

## Excerpts from The Anti-Federalist Papers

We the Aristocratic party of the United States, lamenting the many inconveniencies to which the late confederation subjected the *well-born*, the *better kind* of people, bringing them down to the level of the *rabble*—and holding in utter detestation that frontispiece to every bill of rights, “that all men are born equal”—beg leave (for the purpose of drawing a line between such as we think were *ordained* to govern, and such as were *made* to bear the weight of government without having any share in its administration) to submit to *our friends* in the first class for their inspection, the following defense of our *monarchical, aristocratical democracy*.

1st. As a majority of all societies consist of men who (though totally incapable of thinking or acting in governmental matters) are more readily led than driven, we have thought meet to indulge them in something like a democracy in the new constitution, which part we have designated by the popular name of the House of Representatives. But to guard against every possible danger from this *lower house*, we have subjected every bill they bring forward, to the double negative of our *upper house* and president. . . . – Anti-Federalist No. 9

. . . We find here that the Congress in its legislative capacity, shall have the power to lay and collect taxes, duties, and excises; to borrow money; to regulate commerce; to fix the rule for naturalization and the laws of bankruptcy; to coin money; to punish counterfeiters; to establish post offices and post roads; to secure copy rights to authors; to constitute tribunals; to define and punish piracies; to declare war; to raise and support armies; to provide and support a navy; to call forth the militia; to organize, arm and discipline the militia; to exercise absolute power over a district ten miles square, independent of all the State legislatures, and to be alike absolute over all forts, magazines, arsenals, dock-yards, and other needful buildings thereunto belonging. This is a short abstract of the powers given to Congress . . . My object is to consider that *undefined, unbounded and immense power* which is comprised in the following clause—“And to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the *foregoing powers, and all other powers* vested by this constitution in the government of the United States; or in any department or offices thereof.” Under such a clause as this, can anything be said to be reserved and kept back from Congress? . . . Besides the powers already mentioned, other powers may be assumed hereafter as contained by implication in this constitution. The Congress shall judge of what is necessary and proper in all these cases, and in all other cases—in short, in all cases whatsoever. – Anti-Federalist No. 46

When a building is to be erected which is intended to stand for ages, the foundation should be firmly laid. The Constitution proposed to your acceptance is designed, not for yourselves alone, but for generations yet unborn. The principles, therefore, upon which the social compact is founded, ought to have been clearly and precisely stated, and the most express and full declaration of rights to have been made. But on this subject there is almost an entire silence. –Anti-Federalist No. 84

I am pleased to see a spirit of inquiry burst the band of constraint upon the subject of the NEW PLAN for consolidating the governments of the United States, as recommended by the late Convention. If it is suitable to the GENIUS and HABITS of the citizens of these states, it will bear the strictest scrutiny. The PEOPLE are the grand inquest who have a RIGHT to judge of its merits. The hideous daemon of Aristocracy has hitherto had so much influence as to bar the channels of investigation, preclude the people from inquiry and extinguish every spark of liberal information of its qualities. . . . They cry aloud the whole must be swallowed or none at all, thinking thereby to preclude any amendment; they are afraid of having it abated of its present RIGID aspect. —Anti-Federalist No.1

They will from the perpetuity of office be under *our* eye, and in a short time will think and act like *us*, independently of popular whims and prejudices. . . . We have frequently endeavored to effect in our respective states, the happy discrimination which pervades this system; but finding we could not bring the states into it individually, we have determined . . . and have taken pains to leave the legislature of each *free and independent* state, as they now call themselves, in such a situation that they will eventually be absorbed by our *grand continental vortex*, or dwindle into petty corporations, and have power over little else than *yoaking hogs* or determining the width of *cart wheels* . . . Impressed with a conviction that this constitution is calculated to restrain the influence and power of the LOWER CLASS—to draw that *discrimination* we have so long sought after; to secure to our friends *privileges and offices* . . . —Anti-Federalist No. 9

. . . Ought not a government, vested with such extensive and indefinite authority, to have been restricted by a declaration of rights? It certainly ought. So clear a point is this, that I cannot help suspecting that persons who attempt to persuade people that such reservations were less necessary under this Constitution than under those of the States, are wilfully endeavoring to deceive, and to lead you into an absolute state of vassalage. —Anti-Federalist No.84