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THOMAS JEFFERSON AND ALEXANDER HAMILTON

“The division between Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton has, in many ways, permeated the consciousness and self-understanding of Americans”¹. During the discussion of the Constitution and after its ratification by the states, in the American republic, there were two currents that later became the first political parties. Federalists led by Alexander Hamilton sought to create a strong central government with supremacy of national interests. Their opponents, subsequently called Democratic Republicans, sought to limit the powers of the national government and strengthen the state and local governments because they feared that the concentration of power would lead to the replacement of democracy by aristocracy. A leader of anti-Federalists was Thomas Jefferson. In fact, the conflict between Federalists and Republicans was a dispute over the future development of the United States. It was the search for a model of a new republic. Federalists struggled for the rights and freedoms. However, they wanted the rights, not for everyone but only for owners. Federalists defended the English model of the state while the supporters of Jefferson advocated for the democratic development of America.

“Alexander Hamilton has always seemed the least typical of the Founding Fathers”²

Alexander Hamilton was a son of a poor Scottish merchant from West India. He arrived in New York in 1772. Alexander Hamilton studied at King's College (now Columbia University). At the

¹ Robert Martin, *The many faces of Alexander Hamilton* (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 25.

² Alexander Hamilton, *Alexander Hamilton: a biography in his own words* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 7.

beginning of the War of Independence, he joined the army of colonists. Due to his military abilities and personal qualities, he became Adjutant General of George Washington. In the 1780s, he became one of the leading lawyers in New York strengthening his position in the commercial and financial circles of the North by marrying the daughter of a wealthy landowner.

Alexander Hamilton was one of the most prominent political figures of the period of the formation of the U.S. His theoretical ideas and practices had a decisive influence on the content of the U.S. Constitution in 1787. During the immediate preparation of the Constitution and especially after its adoption, there was sharp political struggle between federalists and anti-federalists in the country. The basis of the split was the attitude to the federal form of government in the United States. Hamilton was among the most influential leaders of Federalists, who believed that the federal structure could overcome the weakness of the U.S. confederative organization consolidated in “Articles of Confederation” in 1781. In their opinion, only the strong central authority was capable to create a stable state and prevent further development of the democratic movement of the masses, which increased after the victory in the War of Independence. Hamilton claimed that federation would be a barrier preventing internal dissensions and popular uprisings. Federalists actually represented the interests of large commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and planters. Antifederalists expressed aspirations of poor and farmers, small traders, entrepreneurs and wage workers.

Monarchical England was an ideal political system for Hamilton. At the Philadelphia convention that gathered to draft a new constitution, which was to replace the Articles of Confederation, Alexander Hamilton proposed the creation of an authoritarian government headed by an elected president for life, who would be endowed with almost unlimited powers including the possibility to control the representative body of the legislature that under voters`

pressure could make arbitrary decisions. The same idea contained in the proposal of Hamilton to make the Ministers appointed by the president virtually irresponsible to the Parliament. Hamilton believed that the Parliament should be bicameral and created on the basis of suffrage with high property qualification. The division of people into rich and poor, and accordingly into capable and incapable to manage the affairs of society, according to Hamilton, had the natural origin and was irremovable. Rich people by the very nature had the right to be represented in the higher state bodies. Only they can ensure the stability of the political system. Providing people with opportunities to participate actively in public affairs would inevitably lead to mistakes and errors due to inconsistency and irrationality of the masses and thereby weaken the state. In his judgment, this was to defend the Republic from imprudence of democracy, otherwise - protect the interests of a minority of the population from the encroachments of the majority.

Hamilton's project was not accepted by the convention. The convention preferred the moderate version of the federal presidential republic. When there was a threat of derangement of the ratification of the Constitution, Hamilton, along with other leaders of Federalist Party J. Madison and J. Jay decided to support it. For six months, they published in the newspapers of New York 85 articles signed "Publius", and most of them belonged to Hamilton. Later, these articles were included in the collection "The Federalist". The authors urged that a strong central government would not lead to tyranny. Objecting to the fears of opponents, who believed that only a small country could be the republic, they argued that the system of representative government and the separation of powers would guarantee the republic and freedoms. Only the inclusion of the Bill of Rights - the first ten amendments to the basic law, which contained guarantees of basic civil liberties, helped the federalists achieve the ratification of the Constitution. Hamilton's political positions were defined in the period preceding the War of

Independence, when he stood for the peaceful settlement of the conflict and a compromise with Britain. His theoretical views completely coincided with this position. They were formed under the decisive influence of Montesquieu`s theory of separation of powers, who was impressed by the constitutional system of the British monarchy. Hamilton thought that it was necessary to put this system in the foundation of the U.S. Constitution.

Not all Hamilton`s ideas were perceived by the U.S. Constitution (the president for life and the census suffrage). However, like the overall thrust and the majority of Hamilton`s specific proposals were adopted by the Constitutional Convention. In this connection, it should be noted that out of 55 members of the Constitutional Convention, only eight participated in the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

Hamilton`s opponent Thomas Jefferson entered the American history as the author of the Declaration of Independence, which he wrote at the age of 33. He was a staunch Democrat. He actively participated in the struggle for independence of the colonies and was elected to the first and second Continental Congress. Tomas Jefferson became a member of the General Assembly of Virginia. Then, he became the Governor of the State and the U.S. Ambassador to France. He witnessed the storming of the Bastille and the beginning of the French Revolution. On the example of Jefferson, it is seen as the American worldview was formed. He knew the works of the British and the French Enlightenment. His idols were Isaac Newton, Francis Bacon and John Locke. He inherited their ideas. The American environment and observation of life of small farmers with the uncomplicated local government made him an agrarian democrat. Jefferson was born in the family of a planter in West Virginia. He received the law degree and graduated from college in his state. "He spent five years as a student in the law office of George Wythe, his

beloved mentor and foster father”³. Tomas Jefferson had varied interests. He knew six languages, studied history, philosophy, agronomy, geology and was an architect and writer. However, Jefferson was primarily a politician who devoted forty years of his life to the American republic.

Jefferson criticized capitalism that gathered strength in the United States. In his opinion, it led to ruin and impoverishment of large sectors of the population. However, he believed that the main cause of these disasters was the development of large-scale capitalist production. He idealized small farms. His ideal was the democratic republic of free and equal farmers. This ideal was utopian. However, its active propaganda by Jefferson played an important role in attracting the masses of colonies to participate actively in the Revolutionary War. Even more important was the fact that Jefferson was the author of the project of Declaration of Independence - the constitutional document that argued the legitimacy of separation of the colonies from England and formation of an independent state. The break with religious beliefs about the state power that was typical for that period (the mention of God as the Creator in the Declaration was made in passing and nothing changed in its content), and the natural lawful argumentation, popular sovereignty and the right to revolution, protection of individual freedom and rights of citizens - all these made the Declaration of Independence an outstanding theoretical and political document of its time. Jefferson as the author of the Declaration truly believed that “all people were created equal. People were endowed with certain unalienable rights by their creator including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”.

Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that the administration was created by people to protect natural rights, and the government’s authority derived from the consent of the people to submit it. Sequentially developing the idea of popular sovereignty, Jefferson inferred

³ Bernard Mayo, *Jefferson himself: The personal narrative of a many-sided American* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1970), 2.

that because of the nature of the government power and such conditions of its being, people had the right to destroy or change the existing form of government and the duty of people was to overthrow a despotic government. Thus, the right of revolution was justified convincingly.

The Declaration of Independence contains a 27-count indictment of King George in an effort to proclaim separation of the colonies from England (overthrow of the government seeking to despotism - the right of revolution) and the formation of the independent United States. To characterize Jefferson's political views, it is important to pay attention to the fact that in the project of the Declaration of Independence, there were not 27 but 28 counts. The item that was not included in the final text of the Declaration as a result of strong objections of planters of the southern colonies condemned flourished Negro slavery in the southern colonies. Jefferson was convinced that the King of England contradicted human nature and the natural rights of people and stated that he "captured people and brought them into slavery in another hemisphere, and they often died horribly unable to bear the carriage".

Jefferson's ideal was the decentralized republic of small farmers. He considered them "the real representatives of the great American people" while agriculture was the source of virtue. He called those who cultivated land the chosen of God while the city, industry and trade, in his opinion, carried immorality, corruption and led to degeneration of people. Jefferson supported strong local authorities and self-government. He insisted on the freedom of the press. "People are the main subject. If I had to choose between government without newspapers and newspapers without government, with no hesitation I would choose the latter". Jefferson always was an ardent advocate of human rights considering them to be the most important. That is why, during the discussion of the Constitution in 1787, he insisted on the adoption of the Bill of Rights. He attached special importance to religious tolerance and separation of the church from

the state. With the election of the first president of the United States, George Washington, Jefferson entered the Cabinet of Ministers as the Secretary of State. However, a leader of the government became the Minister of Finance Alexander Hamilton. The Federalists won. Jefferson entered the history of the political thought and the history of the New Age in general as the author of the Declaration of Independence of the United States. The significance of the Declaration was not only in the fact that it proclaimed the formation of the United States but in the proclamation of the most advanced political and legal ideas and concepts at the time. Ideas of the Declaration and Jefferson himself had and continue to have an impact on political life in the United States.

Jefferson was the most prominent representative of the democratic forces, who made a decisive contribution to the victorious outcome of the War of Independence. His ideas were particularly close to the broad masses and formed the basis of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, which played an important role in uniting colonists against British colonialists. Unlike Jefferson, Hamilton expressed the interests of financial, commercial and industrial bourgeoisie and planters configured very moderately. Hamilton's views had a decisive influence on the U.S. Constitution.

“American thinkers did not make a lot of new provisions in the natural-law doctrine”⁴. However, their contribution to the promotion and original interpretation of certain provisions in relation to the situation of the Revolutionary War and the subsequent constitutional formation of the U.S. (for example, the Republican interpretation of the theory of separation of powers) was extremely important. The nature of this interpretation was determined by the class interests that it reflected. In political and legal views of Jefferson, there were democratic and revolutionary

⁴ Anthony K. Scott, *Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton: A defining political debate* (Boca Raton: Universal-Publishers, 2008), 15.

tendencies in the liberation movement of colonists, which expressed the sentiments and aspirations of ordinary people. Hamilton's natural law doctrine received another interpretation that was responsible for compromising trends among the higher strata of colonists in the struggle against England.

In general, theoretical premises therefore led to various political and legal conclusions. In the political sphere, this was manifested in different attitudes to the state system of England and idealized theories of Locke and Montesquieu. If Jefferson did not find it perfect, Hamilton had an opposite opinion. In the legal field, the same distinction was in relation to the natural equality of people and the ensuing equality of citizens; the opponent of which was Hamilton and Jefferson was its ardent supporter. The latter applied the principle of equality to people and Negro slaves. Assessing the political and legal views of Jefferson and Hamilton, it is necessary to bear in mind another important fact – for the first time in history, the ideas of natural law doctrines were described in the constitutional provisions and set out in the constitutional documents. Thus, the United States Declaration of Independence proclaiming the formation of the United States as an independent nation was developed by Jefferson and his ideas of popular sovereignty and the right of people to revolution. If the theory of Locke only described the state system established in the UK as a result of the bourgeois revolution, developed under its influence (as well as under the influence of Montesquieu's theory) Hamilton's views served as the theoretical basis for the development of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

Annotated Bibliography

Cunningham, N. E. *Thomas Jefferson versus Alexander Hamilton: Confrontations that shaped a nation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000. Print.

The book provides readers with the general information about two politicians and what impact that had on the formation of the USA.

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This book provides accurate and authoritative information on the issue. The source is an expert in the field.

Hamilton, A. *Alexander Hamilton: A biography in his own words*. New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1973. Print.

The current book is the autobiography of Alexander Hamilton, in which his life and political career is described.

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The book contains the U.S. Constitution, the Articles of Confederations, the Declaration of Independence.

Martin, R. *The many faces of Alexander Hamilton: The life and legacy of America's most elusive founding father*. New York, NY: NYU Press, 2006. Print.

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Mayo, B. *Jefferson himself: The personal narrative of a many-sided American*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1970. Print.

The book is autobiography of Tomas Jefferson.

Scott, K. A. *Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton: A defining political debate*. Boca Raton, Florida: Universal-Publishers, 2008. Print.

The book shows how political philosophy of these two politicians influenced America.

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