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TA Answers to our Questions

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I am enjoying the course, and appreciate all the hard work the professor and the staff are doing on our behalf. That said, I did find Friday's "answers" to our questions as problematic.

Surely the Constitution is a contract, and those who joined were not the PEOPLE, but the states. The framers went to Philadelphia with a specific charge. They met in secret, violated their charge, and wrote a new document. Was that legal? It might have been RIGHT, but was it legal. Why is there some reluctance to say it was illegal, but a wonderful thing to do. In this instance, and so many others, there seems to be a wont to rationalize (whitewash) what the founders did.

I agree that the Constitution is a blue-print, and a blueprint is brief and lacking in details. But, if they meant it -- the Founders could have written two or three more sentences saying, for instance, that the Supreme Court could declare state and Congressional laws unconstitutional. They could have added a sentence saying, "once in, always in." Perhaps they couldn't write these sentences without threatening ratification. If that is a credible explanation, let's say so.

I do not find it credible to cite an author of a chapter in The Federalist Papers as an explication of what the Founders, as a group, thought or meant. These authors might know what they thought or meant, and even what two or three others thought or meant, but it seems unlikely that the Founders, as a group, thought one way or held one meaning of the words they were debating. Again, would it be so awful to acknowledge our lack of information here?

Jim

↑ 0 ↓ · flag

[Albert Strong](#) · [12 hours ago](#) 🔒

James.

The Papers, letters, summuries of debates, pamphlets, newspaper articles, official records that the

Framers and founders left is quite voluminous. If one has tried to read them all, it seems almost impossible. the Federalist papers were a series of collected newspapers articles reflecting the debates and ideas of the Framers. there are thousands of additional papers.

Master them and you may get a clearer picture. The Library of America book club offers several volumes and thousands of papers of the principle founders and the debates on Ratifications. I admit I have not gotten thru them all myself even after decades of casual study. but I try. <http://www.loa.org/catalog.jsp?sort=3#EarlyAmericanHistoryFoundingFathers>

We also have the actions of several of the Founders in office: In particular Washington and Madison. We may assume their performance in office reflected their vision on how the govt. would work as they were designing it in the framing convention.

As for the Federalist Papers, this advice is posted on the current House Majority Leader's (Eric Cantor, R-VA) official website in a memo to the Republican and Democratic House Members:

- *The Federalist Papers, written mostly by James Madison and Alexander Hamilton to explain the purpose of the Constitution, are considered by many to be the primary source of authority on what the Constitution was understood to mean when it was ratified. There are various editions of the Federalist Papers that provide useful commentary, including the Clinton Rossiter edition, which contains a useful copy of the Constitution with page references to the Federalist Papers that discuss those parts of the Constitution in the margins. The Federalist Papers are also available online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html>*

Found at: <http://majorityleader.gov/CAS/>

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