

A New Coalition

In the 1936 election, Roosevelt won a decisive victory over his Republican opponent, Alf Landon of Kansas. He was personally popular, and the economy seemed near recovery. He took 60 percent of the vote and carried all but two states. A broad new coalition aligned with the Democratic Party emerged, consisting of labor, most farmers, most urban ethnic groups, African Americans, and the traditionally Democratic South. The Republican Party received the support of business as well as middle-class members of small towns and suburbs. This political alliance, with some variation and shifting, remained intact for several decades.

1. Who ran against Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1936 presidential election?

2. Following Roosevelt's victory, the Democratic Party found itself unable to form strong ties with groups such as farmers and laborers.

- a. True
- b. False

Roosevelt's second term was a time of consolidation. The president made two serious political missteps: an ill-advised, unsuccessful attempt to enlarge the Supreme Court and a failed effort to "purge" increasingly recalcitrant Southern conservatives from the Democratic Party. When he cut high

government spending, moreover, the economy collapsed. These events led to the rise of a conservative coalition in Congress that was unreceptive to new initiatives.

3. What two serious missteps did Franklin Roosevelt make during his second term?

From 1932 to 1938 there was widespread public debate on the meaning of New Deal policies to the nation's political and economic life. Americans clearly wanted the government to take greater responsibility for the welfare of ordinary people, however uneasy they might be about big government in general. The New Deal established the foundations of the modern welfare state in the United States. Roosevelt, perhaps the most imposing of the 20th-century presidents, had established a new standard of mass leadership.

4. What established the foundations of the modern welfare state in the United States?

No American leader, then or since, used the radio so effectively. In a radio address in 1938, Roosevelt declared: "Democracy has

