

31. "*An Enemy to Monarchy*"

To George Washington

Paris May 2, 1788

... I am anxious about every thing which may affect our credit. My wish would be to possess it in the highest degree, but to use it little. Were we without credit we might be crushed by a nation of much inferior resources but possessing higher credit. The present system of war renders it necessary to make exertions far beyond the annual resources of the state, and to consume in one year the efforts of many. And this system we cannot change. It remains then that we cultivate our credit with the utmost attention.—I had intended to have written a word to your Excellency on the subject of the new constitution, but I have already spun out my letter to an immoderate length. I will just observe therefore that according to my ideas there is a great deal of good in it. There are two things however which I dislike strongly. 1. The want of a declaration of rights. I am in hopes the opposition of Virginia will remedy this, and produce such a declaration. 2. The perpetual re-eligibility of the President. This I fear will make that an office for life first, and then hereditary. I was much an enemy to monarchy before I came to Europe. I am ten thousand times more so since I have seen what they are. There is scarcely an evil known in these countries which may not be traced to their king as it's source, nor a good which is not derived from the small fibres of republicanism existing among them. I can further say with safety there is not a crowned head in Europe whose talents or merit would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of any parish in America. However I shall hope that before there is danger of this change taking place in the office of President, the good sense and free spirit of our countrymen will make the changes necessary to prevent it. Under this hope I look forward to the general adoption of the new constitution with anxiety, as necessary for us under our present circumstances. . . .