Opposition To The New Deal Essay, Research Paper

Why was there opposition to the New Deal?

In many ways the New Deal turned out to be a success. It clearly stopped the Depression from getting worse; gave hope and confidence to the American people at the worst tome in their history; and saved American democracy. But why did it face so much opposition and criticism.

Firstly, many people believed that the New Deal went against the basic principles of the American constitution. Many people, including the Republicans, thought that the government should not interfere with the economy or help the poor, i.e. there should be policy of laissez faire. However, Roosevelt defied this by setting up social welfare systems and by setting up the National Industry Recovery Act. Later on, however, the Supreme Court decided that several of Roosevelt s laws were unconstitutional and they were subsequently vetoed. Moreover, after Roosevelt s victory in the 1936 election, Roosevelt grew so confident that he felt he could replace members of the Supreme Court with people chosen by himself. However, this did no go down well with the American public and as a result many people began to oppose Roosevelt and his policies.

Secondly, the New Deal meant that the rich were taxed more in order to pay for the schemes to help the poor. Many business leaders also opposed Roosevelt s support for trade unions and employee rights. Wealthy business organisations, such as the American Liberty League, opposed Roosevelt. As they did not like the way the New Deal interfered with business.

Thirdly, more serious opposition came from radicals, such as Louisiana state senator Huey Long, who believed the government and the New Deal had not done enough to stop poverty and unemployment. Long called for taxation of the rich and the total confiscation of all fortunes over $5 million. His Share our Wealth scheme, Long claimed, would give each American family $6,000 to spend. These ideas became very popular among the poor, with over 7.5 million people joining these schemes.

There was also much opposition from the States who believed that the New Deal was undermining their authority. During the New Deal, campaigners for states rights objected to schemes, like the TVA, which forced them to co-operate in the Federal Government s plan to build dams across seven states.

In conclusion, the New Deal, although it brought America hope after years of Depression, faced much criticism. Like any other leader, Roosevelt faced problems from both sides of scale. Since he tried to help less fortunate people he got opposition from the right, but since he was not too radical he received opposition from the far left.