

Federal government assignment



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ The Federal government hindered rather than helped the development of trade union and labor rights. ‘ How far do you agree with this view of the period from 1865 to 1992? I am not deep, but I am very wide-Throughout the period 1865 to 1992, the government was both a help and hindrance to the trade union movement. Roosevelt New Deal represented a brief turning point in the Federal government’s attitude towards labor rights. Prior to which Its laissez-fairer approach to the economy had significantly favored employers by granting them more power to abuse the rights of laborers.

The New Deal of 1933 was set out with the intention of steering better relations between the employers and the workforce, as well as helping establish new minimum wage and working hour agreements. Ultimately, Roosevelt proved to be Ineffectual in helping improve the development of labor rights too, In that successive Democratic governments overwhelming reverted back to its anta-nylon policies, suavely siding with employers In order to break up strike action.

As a result of the actions of Presidents like Reagan and the Air Controllers strike, the momentum of the movement had all but disappeared, illustrating how Federal action was one of the greatest hindrances over the entire period to labor sights. In the early half of the time periods, the government’s laissez fairer approach to the economy was one of the largest obstacles to trade unions In the development of labor rights. In not regulating the business practices of businesses, the government showed their clear bias towards the employers and by extension their opposition to the increasing rights of the unskilled worker.

The lack of government intervention enabled companies to amass large fortunes at the expense of the worker, who had to suffer low pay and poor working conditions in order to minimize production cost, to the benefit of a few individuals like Carnegie. Thus, as industrialization occurred in America in the late part of the 19th century, the support of big business meant that as a whole, the working classes suffered a loss in rights, as companies were able to maximize profits by cutting employee rights, such as pay and long working days.

Further evidence of the government's support for the employers was illustrated by Cleveland's use of Pinkerton agents to suppress the Pullman strike. The Pullman strike illustrates the often hostile approach of governments in the early part of the period, as the Federal government occasionally acted in their support for the employers, to the detriment of the workers, whose strike for higher wages failed as a result of the government. The New Deal of 1933 is often regarded as the height of the government's beneficial support for the rights of the worker.

The overall aim of the legislation was to decrease unemployment left in the wake of the Great Depression, as well as improve the rights of those who had already found employment in the unskilled labor force. The National Industrial Recovery Act marked a significant change in the attitude of the governments that had helped the employer, seeking to guarantee minimum wages, as well as the rights of trade unions to exercise collective bargaining techniques.

The real benefits of the act were limited in that it was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, as it infringed on State's rights. Despite this, the prospects for greater improvement in labor rights had never been better, as there was now a President who not only recognized the legitimacy of trade unions, as others before had, but saw them as essential in the economic recovery of the country following the great depression. Hence, whilst the New Deal was fundamentally undermined by the likes of Supreme Court, the government was being more helpful than ever before in improving employer-employee relationships. Similarly, the Wagner Act was dismissed on similar grounds but also showed the New Deal to be a positive impact on the rights of workers. It proposed the creation of a new independent agency?? the National Labor Relations Board, made up of three members appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate-to enforce employee rights rather than to mediate disputes.

It gave employees the right, under Section 7, to form and join unions, and it obligated employers to bargain collectively with unions selected by a majority of the employees in an appropriate bargaining unit. The success of the bill in passing through the town houses of Federal government, like NIRA, illustrate that whilst there was undoubtedly a more positive outlook on the trade union movement as a whole, the actual effect of the government in improving rights was limited.

The Second World War is considered to be the point after which the government was once again a hindrance to the labor rights movement. During the war, the Government once again relied on the cooperation of

unions in order to increase output needed for the armament of people on the front line. Trade unions in this period therefore experienced a significant reduction in power, as non-striking policies were forced upon them by the Federal government to coordinate the war effort at home.

This was shown through the landmark decision by the Supreme Court in 1943 which banned industrial action for plants producing war materials, illustrating how there was an increasing tendency of the Federal Government to view Trade Unions with suspicion, believing that they represented Communist ideals, and were disruptive to the American industry. As a result, Reagan adopted a union busting attitude during his time in the White House, which brought about the beginning of the end for trade unions.

His intervention in the Air Traffic Controllers strike of 1981 demonstrated this, as the government went to extraordinary lengths to break up the strike, overtly using scab labor to put everybody who went on strike out of a job. The result of this Federal action was the demise of large scale union action, as membership of unions fell from 27% in 1970, to 12% in 1990. Hence, the Federal government was undeniably a hindrance in the latter part of the century,