Subject: Our Federalist Republic
Posted by elektratig on Fri, 16 Jun 2006 01:44:18 GMT
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In the ratification debates, the proponents of the Constitution enunciated a new vision. The key lay in transferring sovereignty to "the People":"Instead of locating sovereignty in either the national government or the state governments, the Federalists had located it in the people at large. By asserting that all sovereignty rested with the people, the Federalists were not simply saying, as theorists had for ages, that all governmental power was derived from the people. Instead they were saying that sovereignty, the final supreme indivisible lawmaking authority, remained always with the people and that government was only a temporary and limited agency of the people -- lent out to the various governmental officials, so to speak, on a short-term, always recallable loan. No longer could any parts of the state and federal governments, event the so-called popular houses of representatives, ever fully represent the people; instead all elected parts of the governments -- senators and governors and presidents -- were now regarded in one way or another as simply partial agents of the people."From the essay "The Relevance and Irrelevance of John Adams" in Gordon S. Wood, Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different (Penguin Press 2006) at pp. 191-92.