Midterm Essay

[Name of the Student:]

[Name of the Institution:]

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# Introduction

The Great Depression was a worldwide economic recession that initiated in the US due to its stock market crash. It affected the American population to massive extents. People were forced by the circumstances to live a life far below the poverty line. The circumstances had become so adverse that African-American people were not able to find low-wage jobs, because the white people were compelled by the financial conditions of the country to opt for these jobs. People from rural areas had to leave their farms and move to nearby urban areas but these urban areas had little to offer them. People needed houses, food, jobs and social support. President Roosevelt made the necessary efforts in establishing government policies and executing several programs to cope with the adversities caused by the economic disaster. He redefined the role of government in intervening issues related to people’s lives. He took initiatives that helped people in dealing with the problems created after the Great Depression. His efforts were met with praise and acclaim. At the same time, some people critiqued his work and its outcomes. However, none questioned his devotion to the cause he was working for. This essay gives an account of the efforts made by President Roosevelt during the new deal, suggesting its success or failure, and indicating whether the new deal went far enough for the sake of people or not.

# Discussion

President Roosevelt was a politician who possessed many distinctive attributes that made him eligible to be America’s President. He was elected to serve as the President of America with a heavy mandate. His background made him very suitable for working in that particular critical moment in American history. People were in great distress, and it was a situation when they might probably looking for a game-changer. When he was elected, he could not immediately join office because the former President, Mr. Hoover, had to continue his four-month interregnum. During this period, the people of America faced the harshest economic conditions of the Great Depression. The statistics supported this argument. The rate of unemployment reached a maximum level. It was not until March 1933 when President Roosevelt first joined office. At that time, he could not come up with a specific plan to cope with the difficulties of the recessed economic conditions. However, he demonstrated undefeatable determination. He inspired the nation with great hope. People who were in fear until that time, became hopeful for their future. Despite being unable to give any formal plan for revival of the economy, he was successful in bringing people together. He asked people to leave the regrets behind, and join him for the sake of a better future.

Roosevelt came with certain beliefs, values and principles for his work. He thought that it was his duty to make people's lives better. The people of America gathered under his flag and cooperated in his strategic efforts. The President held the belief that the government will have to be active showing concern for people's needs. The government should take immediate initiatives to spread relief on the national level. The government has to intervene in issues, programs, and organizations that are related to human rights and public welfare. Therefore, it was an integral part of his policy that the government has to directly act on the projects of federal relief, social services, and public aid. He wanted to make radical changes to the government's role in people's lives.

Roosevelt took great initiatives to deal with the impacts of the Great Depression on the whole nation. The first hundred days of his tenure were of immense importance, and comprised the first new deal of his government (Corbett, et. al., 2017). After assuming his position, he pledged to fight against poverty and unemployment which were the biggest issues of his time. The previous governments had not given these issues due importance. His first significant step toward restoring the country’s economy was to restore customers’ confidence in the banking system. To this end, he announced a bank holiday and made arrangements that could enable the legislative authorities to address the issue. His efforts led to the establishment of the "Emergency Banking Act" by Congress legislation. This act made it necessary for the banks to get examined before their openings by the concerned authorities. This ensured that the banks are safe to make transactions as far as their policies, strategies and programs are concerned. People showed confidence in banking and started making financial transactions.

As part of his first new deal, Roosevelt established many new rules that addressed people’s needs during that period. The main points of his agenda were to create jobs for the unemployed, improve the conditions of industry, make essential arrangements for the development of agriculture, and offer programs for providing relief to individuals. His government intended to offer finances for rehabilitation and development to individuals. His programs were comprehensive, specific and workable. However, all his programs did not prove as effective as he had foreseen. Therefore, he had to confront criticism from many people.

Roosevelt’s new deal comprised many programs, reforms and regulations during the first three years of his tenure. The major programs as part of the first new deal aimed at providing social security, ensuring restoration of the economy, providing farm security, improving civil administration and accelerating the social work. These programs were intended to provide support to people associated with agriculture, the unemployed, and people belonging to different age groups. The major reforms planned in his first hundred days addressed the fiscal policy, regulations made for banking and monetary systems and financial securities.

During the second new deal, Roosevelt strived for continuing the pace of the programs he had started in the first new deal period. He made efforts that pushed Congress to issue new regulations regarding the provision of jobs to the unemployed, reinforcement of banking reforms and creation of social security. The prominent outcomes of his efforts came in the form of "the banking act", "emergency relief appropriation act", and the "social security act". These acts are still applied in the country. The major objectives set for the second new deal were: using the national resources to a maximum level, providing security to the elderly, addressing unemployment with a determination, eliminating illnesses from the society, and executing relief programs at the national level. Another significant effort in the course of the second new deal was the "fair labor standards act". This act protected the rights of employed workers in the industries. It set the minimum wage limit for jobs while hiring new employees. It established the limit of work hours in a week for all workers. The child labor was declared to be illegal in any way. During the second new deal, this act and the social security act ensured many aspects of social safety in the country. President’s reforms helped many individuals to get jobs. A major issue arose regarding discrimination in jobs. This was due to the systemization of workplaces. Mostly, women were the target of this discrimination. However, the programs were able to get many people jobs.

President Roosevelt was successful in his endeavors. Even though critiques gave discouraging remarks about his programs, he succeeded in changing the scope of American government. The government that was earlier representing individualism had shifted its priorities and directions of activities towards making the country a welfare state. The role of government was enhanced in his presidency. The government started monitoring the general conditions in people’s lives. Unemployment, poverty, and social injustice became important issues of discussion and regulation.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, there have been certain thinkers who, acknowledging the great influence of Roosevelt’s efforts, have criticized certain things in his programs. They ask the question of why taxes increased in his period. They claim that all taxes – including income tax, excise tax, holding tax, and corporate tax – were increased three times the amounts of previous taxes. “FDR introduced an undistributed profits tax. Consumers had less money to spend, and employers had less money for growth and jobs (Tough Questions for Defenders of the New Deal, 2003).” This question can be answered by presenting the fact that the stability of government and safety of the state are the most important issues to be considered in governance. Taxes were levied to save the nation and the state. Taxes were imposed to support the financial system of the country. Huey Long presented a plan for government aid of sharing wealth. Regarding agricultural income, he suggests, “Balance agricultural production with what can be consumed according to the laws of God, which includes the preserving and storage of surplus commodities to be paid for and held by the Government for the emergencies when such are needed (“Huey P. Long, ‘Every Man a King’ and ‘Share our Wealth’ (1934) | The American Yawp Reader,” n.d.).”

# Conclusion

President Roosevelt redefined the government by expanding its role to issues of people’s concerns. During his tenure, he signed first and second new deals to implement acts in favor of people’s rights and interests. His efforts were successful in many aspects. Some critiques speak against his programs, but they consider only one side of the issue.

**Works Cited**

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