

Federalists and anti-federalists research paper examples

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The current situation in America where there is a two party system; the Democratic Party and the Republican Party is just a depiction of how it used to be in the past. Just as the parties do not seem to see eye to eye on most matters, the same case happened in the past. Long before the coming of the two parties were two opposing sides; the federalists and the anti-federalists. A basic question can be asked regarding the nature of these two opposing sides. That is; what were the main points of differences between the federalists and the anti-federalists in relation to the unity of the American states? The paragraphs below are dedicated to exploring this issue and bringing a clearer understanding of the same.

The Federalist Paper No. 8 as written by Alexander Hamilton in 1787 can help in addressing this question quite effectively. The paper looked at “ The Consequences of Hostilities between the States” Practically, this article sought to tell where the differences between the two sides came about and why they perceived the issue of uniting the American states under one federal government. His argument was quite solid and well grounded, explaining this issue to great detail.

The first point of concern was the issue of sovereignty. According to Hamilton (Para. 2), the anti-federalists felt that uniting the states under one umbrella led to the loss of the independence and the sovereignty of the individual states. This is mainly because they would be forced to open up their borders and let the people from other states infiltrate. Eventually, the people from other regions would probably pour into the region of another that has more resources and exploit them, leading to suffering for the native

inhabitants. This would, in return, lead to a kind of conflict which could as well escalate into war as the people fought for their resources. The idea is that if the states ever got to such a situation, there was a possibility that the people of one state would be hurt but cannot be protected by their government since they are under the rule of the confederate.

The federalists, on the other hand, were of the opinion that opening up the borders would be a way to technological and infrastructural developments. More roads would be constructed to link up the states and trade activities between the borders would be enhanced. The overall result of such an arrangement is that the people would benefit in that they had more sources for products that they could not produce while also having markets for their surplus production. From this explanation by Hamilton (Para. 3), it is quite clear that the main difference between the federalists and the Anti-federalists is that they saw the union from different perspectives. While the federalists saw a chance for greater collaboration in order to partner in development, the anti-federalists looked at it as a way of loosing the states' individual autonomy. They could not see the reason as to why a free state could willingly subject to another authority apart from that which is established within the state itself.

The federalists were also opposed to the union because they felt that this was a loophole through which the populous states would find a channel through which they could plunder the less populous nations (Hamilton Para 5). They argued that with the development of infrastructure, the different states would easily allow the people from other states to get into their land.

However, he argues that though there was the existence and the love for liberty, there would come a time when the individualism from the members of a given state would definitely rise with time and they would feel like associating with their own nation. This would lead to a kind of jealousy between the nations. On the same note, Hamilton observes that the greatest enemies of a state are those from the outside. As such, if such a conflict or situation of jealousy arose when there were members of a populous state within the less populous state, there would be much of plundering. The less populous state would be the loser as most of its resources would be exploited by another. It is for this reason that the anti-federalists felt that a federal government and state was not the best. It was too much of a risk for the less populous states to take.

The federalists had a very different view on the issue. Again, rather than looking at the negative side, they looked at the positive perspective of the confederate. It is well known that every nation likes having its autonomy and feeling that there is the sense of power within the state. As such, when the states were not united, there was a greater chance that the smaller states could be exploited by the others as they would be easily overwhelmed, even in war, and their resources plundered all together. However, if the states were united, all the people would feel that in whichever part of the confederate they were, they would still be members of the same country. This implies that rather than having the urge to amass wealth and send it back home, they would feel at home in whichever part of the confederate and would be comfortable bringing development in the area. In the long run,

there would be a peaceful co-existence as opposed to when the states are separate.

In summary, it can be said that the main difference between the federalists and the anti-federalists on the issue of the United States was largely ideological. The federalists looked at it from the brighter side while the anti-federalists saw it from the dark side. The anti-federalists felt that having a union of the states would dissolve the authority and the power of the individual states, making them less equipped to protect their citizens and their interests in case of a conflict. To them, forming a union was more like dissolving the power of the states. The federalists, on the other hand, saw the union as a unity of purpose. If all the states were united, they could live more peacefully since they would look upon each other as members of the same country. Furthermore, the nations would be more equipped to deal with external aggressors as they would combine their force power to build a strong army that would be ready to protect all the members of the union. They also argued that the establishment of a union could make the different states of America even more independent and self-reliant. This is mainly because they would be opened up to the opportunities and the resources in the other nations and these could be used for the benefit of the general population. Based on these ideological differences between the groups, it is quiet easy to deduce the reason as to why they could not agree on the matter of union of the states.

Work Cited

Hamilton, Alexander. "The Consequences of Hostilities between the States."

Federalist No. 8, Nov. 20, 1787. Web, 30th Oct. 2012,

<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=752>