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When Government Helped: Learning from the Successes and Failures of the New Deal. Sheila D. Collins and Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg (Eds.). Reviewed by Robert D. Leighninger, Jr.

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Sheila D. Collins and Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg (Eds.), *When Government Helped: Learning from the Successes and Failures of the New Deal*. Oxford University Press (2014). \$39.95 paperback, 360 pages.

In 2008 did we elect another Franklin Roosevelt or another Herbert Hoover? This wonderfully comprehensive analysis of the New Deal's responses to the Great Depression and the responses of the Obama Administration to The Great Recession addresses that question. It offers detailed comparisons of the two administrations on banking, jobs, agriculture, the environment, labor, social movements, welfare, culture, and general political economy. It documents the similarities and differences in the contexts within each had to operate: the political skills of the president, the available channels of communication and his ability to use them, the strength and composition of his party, the interest groups and social movements aiding and opposing him, and other environmental, cultural, and international factors that each faced.

Several common themes emerge. One was Roosevelt's superior ability to explain to the electorate what was happening to them, what his policies were intended to accomplish, and to do so with language that identified with traditional American values. Sheila Collins concludes that the most important difference between the two presidents was that Roosevelt had a broader vision of a new age that required the redefinition of old American ideals like "liberty," "security," and "freedom." Obama's "soaring rhetoric" was no substitute for the ability to articulate policy in ways that would "forge alliances and win over adversaries."

Another theme was Roosevelt's crucial vision of the interrelationships of problems, another point made by Collins, which allowed him to devise policies to combat economic, social, and ecological disasters simultaneously. The Civilian Conservation Corps rescued a hoard of desperate, aimless young men by putting them to work rescuing a ravaged landscape and turning it into splendid recreational opportunities, all the while supporting their starving families back home. The Tennessee Valley Authority similarly stopped deforestation and erosion, prevented disastrous flooding, improved

commercial navigation, and electrified vast rural areas. Obama's Affordable Care Act may one day come close to matching the multiple impacts of these policies, but his stimulus effort fell far short.

A third theme was the utility of radical movements to Roosevelt's left. Gertrude Goldberg shows how these multiple groups of dissenters—jobless veterans, unemployed workers, blacks, tenant farmers, elders, and "levelers" like Huey Long and Father Coughlin—struck enough fear in the hearts of New Deal opponents that if they did not accept Roosevelt's "slightly-left-of-center" programs, they might get something far worse. Richard McIntyre argues that Roosevelt not only used the militants and radicals to further his agenda, but also controlled their influence within the collective bargaining process that his legislation had made legal. McIntyre sees the Communist-led unions as the most effective at resisting management and sees the current sorry state of unions as beginning with the purge of the radicals from the New Deal "system." Obama, of course, cannot be blamed for not having enough enemies on the left to frighten the right into compromise. He might, however, have gotten farther by paying more attention to advocates of "the public option" in health reform and less to placating Republicans.

The greatest contrast between presidents is in the area of job creation. The New Deal spawned a dozen programs that created public jobs: huge infrastructure projects; small repair projects; programs for artists, archeologists, draftsmen, totem-pole carvers, and all sorts for white-collar workers. Roosevelt ignored the Republican mantra of supply-side economics and put large amounts of money into the demand side. Investors invest and businesses hire when people buy their goods and services, not when they are offered tax breaks. And it worked. The effects of these public works programs on the economy could be seen both when they were initiated and when they were, twice, temporarily cut back. The second withdrawal in 1937 triggered a recession that set back recovery several years. Philip Harvey tells this story very well. He shows how direct job creation is cheaper and more efficient than stimulating or cajoling the private sector. In contrast, Obama, as Timothy Canova notes, did not believe that the private sector could

create jobs. In this he is clearly a Hooverite. And his pitiful stimulus effort showed it. Canova connects this failure of jobs creation to the backlash of the 2010 midterm elections. Had he attacked and defeated unemployment first, argues Goldberg, his reform of health care might have had more enthusiastic support.

Though I have emphasized Roosevelt's successes, this book is no hagiography. It is as alert to the failures of the New Deal as to Obama's missed opportunities. There is still time to learn from both.

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Steve Early, *Save Our Unions*. Monthly Review Press (2013). \$19.95 (paperback), 344 pages.

Save Our Unions is a sprawling collection of essays, covering everything from the Bread and Roses strike of 1912 to the current struggles of the British Labour Party. The text includes movie and book reviews, as well as journalistic accounts of many contemporary U.S. labor struggles, and even author Steve Early's personal experience over many years of working for the Communication Workers of America (CWA). The book will offer practitioners a wealth of details with strategic implications for ongoing efforts. Academics will find hints of theory throughout, and a series of cases with implications for long-standing debates in labor and social movement studies.

The seven thematic sections are bookended by an introduction and conclusion that contain a positive assessment of Sol Roselli's National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). The union was formed in the midst of a an intra-Service Employees International Union (SEIU) conflict that came to the surface in early 2009 when the SEIU International Union placed Roselli's massive California-based SEIU Local union under trusteeship in a successful effort to remove him from power. Indeed Early's assessment of the conflict is woven throughout the book, and anyone curious to understand the recent labor movement civil wars—about which the author has written extensively in his book *The Civil Wars in US Labor*—will be thoroughly engaged.

The first section of *Save Our Unions* addresses several cases