

A Concise History of the New Deal (Cambridge Essential Histories)

By Jason Scott Smith

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During the 1930s, Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal carried out a program of dramatic reform to counter the unprecedented failures of the market economy exposed by the Great Depression. Contrary to the views of today's conservative critics, this book argues that New Dealers were not "anticapitalist" in the ways in which they approached the problems confronting society. Rather, they were reformers who were deeply interested in fixing the problems of capitalism, if at times unsure of the best tools to use for the job. In undertaking their reforms, the New Dealers profoundly changed the United States in ways that still resonate today. Lively and engaging, this narrative history focuses on the impact of political and economic change on social and cultural relations.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Jason Scott Smith's book could not be more timely. He has written what now must be regarded as the best one-volume history of the New Deal. His easy mastery of the vast historical literature and his sensitivity to political realities provide a compelling account of FDR's dramatic efforts to save capitalism and create a more humane society. Smith's clear-eyed assessment of what the New Deal did, and did not, achieve is a refreshing antidote to the simplistic debates of today's politics. A tour de force."

Tony Badger, Paul Mellon Professor of American History, University of Cambridge

"With an enduring legacy that, despite repeated efforts by critics to minimize and denigrate its contributions, literally redefined modern American politics, the New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt continues to captivate the attention of scholars and engaged citizens alike. Such an audience will greatly enjoy Jason Scott Smith's new book - a refreshingly succinct overview that vividly portrays the efforts of an inspired generation of leaders, one determined to ameliorate the worst impacts of unprecedented economic instability while, at the same time, striving to preserve the core virtues of capitalist enterprise."

Michael A. Bernstein, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Tulane University, Louisiana

"Thanks to Jason Scott Smith, twenty-first-century undergraduates now have a highly readable account of the Great Depression and the New Deal. Written in the shadow of our own great recession, Smith's account is notable for its emphasis on New Deal infrastructure spending, a long-ago "stimulus" that put millions to work, boosted the economy, and permanently transformed the nation."

Nelson Lichtenstein, MacArthur Foundation Chair in History, University of California, Santa Barbara

About the Author

Jason Scott Smith is Associate Professor of History at the University of New Mexico, where he teaches courses on the history of capitalism and liberalism. Smith is the author of the award-winning *Building New Deal Liberalism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005). He is often quoted in the media, and his scholarly work has appeared in a number of journals, including the *Journal of Social History*, the *Pacific Historical Review*, *Reviews in American History*, and the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. From 2004 to 2006 he held a Mellon Fellowship in American Studies at Cornell University, where he was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Department of Government. In 2001-2 he was the Harvard-Newcomen Fellow at the Harvard Business School. He received his PhD from the University of California, Berkeley.

Users Review

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