

### Background information

The New Deal can certainly be criticised for its failure to address certain elements of the Great Depression, and, arguably, its short-term focus. However, at the time there were significant criticisms not only of the New Deal itself, but of the type of politics behind it, and what the New Deal represented. As such, criticisms of the New Deal can be broken down into the following main categories:

- criticism that the New Deal led to too much government intervention (it went too far)
- criticism that it did not go far enough.

These stemmed from fundamental divides within American politics shown in the different views of the two main parties - Republicans and Democrats. Republicans had run the country since 1923, and had partly been blamed for the Great Depression; however, on the whole, they were still seen as the party that was more financially competent, whereas the Democrats had a legacy of overspending. Republicans were directly opposed to government intervention in both the economy and people's everyday lives - as such, the New Deal was their worst nightmare. Furthermore, they opposed 'federal' (government of the whole country) intervention in the running of the individual States, they preferred to keep 'small government', and let local towns and cities run themselves. Again, this was directly opposed to the centralising and federal principles of the New Deal.

On the other hand, there was a growing feeling that neither the Republicans nor the Democrats could be trusted with the economy, and new 'radical' ideas were starting to emerge. These ideas eschewed the established political order, and proposed huge overhauls of taxation, property, and so on - they all believed that the New Deal was not going far enough, and was just repeating the mistakes of the 1920s.

### Tasks

1. Read the background information. Highlight or annotate the key terms and dates in this information.
2. Define the following key-terms:
  - Republican
  - Democrat
  - radical politics
  - the New deal
  - the Great Depression
  - the Federal Government
3. Analyse both cartoons on page 3. What is your initial reaction - what do you think the cartoons are suggesting about the New Deal?
4. Now look at the annotated cartoons on pages 4 and 5. Using the hints, explain what each annotated part of the source is referring to, and why it criticises the New Deal.
  - Note: Not all of the annotations are explained, and not everything in the cartoon is annotated! Push yourself to add more - original - notes.

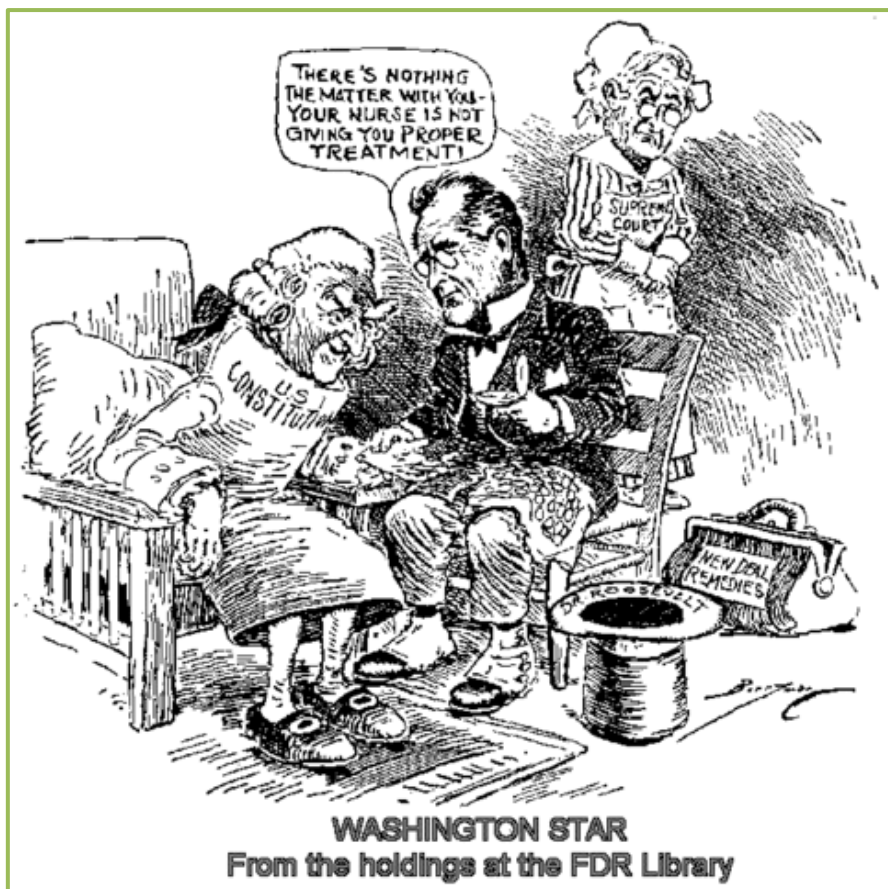
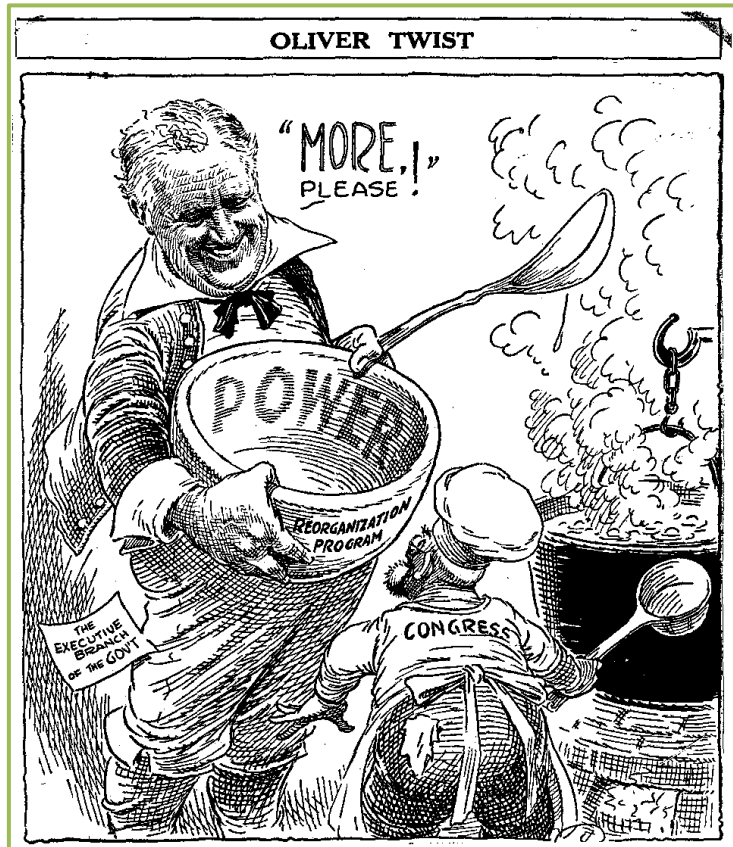
5. Now look at the annotated cartoons on pages 4 and 5. Using the hints, explain what each annotated part of the source is referring to, and why it criticises the New Deal.
  - Note: Not all of the annotations are explained, and not everything in the cartoon is annotated! Push yourself to add more - original - notes.
6. Read sources A and B.
  - Highlight or annotate the key terms and dates in this information.
  - How do the sources differ? (4 marks)
  - Why do the sources differ? (4 marks)
7. Which criticism of the New Deal do you think Americans would agree with more? Why?
  - Analyse each type of criticism, and explain why Americans would and would not agree with them (short paragraph for each type of criticism).
  - Judge which criticism you think most Americans agreed with.

**Source A:** A speech by Huey Long, an increasingly popular, though radical, left-wing Democrat. Whilst he was in the same party as Roosevelt, he constantly campaigned, arguing that the New Deal was not going far enough in supporting the everyday people of the United States. Long argued that Roosevelt came from money himself, and so did not see the need to redistribute wealth more radically.

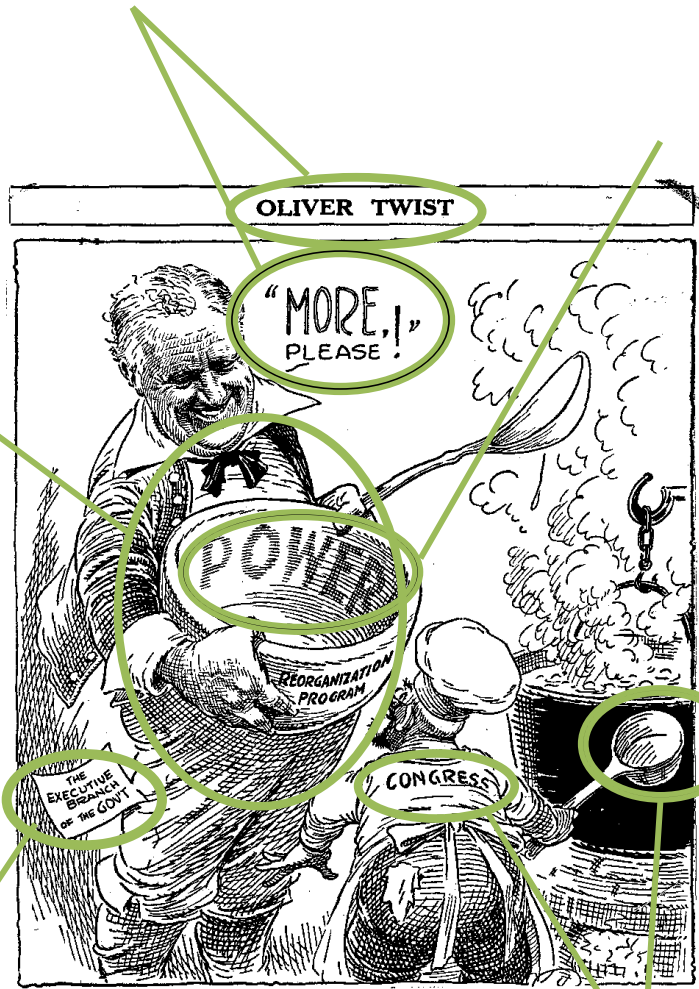
‘The American People need a change! Too long have we allowed the rich to get richer and do nothing to help their fellow countrymen. Well, I say the time has come for these people to give back! I demand that all those with wealth over \$5 million surrender this extra wealth to the government (or we can just take it), and we can use this money to help real folks! We should use this money to build schools and have free education for all, and to subsidise food so that farmers still get a fair wage whilst the good people can afford to eat! And whilst we’re at it, why don’t we give every family a radio, a car, and a house! These are basic necessities, so why don’t we just let the people have them?!’

**Source B:** A suburban woman being interviewed on a radio programme about ‘mad new ideas’ going around. She had just attended a speech by Francis Townsend. The woman came from a moderately successful middle-income family. They had lost some money in the Great Depression; however, they had already owned their house and a shop, and so their investments were not so affected.

‘There are so many mad new ideas going around these days - I’ve heard them called ‘radical politics’. Well, they’re too far for my taste. This man Townsend, he proposes making everyone retire at the age of 60, just so young people can have jobs. Now, I’m all in favour of making jobs for the young - they need to learn the value of hard work - but we can’t just hand this to them. What’s more, my husband and I don’t have enough money to retire yet, and if we had to retire in just a few years then we wouldn’t be able to afford a comfortable life. How is that fair? It’s the same with that man, Coughlin, arguing for a higher minimum wage and shorter hours for workers - somebody has to pay for it!’



What is happening to Roosevelt after all of this 'food'? What might this represent?



The 'executive branch' is the part of the government with the President. Does this cartoon reflect favourably on them?

Who is the cartoon also blaming? Are they helping or opposing Roosevelt?



The Supreme Court tried to block certain aspects of the New Deal - it said that the Federal Government should not give money to farmers (this was the job of State governments), and said many NRA work codes were illegal. Roosevelt argued back, saying they were needed.

Just as the Constitution is meant to stop the President from becoming too powerful, the Supreme Court is meant to protect the Constitution. Does this Supreme Court look like it's doing its job?



WASHINGTON STAR  
From the holdings at the FDR Library

One of the roles of the Constitution is to prevent the President from getting too much power. Does this cartoon suggest the Constitution is working?

Does this bag look empty or full? What does this suggest about the different ways Roosevelt is attempting to solve the Great Depression?