

10 th federalist paper essay sample



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James Madison, in his 10th Federalist Paper, identified factions as an evil that may cause destruction to a government. By faction, he means “ a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adversed to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community” (Madison). Madison reached the conclusion that the solution to the problem caused by factions is to create a Republican Government.

To start his analysis, Madison cited two ways by which faction may be addressed. One of them is to remove its causes, while the other is to control its effects. Between the two, it is controlling the effects of factions that should be done through. To complete the analysis of why the second method is the method that should be chosen, it should first be noted that there are two methods to remove the causes of faction. The first one is by destroying the liberty, which is essential to the existence of factions, and the second is by giving to every citizen the same opinions, passions, and interests. Both of these methods are undesirable because, in the words of Madison, the first one is “ unwise”, while the second one is “ impracticable”.

As for the first, liberty may be the one that causes factions, but it is also the element that maintains political life. Removing liberty will not only cause the end of factions. It will also cause the end of many, if not all, aspects of political life. For the second method, it is man and man’s nature themselves that hinder man from having the same opinions, passions and interests. Men have different faculties and reasons. Men are fallible, and will not have the same set of correct opinions, if there ever was a correct opinion. Men have

certain views and sentiments formed by the complexities of their own faculties. They believe these beliefs to be correct, thus difference in interests will not be avoided, and so will factions.

Therefore, the only conclusion that may be reached is that the aim is not to remove faction, because its causes cannot be removed. The solution is to control its negative effects. At this point, it should be noted that a faction might be of two sizes. One is a faction composed of majority of the citizens, while the other is a faction composed of less than majority. A faction composed of a majority is dangerous because such faction will be endowed with a large enough power to oppress. Therefore, the main concern will be to avoid oppression by the majority. Doing so may be by preventing the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority or preventing a majority with coexistent passion or interest from concerting and carrying into effect schemes of oppression.

It is for this that a Democracy shall be avoided and a Republican shall be upheld. A pure democracy or “ a society consisting of a small number of citizens, who assemble and administer the government in person” (Madison) has no power to fight factions. The relatively small size of the society gives rise to a fewer number of interest and a greater probability for the formation of a majority. Also, since pure democracies allow people to speak directly, too many voices have to be heard, thus the attainment of the common good is less likely. On the contrary, a Republic, which is often composed of a greater number of citizens and a larger territory. These allow the formation of more variations in parties and interests. The differences will make it more difficult to form a majority; and if a majority is still formed, their number will

hinder them from meeting and organizing properly to oppress the weaker factions.

Next, government is delegated to a small number of citizens elected by the rest. This allows for a smaller number of representatives to apply their wisdom in determining what the people they are representing truly want. There are dangers that unscrupulous representatives may be elected and then betray their people after election. However, this is a risk that has to be undertaken and is not entirely unavoidable. To avoid this risk, it must be numerous enough to ensure that a few of them will not find it easy to manipulate and oppress, but it should not be too many that the multitude will cause confusion, similar to what happens in a pure democracy.