

CHAPTER 26

The New Deal

Franklin Roosevelt served longer as president than anyone else before or since, and during his twelve years in office he became more central to the life of the nation than any chief executive before him. Most important, his administration constructed a series of programs that permanently altered the federal government and its relationship to society.

By the end of the 1930s, the New Deal (as the Roosevelt program was called) had created many of the broad outlines of the political world we know today. It had constructed the foundations of the federal welfare system. It had extended national regulation over new areas of the economy. It had presided over the birth of the modern labor movement. It had made the government a major force in the agricultural economy. It dramatically expanded the role of Washington in supervising and funding major public works projects all over the nation, some of them of enormous size and scope, which contributed substantially to the economic growth of regions that had previously remained largely outside the new national economy. It had created a powerful coalition within the Democratic Party that would dominate American politics for most of the next thirty years. And it had produced the beginnings of a new liberal ideology that would govern reform efforts for several decades after the war.

One thing the New Deal had not done, however, was end the Great Depression. It had helped stop the disastrous downward spiral in 1933, and there had been a limited, if erratic, recovery in some areas after that. But by the end of 1939, many of the basic problems of the Depression remained unsolved. An estimated 15 percent of the work force remained unemployed. The gross national product was no larger than it had been ten years before.

The Roosevelt administration was in many ways the most politically successful presidency in American history. Franklin Roosevelt won four successive terms in office, two more than any other president, all of them by substantial margins, and two of them by landslides. His party controlled Congress throughout his presidency. He retained enormous popularity throughout his time in office. But the persistence of the Depression also created many challenges to the New Deal. Dissident groups on both the right and the left—some of them of considerable size and strength—mobilized outside the conventional party system to promote alternative paths to recovery. The American Communist Party attracted more members than it had ever attracted before and had significant influence in a number of areas of American life. Significant factions of the Democratic party, most notably southern conservatives, turned against the President's policies, joined with Republicans, and helped create a conservative coalition in Congress that was able to frustrate many of his goals.

Only the advent of World War II in 1940 and 1941 succeeded in ending the Great Depression and eliminating large-scale unemployment. It also brought to a close most of the domestic initiatives of the New Deal.

LAUNCHING THE NEW DEAL

Roosevelt's first task upon taking office was to alleviate the panic that was threatening to create chaos in the financial system. He did so in part by force of personality and in part by constructing very rapidly an ambitious and diverse program of legislation.

Restoring Confidence

Much of Roosevelt's success was a result of his ebullient personality. Beginning with his inaugural address, in which he assured the American people that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," and promised to take drastic, even warlike, action against the emergency, he projected an infectious optimism that helped alleviate the growing despair. He was the

first president to make regular use of the radio, and his friendly “fireside chats,” during which he explained his programs and plans to the people, helped build public confidence in the administration. Roosevelt held frequent informal press conferences and won the respect and the friendship of most reporters. Their regard for him was such that by unwritten agreement, no journalist ever photographed the president getting into or out of his car or being wheeled in his wheelchair. Much of the American public remained unaware throughout the Roosevelt years that the president’s legs were completely paralyzed. But Roosevelt could not rely on image alone. On March 6, two days after taking office, he issued a proclamation closing all American banks for four days until Congress could meet in special session to consider banking-reform legislation. So great was the panic about bank failures that the “bank holiday,” as the president euphemistically described it, created a general sense of relief. Three days later, Roosevelt sent to Congress the Emergency Banking Act, a generally conservative bill (much of it drafted by Hoover administration holdovers) designed primarily to protect the larger banks from being dragged down by the weakness of smaller ones. The bill provided for Treasury Department inspection of all banks before they would be allowed to reopen, for federal assistance to some troubled institutions, and for a thorough reorganization of those in the greatest difficulty. A confused and frightened Congress passed the bill within four hours of its introduction. “I can assure you,” Roosevelt told the public on March 12, in his first fireside chat, “that it is safer to keep your money in a reopened bank than under the mattress.” Whatever else the new law accomplished, it helped dispel the panic. Three quarters of the banks in the Federal Reserve system reopened within the next three days, and \$1 billion in hoarded currency and gold flowed back into them within a month. The immediate banking crisis was over.

On the morning after passage of the Emergency Banking Act, Roosevelt sent to Congress another measure—the Economy Act—designed to convince fiscally conservative Americans (and especially the business community) that the federal government was in safe, responsible hands. The act proposed to balance the federal budget by cutting the salaries of government employees and reducing pensions to veterans by as much as 15 percent. Otherwise, the president warned, the nation faced a \$1 billion deficit. Like the banking bill, this one passed through Congress almost instantly—despite heated protests from some congressional progressives.

Roosevelt also moved in his first days in office to put to rest one of the divisive issues of the 1920s. He supported and then signed a bill to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer with a 3.2 percent alcohol content—an interim measure pending the repeal of prohibition, for which a constitutional amendment (the Twenty-first) was already in process. The amendment was ratified later in 1933.

Agricultural Adjustment

These initial actions were largely stopgaps, to buy time for more comprehensive programs.

The first was the Agricultural Adjustment Act, which Congress passed in May 1933. Its most important feature was its provision for reducing crop production to end agricultural surpluses and halt the downward spiral of farm prices.

Under the provisions of the act, producers of seven basic commodities (wheat, cotton, corn, hogs, rice, tobacco, and dairy products) would decide on production limits for their crops.

The government, through the Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA), would then tell individual farmers how much they should produce and would pay them subsidies for leaving some of their land idle. A tax on food processing (for example, the milling of wheat)

would provide the funds for the new payments. Farm prices were to be subsidized up to the point of parity.

The AAA helped bring about a rise in prices for farm commodities in the years after 1933. Gross farm income increased by half in the first three years of the New Deal, and the agricultural economy as a whole emerged from the 1930s much more stable and prosperous than it had been in many years. The AAA did, however, favor larger farmers over smaller ones, particularly since local administration of its programs often fell into the hands of the most powerful producers in a community. By distributing payments to landowners, not those who worked the land, the government did little to discourage planters who were reducing their acreage from evicting tenants and sharecroppers and firing field hands.

In January 1936, the Supreme Court struck down the crucial provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act, arguing that the government had no constitutional authority to require farmers to limit production. But within a few weeks the administration had secured passage of new legislation (the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act), which permitted the government to pay farmers to reduce production so as to “conserve soil,” prevent erosion, and accomplish other secondary goals. The Court did not interfere with the new laws.

The administration launched several efforts to assist poor farmers as well. The Resettlement Administration, established in 1935, and its successor, the Farm Security Administration, created in 1937, provided loans to help farmers cultivating submarginal soil to relocate to better lands. But the programs never moved more than a few thousand farmers. More effective was the Rural Electrification Administration, created in 1935, which worked to make electric power available for the first time to thousands of farmers through utility cooperatives.

Industrial Recovery

Ever since 1931, leaders of the United States Chamber of Commerce and many others had been urging the government to adopt an antideflation scheme that would permit trade associations to cooperate in stabilizing prices within their industries. Existing antitrust laws clearly forbade such practices, and Herbert Hoover had refused to endorse suspension of the laws. The Roosevelt administration was more receptive. In exchange for relaxing antitrust provisions, however, New Dealers insisted on other provisions. Business leaders would have to make important concessions to labor—recognize the workers’ right to bargain collectively through unions—to ensure that the incomes of workers would rise along with prices. And to help create jobs and increase consumer buying power, the administration added a major program of public works spending. The result of these and many other impulses was the National Industrial Recovery Act, which Congress passed in June 1933.

At first, the new program appeared to work miracles. At its center was a new federal agency, the National Recovery Administration (NRA), under the direction of the flamboyant and energetic Hugh S. Johnson. Johnson called on every business establishment in the nation to accept a temporary “blanket code”: a minimum wage of between 30 and 40 cents an hour, a maximum workweek of thirty-five to forty hours, and the abolition of child labor.

Adherence to the code, he claimed, would raise consumer purchasing power and increase employment. At the same time, Johnson negotiated another, more specific set of codes with leaders of the nation’s major industries. These industrial codes set floors below which no company would lower prices or wages in its search for a competitive advantage. He quickly won agreements from almost every major industry in the country.

From the beginning, however, the NRA encountered serious difficulties. The codes themselves were hastily and often poorly written. Administering them was beyond the capacities of federal officials with no prior experience in running so vast a program. Large

producers consistently dominated the code-writing process and ensured that the new regulations would work to their advantage and to the disadvantage of smaller firms. And the codes at times did more than simply set floors under prices; they actively and artificially raised them—sometimes to levels higher than the market could sustain.

Other NRA goals did not progress as quickly as the efforts to raise prices. Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act promised workers the right to form unions and engage in collective bargaining and encouraged many workers to join unions for the first time. But Section 7(a) contained no enforcement mechanisms. Hence recognition of unions by employers (and thus the significant wage increases the unions were committed to winning) did not follow. The Public Works Administration (PWA), established to administer the National Industrial Recovery Act's spending programs, only gradually allowed the \$3.3 billion in public works funds to trickle out. Not until 1938 was the PWA budget pumping an appreciable amount of money into the economy.

Perhaps the clearest evidence of the NRA's failure was that industrial production actually declined in the months after the agency's establishment—from an index of 101 in July 1933 to 71 in November—despite the rise in prices that the codes had helped to create. By the spring of 1934, the NRA was besieged by criticism, and businessmen were flaunting many of its provisions. That fall, Roosevelt pressured Johnson to resign and established a new board of directors to oversee the NRA. Then in 1935, the Supreme Court intervened.

In 1935, a case came before the Court involving alleged NRA code violations by the Schechter brothers, who operated a wholesale poultry business confined to Brooklyn, New York. The Court ruled unanimously that the Schechters were not engaged in interstate commerce (and thus not subject to federal regulation) and, further, that Congress had unconstitutionally delegated legislative power to the president to draft the NRA codes. The

justices struck down the legislation establishing the agency. Roosevelt denounced the justices for their “horse-and-buggy” interpretation of the interstate commerce clause. He was rightly concerned, for the reasoning in the Schechter case threatened many other New Deal programs as well. But the Court’s destruction of the NRA itself gave the New Deal a convenient excuse for ending a failed experiment.

Regional Planning

The AAA and the NRA largely reflected the beliefs of New Dealers who favored economic planning but wanted private interests (farmers or business leaders) to dominate the planning process. Other reformers believed that the government itself should be the chief planning agent in the economy. Their most conspicuous success, and one of the most celebrated accomplishments of the New Deal, was an unprecedented experiment in regional planning: the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA).

The TVA had its roots in a political controversy of the 1920s. Progressive reformers had agitated for years for public development of the nation’s water resources as a source of cheap electric power. In particular, they had urged completion of a great dam at Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee River in Alabama—a dam begun during World War I but left unfinished when the war ended. But opposition from the utilities companies had been too powerful to overcome.

In 1932, however, one of the great utility empires—that of the electricity magnate Samuel Insull—collapsed spectacularly, amid widely publicized exposés of corruption. Hostility to the utilities soon grew so intense that the companies were no longer able to block the public power movement. The result in May 1933 was the Tennessee Valley Authority. The TVA was authorized to complete the dam at Muscle Shoals and build others in the region, and to generate and sell electricity from them to the public at reasonable rates. It was also intended

to be an agent for a comprehensive redevelopment of the entire region: for stopping the disastrous flooding that had plagued the Tennessee Valley for centuries, for encouraging the development of local industries, for supervising a substantial program of reforestation, and for helping farmers improve productivity.

Opposition by conservatives within the administration ultimately blocked many of the ambitious social planning projects proposed by the more visionary TVA administrators, but the Authority revitalized the region in numerous ways. It improved water transportation, virtually eliminated flooding in the region, and provided electricity to thousands who had never before had it. Throughout the country, largely because of the “yardstick” provided by the TVA’s cheap production of electricity, private power rates declined. Even so, the Tennessee Valley remained a generally impoverished region despite the TVA’s efforts. And like many other New Deal programs, it made no serious effort to challenge local customs and racial prejudices.

Currency, Banks, and the Stock Market

Roosevelt was not an inflationist at heart, but he soon came to consider the gold standard a major obstacle to the restoration of adequate prices. On April 18, 1933, the president made the shift off the gold standard official with an executive order. By itself, the repudiation of the gold standard meant relatively little. But both before and after the April decision, the administration experimented in various ways with manipulating the value of the dollar—by making substantial purchases of gold and silver and later by establishing a new, fixed standard for the dollar (reducing its gold content substantially from the 1932 amount). The resort to government-managed currency—that is, to a dollar whose value could be raised or lowered by government policy according to economic circumstances—created an important precedent for future federal policies and permanently altered the relationship between the

public and private sectors. It did not, however, have any immediate impact on the depressed American economy.

Through other legislation, the early New Deal increased federal authority over previously unregulated or weakly regulated areas of the economy. The Glass-Steagall Act of June 1933 gave the government authority to curb irresponsible speculation by banks. More important, perhaps, it established the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, which guaranteed all bank deposits up to \$2,500. Finally, in 1935, Congress passed a major banking act that transferred much of the authority once wielded by the regional Federal Reserve banks to the Federal Reserve Board in Washington.

To protect investors in the stock market, Congress passed the so-called Truth in Securities Act of 1933, requiring corporations issuing new securities to provide full and accurate information about them to the public. Another act of June 1934 established the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to police the stock market. Among other things, the establishment of the SEC was an indication of how far the financial establishment had fallen in public estimation. In earlier years, J. P. Morgan and other important financiers could have wielded enough influence to stop such government interference in the financial world. Now Morgan's son and successor could not even get a respectful hearing on Capitol Hill. The criminal trials of a number of once-respected Wall Street figures for grand larceny and fraud (including the conviction and imprisonment of Richard Whitney, onetime head of the New York Stock Exchange and a close Morgan associate) eroded the public stature of the financial community still further.

The Growth of Federal Relief

Although Roosevelt did not consider relief to the unemployed his most important task, among his first acts in office was the establishment of the Federal Emergency Relief

Administration (FERA), which provided cash grants to states to prop up bankrupt relief agencies. To administer the program, he chose the director of the New York State relief agency, Harry Hopkins, who disbursed the FERA grants widely and rapidly. But both Hopkins and Roosevelt had misgivings about establishing a government “dole.”

They felt somewhat more comfortable with another form of government assistance: work relief. Thus when it became clear that the FERA grants were not enough, the administration established a second program: the Civil Works Administration (CWA). Between November 1933 and April 1934, it put more than 4 million people to work on temporary projects. Some of the projects were of lasting value, such as the construction of roads, schools, and parks; others were little more than make-work. To Hopkins, however, the important thing was pumping money into an economy badly in need of it and providing assistance to people with nowhere else to turn.

Roosevelt’s favorite relief project was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Established in the first weeks of the new administration, the CCC was designed to provide employment to the millions of young men who could find no jobs in the cities. The CCC created camps in national parks and forests and in other rural and wilderness settings. There young men (women were excluded from the program) worked in a semimilitary environment on such projects as planting trees, building reservoirs, developing parks, and improving agricultural irrigation. CCC camps were segregated by race. The vast majority of them were restricted to whites, but a few were reserved for blacks, Mexicans, and Indians. Most such jobs went to men, but women had access to some employment—mostly in lower-paid programs like sewing projects.

Mortgage relief was a pressing need for millions of farm owners and homeowners. The Farm Credit Administration, which within two years refinanced one-fifth of all farm mortgages in

the United States, was one response to that problem. The Frazier-Lemke Farm Bankruptcy Act of 1933 was another. It enabled some farmers to regain their land even after the foreclosure of their mortgages. Despite such efforts, however, 25 percent of all American farm owners had lost their land by 1934. Homeowners were similarly troubled, and in June 1933 the administration established the Home Owners' Loan Corporation, which by 1936 had refinanced the mortgages of more than 1 million householders. A year later, Congress established the Federal Housing Administration to insure mortgages for new construction and home repairs.

THE NEW DEAL IN TRANSITION

Seldom has an American president enjoyed such remarkable popularity as Franklin Roosevelt did during his first two years in office. But by early 1935, with no end to the Depression yet in sight, the New Deal found itself the target of fierce public criticism. In the spring of 1935, partly in response to these growing attacks, Roosevelt launched an ambitious new program of legislation that has often been called the "Second New Deal."

Critics of the New Deal

Some of the most strident attacks on the New Deal came from critics on the right. Roosevelt had tried for a time to conciliate conservatives and business leaders. By the end of 1934, however, it was clear that the American right in general, and much of the corporate world in particular, had become irreconcilably hostile to the New Deal. In August 1934, a group of the most fervent (and wealthiest) Roosevelt opponents, led by members of the Du Pont family, formed the American Liberty League, designed specifically to arouse public opposition to the New Deal's "dictatorial" policies and its supposed attacks on free enterprise. But the new organization was never able to expand its constituency much beyond the northern industrialists who had founded it.

Roosevelt's critics on the far left also managed to produce alarm among some supporters of the administration, but like the conservatives, they proved to have only limited strength. The Communist Party, the Socialist Party, and other radical and semiradical organizations were at times harshly critical of the New Deal. But they too failed ever to attract genuine mass support.

More menacing to the New Deal than either the far right or the far left was a group of dissident political movements that defied easy ideological classification. Some gained substantial public support within particular states and regions. And three men succeeded in mobilizing genuinely national followings. Dr. Francis E. Townsend, an elderly California physician, rose from obscurity to lead a movement of more than 5 million members with his plan for federal pensions for the elderly. According to the Townsend Plan, all Americans over the age of sixty would receive monthly government pensions of \$200, provided they retired (thus freeing jobs for younger, unemployed Americans) and spent the money in full each month (which would pump needed funds into the economy). By 1935, the Townsend Plan had attracted the support of many older men and women. And while the plan itself made little progress in Congress, the public sentiment behind it helped build support for the Social Security system, which Congress did approve in 1935.

Father Charles E. Coughlin, a Catholic priest in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak, Michigan, achieved even greater renown through his weekly sermons broadcast nationally over the radio. In later years, Coughlin became notorious for his sympathy for fascism and his outspoken anti-semitism. But until at least 1937, he was known primarily as an advocate for changing the banking and currency systems. He proposed a series of monetary reforms—remonetization of silver, issuing of greenbacks, and nationalization of the banking system—that he insisted would restore prosperity and ensure economic justice. At first a warm

supporter of Franklin Roosevelt, by late 1934 Coughlin had become disheartened by what he claimed was the president's failure to deal harshly enough with the "money powers." In the spring of 1935, he established his own political organization, the National Union for Social Justice. He was widely believed to have one of the largest regular radio audiences of anyone in America.

Most alarming of all to the administration was the growing national popularity of Senator Huey P. Long of Louisiana. Long had risen to power in his home state through his strident attacks on the banks, oil companies, and utilities and on the conservative political oligarchy allied with them. Elected governor in 1928, he launched an assault on his opponents so thorough and forceful that they were soon left with virtually no political power whatsoever. Many claimed that he had, in effect, become a dictator. But he also maintained the overwhelming support of the Louisiana electorate, in part because of his flamboyant personality and in part because of his solid record of conventional progressive accomplishments: building roads, schools, and hospitals; revising the tax codes; distributing free textbooks; lowering utility rates. Barred by law from succeeding himself as governor, he ran in 1930 for a seat in the United States Senate and won easily.

Long, like Coughlin, supported Franklin Roosevelt for president in 1932. But within six months of Roosevelt's inauguration he had broken with the president. As an alternative to the New Deal, he advocated a drastic program of wealth redistribution, a program he ultimately named the Share-Our-Wealth Plan. The government, he claimed, could end the Depression easily by using the tax system to confiscate the surplus riches of the wealthiest men and women in America and distribute these surpluses to the rest of the population. That would, he claimed, allow the government to guarantee every family a minimum "homestead" of \$5,000 and an annual wage of \$2,500. In 1934, Long established his own

national organization: the Share-Our-Wealth Society, which soon attracted a large following through much of the nation. A poll by the Democratic National Committee in the spring of 1935 disclosed that Long might attract more than 10 percent of the vote if he ran as a third-party candidate, possibly enough to tip a close election to the Republicans. An increasing number of advisers were warning Roosevelt that he would have to do something dramatic to counter their strength.

The “Second New Deal”

Roosevelt launched the so-called Second New Deal in the spring of 1935 in response both to the growing political pressures and to the continuing economic crisis. The new proposals represented, if not a new direction, at least a shift in the emphasis of New Deal policy.

Perhaps the most conspicuous change was in the administration’s attitude toward big business. Symbolically at least, the president was now willing to attack corporate interests openly. In March, for example, he proposed to Congress an act designed to break up the great utility holding companies, and he spoke harshly of monopolistic control of their industry. The Holding Company Act of 1935 was the result, although furious lobbying by the utilities led to amendments that sharply limited its effects.

Equally alarming to affluent Americans was a series of tax reforms proposed by the president in 1935, a program conservatives quickly labeled a “soak-the-rich” scheme.

Apparently designed to undercut the appeal of Huey Long’s Share-Our-Wealth Plan, the Roosevelt proposals called for establishing the highest and most progressive peacetime tax rates in history—although the actual impact of these rates was limited.

The Supreme Court decision in 1935 to strike down the National Industrial Recovery Act also invalidated Section 7(a) of the act, which had guaranteed workers the right to organize and bargain collectively. A group of progressives in Congress led by Senator Robert E.

Wagner of New York introduced what became the National Labor Relations Act of 1935. The new law, popularly known as the Wagner Act, provided workers with a crucial enforcement mechanism missing from the 1933 law: the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which would have power to compel employers to recognize and bargain with legitimate unions. The president was not entirely happy with the bill, but he signed it anyway. That was in large part because American workers themselves had by 1935 become so important and vigorous a force that Roosevelt realized his own political future would depend in part on responding to their demands.

Labor Militancy

The emergence of a powerful trade union movement in the 1930s was one of the most important social and political developments of the decade. It occurred partly in response to government efforts to enhance the power of unions, but it was also a result of the increased militancy of American workers and their leaders. In the 1930s, many of the factors that had previously impeded militancy vanished or grew weaker. Business leaders and industrialists lost (at least temporarily) the ability to control government policies. Equally important, new and more militant labor organizations emerged to challenge the established, relatively conservative unions.

The growing militancy first became obvious in 1934, when newly organized workers (many of them inspired by the collective bargaining provisions of the National Industrial Recovery Act) demonstrated an assertiveness and at times radicalism seldom seen in recent years. It was soon clear, however, that without stronger legal protection, most organizing drives would end in frustration. Once the Wagner Act became law, the search for more effective forms of organization rapidly gained strength in labor ranks.

The American Federation of Labor remained committed to the idea of the craft union: organizing workers on the basis of their skills. But that concept had little to offer unskilled laborers, who now constituted the bulk of the industrial work force. During the 1930s, therefore, a newer concept of labor organization challenged the craft union ideal: industrial unionism. Advocates of this approach argued that all workers in a particular industry should be organized in a single union, regardless of what functions the workers performed. All autoworkers should be in a single automobile union; all steelworkers should be in a single steel union. United in this way, workers would greatly increase their power.

Leaders of the AFL craft unions for the most part opposed the new concept. But industrial unionism found a number of important advocates, most prominent among them John L. Lewis, the talented, flamboyant, and eloquent leader of the United Mine Workers. At first, Lewis and his allies attempted to work within the AFL, but friction between the new industrial organizations Lewis was promoting and the older craft unions grew rapidly. At the 1935 AFL convention, Lewis became embroiled in a series of angry confrontations (and one celebrated fistfight) with craft union leaders before finally walking out. A few weeks later, he created the Committee on Industrial Organization. When the AFL expelled the new committee and all the industrial unions it represented, Lewis renamed the committee the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), established it in 1936 as an organization directly rivaling the AFL, and became its first president.

The CIO expanded the constituency of the labor movement. It was more receptive to women and to blacks than the AFL had been, in part because women and blacks were more likely to be relegated to unskilled jobs and in part because CIO organizing drives targeted previously unorganized industries (textiles, laundries, tobacco factories, and others) where women and minorities constituted much of the work force. The CIO was also a more

militant organization than the AFL. By the time of the 1936 schism, it was already engaged in major organizing battles in the automobile and steel industries.

Organizing Battles

Out of several competing auto unions, the United Auto Workers (UAW) was gradually emerging preeminent in the early and mid-1930s. But although it was gaining recruits, it was making little progress in winning recognition from the corporations. In December 1936, however, autoworkers employed a controversial and effective new technique for challenging corporate opposition: the sit-down strike. Employees in several General Motors plants in Detroit simply sat down inside the plants, refusing either to work or to leave, thus preventing the company from using strikebreakers. The tactic spread to other locations, and by February 1937 strikers had occupied seventeen GM plants. While male workers remained in the factories, female supporters—relatives, friends, and co-workers of the strikers—provided critical support. They demonstrated on behalf of the strikers, lobbied on their behalf with state and local officials, and provided food, clothing, and other needs to the men inside. The strikers ignored court orders and local police efforts to force them to vacate the buildings. When Michigan's governor, Frank Murphy, a liberal Democrat, refused to call up the National Guard to clear out the strikers, and when the federal government also refused to intervene on behalf of employers, General Motors relented. In February 1937 it became the first major manufacturer to recognize the UAW; other automobile companies soon did the same. The sit-down strike proved effective for rubber workers and others as well, but it survived only briefly as a labor technique. Its apparent illegality aroused so much public opposition that labor leaders soon abandoned it.

In the steel industry, the battle for unionization was less easily won. In 1936, the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee (SWOC; later the United Steelworkers of America) began a

major organizing drive involving thousands of workers and frequent, at times bitter, strikes. In March 1937, to the surprise of almost everyone, U.S. Steel, the giant of the industry, recognized the union rather than risk a costly strike at a time when it sensed itself on the verge of recovery from the Depression. But the smaller companies (known collectively as “Little Steel”) were less accommodating. On Memorial Day 1937, a group of striking workers from Republic Steel gathered with their families for a picnic and demonstration in South Chicago. When they attempted to march peacefully (and legally) toward the steel plant, police opened fire on them. Ten demonstrators were killed; another ninety were wounded. Despite a public outcry against the “Memorial Day Massacre,” the harsh tactics of Little Steel companies succeeded. The 1937 strike failed.

But the victory of Little Steel was one of the last gasps of the kind of brutal strikebreaking that had proved so effective in the past. In 1937 alone, there were 4,720 strikes—over 80 percent of them settled in favor of the unions. By the end of the year, more than 8 million workers were members of unions recognized as official bargaining units by employers (as compared with 3 million in 1932). By 1941, that number had expanded to 10 million and included the workers of Little Steel, whose employers had finally recognized the SWOC.

Social Security

From the first moments of the New Deal, important members of the administration, most notably Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the first woman ever named to a position in the Cabinet, had been lobbying for a system of federally sponsored social insurance for the elderly and the unemployed, as many other women progressives had been doing for years. In 1935, Roosevelt gave public support to what became the Social Security Act, which Congress passed the same year. It established several distinct programs. For the elderly, there were two types of assistance. Those who were presently destitute could receive up to \$15 a month in

federal assistance. More important for the future, many Americans presently working were incorporated into a pension system, to which they and their employers would contribute by paying a payroll tax; it would provide them with an income on retirement. Pension payments would not begin until 1942 and even then would provide only \$10 to \$85 a month to recipients. And broad categories of workers (including domestic servants and agricultural laborers, occupations with disproportionate numbers of blacks and women) were excluded from the program. But the act was a crucial first step in building the nation's most important social program for the elderly.

In addition, the Social Security Act created a system of unemployment insurance, which employers alone would finance and which made it possible for workers laid off from their jobs to receive temporary government assistance. It also established a limited system (later expanded) of federal aid to people with disabilities and a program of aid to dependent children.

The framers of the Social Security Act wanted to create a system of "insurance," not "welfare." And the largest programs (old-age pensions and unemployment insurance) were in many ways similar to private insurance programs, with contributions from participants and benefits available to all. But the act also provided considerable direct assistance based on need—to the elderly poor, to those with disabilities, to dependent children and their mothers. These groups were widely perceived to be small and genuinely unable to support themselves. But in later generations the programs for these groups would expand until they assumed dimensions that the planners of Social Security had neither foreseen nor desired.

New Directions in Relief

Social Security was designed primarily to fulfill long-range goals. But millions of unemployed Americans had immediate needs. To help them, the Roosevelt administration established in

1935 the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Like the Civil Works Administration and other earlier efforts, the WPA established a system of work relief for the unemployed. But it was much bigger than the earlier agencies, both in the size of its budget (\$5 billion at first) and in the energy and imagination of its operations.

Under the direction of Harry Hopkins, the WPA was responsible for building or renovating 110,000 public buildings (schools, post offices, government office buildings) and for constructing almost 600 airports, more than 500,000 miles of roads, and over 100,000 bridges. In the process, the WPA kept an average of 2.1 million workers employed and pumped needed money into the economy.

The WPA also displayed remarkable flexibility and imagination in offering assistance to those whose occupations did not fit into any traditional category of relief. The Federal Writers Project of the WPA, for example, gave unemployed writers a chance to do their work and receive a government salary. The Federal Arts Project, similarly, helped painters, sculptors, and others to continue their careers. The Federal Music Project and the Federal Theater Project oversaw the production of concerts and plays, creating work for unemployed musicians, actors, and directors. Other relief agencies emerged alongside the WPA. The National Youth Administration (NYA) provided work and scholarship assistance to high-school and college-age men and women. The Emergency Housing Division of the Public Works Administration began federal sponsorship of public housing.

Men and women alike were in distress in the 1930s (as in all difficult times). But the new welfare system dealt with members of the two sexes in very different ways. For men, the government concentrated mainly on work relief—on such programs as the CCC, the CWA, and the WPA, all of which were overwhelmingly male, and—through the Social Security Act—pensions and unemployment insurance, both structured initially to assist mostly men.

The principal government aid to women was not work relief but cash assistance—most notably through the Aid to Dependent Children program of Social Security, which was designed largely to assist single mothers. This disparity in treatment reflected a widespread assumption that men constituted the bulk of the paid work force and that women needed to be treated within the context of the family. In fact, millions of women were already employed by the 1930s.

The 1936 “Referendum”

For a time in 1935 there had seemed reason to question the president’s prospects for reelection. But by the middle of 1936—with the economy visibly reviving—there could be little doubt that he would win a second term. The Republican Party nominated the moderate governor of Kansas, Alf M. Landon, who waged a generally pallid campaign. Roosevelt’s dissident challengers now appeared powerless. One reason was the violent death of their most effective leader, Huey Long, who was assassinated in Louisiana in September 1935. Another reason was the ill-fated alliance among Father Coughlin, Dr. Townsend, and Gerald L. K. Smith (an intemperate henchman of Huey Long), who joined forces that summer to establish a new political movement—the Union Party, which nominated an undistinguished North Dakota congressman, William Lemke, for president.

The result was the greatest landslide in American history to that point. Roosevelt polled just under 61 percent of the vote to Landon’s 36 percent and carried every state except Maine and Vermont. The Democrats increased their already large majorities in both houses of Congress. The Union Party received fewer than 900,000 votes.

The election results demonstrated the party realignment that the New Deal had produced. The Democrats now controlled a broad coalition of western and southern farmers, the urban working classes, the poor and unemployed, and the black communities of northern cities, as

well as traditional progressives and committed new liberals—a coalition that constituted a substantial majority of the electorate. It would be decades before the Republican Party could again create a lasting majority coalition of its own.

THE NEW DEAL IN DISARRAY

Roosevelt emerged from the 1936 election at the zenith of his popularity. Within months, however, the New Deal was mired in serious new difficulties—a result of continuing opposition, the president’s own political errors, and major economic setbacks.

The Court Fight

The 1936 mandate, Franklin Roosevelt believed, made it possible for him to do something about the problem of the Supreme Court. No program of reform, he had become convinced, could long survive the conservative justices, who had already struck down the NRA and the AAA and threatened to invalidate even more legislation.

In February 1937, Roosevelt sent a surprise message to Capitol Hill proposing a general overhaul of the federal court system; included among the many provisions was one to add up to six new justices to the Supreme Court. The courts were “overworked,” he claimed, and needed additional manpower and younger blood to enable them to cope with their increasing burdens. But Roosevelt’s real purpose was to give himself the opportunity to appoint new, liberal justices and change the ideological balance of the Court.

Conservatives were outraged at the “Court-packing plan,” and even many Roosevelt supporters were disturbed by what they considered evidence of the president’s hunger for power. Still, Roosevelt might well have persuaded Congress to approve at least a compromise measure had not the Supreme Court itself intervened. Of the nine justices, three reliably supported the New Deal, and four reliably opposed it. Of the remaining two, Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes often sided with the progressives and Associate Justice

Owen J. Roberts usually voted with the conservatives. On March 29, 1937, Roberts, Hughes, and the three progressive justices voted together to uphold a state minimum-wage law—in the case of *West Coast Hotel v. Parrish*—thus reversing a 5-to-4 decision of the previous year invalidating a similar law. Two weeks later, again by a 5-to-4 margin, the Court upheld the Wagner Act, and in May it validated the Social Security Act. Whether or not for that reason, the Court’s newly moderate position made the Court-packing bill seem unnecessary. Congress ultimately defeated it.

On one level, the affair was a significant victory for Franklin Roosevelt. The Court was no longer an obstacle to New Deal reforms, particularly after the older justices began to retire, to be replaced by Roosevelt appointees. But the Court-packing episode did lasting political damage to the administration. From 1937 on, southern Democrats and other conservatives voted against Roosevelt’s measures much more often than they had in the past.

Retrenchment and Recession

By the summer of 1937, the national income, which had dropped from \$82 billion in 1929 to \$40 billion in 1932, had risen to nearly \$72 billion. Other economic indices showed similar advances. Roosevelt seized on these improvements as an excuse to try to balance the federal budget, convinced by Treasury secretary Henry Morgenthau and many economists that the real danger now was no longer depression but inflation. Between January and August 1937, for example, he cut the WPA in half, laying off 1.5 million relief workers. A few weeks later, the fragile boom collapsed. The index of industrial production dropped from 117 in August 1937 to 76 in May 1938. Four million additional workers lost their jobs. Economic conditions were soon almost as bad as they had been in the bleak days of 1932–1933.

The recession of 1937, known to the president’s critics as the “Roosevelt recession,” was a result of many factors. But to many observers at the time (including, apparently, the

president himself), it seemed to be a direct result of the administration's unwise decision to reduce spending. And so in April 1938, the president asked Congress for an emergency appropriation of \$5 billion for public works and relief programs, and government funds soon began pouring into the economy once again. Within a few months, another tentative recovery seemed to be under way, and the advocates of spending pointed to it as proof of the validity of their approach.

At about the same time, at the urging of a group of younger, antimonopolist liberals in the administration, Roosevelt sent a stinging message to Congress, vehemently denouncing what he called an "unjustifiable concentration of economic power" and asking for the creation of a commission to examine that concentration with an eye to major reforms in the antitrust laws. In response, Congress established the Temporary National Economic Committee (TNEC), whose members included representatives of both houses of Congress and officials from several executive agencies. Also that spring, Roosevelt appointed a new head of the antitrust division of the Justice Department: Thurman Arnold, a Yale Law School professor who soon proved to be the most vigorous director ever to serve in that office.

Later in 1938, the administration successfully supported one of its most ambitious pieces of labor legislation, the Fair Labor Standards Act, which for the first time established a national minimum wage and a forty-hour work week, and which also placed strict limits on child labor. Like Social Security, this act was the culmination of years of effort by women progressives. And also like Social Security, the Act at first excluded from its provisions the great majority of women and minority workers.

Despite these achievements, however, by the end of 1938 the New Deal had essentially come to an end. Congressional opposition now made it difficult for the president to enact any major new programs. But more important, perhaps, the threat of world crisis hung heavy

in the political atmosphere, and Roosevelt was gradually growing more concerned with persuading a reluctant nation to prepare for war than with pursuing new avenues of reform.

LIMITS AND LEGACIES OF THE NEW DEAL

In the 1930s, Roosevelt's principal critics were conservatives, who accused him of abandoning the Constitution and establishing a menacing, even tyrannical state. In more recent years, the New Deal's most visible critics have attacked it from the left, pointing to the major problems it left unsolved and the important groups it failed to represent. A full understanding of the New Deal requires coming to terms with the sources of both critiques, by examining both its achievements and its limits.

The Idea of the “Broker State”

In 1933, many New Dealers dreamed of using their new popularity and authority somehow to remake American capitalism—to produce new forms of cooperation and control that would create a genuinely harmonious, ordered economic world. By 1939, it was clear that what they had created was in fact something quite different. But rather than bemoan the gap between their original intentions and their ultimate achievements, New Deal liberals, both in 1939 and in later years, chose to accept what they had produced and to celebrate it—to use it as a model for future reform efforts.

What they had created was something that in later years would become known as the “broker state.” Instead of forging all elements of society into a single, harmonious unit, as some reformers had once hoped to do, the real achievement of the New Deal was to elevate and strengthen new interest groups so as to allow them to compete more effectively in the national marketplace. The New Deal made the federal government a mediator in that continuous competition—a force that could intervene when necessary to help some groups and limit the power of others. In 1933, there had been only one great interest group (albeit a

varied and divided one) with genuine power in the national economy: the corporate world. By the end of the 1930s, American business found itself competing for influence with an increasingly powerful labor movement, with an organized agricultural economy, and with aroused consumers. In later years, the “broker state” idea would expand to embrace other groups as well: racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; women; and many others. Thus, one of the enduring legacies of the New Deal was to make the federal government a protector of interest groups and a supervisor of the competition among them, rather than an instrument attempting to create a universal harmony of interests.

What determines which interest groups receive government assistance in a “broker state”? The experience of the New Deal suggests that such assistance goes largely to those groups able to exercise enough political or economic power to demand it. Thus in the 1930s, farmers—after decades of organization and agitation—and workers—as the result of militant action and mass mobilization—won from the government new and important protections. Other groups, less well organized perhaps but politically important because so numerous and visible, won more limited assistance as well: imperiled homeowners, the unemployed, the elderly.

By the same token, the interest-group democracy that the New Deal came to represent offered much less to those groups either too weak to demand assistance or not visible enough to arouse widespread public support. And yet those same groups were often the ones most in need of help from their government. One of the important limits of the New Deal, therefore, was its very modest record on behalf of several important social groups.

African Americans and the New Deal

One group the New Deal did relatively little to assist was African Americans. The administration was not hostile to black aspirations. On the contrary, the New Deal was

probably more sympathetic to them than any previous government of the twentieth century. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke throughout the 1930s on behalf of racial justice and put continuing pressure on her husband and others in the federal government to ease discrimination against blacks. She was also partially responsible for what was, symbolically at least, one of the most important events of the decade for African Americans. When the black singer Marian Anderson was refused permission in the spring of 1939 to give a concert in the auditorium of the Daughters of the American Revolution (Washington's only concert hall), Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the organization and then (along with Interior Secretary Harold Ickes, another champion of racial equality) helped secure government permission for her to sing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Anderson's Easter Sunday concert attracted 75,000 people and became, in effect, one of the first modern civil rights demonstrations. The president himself appointed a number of blacks to significant second-level positions in his administration. Roosevelt appointees such as Robert Weaver, William Hastie, and Mary McLeod Bethune created an informal network of officeholders who consulted frequently with one another and who became known as the "Black Cabinet." Eleanor Roosevelt, Harold Ickes, and Harry Hopkins all made efforts to ensure that New Deal relief programs did not exclude blacks; and by 1935, perhaps a quarter of all African Americans were receiving some form of government assistance. One result was a historic change in black electoral behavior. As late as 1932, most American blacks were voting Republican, as they had since the Civil War. By 1936, more than 90 percent of them were voting Democratic—the beginnings of a political alliance that would endure for decades. Blacks supported Franklin Roosevelt because they knew he was not their enemy. But they had few illusions that the New Deal represented a millennium in American race relations. For example, the president was never willing to risk losing the support of southern

Democrats by supporting legislation to make lynching a federal crime. Nor would he endorse efforts in Congress to ban the poll tax, one of the most potent tools by which white southerners kept blacks from voting.

New Deal relief agencies did not challenge, and indeed reinforced, existing patterns of discrimination. The Civilian Conservation Corps established separate black camps. The NRA codes tolerated paying blacks less than whites doing the same jobs. Blacks were largely excluded from employment in the TVA. The Federal Housing Administration refused to provide mortgages to blacks moving into white neighborhoods, and the first public housing projects financed by the federal government were racially segregated. The WPA routinely relegated black, Hispanic, and Asian workers to the least-skilled and lowest-paying jobs, or excluded them altogether; when funding ebbed, nonwhites, like women, were among the first to be dismissed.

The New Deal was not hostile to black Americans, and it did much to help them advance. But it refused to make the issue of race a significant part of its agenda.

The New Deal and the “Indian Problem”

In many respects, government policies toward the Indian tribes in the 1930s were simply a continuation of the long-established effort to encourage Native Americans to assimilate into the larger society and culture.

But the principal elements of federal policy in the New Deal years worked to advance a very different goal, largely because of the efforts of the extraordinary commissioner of Indian affairs in those years, John Collier. Collier was a former social worker who had become committed to the cause of the Indians after exposure to tribal cultures in New Mexico in the 1920s. More important, he was greatly influenced by the work of twentieth-century anthropologists who promoted the idea of cultural relativism, which challenged the three-

centuries-old assumption among white Americans that Indians were “savages” and that white society was inherently superior and more “civilized.”

Collier promoted legislation that would, he hoped, reverse the pressures on Native Americans to assimilate and would allow them the right to live in traditional Indian ways. Not all tribal leaders agreed with Collier; indeed, his belief in the importance of preserving Indian culture would not find its broadest support among the tribes until the 1960s. Nevertheless, Collier effectively promoted legislation—which became the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934—that restored to the tribes the right to own land collectively (reversing the allotment policy adopted in 1887, which encouraged the breaking up of tribal lands into individually owned plots—a policy that had led to the loss of over 90 million acres of tribal land to white speculators and others). In the thirteen years after passage of the 1934 bill, tribal land increased by nearly 4 million acres, and Indian agricultural income increased dramatically (from under \$2 million in 1934 to over \$49 million in 1947).

Even with the redistribution of lands under the 1934 act, however, Indians continued to possess, for the most part, only territory whites did not want—much of it arid, some of it desert. And as a group, they continued to constitute the poorest segment of the population. The efforts of the 1930s did not solve what some called the “Indian problem.” They did, however, provide Indians with some tools for rebuilding the viability of the tribes.

Women and the New Deal

As with African Americans, the New Deal was not hostile to feminist aspirations, but neither did it do a great deal to advance them. That was largely because such aspirations did not have sufficiently widespread support (even among women) to make it politically advantageous for the administration to back them.

There were, to be sure, important symbolic gestures on behalf of women. Roosevelt appointed the first female cabinet member in the nation's history, Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. He also named more than 100 other women to positions at lower levels of the federal bureaucracy. They created an active female network within the government and cooperated with one another in advancing causes of interest to women. Such appointments were in part a response to pressure from Eleanor Roosevelt, who was a committed advocate of women's rights and a champion of humanitarian causes. Molly Dewson, head of the Women's Division of the Democratic National Committee, was also influential in securing federal appointments for women as well as in increasing their role within the Democratic Party. Several women received appointments to the federal judiciary. And one, Hattie Caraway of Arkansas, became in 1934 the first woman ever elected to a full term in the U.S. Senate. (She was running to succeed her husband, who had died in office.)

But New Deal support for women operated within limits, partly because New Deal women themselves had limited views of what their aims should be. Frances Perkins and many others in the administration emerged out of the feminist tradition of the progressive era, which emphasized not so much sexual equality as special protections for women. Perkins herself had been instrumental in fighting for passage of various state laws safeguarding female workers. She opposed the National Woman's Party and its goal of securing the Equal Rights Amendment because she feared the amendment would threaten the protective mechanisms that she had helped to establish. Perkins and other women reformers were instrumental in creating support for, and shaping the character of, the Social Security Act of 1935. But they built into that bill their own notion of women's special place in a male-dominated economy. The principal provision of the bill specifically designed for women—the Aid to Dependent

Children program—was modeled on the state-level mothers' pensions that generations of progressive women had worked to pass earlier in the century.

The New Deal generally supported the prevailing belief that in hard times women should withdraw from the workplace to open up more jobs for men. Even Frances Perkins spoke out against what she called the "pin-money worker"—the married woman working to earn extra money for the household. New Deal relief agencies offered relatively little employment for women. The NRA sanctioned sexually discriminatory wage practices. The Social Security program at first excluded domestic servants, waitresses, and other predominantly female occupations.

The New Deal in the West and the South

Two regions of the United States that did receive special attention from the New Deal were the West and the South, both of which benefited disproportionately from New Deal relief and public works programs. The West received more federal funds per capita through New Deal relief programs than any other region, and parts of the South were not far behind.

Most westerners were eager for the assistance New Deal agencies provided, but their political leaders were not always as supportive. In Colorado, for example, the state legislature refused to provide the required matching funds for FERA relief in 1933. When, in response, Harry Hopkins cut Colorado off from the program, unemployed people rioted in Denver and looted food stores. Only then did the legislature reverse course and provide funding. In the South, locally administered New Deal relief programs did not challenge prevailing racial norms. In the West, too, New Deal programs accepted existing racial and ethnic prejudices. In several states, relief agencies paid different groups at different rates: white Anglos received the most generous aid; blacks, Indians, and Mexican Americans received lower levels of support. In the CCC camps in New Mexico, Hispanics and Anglos

sometimes worked in the same camps, but there were frequent tensions and occasional conflicts between them. But the main reason for the New Deal's particular impact on the West was that conditions in the region made the government's programs especially important. Federal agricultural programs had an enormous impact on the West because farming remained so much more central to the economy of the region than it did in much of the East. The largest New Deal public works programs—the great dams and power stations—were mainly in the West, both because the best locations for such facilities were there and because the West had the most need for new sources of water and power. The Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River was the largest public works project in American history to that point. It provided cheap electric power for much of the Northwest and, along with the construction of other smaller dams and water projects nearby, created a basis for economic development in the region.

Without this enormous public investment by the federal government, much of the economic development that transformed the West after World War II would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. But the region paid a price for the government's beneficence. For generations after the Great Depression, the federal government maintained a much greater and more visible bureaucratic presence in the West than in any other region. The New Deal located fewer great infrastructure projects in the South than it did in the West—although the largest of them all, the TVA, was an entirely southern venture. But much of the economic development efforts the Roosevelt administration undertook were of disproportionate benefit to the South, in large part because the South was the least economically developed region of the nation in the 1930s. One example was rural electrification, which had a large impact on many agrarian areas of the nation but a particular

impact on the South, where vast parts of the countryside remained without access to power lines until the REA provided them.

The New Deal also directed national attention toward the economic condition of the South in a way that no previous administration had done. Many Americans outside the South had long believed the South to be somehow “backward,” but they tended to attribute that backwardness to racism, segregation, and prejudice. In a 1938 economic report sponsored by the federal government, a group of social scientists and others called the South “the nation’s number one economic problem.” Although the report made some reference to the South’s racial customs, it spoke mostly about its lack of sufficiently developed economic institutions and facilities. Some southerners objected to the report, claiming that it reinforced anti-southern prejudices outside the region. But others saw it as an opportunity to win national support for efforts to modernize and develop the region.

The New Deal and the National Economy

The most frequent criticisms of the New Deal involve its failure genuinely to revive or reform the American economy. New Dealers never fully recognized the value of government spending as a vehicle for recovery, and their efforts along other lines never succeeded in ending the Depression. The economic boom sparked by World War II, not the New Deal, finally ended the crisis. Nor did the New Deal substantially alter the distribution of power within American capitalism; and it had only a small impact on the distribution of wealth among the American people.

Nevertheless, the New Deal did have a number of important and lasting effects on both the behavior and the structure of the American economy. It helped elevate new groups—workers, farmers, and others—to positions from which they could at times effectively challenge the power of the corporations. It contributed to the economic development of the

West and, to a lesser degree, the South. It increased the regulatory functions of the federal government in ways that helped stabilize previously troubled areas of the economy: the stock market, the banking system, and others. And the administration helped establish the basis for new forms of federal fiscal policy, which in the postwar years would give the government tools for promoting and regulating economic growth.

The New Deal also created the basis of the federal welfare state, through its many relief programs and above all through the Social Security system. The conservative inhibitions New Dealers brought to this task ensured that the welfare system that ultimately emerged would be limited in its impact (at least in comparison with those of other industrial nations), would reinforce some traditional patterns of gender and racial discrimination, and would be expensive and cumbersome to administer. But for all its limits, the new system marked a historic break with the federal government's traditional reluctance to offer public assistance to its neediest citizens.

The New Deal and American Politics

Perhaps the most dramatic effect of the New Deal was on the structure and behavior of American government itself and on the character of American politics. Franklin Roosevelt helped enhance the power of the federal government as a whole. By the end of the 1930s, state and local governments were clearly of secondary importance to the government in Washington; in the past, that had not always been clear. Roosevelt also established the presidency as the preeminent center of authority within the federal government. Never again would Congress be able to wield as much independent power as it had in the years before the New Deal. And never again would it have the same control over presidential authority. Finally, the New Deal had a profound impact on how the American people defined themselves politically. It took a weak, divided Democratic Party, which had been a minority

force in American politics for many decades, and turned it into a mighty coalition that would dominate national party competition for more than forty years. It turned the attention of many voters away from some of the cultural issues that had preoccupied them in the 1920s and awakened in them an interest in economic matters of direct importance to their lives. And it created among the American people greatly increased expectations of government—expectations that the New Deal itself did not always fulfill but that survived to become the basis of new liberal crusades in the postwar era.

F

“Bank Holiday”

Roosevelt’s Personality

Prohibition Repealed

THE RADIO PRESIDENT Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first American president to master the use of radio. Beginning in his first days in office, he regularly bypassed the newspapers (many of which were hostile to him) and communicated directly with the people through his famous “fireside chats.” He is shown here speaking in 1938, urging communities to continue to provide work relief for the unemployed. (*Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*)

AAA

“Rural Electrification”

NRA

SALUTING THE BLUE EAGLE Several thousand San Francisco schoolchildren assembled on a baseball field in 1933 to form the symbol of the National Recovery Administration: an eagle clutching a cogwheel (to symbolize industry) and a thunderbolt (to symbolize energy). This display is evidence of the widespread (if brief) popular enthusiasm the NRA produced. NRA administrators drew from their memories of World War I Liberty

Loan drives and tried to establish the Blue Eagle as a symbol of patriotic commitment to recovery. *(Bettmann/Corbis)*

Section 7(a)

THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY The Tennessee Valley Authority was one of the largest experiments in government-funded public works and regional planning in American history to that point. The federal government had helped fund many projects in its history—canals, turnpikes, railroads, bridges, dams, and others. But never before had it undertaken a project of such great scope, and never before had it maintained such close control and ownership over the public works it helped create. This map illustrates the broad reach of the TVA within the Tennessee Valley region, which spanned seven states. TVA dams throughout the region helped control floods and also provided a source for hydroelectric power, which the government sold to consumers. Note the dam near Muscle Shoals, Alabama, in the bottom left of the map. It was begun during World War I, and efforts to revive it in the 1920s helped create the momentum that produced the TVA. *u Why were progressives so eager to see the government enter the business of hydroelectric power in the 1920s?*

TVA

PUBLIC WORKS Among the most visible products of the New Deal was a vast network of public works in almost all areas of the country, but concentrated particularly in the South and the West. The great dams that the government built in the Tennessee Valley and elsewhere were particularly effective at capturing the public imagination. This dramatic picture by the renowned photographer Margaret Bourke White appeared on the cover of the very first issue of *Life* in 1936, which very quickly became the most popular and successful magazine in America. It shows the Fort Peck Dam on the Missouri River. *(Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)*

CWA

Glass-Steagall Act

CCC

SEC

Townsend Plan

American Liberty League

“AN ATTACK ON THE NEW DEAL” This cartoon by William Gropper appeared in *Vanity Fair* in 1935 to illustrate a long excerpt from an anti-New Deal editorial that had appeared a few weeks before in the Republican newspaper, the New York *Herald Tribune*. The cartoon echoes the newspaper’s references to Jonathan Swift’s famous satire, *Gulliver’s Travels*. In this case, Gulliver is Uncle Sam, and the Lilliputians who tie him down with a thousand tiny cords are New Deal agencies and laws. “Here is a giant if there ever was one,” the *Herald Tribune* wrote, “the most powerful nation the world has ever seen. It has the makings of good times, [but] it does not make them. Why? Because the Lilliputians of the New Deal will not let it. These busy little folk cannot bear the thought of letting the great giant, America, escape.” (Courtesy *Vanity Fair* © 1935 (renewed 1963, 1991) by The Condé Nast Publications, Inc.)

Huey Long

HUEY LONG Few public speakers could arouse a crowd more effectively than Huey Long of Louisiana, known to many as “the Kingfish” (a nickname borrowed from the popular radio show *Amos 'n Andy*). It was Long’s effective use of radio, however, that contributed most directly to his spreading national popularity in the early 1930s. (*Culver Pictures, Inc.*)

Share-Our-Wealth Society

Industrial Unionism

National Labor Relations Board

CIO

Sit-Down Strike

THE “MEMORIAL DAY MASSACRE” The bitterness of the labor struggles of the 1930s was nowhere more evident than in Chicago in 1937, when striking workers attempting to march on a Republic Steel Plant were brutally attacked by Chicago police, who used clubs, tear gas, and guns to turn the marchers away. Ten strikers were killed and many others were injured. *(AP/Wide World Photos)*

Organized Labor’s Rapid Growth

SOCIAL SECURITY POSTER, 1935 Within months of the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935, the new Social Security Board began publicizing the benefits the new system offered to working Americans—the most dramatic of which was a monthly pension to retired Americans who had paid into the system. *(Library of Congress)*

Unemployment Insurance

WPA

UNEMPLOYMENT, 1920=1945 This chart shows the shifting patterns of unemployment from 1920 to the end of World War II. As it reveals, unemployment was very high in the early 1920s, in the last year of the postwar recession, but remained relatively low from 1923 to 1929. The beginning of the Great Depression sent unemployment soaring—to a peak of nearly 13 million people in early 1933. The New Deal helped create a partial recovery from the Depression over the next four years, but unemployment remained very high throughout the 1930s, and spiked sharply higher again during the recession of 1937–1938, before falling rapidly after war began in Europe. *u Why was the war so much more successful than the New Deal in ending unemployment?*

Alf Landon

WPA WORKERS ON THE JOB The Works Progress Administration funded an enormous variety of work projects to provide jobs for the unemployed. But most WPA employees worked on construction sites of one kind or another. Here, WPA workers labor on a bridge project in the Bronx, in New York City. (*Bettmann/Corbis*)

WPA MURAL ART The Federal Arts Project of the Works Progress Administration commissioned an impressive series of public murals from the artists it employed. Many of these murals adorned post offices, libraries, and other public buildings constructed by the WPA. William Gropper's *Construction of a Dam*, a detail of which is seen here, is typical of much of the mural art of the 1930s in its celebration of the workingman. Workers are depicted in heroic poses, laboring in unison to complete a great public project. Most WPA iconography similarly portrayed workers as white men only. (*Library of Congress*)

PATTERNS OF POPULAR CULTURE

THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMIC BOOKS

In the troubled years of the Great Depression and World War II, many Americans sought release from their anxieties in fantasy. Those who produced America's popular culture eagerly obliged them, with movies, plays, books, radio shows, and other diversions that drew people out of their own lives and into a safer or more glamorous or more exciting world. Beginning in 1938, one of the most popular forms of escape for many young Americans became the comic book. For decades after that, comic books remained a powerful force in American culture.

The modern comics began on the "funny pages" of American newspapers in the 1890s. In the first years of the twentieth century, publishers collected previously published strips and began selling them in books. Seldom did these early comics make any effort to develop

continuing plots or complex characters—although the popular character Dick Tracy did serve as the hero of some continuing detective stories. In the 1930s, however, some artists and businessmen began to see new and greater possibilities in the comics. In February 1935, Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson founded the first comics magazine—what we now know as the “comic book”—entitled *New Fun*, which published entirely original material. Wheeler had little success with *New Fun*, but he continued to believe in the potential of original comic books. He founded a new company, Detective Comics, and began in 1937 to design a new magazine called *Action Comics*. Wheeler himself ran out of money before he could publish anything, but the company continued without him. In 1938, the first issue of *Action Comics* appeared with a startling and controversial cover—a powerful man in a skin-tight suit lifting a car over his head. His name was Superman, and he became the most popular cartoon character of all time.

Within a year, Superman had a comic book named after him, which was selling over 1.2 million copies each issue. By 1940, there was a popular Superman radio show—introduced by a breathless announcer crying “It’s a bird! It’s a plane! It’s . . . Superman!” And very soon, other publishers—and even Detective Comics itself—began developing new “superheroes” (a term invented by the creators of Superman) to capitalize on this growing new popular appetite. In 1939, a second great comic-book publisher appeared—Marvel Comics. By the early 1940s, Superman had been joined by such other supernatural heroes as the Human Torch, the Sub-Mariner, Batman, the Flash, and Wonder Woman, a character created in part to signal the importance of women to the war effort. None proved as popular as Superman, but many were commercially successful nevertheless.

It is not hard to imagine why superheroes would be so appealing to Americans—and particularly to the teenage boys who were the largest single purchasers of comic books—in

the 1930s and 1940s. Superman and other superheroes were idealized versions of the ideal boy—smart, good, “the perfect Boy Scout,” as one fan put it. But they were also all-powerful, capable of righting wrong and preventing catastrophe. In a world where catastrophe was an ever-present possibility—in the lives of many families in the 1930s, and in the reality of the world at large in the 1940s—superheroes were a comforting escape from fear. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, who drew and wrote the Superman comics, were themselves very young men in the late 1930s, not far removed from their own teenage fantasies. And indeed many of the early comic book writers were men in their late teens or early twenties.

Many of the creators of comic books were also Jewish, young men conscious of their outsider status in an American culture not yet wholly open to them. The characters they created almost all had alter egos, identities they used while living within the normal world. Superman was Clark Kent, a “mild-mannered reporter.” Batman was Bruce Wayne, a wealthy heir. All were wholly a part of mainstream American society, and they expressed in part the outsider’s dream of assimilation. At the same time, the characters as superheroes were outsiders themselves—but outsiders endowed with special powers and abilities unavailable to ordinary people.

Even before America entered World War II, the comic books went to war with the Axis. Marvel’s the Human Torch and the Sub-Mariner joined forces against the German navy. Superman fought spies and saboteurs at home. A new character created in March 1941, Captain America, was a frail young man rejected by the army who, after being given a secret serum by a military doctor, became extraordinarily powerful. Joining the army at last, he posed as an ordinary private but managed to perform extraordinary deeds. On the cover of the first issue of *Captain America*, the title character could be seen punching Hitler in his

headquarters in Germany. The war also expanded the readership of the comic books. They became enormously popular among soldiers and sailors—many of whom had been reading them, as teenagers, before joining the military.

The end of the war was also the end of this first “Golden Age” of American comic books. Many superhero magazines—including *Captain America*—ceased publication as peacetime reduced the popular appetite for fantasy. In their place emerged new comic books, which emphasized romance and even mild sexuality. A new company, Entertainment Comics, began publishing lurid horror and science-fiction comics, with levels of violence and cruelty far higher than the earlier superhero books had ever displayed. None ever reached the levels of popularity that the superhero comics had enjoyed during the Depression and war.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, comic books began to come under attack from educators, psychiatrists, journalists, and even the federal government. In 1954, members of the United States Senate held hearings in New York to hear testimony from comic book writers and publishers. The senators seemed unpersuaded by the claims they heard that comics were, in fact, healthy and decent. Congress took no legal action against them, but the comic book industry itself created a trade association, which produced a “Comics Code” to prevent indecency in the industry.

Comic books experienced an unexpected revival in the late 1950s and 1960s. Old superheroes—Captain America, the Human Torch, and others—reappeared. New ones—Spiderman, Iron Man, the Silver Surfer—joined them. Superman, who had never disappeared, enjoyed newfound popularity and became the hero for a time of a popular television show. But these new or revised heroes were not entirely like those of the 1930s and 1940s—not the rock-solid Boy Scouts certain of the difference between right and

wrong. They were more complicated characters, plagued at times by doubt and weakness and thwarted desire. They reflected the realities of an increasingly complex and complicated world, which their characters—like their mostly young readers—were struggling to understand.

SUPERMAN The most popular action figure in the history of comic books was Superman, whose superhuman powers were particularly appealing fantasies to Americans suffering through the Depression and, later, World War II. (*Superman No. 1* © 1939 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. Used with Permission.)

Electoral realignment

THE INDUSTRY CODE Beginning in 1955, under pressure from government officials and others who charged comic books with being vulgar and dangerous, the comic book industry established its own code authority, much like the organization created to police movies that had been created in the 1920s. This stamp was the code authority's seal of approval, designed to reassure readers (and their parents) that the contents were wholesome.

CAPTAIN AMERICA Captain America made his comic book debut in 1941 and immediately established himself as both super-hero and super-patriot. Even before Pearl Harbor, Captain America was portrayed as a powerful foe of the Nazis and the Japanese, and as a particularly deadly enemy of spies and saboteurs who had infiltrated the United States—as in this strip where he throttles an “enemy agent.” (*CAPTAIN AMERICA: TM* © 2002 Marvel Characters, Inc. Used with permission.)

Court Packing

Roosevelt Recession

End of the New Deal

Establishment of the “Broker State”

FEDERAL BUDGET SURPLUS/DEFICIT AND GNP, 1920–1940 Among its many other effects, the Great Depression produced dramatic changes in the fiscal condition of the federal government. In the first of these three charts, note the sharp decline in federal spending in the early 1920s (as the nation demobilized from World War I) and the appearance of significant budget surpluses. Note, too, the dramatic increase in government spending (and the appearance of significant deficits) once the Depression began and, particularly, once Franklin Roosevelt became president. The second chart illustrates the varying fortunes of the nation's economy by showing the rise and fall of Gross National Product—the total of goods and services produced by the economy. GNP fell sharply in the first years of the Depression, but by the end of the 1930s was nearing its 1929 levels again. The final chart gives some perspective on these figures by illustrating the relationship between federal spending (and federal surpluses and deficits) and the total size of the economy. At its peak in these years, federal spending was never more than about 9 percent of GNP and the deficit never more than about 5 percent. In the late twentieth century, the federal budget has often exceeded 20 percent of GNP, while deficits—much higher in absolute numbers than those of the 1930s—were rarely higher as a percentage of GNP than those of the 1930s. u *Why did government deficits increase so sharply during the Great Depression?*

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE Mary McLeod Bethune was one of a small but energetic group of African-American officeholders in the Roosevelt administration. Together they formed an informal network known as the “Black Cabinet.” Among their most important allies was Eleanor Roosevelt, who is shown here appearing with Bethune at a 1937 “National Conference on Problems of the Negro and Negro Youth,” organized by the National Youth Administration. Bethune was the NYA’s Director of Negro Activities. (*Bettmann/Corbis*)

“Black Cabinet”

Existing Discrimination Reinforced

Indian Reorganization Act

HARLEM GROCERY STORE, 1940 The photographer Aaron Siskind took this picture of a community grocery store in Harlem, its manager standing proudly in the doorway. It was part of a project designed to document life in what *Look* magazine that same year called “the Negro capital of America.” Siskind and other photographers worked from 1938 to 1940 to produce a series they called *The Harlem Document*. (*Print and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. Courtesy of The Aaron Siskind Foundation.*)

John Collier

Symbolic Gains for Women

WHERE HISTORIANS DISAGREE

The New Deal

For many years, debate among historians over the nature of the New Deal mirrored the debate among Americans in the 1930s over the achievements of the Roosevelt administration. Historians struggled, just as contemporaries had done, to decide whether the New Deal was a good thing or a bad thing.

The conservative critique of the New Deal has received relatively little scholarly expression. Edgar Robinson, in *The Roosevelt Leadership* (1955), and John T. Flynn, in *The Roosevelt Myth* (1956), attacked Roosevelt as both a radical and a despot; but few other historians have taken such charges very seriously. By far the dominant view of the New Deal among scholars has been an approving, liberal interpretation.

The first important voice of the liberal view was Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., who argued in the three volumes of *The Age of Roosevelt* (1957–1960) that the New Deal marked a

continuation of the long struggle between public power and private interests, but that Roosevelt moved that struggle to a new level. The unrestrained power of the business community was finally confronted with an effective challenge, and what emerged was a system of reformed capitalism, with far more protection for workers, farmers, consumers, and others than in the past.

The first systematic “revisionist” interpretation of the New Deal came in 1963, in William Leuchtenburg’s *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal*. Leuchtenburg was a sympathetic critic, arguing that most of the limitations of the New Deal were a result of the restrictions imposed on Roosevelt by the political and ideological realities of his time—that the New Deal probably could not have done much more than it did. Nevertheless, Leuchtenburg challenged earlier views of the New Deal as a revolution in social policy and was able to muster only enough enthusiasm to call it a “halfway revolution,” one that enhanced the positions of some previously disadvantaged groups (notably farmers and factory workers) but did little or nothing for many others (including blacks, sharecroppers, and the urban poor). Ellis Hawley augmented these moderate criticisms of the Roosevelt record in *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly* (1966). In examining 1930s economic policies, Hawley challenged liberal assumptions that the New Deal acted as the foe of private business interests. On the contrary, he argued, New Deal efforts were in many cases designed to enhance the position of private entrepreneurs—even, at times, at the expense of some of the liberal reform goals that administration officials espoused.

Other historians in the 1960s and later, writing from the left, expressed much harsher criticisms of the New Deal. Barton Bernstein, in a notable 1968 essay, compiled a dreary chronicle of missed opportunities, inadequate responses to problems, and damaging New Deal initiatives. The Roosevelt administration may have saved capitalism, Bernstein charged,

but it failed to help—and in many ways actually harmed—those groups most in need of assistance. Ronald Radosh, also in 1968, portrayed the New Deal as an effective agent for the consolidation of modern corporate capitalism. Several essays by Thomas Ferguson in the 1980s and Colin Gordon's 1994 book *New Deals* took such arguments further. They cited the close ties between the New Deal and internationalist financiers and industrialists; the liberalism of the 1930s was a product of their shared interest in protecting capitalists and stabilizing capitalism.

Except for the work of Ferguson and Gordon, the attack on the New Deal from the left has not developed very far beyond its preliminary statements in the 1960s. Instead, by the 1970s and 1980s, most scholars seemed less interested in the question of whether the New Deal was a “conservative” or “revolutionary” phenomenon than in the question of the constraints within which it was operating. The sociologist Theda Skocpol, in an important series of articles, has emphasized (along with others) the issue of “state capacity” as an important New Deal constraint; ambitious reform ideas often foundered, she argued, because of the absence of a government bureaucracy with sufficient strength and expertise to shape or administer them. James T. Patterson, Barry Karl, Mark Leff, and others have emphasized the political constraints the New Deal encountered. Both in Congress and among the public, conservative inhibitions about government remained strong; the New Deal was as much a product of the pressures of its conservative opponents as of its liberal supporters. Frank Freidel, Ellis Hawley, Herbert Stein, and many others point as well to the ideological constraints affecting Franklin Roosevelt and his supporters. Alan Brinkley, in *The End of Reform* (1995), described a transition in New Deal thinking from a regulatory view of government to one that envisioned relatively little direct interference by government in the corporate world; a movement—driven in part by the need to adapt to a conservative political

climate—toward an essentially “compensatory” state centered on Keynesian welfare state programs. David Kennedy, in *Freedom from Fear* (1999), argues by contrast that the more aggressive strands of early New Deal liberalism actually hampered the search for recovery, that Roosevelt’s embrace of measures that unleashed the power of the market was the most effective approach to prosperity.

The phrase “New Deal liberalism” has come in the postwar era to seem synonymous with modern ideas of aggressive federal management of the economy, elaborate welfare systems, a powerful bureaucracy, and large-scale government spending. The “Reagan Revolution” of the 1980s often portrayed itself as a reaction to the “legacy of the New Deal.” Many historians of the New Deal, however, would argue that the modern idea of “New Deal liberalism” bears only a limited relationship to the ideas that New Dealers themselves embraced. The liberal accomplishments of the 1930s can only be understood in the context of their own time; later liberal efforts drew from that legacy but also altered it to fit the needs and assumptions of very different eras.

(Franklin D. Roosevelt Library)

Prevailing Gender Norms Buttressed

Failure to Challenge Jim Crow

New Deal’s Legacy in the West

Failure to Achieve Recovery

Federal Welfare State Established

MAJOR LEGISLATION OF THE NEW DEAL

1933 Emergency Banking Act **1935** Works Progress Administration

Economy Act National Youth Administration

Civilian Conservation Corps Social Security Act

Agricultural Adjustment Act National Labor Relations Act
 Tennessee Valley Authority Public Utilities Holding Company Act
 National Industrial Recovery Act Resettlement Administration
 Banking Act Rural Electrification Administration
 Federal Emergency Relief Act Revenue Act (“wealth tax”)
 Home Owners’ Refinancing Act **1936** Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment
 Act
 Civil Works Administration **1937** Farm Security Administration
 Federal Securities Act National Housing Act
1934 National Housing Act **1938** Second Agricultural Adjustment Act
 Securities and Exchange Act Fair Labor Standards Act
 Home Owners’ Loan Act **1939** Executive Reorganization Act

New Expectations of Government

CONCLUSION

The New Deal was the most dramatic and important moment in the modern history of American government. From the time of Franklin Roosevelt’s inauguration in 1933 to the beginning of World War II eight years later, the federal government engaged in a broad and diverse series of experiments designed to relieve the distress of unemployment and poverty, to reform the economy to prevent future crises, and to bring the Great Depression itself to an end. It had only partial success in all those efforts.

Unemployment and poverty remained high throughout the New Deal, although many federal programs provided assistance to millions of people who would otherwise have had none. The structure of the American economy remained essentially the same as it had been in earlier years, although there were by the end of the New Deal some important new

regulatory agencies in Washington—and an important new role for organized labor, enforced by a new federal law. Nothing the New Deal did ended the Great Depression, but some of its policies kept it from getting worse—and some of them pointed the way toward more effective economic policies in the future.

Perhaps the most important legacy of the New Deal was to create a sense of possibilities among many Americans, to persuade them that the fortunes of individuals need not be left entirely to chance or to the workings of the market. Many Americans emerged from the 1930s convinced that individuals deserved some protections from the unpredictability and instability of the modern economy, and that the New Deal—for all its limitations—had demonstrated the value of enlisting government in the effort to provide those protections.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING

The *Primary Source Investigator* CD-ROM offers the following materials related to this chapter:

- Interactive maps: **U.S. Elections** (M7) and **Unemployment Relief** (M26).
- Documents, images, and maps related to Roosevelt and the policies and politics of his New Deal. Highlights include excerpts from some of the major legislation of the New Deal era, including the Tennessee Valley Authority Act and the Social Security Act; lyrics and audio clips of Depression-era songs; a 1936 “Fireside Chat”; and excerpts from the WPA slave narratives, as documented by the Federal Writers Project.

Online Learning Center (www.mhhe.com/brinkley12)

For quizzes, Internet resources, references to additional books and films, and more, consult this book’s Online Learning Center.

FOR FURTHER REFERENCE

William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (1963) is a classic short history of the New Deal. Anthony Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years* (1989) is

another fine overview. David Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929–1945* (1999) is an important narrative history, a volume in the Oxford History of the United States. Geoffrey Ward, *Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt, 1882–1905* (1985) and *A First-Class Temperament: The Emergence of Franklin Roosevelt* (1989) are superb biographical accounts of the pre-presidential FDR. Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny* (1990) is a one-volume biography by one of FDR's most important biographers. Ellis Hawley, *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly* (1967) is a classic examination of the economic policies of the Roosevelt administration in its first five years. Colin Gordon, *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920–1935* (1994) is a challenging reinterpretation of the early New Deal years. The transformation of liberalism after 1937 is the subject of Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (1995). Jennifer Klein, *For All These Rights: Business, Labor, and the Shaping of America's Public-Private Welfare State* (2003) sees the origin of the modern welfare state as a product in part of struggles between labor and capital. Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (1994) is a pioneering work on women as the recipients and also the authors of government welfare policies. Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (2001) is an important study of the intersection of gender and economic rights. The efforts of Chicago workers to protest and organize is the subject of Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939* (1990). Nelson Lichtenstein, *The Most Dangerous Man in Detroit: Walter Reuther and the Fate of American Labor* (1995) is a valuable study of one of the early leaders of the CIO. Richard Lowitt, *The New Deal and the West* (1984) pays particular attention to water policy and agriculture in the New Deal years. Jordan Schwarz, *The New Dealers: Power Politics in the Age of Roosevelt* (1993) examines the proponents of state-funded

economic development of the South and West. Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (1982) examines some of the most powerful challenges to the New Deal. Bruce Shulman, *From Cotton Belt to Sunbelt* (1991) explores the New Deal's effort to transform the region Roosevelt and others considered the nation's number one economic problem, the American South. Harvard Sitkoff, *A New Deal for Blacks* (1978) and Nancy J. Weiss, *Farewell to the Party of Lincoln: Black Politics in the Age of FDR* (1983) take contrasting positions on what the New Deal did for African Americans.

FDR (1994), a documentary by David Grubin, gives viewers a fine view of the private and public life of Franklin D. Roosevelt. One of the president's most vocal and powerful critics is featured in another film, by Ken Burns, *Huey Long* (1986). *The World of Tomorrow* (1984) is a provocative documentary on the 1939 World's Fair.