



Name _____

American History Unit 18 – The New Deal Critical Thinking Assignment

The NEW DEAL FOR THE COMMON MAN

The New Deal profoundly altered industrial relations by throwing the weight of the government behind efforts to unionize workers. At the outset of the Great Depression, only a minority of factory workers were unionized in the United States. Employers hired & fired at will. Because of Roosevelt and the New Deal he created, a very different pattern emerged. Under the **National Industrial Recovery Act** of 1933 & the far-reaching **Wagner Act** of 1935, union organizers gained millions of recruits in such industries as steel, automobiles, & textiles. Employees won higher wages, reductions in hours, and greater job security.

Thanks to the National Recovery Administration coal miners achieved the outlawing of compulsory company houses & stores. Steel workers, who in 1920 labored twelve-hour after WWII era they would win not merely paid vacations but sabbatical leaves. The labor code of the United was transformed into one of the most liberal, in the world & these reforms were not the harvest of union led agitation, but were forced upon a the labor movement by the government. Years later, when David E. Lilienthal, the director of the **Tennessee Valley Authority**, was being driven to the airport to fly to Roosevelt's funeral, the driver said to him:

I won't forget what he did for me. . I spent the best years of my life working at the Appalachian Mills & they didn't even treat us like humans. If you didn't do like they said, they always told you there was someone else to take your job. I had my mother & my sister to take care of. Sixteen cents an hour was what we got; a fellow can't live on that. If you asked to get off on a Sunday, the foreman would say, "All right you stay away Sunday, but when you come back Monday someone else will have your job." No, sir, I won't forget what he done for us.

The NRA wiped out sweatshops, & removed some 150,000 child laborers from factories. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 established the principle of a federally imposed minimal level of working conditions. The New Deal also originated a new system of social welfare to replace private charity. The Social Security Act of 1935 created America's first national system of old-age pensions & initiated a federal program of unemployment insurance. It also authorized grants for the blind, for the incapacitated, & for dependent children. Roosevelt himself affirmed the newly assumed attitudes in Washington in his annual message to Congress in 1938 when he declared:

Government has a final responsibility for the well-being of its citizenship. If private cooperative endeavor fails to provide work for willing hands & relief for the unfortunate, those suffering hardship from no fault of their own have a right to call upon the Government for aid; & a government worthy of its name must make fitting response.

Directions:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences, offering plenty of examples and facts from the reading. Complete your work on a separate sheet of paper and staple this handout to it.

1. Was the New Deal pro-labor or pro-business? Explain.
2. Why was the driver grateful to Roosevelt?
3. After reading this passage explain what the New Deal accomplished