

Answering AS Level American History questions.

# The New Deal

Hilary Stark. AS/A Examiner

**QUESTION:** How successful was the New Deal in promoting the recovery of agriculture and industry in the United States in the years 1933-1941? (The question follows the Edexcel AS Level for Unit 3 part c.)

### Mary's answer

Roosevelt believed in three basic methods to get America out of the depression: relief, recovery and reform. He wanted to use government money to pull the United States out of the depression. Roosevelt would provide food and shelter to poverty-stricken millions. Recovery would stimulate the demand for goods and lower unemployment and reform would rebuild the economy and stock market.

The banking and finance systems were important. People had lost money in the recession and Roosevelt wanted to restore confidence in the banks and get money flowing again. He therefore took over the banks to secure depositors' cash flow in case of another recession. He then introduced the Securities Exchange Commission (1934) to reform the stock market.

The Farmers Relief Act (1933) gave compensation to farmers who were affected by the depression and dust bowl. There was success by 1937 when farm incomes doubled. This came about through increasing prices.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (1934) introduced jobs to unemployed and offered a \$30 a month salary. It also provided food, shelter and clothing. The National Industrial Recovery Act (1933) got people back to work permanently. The organisation stimulated the demand for goods. Part 1 abolished child labour, introduced the minimum wage and had a maximum of an eight-hour working day. The blue eagle assessed the company's rating. Part 2 was the Public Works Administration and this put people back to work.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration gave further relief and recovery to people who still did not earn a salary. It gave \$500 million towards dole money and soup kitchens. The Works Progress Administration (1935) improved industry in that it started the building of hospitals, schools and roads.

The government also wanted the trade unions to improve working conditions. The Wagner Act (1935) gave trade unions a legal foundation and the Fair Labour Standards Act (1938) increased the minimum wage and introduced a maximum of a 48-hour working week.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (1934) revitalised areas of rural America which had been hit badly or been affected by careless farming and soil erosion, as well as overproduction. The organisation organised and provided cheap electricity, irrigation and prevention against soil erosion. They also gave loans to homeowners.

The end to Prohibition meant the end to organised crime and corruption. Roosevelt announced, 'It's time for a drink' in 1933. The opposition to organisations like these were businessmen who objected to the strength of the trade unions and higher taxation. Socialists thought that the New Deal was not extreme enough and still thought big businesses had too much power. The state government objected with the interference in state affairs and so did the Supreme Court.

Roosevelt did not achieve all that he wished. Some



*A comment on the Great Depression from the San Francisco Chronicle, October 1929, shows a closed factory and lobbying of Congress for increases in tariffs to protect profits and jobs*

organisations failed such as the Farmers' Relief Act. It helped farmers but forced many out of work and the government still did not improve agriculture in Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. Eight million were left unemployed and reduced government spending caused a recession with 10.8 million unemployed by 1937. Only the war effort lowered unemployment.

Never before had the government intervened in the lives of everyday people. The New Deal provided jobs. It provided relief for the jobless and destitute and the PWA and TVA were successful organisations. It provided welfare benefits but, most importantly, it preserved American democracy and free enterprise while many countries in Europe were being faced with Fascism.

### Examiner's comments

This answer was given a low level 3 and awarded 11 marks out of 18 - a grade C. It is typical of the work produced by many candidates working under examination conditions in that Mary has taken a broadly descriptive approach.

She works her way through an account of a number of alphabet agencies. On the positive side, she has included material from across the chronological range of the First, Second and 'Third' New Deals. Examiners are looking to credit those candidates who are able to draw their examples from across the entire period as many candidates focus only on material that comes from the early part of the New Deal. The question that has been set requires Mary to focus on the impact of the New Deal in two areas - agriculture and industry.

