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## Centinel IV, *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 30 November 1787 (excerpts)

To the People of PENNSYLVANIA.

It is to be lamented that the interested and designing have availed themselves so successfully of the present crisis, and under the specious pretence of having discovered a panacea for all the ills of the people, they are about establishing a system of government, that will prove more destructive to them, than the wooden horse filled with soldiers did in ancient times to the city of Troy; this horse was introduced by their hostile enemy the Grecians, by a prostitution of the sacred rights of their religion; in like manner, my fellow citizens are aspiring despots among yourselves prostituting the name of a Washington to cloak their designs upon your liberties. . . .

If you are in doubt about the nature and principles of the proposed government, view the conduct of its authors and patrons, that affords the best explanation, the most striking comment.

The evil genius of darkness presided at its birth, it came forth under the veil of mystery, its true features being carefully concealed, and every deceptive art has been and is practising to have this spurious brat received as the genuine offspring of heaven-born liberty. So fearful are its patrons that you should discern the imposition, that they have hurried on its adoption, with the greatest precipitation; they have endeavored also to preclude all investigation, they have endeavored to intimidate all opposition; by such means as these, have they surreptitiously procured a Convention in this state, favorable to their views; and here again investigation and discussion are abridged, the final question is moved before the subject has been under consideration; an appeal to the people is precluded even in the last resort, lest their eyes should be opened; the Convention have denied the minority the privilege of entering the reasons of their dissent on its journals—Thus despotism is already triumphant, and the genius of liberty is on the eve of her exit, is about bidding an eternal adieu to this once happy people.

After so recent a triumph over British despots, after such torrents of blood and treasure have been spent, after involving ourselves in the distresses of an arduous war, and incurring such a debt, for the express purpose of asserting the rights of humanity, it is truly astonishing that a set of men among ourselves, should have the effrontery to attempt the destruction of our liberties. But in this enlightened age to hope to dupe the people by the arts they are practising, is still more extraordinary.

How do the advocates of the proposed government, combat the objections urged against it? Not even by an attempt to disprove them, for that would the more fully confirm their truth,

but by a species of reasoning that is very congenial to that contempt of the understandings of the people, that they so eminently possess, and which policy cannot even prevent frequent ebullitions of; they seem to think that the oratory and facination of great names and mere sound will suffice to ensure success; that the people may be diverted from a consideration of the merits of the plan, by bold assertions and mere declamation. Some of their writers for instance, paint the distresses of every class of citizens with all the glowing language of eloquence, as if this was a demonstration of the excellence, or even the safety of the new plan, which, notwithstanding the reality of this distress, may be a system of tyranny and oppression; other writers tell you of the great men who composed the late convention, and give you a pompous display of their virtues, instead of a justification of the plan of government; and others again urge the tyrant's plea, they endeavor to make it a case of necessity, now is the critical moment; they represent the adoption of this government as our only alternative, as the last opportunity we shall have of peaceably establishing a government; they assert it to be the best system that can be formed, and that if we reject it, we will have a worse one or none at all, nay, that if we presume to propose alterations, we shall get into a labyrinth of difficulties from which we cannot be extricated, as no two states will agree in amendments, that therefore it would involve us in irreconcilable discord. But they all seduously avoid the fair field of argument, a rational investigation into the origination of the proposed government. I hope the good sense of the people will detect the fallacy of such conduct, will discover the base juggle and with becoming resolution resent the imposition. . . .

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