

Hoover simply  
extended the agonies  
of the depression  
essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

On the one hand, Hoover's interventions mitigated the depression. Hoover has historically said to have "stepped up federal construction, urged state and local governments to accelerate spending", this indicates that he did try and ease the depression and that he did not lead America into a further and dire situation. Hoover even cut his own/state officials' pay by 20% to provide revenue for recovery measures.

This shows that Hoover was sympathetic towards the American's suffering in the Depression, hence by reducing his own wages showed his willingness to help America during a time of economic difficulty. In support of this, the USA supreme court have been quoted to say that Hoover "started more public works schemes than had been done by the previous 40 presidents". The emphasis on "more public works schemes" suggests that Hoover was not reluctant to help, and he wanted to ease America during times of hardship. Furthermore, Hoover secures an additional \$500 million from Congress in 1931, to help agencies around the USA to provide relief. In hindsight, it is clear that Hoover did much to try and ease America through the depression, but whether his aid was in time or consistent is arguable.

However, it can also be suggested that Hoover's interventions did not do a sufficient amount during the depression, hence the depression merely stood at a halt. This view is supported by Harold Wilson who once stating that Hoover "should have left the economy to right itself". This indicates that what he implemented was merely a waste of time. He stuck by his policy of rugged individualism and voluntary cooperation: He did not accept the idea of direct government relief. Additionally, he stated that Hoover was "being asked to abandon the convictions of a lifetime, and he could not do it". This

<https://assignbuster.com/hoover-simply-extended-the-agonies-of-the-depression-essay-sample/>

conveys that Hoover was a “do-nothing” president, and did not physically do a sufficient amount of deeds to ease America during the depression.

Moreover, William Leuchtenberg also implies that what Hoover implemented, was done far “too modestly”. In the eyes of this historian, Hoover was unable to implement actions which would help America; instead he remained reluctant and apathetic. Hoover passed the blame for the depression onto Europe, and so did not face up to the problem and try to resolve or ease it. Problems were too great to be solved by voluntarism- therefore his actions were not far-reaching enough to address the scale and seriousness of the Depression!

On the other hand, Hoover’s interventions were seen to prolong the depression and in doing so, extend the agonies of the Depression. Although he “aimed to stabilise agriculture through federal encouragements of farm cooperatives” as Roosevelt indicates, in actual fact the agricultural policy failed for paying farmers too high for surplus, which couldn’t continue in the long term. In addition, the introduction of the Hawley-Smoot tariff in 1930 “reduced taxes in order to stimulate the economy and increased government spending”, as stated by historian Paul Johnson.

This tariff “limited international trade”, which was indeed a massive mistake seeing as the USA was in great need of trading alliances to help their economy. What seemed to be a grand idea i. e. the Hawley Smoot Tariff, back-fired and showed Hoover’s government as further extending the agonies of the depression. Johnson criticised Hoover’s actions, and made it clear that he opposed Hoover’s interventions-claiming that “Hoover simply extended the agonies of the Depression”. Hence, this suggests that perhaps <https://assignbuster.com/hoover-simply-extended-the-agonies-of-the-depression-essay-sample/>

Johnson was unlikely to state the support Hoover gave to America during the depression. It seemed as though the “ inconsistencies in Hoover’s policies” made the depression “ even worse” as stated by Roosevelt. Furthermore, the Federal Home Loan Bank Act in July 1932 was invented to save mortgages by making credit easier, however mortgages were collapsing due to banks going bust. This was evidently pointless and led the US into further agonies of the depression. The reconstruction finance corporation offered “ too little too late”-he made it impossible for people to take help.

Therefore, it’s plain to suggest that Hoover simply extended the agonies of the depression, in which he was not able to relieve any of the problems suffered by the American nation. USA went from being one of the richest countries in the world, to one that saw a plummet in world assets and wealth. If anything, his policies can be seen to have been a long term catalyst in relief, but it was inadequate for short term satisfaction.