The **New Deal** was a series of programs, public works projects, financial reforms, and regulations enacted by **President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR)** in response to the **Great Depression**. It aimed to provide **relief** for the unemployed and poor, **recovery** of the economy, and **reform** of the financial system to prevent future depressions. These goals were often summarized as the "3 Rs": Relief, Recovery, and Reform.

**Context:**

When Roosevelt became president in **1933**, the U.S. was in the depths of the Great Depression:

* Unemployment was around **25%**.
* Banks were failing, and people had lost their life savings.
* Agricultural and industrial production had plummeted.

The New Deal unfolded in two major phases: the **First New Deal (1933–1934)** and the **Second New Deal (1935–1939)**.

**Key Programs and Policies:**

**First New Deal (1933–1934): Immediate Relief and Economic Recovery**

1. **Emergency Banking Act (1933)**:
   * Temporarily closed banks ("bank holiday") to stabilize the banking system.
   * Led to the creation of the **Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)** to insure deposits.
2. **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**:
   * Created jobs for young men in conservation projects, such as reforestation, soil erosion control, and building parks.
3. **Public Works Administration (PWA)**:
   * Funded large infrastructure projects like bridges, dams, and schools.
4. **Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA)**:
   * Aimed to raise crop prices by paying farmers to reduce production.
   * Controversial because it involved destroying surplus crops while many people were starving.
5. **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**:
   * Built dams and hydroelectric plants in the Tennessee Valley to provide electricity and prevent flooding in rural areas.
6. **National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA)**:
   * Established the **National Recovery Administration (NRA)** to regulate wages, prices, and working conditions.
   * Declared unconstitutional in 1935.

**Second New Deal (1935–1939): Long-Term Reform and Social Security**

1. **Works Progress Administration (WPA)**:
   * Employed millions of people in public works projects, including roads, schools, and even artistic projects like murals and plays.
2. **Social Security Act (1935)**:
   * Created the Social Security system, providing pensions for the elderly, unemployment insurance, and aid for disabled individuals.
3. **Wagner Act (1935)**:
   * Strengthened labor unions by guaranteeing workers the right to collective bargaining and outlawing unfair labor practices.
4. **Rural Electrification Administration (REA)**:
   * Expanded access to electricity in rural areas.
5. **Fair Labor Standards Act (1938)**:
   * Established the federal minimum wage, maximum work hours, and banned child labor in many industries.

**Impact:**

* **Economic Relief**: The New Deal reduced unemployment and provided immediate relief to struggling Americans. Programs like the CCC and WPA created millions of jobs.
* **Reforms**: Banking reforms and the FDIC restored trust in financial institutions. Social Security laid the foundation for the modern welfare state.
* **Infrastructure**: The New Deal built infrastructure (roads, dams, bridges) still in use today.
* **Government Role**: It significantly expanded the federal government's role in the economy, creating a precedent for future intervention.

**Criticism:**

1. **From the Right**: Critics argued that the New Deal expanded government power too much, leading to inefficiency and higher taxes.
2. **From the Left**: Some believed it didn’t go far enough to address wealth inequality and poverty.
3. **Supreme Court**: Several programs, such as the NRA and parts of the AAA, were declared unconstitutional until FDR threatened to "pack" the Court with additional justices.