

# Portrait gallery features exhibit on Hamilton-Jefferson debate

by Paul Goldstein

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## **"The Spirit of Party": Hamilton and Jefferson at Odds**

by Margaret C.S. Christman  
National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1992  
64 pages, paperbound, \$12.95

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One of the more intriguing and interesting exhibitions now on display at the Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery is "The Spirit of Party": Hamilton and Jefferson at Odds. The exhibition, which opened Sept. 11 and lasts until Feb. 7, presents an examination of the critical political battles fought at the founding of the republic. Using Gilbert Stuart and John Trumbull's portraits of the Founding Fathers as a focal point, the exhibition also lays out, through documents, political cartoons, personal letters, and etchings, the essential political and philosophical struggle between the outlook of Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson.

"The Spirit of Party," Alexander Hamilton's famous quote taken from a letter written to William Short on Feb. 5, 1793, was chosen as the title to represent the political and philosophical differences between Hamilton and Jefferson. The exhibition is divided into two rooms and spans the historical period of 1790-1800. The author of the exhibition, Margaret C.S. Christman, draws attention to the momentous struggle to establish the First National Bank of the United States and the subsequent developments surrounding the young republic's foreign and domestic policies. In the display of two newspapers, *The Gazette of the United States* (Federalist) and *The National Gazette* (Republican), coverage of the debate surrounding the founding of the National Bank is laid out.

The exhibition's catalogue even discusses the Jeffersonian charges that Hamilton modeled the National Bank on the Britain's central bank, the Bank of England. Foolish and dangerous as those charges are against Hamilton, nevertheless, in the foreword of the "*The Spirit of Party*," director Alan Fern of the National Portrait Gallery cites the reason why Jeffersonianism has dominated American history. Fern quotes historian Forrest McDonald: "Most of American history was written by New England Yankees who, except for

descendants of John Adams, almost uniformly idolized Jefferson."

McDonald also charges that the "Hamiltonians viewed Jefferson's approach as overly favoring rural America, with its dependence upon market restraints, reliance upon slave labor and weakening of the central government through excessive favoring of the rights of the states." Jeffersonian governance, he says, fostered dependence and lawlessness, "governed by coercion and party spirit, but Jefferson's view prevailed, especially in the South, until the Civil War forced the issue."

## **Jefferson's philosophical 'trinity'**

In a limited way, McDonald's view of the struggle correctly identifies the problem. However, it is the underlying philosophical problem of Jefferson which defines the nature of the problem. Nowhere is this more clearly exposed than in Jefferson's Jan. 16, 1811 letter to Dr. Benjamin Rush. Situated in the second room of the exhibition, Jefferson's letter discusses his philosophical differences with Hamilton and goes on to declare that John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Francis Bacon were the basis of his philosophical foundations. "They were my trinity of the three greatest men the world has ever produced."

What Jefferson reveals is not only that his philosophical outlook was part of the "Enlightenment" attack on the Christian view of man, but also that his outlook was shaped by the Venetian Party of England, France, and Switzerland, which sought to subvert the principles of the republic. Ironically, Jefferson's actions during crises betrayed those very principles to the furthering of the nation's development.

Though Hamilton is falsely accused of being a "tool of the monied interests" the reality is quite different, with Jefferson actually being the one manipulated by the Venetian Party—the usurious class. In fact, the Venetian-Swiss agent Albert Gallatin is presented as representing the opposite view of Hamilton's economic program. Gallatin's pamphlet "A Sketch of the Finances of the United States" is also on display. Jefferson not only appointed Gallatin as secretary of the treasury during his administration, but aligned with Gallatin's seditious actions in their support of the Whiskey Rebellion.

Perhaps the most telling aspect of this Venetian Party



THE PROVIDENTIAL DETECTION

The Providential Detection ca. 1800. Engraving by an unidentified artist. The exhibition catalogue explains the cartoon: "In the nick of time, the federal eagle prevents Thomas Jefferson from sacrificing the Constitution upon the 'Altar of Gallic Despotism.' The document labeled 'Mazzei' refers to a letter that Jefferson wrote his Italian friend Philip Mazzei, deploring 'men who were Solomons in council, and Samsons in combat, but whose hair has been cut off by the whore England'—which the Federalists trumpeted as a pointed insult to Washington."

outlook is the cartoon lampooning Jefferson and the French Revolution. Entitled "The Providential Detection" the cartoon depicts the American Eagle saving the Constitution from Jefferson. Using "masonic symbolism," the Federalist cartoon attacks the "Altar to Gallic Despotism" and shows at the base of the altar the building stones for the French Revolution and Jefferson's outlook. On the left of the altar is the stone for Venice, followed by Sardinia, Flanders, the Dutch Republic, and American Separatism—the result of Jefferson's outlook.

All in all, the exhibition is worth seeing. What's more, it is high time that the issue of Hamilton's financial reorganization program be publicly displayed. Only through the work of Lyndon LaRouche and *EIR* has such emphasis been placed on Hamilton's financial and economic applicability to today's crisis. Despite some of its shortcomings, this exhibition will provoke people to think about how the U.S. can get out of the present economic depression. As Alan Fern wrote: "These debates are by no means remote to our own times. As this is being written, the contest for the American presidency is more complex than it has been for more than 75 years and the 'Spirit of Party' is undergoing close scrutiny by the public and candidates alike."

## A free black family tells its story

by Margaret Sexton

### We Were Always Free: The Maddens of Culpeper County, Virginia, A 200-Year Family History

by Thomas O. Madden, Jr. with Ann L. Miller  
W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., New York, 1992  
218 pages, hardbound, \$19.95

Thomas Obed Madden, Jr., has written a powerful history—not only of his family, "free" Negroes from Culpeper County, Virginia—but a history of slavery versus true freedom of mind and spirit. Mr. Madden, now 89 years old, began this book after he found a trunk full of old papers and photographs representing family history, which Mr. Madden augmented by digging into archives, corroborating dates, places, and names with county records, and, most strongly, with quotations from Virginia laws regarding the status of free—not enslaved—Negroes. (Mr. Madden's preferred terminology is Negro.)

The result is much more than a genealogy. It is a slice of life in Virginia from the 1700s to the present day, from the standpoint of a family of Negroes who were never slaves, but who were treated, by law, almost as if they were.

The family's story begins with Mary Madden, a white Irish woman, who bore a child in 1758 named Sarah, whose father was black. Because Mary Madden was white, her children, although mulattos, were free, and could not be sold as slaves. But because Mary was a pauper, she and her children became indentured servants; there was no welfare in the mid-1700s. Mary had to serve her indenture, which could itself be sold, though neither she nor her children could be, until she was 31 years old. Little Sarah's indenture was sold first to George Fraser when she was only two, and then to the Madison family of Orange (the son was our fourth President, James Madison), when she was nine. There, she learned to be a domestic worker.

In turn, Sarah's indenture and those of four of her children were to be sold in 1783 to a man in Pennsylvania. Sarah