

from a possible impulse to serve two audiences. Taylor offers valuable context by charting the world around Ballou, but the book's subject often disappears in these sections. Such absences may suggest that Ballou is less central to the larger story than Taylor wishes. Conversely, Taylor's close analyses of the political and theological controversies in which Ballou participated are informative, but they might prove too granular for readers primarily interested in the wider story.

Perhaps because of these divergent impulses, Taylor's book never fully justifies Tolstoy's assessment of Ballou as a notable figure. Early on, Taylor suggests that one reason why Ballou is not better known is that he was merely "one of many reformers, religious journeymen, preachers, and utopians" of his day (2). This study does not elevate Ballou's significance beyond his being "one of many." Nevertheless, even as a representative example, Adin Ballou is a compelling figure, and Taylor has provided a valuable portrait of Ballou's life, work, and world.

David Mislin, *associate professor at Temple University, is a historian of the nineteenth and twentieth-century United States. He is the author of WASHINGTON GLADDEN'S CHURCH: THE MINISTER WHO MADE MODERN AMERICAN PROTESTANTISM* (2019).

*An Anti-Federalist Constitution: The Development of Dissent in the Ratification Debate.* By Michael J. Faber. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2022. Pp. 536. \$32.50 paperback.)

Of all the challenges Anti-Federalists faced during the ratification contest, perhaps the greatest was the absence of an alternative version of a constitution to offer for state convention delegates and newspaper readers to consider. Had there been an alternative, what might it have looked like? Which parts of the broad Anti-Federalist critique would it have emphasized?

Michael J. Faber's important book "is an effort to rehabilitate the Anti-Federalists" and to "identify and explain [their] ideology" (2). Anti-Federalists had a "clear and coherent" position which, over the course of the debate, "coalesced on a fairly

consistent theory of government” (x, 2). But Faber believes most scholars of Anti-Federalism have been trapped inside a Charles Beardian social class framework. Faber’s corrective is “to examine the development of ideas rather than events, and examine how the events and strategies shaped and changed those ideas” (21).

This book makes two significant contributions. First, where scholars have argued that opponents of the Constitution divided into elite, middling, and plebeian ranks based on socio-economic interests, Faber contends that a better categorization separates the movement into its three primary intellectual concerns: power, rights, and democracy. Each category of Anti-Federalist dissenters had a distinctive ideological position, identified with a region of the nation, and had an emblematic essayist. Rights Anti-Federalists feared violations of individual rights, were prominent in the south, and typified by “Federal Farmer.” Power Anti-Federalists saw the states as the bulwark of security for liberty and worried about consolidation of power at the national level. They were strongest in the north-east and were best represented in the debates by “Brutus.” Finally, Democratic Anti-Federalists sought a more thoroughly popular system of government, were strongest in the west and rural areas, and were given voice by “Centinel.”

But these three strands were neither evenly proportioned nor equally significant. Over time, the dominant arguments on the opposition side blended the Rights and Power dissent. As the Democratic position came to be seen as too radical, the other two converged, forging a bond that screened out the Democratic element. This convergence was far from a perfect fusion. Ultimately, Faber observes, the actual Bill of Rights reflected overwhelmingly the concerns of Rights Anti-Federalists. The first ten amendments did little for Power Anti-Federalists and almost nothing for Democratic critics of the Constitution.

The second major contribution is to present what the Anti-Federalists themselves did not—a full-blown draft of a constitution. Faber’s version is a heavily redacted and edited adaptation of the actual Constitution. He concedes that his prospective Anti-Federalist Constitution reflects chiefly the

concerns of the Power wing of the dissenters and Brutus in particular. Throughout the book Faber has leaned toward Brutus, noting that his essays were “Perhaps the finest opposition writings to emerge from the debates” (31). Later, in his draft Constitution’s treatment of the powers of Congress, he observes that “Brutus summed up quite succinctly the reason so many changes have been made to this section” (369). Similarly, he finds that “Since Brutus offered the best critique of the courts, the changes below lean heavily on his suggestions” (384). Finally, Faber acknowledges that while there could be many such alternative models, the one he put together might plausibly have won wide support and speculates that if Brutus had a document like Faber’s to compare to the actual Constitution, then “Brutus would find [Faber’s] far more agreeable” since it realized “‘a more perfect union’ on more explicitly federal terms” (396).

Oddly, the book’s final chapter undercuts this creation. Faber grants that “With the benefit of hindsight, it seems that the Anti-Federalist conception of government, if strictly adhered to and not adjusted to circumstances, would not have lasted” (397). Chief among its flaws is that its “strongest point . . . that it truly creates a government of enumerated powers, is also its weakest point.” The “fatal flaw” was “that this Constitution established a confederation disguised as a federal government” (398–99). Faber is no doubt correct, but this calls into question the entire exercise.

The book’s organization similarly detracts from its argumentation and stated goals. Faber begins with two important chapters that spell out his thesis and interpretation of the Anti-Federalists. He concludes with two chapters that present his version of an Anti-Federalist Constitution and then commentary on how it might have fared. The bulk of the book consists of fifteen chapters, some of which are excellent, that trace a state-by-state history of ratification—exactly what he claimed earlier that he would not attempt. As a result of this uneven allocation of space, Faber’s book rushes through its key contributions, failing to develop fully the points that make it unique.

For example, nearly buried yet deserving much greater elaboration, is Faber's critical insight—made in passing—that over time, three distinct positions effectively became two with the merging of Power and Rights Anti-Federalists. Only then, when “proponents of both arguments began to disavow their more radical Democratic brethren, did a clear opposition position begin to emerge, much too late in the debate to have much impact” (350–51). This is an exciting, potentially significant finding that gets brief mention twice—when Luther Martin in the Maryland debate became “the first significant figure” to practice this convergence (199); and again, when his New York chapter off-handedly observed that the “Rights and Power Anti-Federalist positions were not as effectively merged here as in Virginia” (267). For a book focused on the ideas of the Anti-Federalists to treat a major conceptual development so briefly is puzzling and leaves readers wondering how this convergence happened, who besides Luther Martin contributed to it, and how it led to the further marginalization of the Democratic strand.

We also learn early—in what seems a promise that the point will be developed—that the Rights Anti-Federalists “were the most open to compromise. . . . As such, it was this branch . . . to which the Federalists turned for support when it became clear that they needed to convince at least some people to change their minds” (44). This, too, is tantalizing stuff, potentially a major contribution to understanding Anti-Federalist thought and the internal dynamics of the ratification contest. But by the end of the book, this discernment remains underdeveloped. Faber charts a path to revealing interpretations grounded in his thorough reading of the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution* and the secondary literature. By trying to do so much, this project's potential may not be fully realized.

Todd Estes is a professor of history at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. He is completing a book manuscript on the ratification debate tentatively titled “Campaign for the Constitution.”