
The Objectives of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal Program After the Great Depression

Several years into the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt was elected president under the Democratic ticket. The Great Depression was a time of crisis for America; almost a fourth of the labor force was unemployed, and many more only worked part time. Thousands of banks failed which resulted in people losing their savings. The Depression resulted in widespread homelessness and hunger of the poor without enough resources being given to lessen the hardships. Roosevelt started his presidency with the intention of passing legislations to provide relief and help bring the country out of the Depression. During the first hundred days of his presidency, multiple Bills and reforms were passed under what is known as the New Deal, to bolster the economy and provide relief to the needy. At the beginning of his second term in office, Roosevelt started the Second New Deal and sought to pass more progressive policies. If something didn't work well, then it would be improved upon or a new Bill would be made to take its place. The government reforms from Roosevelt's New Deals show that he was a Revolutionary rather than a Conservative.

One objective of the New Deal programs was to directly aid the people. Federal funds were allocated for the purpose of work programs. Millions of the previously unemployed were put to work creating dams, reservoirs, national park trails, and other public work projects. The largest program, the Works Projects Administration (WPA), employed over 8.5 million people. For the long term, Roosevelt created the Social Security Act (SSA). This provided unemployment compensation and aid to needy children. The SSA also provided federal retirement benefits to certain workers, funded through a special Social Security tax paid by those same workers and their employers. The Act was eventually modified to include the majority of the workforce and the transfer of benefits to widows of covered workers.

The other objective of the New Deal was to reform and provide aid to banks and industries in order to bolster the economy. One of the first bills Roosevelt introduced was the Emergency Banking Relief Bill, which passed with overwhelming support in both the House and the Senate. It gave the federal government the authority to revamp the banking system. To make it work, Roosevelt convinced Americans to deposit their money into the reopened banks to restore the financial system. The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) was enacted to provide a way for businesses in each industry to voluntarily create industry wide codes. Big businesses dominated, thus the coded ended up reflecting big business interests. The NIRA did not help with economic recovery and was put to an end by the Supreme Court when it was determined the Act overstepped the federal government's Constitutional bounds. The Agricultural

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Adjustment Act (AAA) was also deemed unconstitutional, but because of its popularity, it was rewritten to be accepted as legal by the Supreme Court. The AAA established a system of crop controls to limit surplus and offered subsidies to farmers who complied.

While the legislations and reforms passed under the New Deals greatly improved the economy, it wasn't until World War 2 that the years of the Great Depression finally ended. Franklin Roosevelt's presidency changed the role of federal government. It went from having a limited role to a more proactive role in the welfare of Americans. It also assumed more control of business practices in order to help the economy. This was due in a large part to Franklin Roosevelt and his revolutionary way of running the country as President during those hard times.

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