



The Federalist

The Federalist ('The Federalist Papers') is a series of 85 essays by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay between October 1787 and May 1788.

The Federalist Papers were written and published to urge New Yorkers to ratify the proposed US Constitution, which was drafted in Philadelphia in 1787.

They explained particular provisions of the Constitution in detail.

For this reason, and because Hamilton and Madison were each members of the Constitutional Convention, the Federalist Papers are often used today to help interpret the intentions of those drafting the Constitution.

These papers are generally considered to be one of the most important contributions to political thought made in America.

The essays appeared in book form in 1788, with an introduction by Hamilton. Subsequently they were printed in many editions and translated to several languages.

The authors of the Federalist papers argued against the decentralization of political authority under the Articles of Confederation.

Broadly, they argued that the government's impotence under the Articles of Confederation obstructed America's emergence as a powerful commercial empire.

In the authors' view, the farmers and artisans who rose to power in postrevolutionary America were too beholden to narrow economic and regional interests to serve the broader public good.

Unlike most Americans of the period, who typically worried about the conspiracies of the elite few against the liberties of the people, the authors were concerned about tyrannical legislative majorities threatening the rights of propertied minorities.

The Articles of Confederation, in their view, had provided no safeguards against the vices of the people themselves, and the American Revolution's enthusiasm for liberty had diminished appreciation of the need for good governance.

The authors of the Federalist papers argued for an increase in the 'energy' of the federal government to respond to a crisis.

However, the national government's increased power would have to be based in republican

principles and retain a federal distribution of power.

In one essay, "Federalist 10," Madison rejected the then common belief that republican government was possible only for small states.

He argued that stability, liberty, and justice were more likely to be achieved in a large area with a numerous and heterogeneous population.

Although frequently interpreted as an attack on majority rule, the essay is in reality a defense of both social, economic, and cultural pluralism and of a composite majority formed by compromise and conciliation.

Largely through the efforts of James Madison, the first Congress in September 1789 proposed a Bill of Rights, which was adopted with little public debate in December 1791.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: www.sar.org

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