

# New Deal Assessments

A History of the History of  
the New Deal

# 1940s & 1950s

- Frederick Allen & others
- Some ex-Brain Trusters
- New Deal was successful b/c “Brilliantly Moderate”
  - Something for all (NRA for biz, NLRB for labor)
  - Made important changes and in so doing, preserved American capitalism & democracy

# 1940s & 1950s (cont.)

- Important Changes were made
  - Against Hooverian “do nothingism” (Alphabet Soup)
  - Took bold quick action in response to crisis (100 days)
  - Relief—stopped acute suffering (FERA)
  - Recovery—turned around economy
    - 1933 Real Income 3% > 1929 Real Income
    - 1939 Per Capita Income= 1929 Per Capita Income
  - Reform—addressed institutional problems (SEC)

# 1940s & 1950s (cont.)

- Preserved American Capitalism & Democracy
  - Preserved Private Enterprise
    - Didn't Nationalize Industries
  - Restored faith in democratic process
    - Constitutional gov't structures & powers unchanged

# 1960s: The "New Left"

- Bernstein, Zinn & others
- New Deal was a failure because:
  - Saved Capitalism
    - Missed historic opportunity for real change
  - “Essentially Conservative Goals”
    - Same goals & methods as Hoover just more of it (Public Works, Balanced Budget)
    - Saved Big Business (NRA)
  - Didn’t help the poor
    - Relief only to buy off radicalism
  - Didn’t address inequality
    - Didn’t redistribute income (class)
    - “Countenanced Racial Discrimination” (race)

# 1980s

- William Leuchtenburg & others
- New Deal Modernized Role of Gov't:
  - “Welfare State”, “Guarantor State” etc.
  - Gov't became Big and Active
    - Challenged Big Business & Banking (NRA, SEC & bunch of other acts)
    - Supported Unionization (NRA, NLRB)
    - Lots of Public Welfare (FERA, CWA, WPA)
  - Modest progress on Race
    - New Deal programs benefited blacks
    - Beginnings of desegregation in gov't

# 1990s & 2000s

- *Patriot's History* & others
- New Deal was Anti-Democratic:
  - Dems conspired to gain long-term control of gov't (opportunistic & pandering)
  - Gov't Became too Big
    - Keynesianism→Huge Debt
    - Gov't Dependency→undermined American values (Individualism, Capitalism)
      - “Nanny State”
  - Gov't/Economy Link→Business pump \$ into politics