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future of Africa” (p. 240). Whether you share in his optimism or not, Francis has written an important and provocative book.

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Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956 by Jason Scott Smith. *New York, Cambridge University Press, 2006. 300 pp. \$75.00.*

In this carefully researched, well-written, and persuasively argued book, Jason Scott Smith fills an important gap in our knowledge about the New Deal and its legacy. Smith’s thesis is that the New Deal’s public works programs revolutionized the role of the federal government in economic development and had a lasting impact on the state and economy. The Public Works Administration (PWA), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and similar agencies transformed the physical landscape and laid the foundation for the post-World War II economy. Smith catalogs the huge scale of this endeavor, the construction of a vast number and variety of facilities—streets and highways, bridges, hydroelectric plants, airports, parks, schools, flood control and reclamation projects, and public buildings of every kind.

The New Dealers built more than physical structures, as the book’s title suggests. Public works were central to the New Deal’s public philosophy, state- and economy-building efforts, and strategy for consolidating its regime. Smith argues that liberal and leftist scholars have failed to appreciate the broad, multifaceted role of public works, focusing only on their inability to end mass unemployment and their aim to prop up a faltering capitalist order. Public works reoriented the role of the federal government in economic development and had a long-term impact on the strength of the U.S. economy. This argument is particularly compelling when he demonstrates the New Deal’s profound impact on the post-World War II interstate highway system and military-industrial complex, which were vital to tying together the nation’s economy, developing the South and West, and pursuing the containment of communism.

From the start, New Dealers were divided over whether improving infrastructure or putting people back to work should take precedence. The PWA, under Harold Ickes, opted for building hydroelectric dams and other large-scale public works. Ickes’s contention that the projects spurred sizable job growth indirectly, through the private sector, did not impress Roosevelt, which led him to create the WPA, whose projects stressed putting people to work directly. The debate over “projects versus people” was misplaced, according to Smith; the WPA constructed, rehabilitated, and improved a large share of the public infrastructure, and the PWA created a great deal of employment (indirectly).

Those who ran the PWA and WPA confronted problems familiar to anyone who has implemented public employment programs. States and localities

fought over shares of the money. Agencies that received funding were tempted to use it to replace other funding (thus creating no additional jobs or facilities). Administrators tried to balance careful planning with creating jobs quickly and keeping the programs free of corruption cronyism at the same time that they were used to build political support for the New Deal.

Republican criticism of the projects as wasteful “boondoggles” had little impact. The projects were highly visible, and federal money for them poured into virtually every county in the country. Most importantly, the public liked them. But the New Dealers’ unabashed use of the programs to build loyalty to the Democrats (rather than Americans’ anti-government political culture, according to Smith) ignited a political backlash that led to restrictions under the Hatch Act. Rising employment during World War II and a more conservative Congress brought to an end the New Deal’s public works. Congress consolidated the remnants of the agencies into the General Service Administration, whose role was limited to managing federal property.

Smith acknowledges that the public works programs enjoyed mixed success, at best, in promoting social justice and other liberal goals. His most disturbing finding is that the public works agencies played a major role in carrying out the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Still, judged against the broad goals of many New Dealers—to build a stronger economy, state, and regime and transform the physical landscape—their performance was impressive. For illuminating this record of accomplishment, *Building New Deal Liberalism* should be read by New Deal historians and political scientists interested in the intersection of U.S. politics and policy and the economy of the twentieth century.

GARY MUCCIARONI
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Five Days in Philadelphia: 1940, Wendell Willkie, and the Political Convention that Freed FDR to Win World War II by Charles Peters. *New York, Public Affairs, 2006. 274 pp. \$13.95.*

The Second World War changed the world so completely that it has incited what might be called a literature of “what if?” Had some significant event happened another way, how different might life have been? Classics range from George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* to Philip Roth’s recent *The War Against America*. And now Charles Peters weighs in with *Five Days in Philadelphia*.

Like Roth, Peters, the founder and former longtime editor of the *Washington Monthly*, focuses on the pivotal 1940 presidential election, which returned Franklin D. Roosevelt to an unprecedented third term in office. In Roth’s novel, the Nazi sympathizer Charles Lindbergh is elected president and makes a pact with Hitler; riots and pogroms ensue. In Peters’s account, the counterfactual is more subtle: What if Wendell Willkie, an energy industry executive consigned to the recycling bin of history, whose most lasting legacy has heretofore