With Jefferson as President, so warned one newspaper, "Murder, robbery, rape, adultery, and incest will be openly taught and practiced, the air will be rent with the cries of the distressed, the soil will be soaked with blood, and the nation black with crimes."

Others attacked Jefferson's deist beliefs as the views of an infidel who "writes aghast the truths of God's words; who makes not even a profession of Christianity; who is without Sabbaths; without the sanctuary, and without so much as a decent external respect for the faith and worship of Christians."

For example, a private letter in which Hamilton depicted Adams as having "great and intrinsic defects in his character" was obtained by Aaron Burr and leaked to the national press.

His opponents also spread the story that Adams had planned to create an American dynasty by the marriage of one of his sons to a daughter of King George III. According to this unsubstantiated story, only the intervention of George Washington, dressed in his Revolutionary military uniform, and the threat by Washington to use his sword against his former vice president had stopped Adams's scheme.

In return, Adams' men called Vice President Jefferson "a mean-spirited, low-lived fellow, the son of a half-breed Indian squaw, sired by a Virginia mulatto father."

Adams was a "hideous hermaphroditical character, which has neither the force of a man, nor the gentleness and sensibility of a woman."