

November 22, 1787

James Madison (1751–1836), Virginian and delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, composed the first draft of the new constitution. Along with Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804) and John Jay (1745–1829), he argued for its ratification in a series of essays entitled *The Federalist Papers* (1787–1788). Here, in *Federalist No. 10*, Madison argues that the new constitution will prevent factionalism, or divisions between groups, which many Americans feared would ultimately destroy the young republic.

The latent causes of faction are thus sown in the nature of man; and we see them everywhere brought into different degrees of activity, according to the different circumstances of civil society. A zeal for different opinions concerning religion, concerning government, and many other points, as well of speculation as of practice; an attachment to different leaders, ambitiously contending for pre-eminence and power; or to persons of other descriptions, whose fortunes have been interesting to the human passions, have, in turn, divided mankind into parties, inflamed them with mutual animosity, and rendered them much more disposed to vex and oppress each other, than to cooperate for their common good. So strong is this propensity of mankind, to fall into mutual animosities, that where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions, and excite their most violent conflicts. But the most common and durable source of factions, has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold, and those who are without property, have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors, and those who are debtors, fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, a moneyed interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government. . . .

It is in vain to say, that enlightened statesmen will be able to adjust these clashing interests, and render them all subservient to the public good. Enlightened statesmen will not always be at the helm: nor in many cases, can such an adjustment

be made at all, without taking into view indirect and remote considerations, which will rarely prevail over the immediate interest which one party may find in disregarding the rights of another, or the good of the whole.

The inference to which we are brought is, that the *causes* of faction cannot be removed; and that relief is only to be sought in the means of controlling its *effects*. . . .

By what means is this object attainable? . . . Either the existence of the same passion or interest in a majority, at the same time, must be prevented; or the majority, having such coexistent passion or interest, must be rendered, by their number and local situation, unable to concert and carry into effect schemes of oppression. . . .

Hence, it clearly appears, that the same advantage, which a republic has over a democracy, in controlling the effects of faction, is enjoyed by a large over a small republic—is enjoyed by the union over the states composing it. Does this advantage consist in the substitution of representatives, whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render them superior to local prejudices, and to schemes of injustice? It will not be denied, that the representation of the union will be most likely to possess these requisite endowments. Does it consist in the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest? In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties, comprised within the union, increase this security. Does it, in fine, consist in the greater obstacles opposed to the concert and accomplishment of the secret wishes of an unjust and interested majority? Here, again, the extent of the union gives it the most palpable advantage.

The Federalist, on the New Constitution, Written in 1788, by Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Madison, and Mr. Jay (Hallowell, ME: Masters, Smith, 1852), 43–48.

PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: What are the sources of factionalism, according to Madison?

Analyze: What does he say are the best ways to address factionalism?

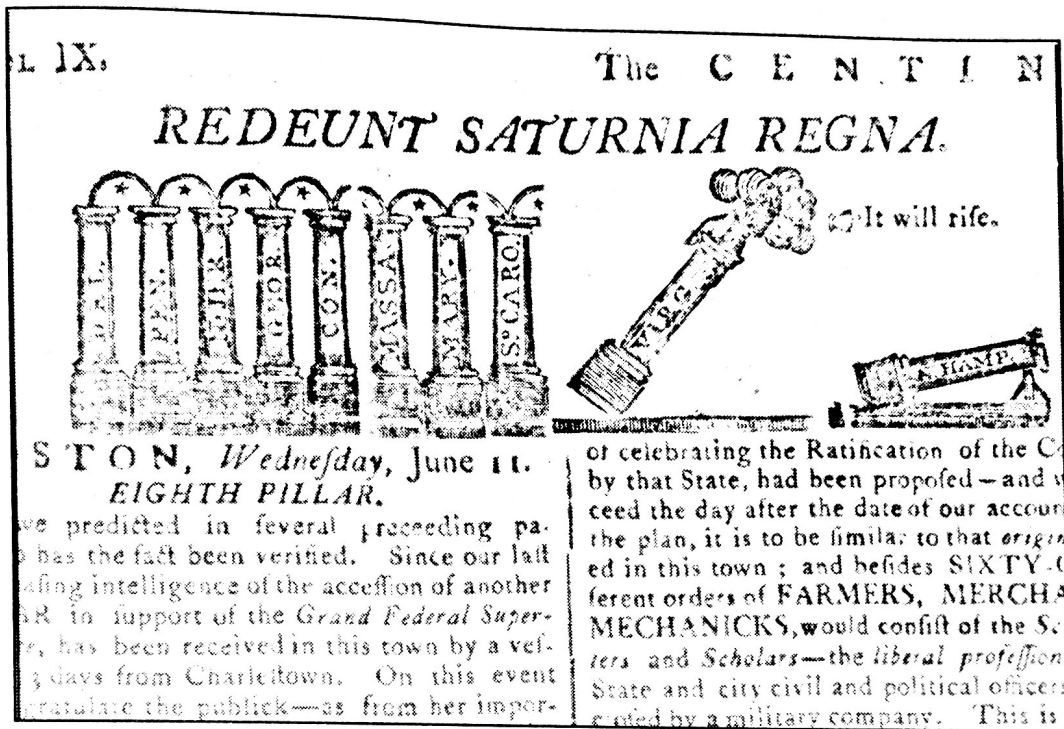
Evaluate: To what extent does this document address the concerns presented in Document 5.10?

DOCUMENT 5.12

Political Cartoon on Virginia's Ratification of the Constitution, *Boston Independent Chronicle*

June 12, 1788

This political cartoon appeared in the *Boston Independent Chronicle* in 1788. According to the proposed US Constitution, nine of the thirteen states were required for ratification. In this cartoon, the Virginian “pillar” is being erected by a hand reaching out from a cloud. New Hampshire ratified the new constitution before Virginia, on June 21, 1788, and became the ninth state to do so.



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PRACTICING Historical Thinking

Identify: Whose hand is present at the top of the cartoon?

Analyze: Based on the imagery in this cartoon, what is the cartoonist's attitude toward the ratification of the US Constitution?

Evaluate: Why would some colonies not ratify the Constitution? Consult your textbook or class notes as needed.