

COLLOQUIUM: THE FEDERALIST AND ANTI-FEDERALIST

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The Federalist was a series of articles or “papers” published first in New York newspapers in 1787-88, then as a book, to urge New Yorkers to ratify the Constitution. The papers were published under the pen name of Publius (savior of the Roman Republic) and written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. Still the fundamental source for anyone who wants to study American government, *The Federalist* was called by Thomas Jefferson “the best commentary on the principles of government which ever was written.”

Opposed to *The Federalist* and to the ratification of the Constitution was the *Anti-Federalist*, consisting of papers and pamphlets written by various authors in defense of the Articles of Confederation or at least in support of traditional republican ideas that were said to have been violated by the innovations of the Constitution. Some issues in the debate were: the proper size of a republic, how strong the executive should be, the true nature of federalism, how far representatives should be from the people, and reliance on a bill of rights. These issues raise problems of political philosophy and Public Choice economics, and they have often come into play in American politics since the original debate that will be studied in this Colloquium.

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