CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

This book is the first major reinterpretation of the New Deal in almost thirty years. Gordon not only recasts our understanding of New Deal programs but also offers a compelling interpretation of the relationship among those programs, of their roots in the 1920s, and of the way in which they were shaped by powerful, if disorganized economic interests. Gordon assesses both private efforts to deal with cutthroat competition and federated politics and political efforts (spurred by private failure and the Great Depression) to enforce the rules or socialize the costs of trade association, welfare capitalism, and "regulatory" labor relations. Of particular importance is the author's argument that the labor and welfare legislation of the "second" New Deal grew directly from disparate business demands for organization and stability.

New Deals offers both a wide range of new or newly interpreted archival evidence and a conceptual approach that draws upon theories of rational choice and collective action, marxian concepts of exploitation, and ongoing efforts to theorize the relationship between politics and markets. This study will interest not only those seeking to understand the New Deal but also those exploring the workings of democratic capitalism and the way in which it organizes (or disorganizes) economic and political interests.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

New Deals

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

New deals

Business, labor, and politics in America, 1920–1935

COLIN GORDON
University of British Columbia

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521451222

© Cambridge University Press 1994

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1994

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Gordon, Colin, 1962–
New deals : business, labor, and politics in America, 1920–1935 /
Colin Gordon.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-521-45122-1. – ISBN 0-521-45755-6 (pbk.)
1. United States – Economic policy – To 1933. 2. United States –
Economic policy – 1933–1945. 3. New Deal, 1933–1939. 4. Labor
policy – United States – History – 20th century. 5. United States –
Politics and government – 1933–1945. I. Title
HC106.3.G625 1994 93-34538
338.973′009′043–dc20 CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-45122-2 Hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-45755-2 Paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2010

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel
timetables and other factual information given in this work are correct at
the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee
the accuracy of such information thereafter.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

FOR MY PARENTS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Abbreviations Used in Text and Notes xi

Introduction 1

1. Rethinking the New Deal: The Logic and Limits of the U.S. Political Economy 5

2. Competition and Collective Action: Business Conditions and Business Strategies, 1920–1933 35

3. Workers Organizing Capitalists: Regulatory Unionism in American Industry, 1920–1932 87

4. The Limits of Associationalism: Business Organization and Disorganization, 1920–1935 128

5. The National Recovery Act: The Political Economy of Business Organization, 1933–1935 166

6. The Wagner Act: The Political Economy of Labor Relations, 1933–1937 204

7. The Social Security Act: The Political Economy of Welfare Capitalism, 1920–1935 240

8. New Deal, Old Deck: Business, Labor, and Politics After 1935 280

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

Bibliographical Essay 307

Manuscript Collections 314

Index 317

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

Acknowledgments

This book has been a large part of my adult life, during which time I have incurred many academic and practical debts. Indeed, my efforts have depended so heavily on the inspiration and assistance and friendship of others that my intellectual creditors could justly lay claim to any merits that this book might have. In the special economy of scholarship, fortunately, such debts can be repaid in kind or (at ten cents on the dollar) in a prefatory testimonial.

In keeping with my own interpretive approach, I'll start with the cash. I am very grateful for the financial support of the University of Wisconsin Graduate School, the Herbert C. Hoover Presidential Library Association, and the Hagley Museum and Library. Special thanks goes to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, whose doctoral fellowship program supports both individual research and the broader goal of truly public education.

Archivists at the University of Wisconsin Libraries, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Roosevelt and Hoover Presidential Libraries, the Baker Library at Harvard, the Littauer Library at Georgetown, and the New York Public Library guided me patiently through their collections and were quick to help a visiting researcher catch a bus or find lunch. Special thanks to Jerry Hess and Tab Lewis for reducing the National Archives to a human scale. At the Hagley Museum, where I spent a year as a doctoral fellow, I would like to thank Chris Baer, Monique Borque, Gail Petrovich, Marjorie McNinch, and Michael Nash for their friendship and for the delivery of more archival boxes than I'd care to remember.

My friends and colleagues in the Wisconsin history program were a constant source of friendship and inspiration. Roger Horowitz was a thoughtful critic and, on Sunday afternoons, a fairly good third baseman. Kathy Brown, Nancy Isenberg, Marie Laberge, Earl Mulderink, Ted Pearson, Leslie Reagan, Daniel Schneider, and Joel Wolfe were always willing to share ideas and frustrations, and mixed scholarly enthusiasm and fathomless cynicism

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

in such a way that made it possible and enjoyable to write my dissertation. That I did not miss these friends more keenly during a year-long research trip to the East Coast is thanks largely to Pat Cooper, whose tenure at the Hagley happily overlapped with mine.

At York University, Joe Ernst provided friendship and encouragement. Stan Vittoz exchanged ideas on the political economy of the 1920s; my debt to him should be apparent to anyone who has read his fine monograph on New Deal labor policy. And Gabriel Kolko, as a friend and a scholar, inspired and encouraged my work at various stages – including a careful review of the complete manuscript. Those who have had the good fortune to work with Gabriel will appreciate the importance of his critical insight and generosity. At Wisconsin, I would like to thank Allan Bogue and Tom McCormick for their support and interest, and Rogers Hollingsworth for spurring my interest in the 1920s and encouraging me to probe other disciplines. As reviewers of this manuscript for Cambridge, Michael Bernstein and Nelson Lichtenstein provided both penetrating criticism and critical enthusiasm at a crucial stage. Frank Smith and Liz Neal steered me painlessly through the editorial process, and the blue pencils of Claire Huismann and Greg Everitt made this a better book.

I cannot adequately communicate my debt to Joel Rogers. As a friend, adviser, and colleague, Joel read my work with a judicious mix of skepticism and enthusiasm and taught me more than I would care to admit. His political and intellectual commitments helped me focus my energies and anticipate problems and criticisms. Joel usually knew what I was arguing or where I was going before I did – a fact that I think (and hope) says more about his commitment to my work than it does about my own doubts. Only intellectual embarassment and my editor kept Joel's name from leading off every other footnote.

Finally, I would like to thank my brothers and sister for their support and for enduring numerous long-winded verbal versions of my latest chapter. My parents, to whom this book is dedicated, were my first and best teachers. Special thanks to Susan, whose love and companionship has done more to sustain my intellectual energies, and to place them in proper perspective, than she will ever know; and to Isabel, for happy interruptions of unqualified affection.

C.G.
Vancouver, British Columbia
September, 1993

An earlier version of Chapter 7 appeared as "New Deal, Old Deck: Business and the Origins of Social Security, 1920–1935," *Politics and Society* 19 (June 1991). It is reprinted with the permission of Sage Publications.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

Abbreviations Used in Text and Notes

AALL: American Association for Labor Legislation
AC: Advisory Council (NRA)
ACW: Amalgamated Clothing Workers
AER: *American Economic Review*
AFL: American Federation of Labor
ALL: American Liberty League
ALLR: *American Labor Legislation Review*
API: American Petroleum Institute
ASR: *American Sociological Review*
BAC: Business Advisory Council
BBLS: *Bulletin of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*
BHR: *Business History Review*
CAS: Code Administration Studies (NRA)
CD: Compliance Division (NRA)
CF: Commerce Files (Hoover Papers)
CES: Committee on Economic Security
CIA: Committee of Industrial Analysis
CIO: Congress of Industrial Organizations
CoC Chamber of Commerce
CTI: Cotton Textile Institute
DIE: Division of Industrial Economics (NRA)
DR: Division of Review (NRA)
FDRPL: Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library
FOCB: Federal Oil Conservation Board
FTC: Federal Trade Commission
HCHPL: Herbert C. Hoover Presidential Library
IAB: Industrial Advisory Board (NRA)
ILGWU: International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
ILRR: *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*
JAH: *Journal of American History*

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-45122-2 - New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935
Colin Gordon
Frontmatter
More information

JEH: *Journal of Economic History*
JPE: *Journal of Political Economy*
LAB: Labor Advisory Board (NRA)
LH: *Labor History*
MLR: *Monthly Labor Review*
N&S: Name and Subject Files (Strauss Papers)
NAM: National Association of Manufacturers
NBER: National Bureau of Economic Research
NICB: National Industrial Conference Board
NIRA: National Industrial Recovery Act
NLB: National Labor Board
NLMA: National Lumber Manufacturers' Association
NLRB: National Labor Relations Board
NRA: National Recovery Administration
OF: Official Files (FDR Papers)
PAW: Petroleum Administration for War
PF: Presidential Files (Hoover Papers)
POUR: President's Organization on Unemployment Relief
PPF: President's Personal Files (Hoover, FDR Papers)
PPI: Post-Presidential Individual Files (Hoover Papers)
PRA: President's Re-employment Agreement
PSF: President's Secretary's Files (FDR Papers)
SSA: Social Security Act
SCC: Special Conference Committee
SEJ: Southern Economic Journal
SWOC: Steel Workers Organizing Committee
TCB: Timber Conservation Board
TNEC: Temporary National Economic Committee
TPSS: Trade Practice Studies Section (NRA Records)
UAW: United Auto Workers
UMW: United Mine Workers
URW: United Rubber Workers
USWA: United Steel Workers of America

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org