Discussion

Author

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Thomas Jefferson's views of the American Republic are reflected in his words "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Following the declaration of independence, each state declared its independence as a sovereign nation unto itself, supremely ruled by its respective people, i.e., its registered voters. In short, each state is a sovereign nation, by law, and its respective People are its ruling sovereigns by popular vote (Ackerman & Fontana, 2004). The Constitution was simply a suggestion, and the People of each state eventually adopted it as a voluntary union of sovereign nations, just like the UN; i.e., each state remained a sovereign nation, by law; and its People remained the ruling sovereigns. State and federal governments were simply the hired employees, just like a corporation's board of directors: i.e., the stockholder owns the corporation, and therefore they can overrule the board at any time-- it would be silly, after all, for the owners to be limited in their authority, or permitted simply to elect board-members but not overrule them.

Jefferson limited the federal government's growth and reduced the national debt, defeated the Barbary Pirates (something even the British hadn't accomplished), kept the US out of the Napoleonic wars, outlawed the importation or export of slaves, sent Lewis and Clark to explore the west, and doubled the size of the nation with the Louisiana Purchase (Ackerman & Fontana, 2004). While his embargos against Britain backfired, he kept the young nation out of another war against that world power for at least his term. He expanded the right to vote and encouraged citizen participation.  Yes, Jefferson was a good president.

Thomas Jefferson, during his term, was greatly opposed by Alexander Hamilton. They both disagreed about almost everything, and two of their disagreements that are still pretty relevant are; Hamilton believed that there should be a strong federal government, Jefferson believed that the states should be stronger. Secondly; Hamilton believed that Blacks and Whites were equal in ability and that the apparent differences were due to different circumstances (like the Blacks being slaves, being forbidden to read, being ill-fed, etc.). Jefferson believed Blacks were "inferior in both mind and body." Alexander Hamilton came with his own trade policies; Hamilton’s policies were in fact greatly inferior to Jefferson’s, harming a large percentage of the population who had to pay high prices for goods (Katz, 1976). They, of course, were praised by those few who made these goods since they made big profits as a result, but for the nation as a whole, it was a clear loss.

 Jefferson was a proponent of the agricultural system of independent yeoman farmers. In short, his beliefs were the antithesis of today's Democrats. Hamilton's story is the virtual embodiment of the American dream. Alexander Hamilton rose on his own merits and abilities, and he wrote the seminal work “On Manufacturing” that said that manufacturing was the country's future, which of course, ended up creating the urban proletariat that became the northern half of the Democrat party. Hamilton saw an American future that eliminated Jefferson's yeoman farmer. Hamilton said to fund all state debts at full value because it would ensure confidence in the American economy and help consolidate American debts (Katz, 1976). Jefferson said the opposite, not to fund debts, like war debts, etc. and that states should retain their own debts. States like Virginia, who paid off their debts, should not have to help more negligible states pay off their debts.

Hamilton and federalists also favored the making of the bank of the U.S. since they felt that the U.S. needed a bank of the U.S. to regulate currency and interest rates. Besides, he also said that the bank should be privately controlled by bankers who are invested in the nation’s economy. Jefferson and fellow anti-federalists did not support that idea, however.

# References

Ackerman, B., & Fontana, D. (2004). Thomas Jefferson counts himself into the presidency. *Va. L. Rev.*, *90*, 551.

Katz, S. N. (1976). Thomas Jefferson and the right to property in revolutionary America. *The Journal of Law and Economics*, *19*(3), 467–488.