

Madison federalist 10 and 51



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A PERSPECTIVE ON FEDERAL 10 AND 51 BY JAMES MADISON Man processes an inherent desire to exercise control over his fellow men, and he shows no hesitation to resort to intrigue or corruption to achieve this end. In a democratic setup the easiest way for a person to wield supremacy over others is to win elections. Thus when a group of people, who are members of a particular faction and are prejudiced, assumes control of the government machinery, can betray the interests of other people. The causes of faction can be attributed to the inborn tendency in man to form groups basing on ethnic, racial or cultural affiliations. Such tendencies can have far-reaching repercussions in a human society because a specific group that commands the majority may try to exercise arbitrary control over the minority, favoring one class or faction and exploiting the others. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the government to have some system in place to control the damage caused by such factions. It is with this view that the constitution has been created. Thus one can argue that the constitution is designed to prevent the tyranny of the majority and to protect the rights of the minority. The Federalist Papers is a treatise on free government in peace and security, and written in support of the ratification of the Constitution. The Federalist Papers is written and compiled by Alexander Hamilton and James Madison under the pseudonym of "publius".

Madison believes that there are two ways to control a faction; one is to remove its causes and the second is to control its effects. He wishes to multiply the deposits of political power in the state itself sufficiently, to break down the sole dualism of rich and poor, and thus to guarantee both liberty and security. In Federalist 10, Madison predicts that the size of the United States and its variety of interests could be made a guarantee of stability and

justice under the New Constitution. A verity of interest precludes forming of factions and the New Constitution, by safeguarding the interests of all parties irrespective of race, class or regional preferences, guarantees equality.

In Federal 51, Madison holds that to ensure liberty to all, each branch should be, for the most part, independent and no one branch should have too much power in selecting members of the other branch. Madison also suggests that the best security against a gradual concentration of power in any one branch is to provide constitutional safeguards that would render such concentration difficult. Madison also observes that dividing power checks concentration of power in any one direction. He offers construction of a powerful government that promotes “community will” as a method of avoiding evil because “such a will is larger than and independent of the simple majority”. In the US, the authority to govern comes from the entire society, the people. Under the constitution the society is divided into many groups of people, and these people hold different views and have different interests. This makes it very difficult for the majority to dominate or threaten the minority.

The Constitution guarantees equal rights to all citizens irrespective of their ethnic origins or class or culture. Each citizen has all the constitutional right without reference to gender, racial or other considerations. Thus when rights of an individual are protected by the provisions in the constitution, no individual or group can control the other individual or group. The view that the majority cannot exercise tyranny over the minority stands established by Madison’s statement: “While all authority in the government will be derived from and dependent on the society, the society itself will be broken into so many parts, interests and classes of citizens that the rights of individuals or of the minority will be in little danger from the majority.” (Fed. 51, Madison).

WORKS-CITED

Madison, James (1788) Federalist 51