

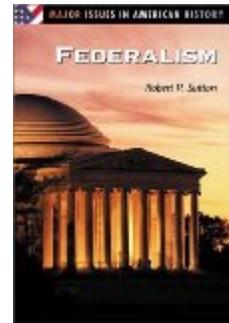
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Robert P. Sutton. *Federalism*. Westport and London: Greenwood Press, 2002. xxvii + 293 pp. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-313-31531-2.

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Many States, One Nation

Robert Sutton introduces teachers and students of United States history and United States government to “the issues and controversies surrounding the history of federalism from 1787” to the present (p. xiv).

According to Sutton, “Federalism is the form of government in the United States where separate states are united under one central authority but with specific powers granted to both components in a written constitution” (p. 1). The specific powers assigned to the federal government and to state governments are outlined in the Constitution of the United States.

On more than one occasion, states have accused the federal government of overstepping the constitutional limits of its power. Similarly, the federal government has occasionally challenged the constitutionality of the authority exercised by states. The result is an ongoing debate that represents a significant piece of the nation’s history, and a large cache of documents that record the debate.

Sutton traces the stages of the ongoing debate about federalism in a series of narratives. In each narrative, Sutton describes the occasion for each stage of the debate, explains the issue or issues generating each stage of the debate, and introduces the documents that represent that stage of the debate.

The documents are drawn from letters, speeches, editorials, resolutions, Supreme Court decisions, political party platforms, and first-person accounts. Several of the documents are printed in their entirety; others are excerpts from longer documents. The authors of the documents are presidents, congressmen, Supreme Court justices, and ordinary citizens. Together, the documents represent a wide range of opinion.

Sutton provides a helpful chronicle of the history of the debate about federalism in the United States. In addition, his analysis of the nature of federalism clarifies the limits of federalism. Finally, Sutton provides teachers and students with handy resources for further study of the various aspects of federalism.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

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