cellent overview and the conclusion a proper summation, but the blocks between are without mortar. One wishes that the analysis were spread throughout rather than concentrated so entirely at either end of this otherwise striking and worthwhile book. Still, it is highly recommended not just to students of literature but also to urban historians.

Indiana University, Bloomington       Cynthia D. Kinnard


Bonnie Fox Schwartz's study is a well-researched and written account of an important, but often overlooked, New Deal agency. Created after the initial legislative surge of Roosevelt's first one hundred days and overshadowed by the highly publicized Public Works and Works Progress administrations, this short-lived agency has received little treatment from historians. But the CWA compiled an impressive record. At its peak it employed over four million workers and pumped an estimated one billion dollars of purchasing power into the sagging economy. Workers built 40,000 schools, 500,000 miles of roads, and thousands of hospitals and playgrounds. Created in November, 1933, and demobilized in the spring of 1934, the CWA helped millions of unemployed weather the severe winter months.

Schwartz's work consists of nine chapters dealing with such topics as the origin and structure of the CWA program, the conflict between social workers and corporate liberals for control of the agency, the CWA in the states, labor, women, and CWA projects for white collar and professional workers. Schwartz contends that the CWA was the most efficient and best run of all New Deal relief agencies. Much of this success she attributes to corporate liberals: engineers, economic planners, and industrial managers who temporarily supplanted social workers and ran the CWA as an efficient business. The CWA paid living wages rather than security wages and provided meaningful public employment rather than charitable make-work. She feels the management techniques employed by these technicians created an efficient and effective relief agency that has been unequaled by any government relief program in the last fifty years.

While different in many respects, the CWA shared some of the same problems of other New Deal relief agencies. Conflict with state political leaders over control of appointments, internal disputes—such as those between social workers and corporate
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liberals for control of the program—, and charges of favoritism and corruption were common to most New Deal programs, including the CWA. Still, it was primarily Roosevelt’s concern for the program’s rising cost that led the President to terminate the agency.

Schwartz’s study adds to the growing body of scholarship on corporate liberalism. Her conclusions about the contribution made to the CWA by corporate liberals are convincing. Her argument that the CWA stands as the most effective model for providing work relief of any government program in the last fifty years is more debatable. CWA was short lived and expensive, and some projects were of poor quality and lacked adequate supervision. Moreover, despite providing public employment rather than charitable make-work, it was a program funded solely by the government. This point alone would cause many today to debate its worthiness.

Nonetheless, the significance of the Civil Works Administration cannot be denied. Schwartz’s conclusions are thought provoking, and her work, based on a wide variety of government records and other primary and secondary sources, is a worthwhile addition to the literature of the New Deal.

University of Notre Dame, Thomas T. Spencer
Notre Dame

Democratic Vistas: Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal.

When Harry Hopkins included programs for artists among the first activities funded by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in 1933, he said: “Hell! They’ve got to eat just like other people.” Little did he realize an offshoot of his efforts would become the largest public art collection in the country—murals in hundreds of post office lobbies in the forty-eight contiguous states.

In 1934, Henry Morgenthau, Jr., secretary of the treasury, established the Section of Painting and Sculpture with the goal of securing “suitable art work of the best quality for the embellishment of public buildings.” From then until its demise in 1943 the Section held anonymous competitions for mural commissions in cities from Calexico, California, to Kennebunk Port, Maine, and from Anacortes, Washington, to Miami, Florida.

Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz provide a thorough and sympathetic study of the work of the Section, perhaps the