



The Rise of the Federal Colossus: The Growth of Federal Power from Lincoln to F.D.R. (Praeger Series on American Political Culture)

Peter Zavodnyik

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The Rise of the Federal Colossus: The Growth of Federal Power from Lincoln to F.D.R. offers readers a front-row seat for the debate over the proper extent of federal authority that extended from the Civil War to the Great Depression.

The Rise of the Federal Colossus argues that the critical period in the growth of federal power was not the New Deal and the three decades that followed, but the preceding seventy-two years when important precedents recognizing the national government's authority to aid citizens in distress, regulate labor, and foster economic growth were established. By the time of Franklin D. Roosevelt's inauguration, the constitutional impediments to an activist federal government had already been severely eroded.

The Rise of the Federal Colossus shows how inadequate state responses to the enormous changes that took place in American life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led many to demand federal action. It reviews the enactment of laws expanding the scope of federal activity as well as debates over the constitutionality of these measures. It also weighs landmark legislation of the period against the original understanding of the powers of Congress and examines how Americans approached the long-running debate over how the Constitution should be interpreted. Court opinions that serve as landmarks in the expansion of federal authority are also surveyed. The book also explores newspaper and magazine articles that reveal how Americans reacted to the growth of federal power. It places the evolution of the federal system in the context of the political contests of the period and reveals how questions of federalism dominated the national political stage during the middle third of our nation's history.

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