable rights of the people? Is he an enemy to America who endeavors to protect the oppressed from the oppressor; who opposes a conspiracy against the liberties of his country, concerted by a few tyrants, whose views are to lord it over the rest of their fellow citizens, to trample the poorer part of the people under their feet, that they may be rendered their servants and slaves? If such a writer is an incendiary, and an enemy to America, then I glory in the character. A conspiracy against the freedom of America, both deep and dangerous, has been formed by an infernal junto of demagogues. Our thirteen free commonwealths are to be consolidated into one despotic monarchy. Is not this a position obvious? . . .

To such lengths have these bold conspirators carried their scheme of despotism, that your most sacred rights and privileges are surrendered at discretion. When government thinks proper, under the pretence of writing a libel, &c. it may imprison, inflict the most cruel and unusual punishment, seize property, carry on prosecutions, &c. and the unfortunate citizen has no magna charta, no bill of rights, to protect him; nay, the prosecution may be carried on in such a manner that even a jury will not be allowed him. Where is that base slave who would not appeal to the ultima ratio, before he submits to this government?

If the despots persist in pushing it on, let them answer the consequences; they may fall a sacrifice to their own obstinacy; for liberty will triumph over every obstacle, even were a standing army opposed to it. . . .

The conspirators saw clearly, that such a system of government could never be established over freemen, except they were taken by surprize; and hence they hurried matters forward with that view; in short, the people were made to believe, that they were all dead men, if they did not adopt it immediately. Even still they are endeavoring to hold up the idea of anarchy

being the consequence of rejection: But he must have very weak intellects indeed, and little acquainted with the spirit of freemen, to whom it is not obvious that adoption will produce anarchy and ruin.

Ye patriots! ye lovers of peace, of liberty, and of your fellow men! Ye are called upon at this solemn juncture, to stand forth and save your country; before the breach is too wide, and while the parties may still be reconciled to each other; before anarchy stalks through the land; and before the sword of civil discord is unsheathed. For the sake of every thing that is great and good, and as you shall answer for it at the great tribunal, use your influence to procure another general convention with all possible speed, as the only way left to preserve the union of America, and to save your fellow citizens from misery and destruction.

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