

## *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Political Life*

by Robert Dallek



This book is Robert Dallek's newest on one of his favorite subjects, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and was released on November 7, 2017.

Named a Best Book of the Year by *The Washington Post* and *NPR*

A one-volume biography of Roosevelt by the #1 *New York Times* bestselling biographer of JFK, focusing on his career as an incomparable politician, uniter, and deal maker.

"We come to see in FDR the magisterial, central figure in the greatest and richest political tapestry of our nation's entire history"

— Nigel Hamilton, *Boston Globe*

"Meticulously researched and authoritative"

— Douglas Brinkley, *The Washington Post*

"A workmanlike addition to the literature on Roosevelt."

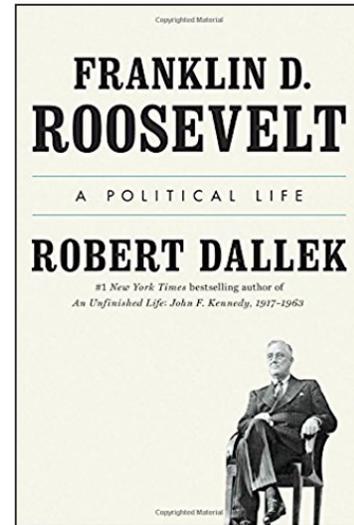
— David Nasaw, *The New York Times*

"Dallek offers an FDR relevant to our sharply divided nation"

— Michael Kazin

"Will rank among the standard biographies of its subject"

— *Publishers Weekly*



In an era of such great national divisiveness, there could be no more timely biography of one of our greatest presidents than one that focuses on his unparalleled political ability as a uniter and consensus maker. Robert Dallek's *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Political Life* takes a fresh look at the many compelling questions that have attracted all his biographers: how did a man who came from so privileged a background become the greatest presidential champion of the country's needy? How did someone who never won recognition for his intellect foster revolutionary changes in the country's economic and social institutions? How did Roosevelt work such a profound change in the country's foreign relations?

For FDR, politics was a far more interesting and fulfilling pursuit than the management of family fortunes or the indulgence of personal pleasure, and by the time he became president, he had commanded the love and affection of millions of people. While all Roosevelt's biographers agree that the onset of polio at the age of thirty-nine endowed him with a much greater sense of

humanity, Dallek sees the affliction as an insufficient explanation for his transformation into a masterful politician who would win an unprecedented four presidential terms, initiate landmark reforms that changed the American industrial system, and transform an isolationist country into an international superpower.

Dallek attributes FDR's success to two remarkable political insights. First, unlike any other president, he understood that effectiveness in the American political system depended on building a national consensus and commanding stable long-term popular support. Second, he made the presidency the central, most influential institution in modern America's political system. In addressing the country's international and domestic problems, Roosevelt recognized the vital importance of remaining closely attentive to the full range of public sentiment around policy-making decisions—perhaps FDR's most enduring lesson in effective leadership.

— Amazon Review

## *The Golden Gate Bridge*

by Ray Strong



Ray Strong, *Golden Gate Bridge*, 1934, oil on canvas, Smithsonian American Art Museum

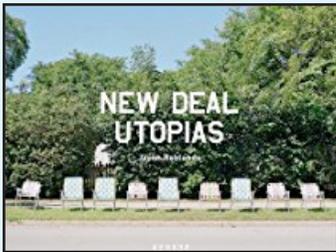
This panoramic depiction of the Golden Gate Bridge under construction pays tribute to the ambitious feat of engineering required to span the mouth of San Francisco Bay. Artist Ray Strong painted looking north from the San Francisco side to the hills of Marin County, where the first bright orange tower rises. Tugboats and a freighter sailing across the deep blue waters typify the busy shipping that would routinely pass beneath the span. The bridge therefore had to have the highest deck ever built. The two massive concrete structures in the foreground are anchors for the cables supporting

the deck. The vast structures on the San Francisco side dwarf the men working around the anchorages and pylons. Strong's painting, with its intense colors and active brushwork, conveys an infectious optimism. Hundreds of tourists who shared the artist's excitement came to gaze at this amazing project that continued despite the financial strains of the Great Depression and the disastrous storm that washed away a trestle on Halloween of 1933. It was only fitting that President Franklin Roosevelt chose this painting celebrating the triumph of American engineering to hang in the White House.

***New Deal Utopias***

by Jason Reblando (Photographer),  
Natasha Egan (Contributor),  
Robert Leighninger Jr (Contributor)

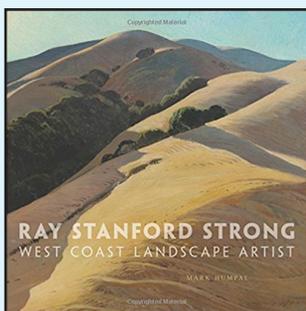
*New Deal Utopias* explores one of the most ambitious but overlooked programs of the New Deal, the Greenbelt Towns, designed and built by the United States government to be model cities in the 1930s. The program was critiqued as “communitistic” by conservative members of Congress, industrial and corporate leaders, and newspapers, yet they still managed to make an indelible impression on urbanist ideas in America. Jason Reblando’s contemporary photographs of Greenbelt, Maryland; Greenhills, Ohio; and Greendale, Wisconsin offer a rich visual and intellectual experience and invite viewers to reflect upon planned communities and the human urge to create an ideal society. (Amazon review) Hardcover – \$30.14



***Ray Stanford Strong: West Coast Landscape Artist***

By Mark Humpal  
University of Oklahoma Press 2017

Throughout his long and prolific career, Ray Stanford Strong (1905–2006) strove to capture the essence of the western American landscape. An accomplished painter who achieved national fame during the New Deal era, Strong is best known for his depiction of landscapes in California and Oregon, rendered in his signature plain air style. This beautiful volume, featuring more than 100 color and black-and-white illustrations, is the first comprehensive exploration of Strong’s life and artistry.



***The Last 100 Days: FDR at War and at Peace***



by Dr. David B Woolner  
Senior Fellow and Hyde Park Resident Historian  
The Roosevelt Institute  
Senior Fellow Center for Civic Engagement  
Bard College  
Professor of History  
Marist College

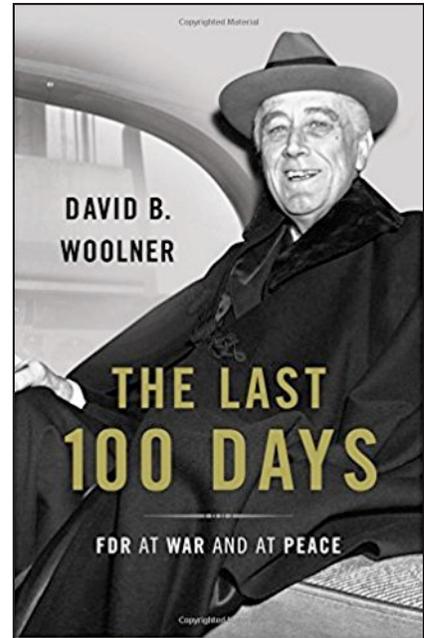
Reviewed by Christopher Breiseth

On December 14th, I attended a book signing/lecture by David B. Woolner at the FDR Presidential Library in Hyde Park, NY. His book, **THE LAST 100 DAYS: FDR AT WAR AND AT PEACE** appeared in book stores that day.

An audience of 150 people attended Woolner’s talk which was filmed by C-SPAN. My closest colleague during my years as president-CEO of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, David had sent me a desk copy which I had the opportunity to read before this premier event. It is terrific.

The work establishes a symmetry between the first 100 days of the Roosevelt Administration, when the domestic New Deal legislation began a redefinition of the relationship between the American people and their government, and FDR’s last 100 days when he led the Allies against Nazi Germany to the edge of victory and secured commitments from Stalin to establish the United Nations and to enter the war against Japan. Acknowledging the President’s deteriorating health as a factor, which has increasingly drawn the attention of historians, Woolner charts on a virtual daily basis the efforts of FDR to pursue with laser like focus his war and peace objectives. Even as his body gave way in early April of 1945 at Warm Springs, he was still managing the relations with Churchill and Stalin and preparing for the opening of the United Nations in San Francisco.

Woolner’s coverage of the Yalta Conference and its importance in



shaping the post war world I believe will become the dominant interpretation of that crucial moment. I have read many books about Franklin Roosevelt but I have never felt closer to the man – and the leader – than when reading Woolner’s book.

The very favorable book jacket blurbs are written by Ken Burns, David Reynolds, Jonathan Alter and E.J. Dionne. The one dimension of Woolner’s success I feel they missed is his masterful control of the world diplomatic scene – David is a diplomatic historian – against which to appreciate Roosevelt’s own mastery of the war and his preparations for the peace.

The book is published by Basic Books and costs \$32.00 in hardback.

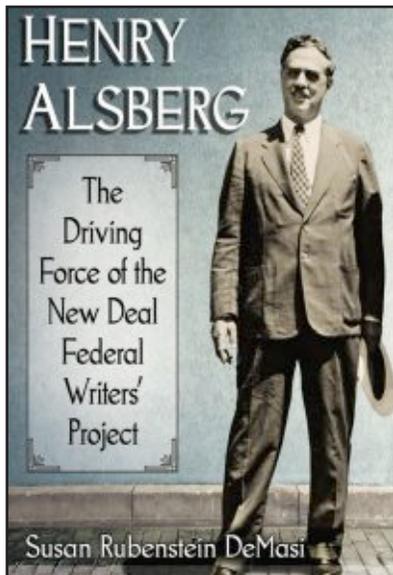
## *Henry Alsberg: The Driving Force of the New Deal Federal Writers' Project*

by Susan Rubenstein DeMasi, Publisher: McFarland & Co., 2016  
Reviewed by: Harvey Smith



The world of the New Deal seems like an alternative universe compared to today's public policies of climate change denial, privatizing of education, rolling back health care benefits, increasing homelessness, threats to publicly funded media and arts, and the increasing gap between rich and poor. The people-centered policies of the New Deal remind us that there is another way. There was a time when policy-makers did not succumb to greed, callousness and denial of basic human needs. Quite the contrary, they moved deliberately and vigorously in the opposite direction.

Much has been written about Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, the two key figures of the New Deal. The relatively recent biography of Frances Perkins, Kirstin Downey's "The Woman Behind the New Deal," finally gives an in depth look at the key architect of FDR's social policy. Susan Quinn's "Furious Improvisation" brings to light the dynamic role of Hallie Flanagan in bringing the performing arts to all Americans. Now Susan Rubenstein DeMasi's new book "Henry Alsberg: The Driving Force of the New Deal Federal Writers' Project" tells the story of the director of New Deal's massive literary project.



Jerre Mangione's earlier work, "The Dream and Deal," described in detail the workings of the "Federal Writers' Project" and to some extent the role of Henry Alsberg. However, DeMasi's book tells the complete life story of another amazing figure from the pantheon of New Deal innovators and reveals the depth of Alsberg's lifelong commitment to human rights and journalistic truth. As it turns out his New Deal work was in a sense the coda to a life of a very dedicated activist, one who was not afraid to confront death defying challenges.

Alsberg was an early champion of the rights of refugees and political prisoners. He worked in Europe during and after World War I. This was long before someone doing such work could rely on the support of an organization like Amnesty International. He sometimes traveled under great risk, working both as a humanitarian and a journalist.

Alsberg hoped to push the world to take action. It's a sad commentary that so many years later others, like contemporary artist Ai Weiwei, must do the same.

As director of the Federal Writers' Project, Alsberg organized the massive program of recruiting writers to do the unique guidebooks for every state and some cities and to chronicle and preserve critical American histories like the slave narratives. Like Hallie Flanagan he faced down the right-wing backlash of the House Committee on Un-American Activities.

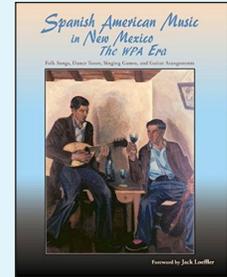
Similar to Bayard Ruston in a later period, he had to hide the fact that he was gay and live under threat of exposure, perhaps stifling efforts to move on to even greater achievements and limiting him to working more behind the scenes.

Thanks to Susan DeMasi for bringing to light the moving story of journalist and human rights advocate Henry Alsberg. His artistic and radical life was an adventure, and her recounting moves along like one.

## NEW BOOKS

### *Spanish American Music in New Mexico: The WPA Era*

by Helen Chandler Ryan  
Foreword by Jack Loeffler. Historical information by Charles R. Cutter.  
Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, NM. 2017.  
222 pgs. Email orders to [newdeal@cybermesa.com](mailto:newdeal@cybermesa.com) or call 505-473-3985.



### *The Last 100 Days: FDR At War and At Peace*

by David Woolner  
Basic Books. Dec. 2017  
See review on page 18.

### *The New Deal: A Global History*

by Kiran Klaus Patel

"A compelling argument that is profoundly relevant to the twenty-first century." – Glenn C. Altschular, *Huffington Post*

"The first book to globalize the history of the New Deal, this is an amazing tour de force with fresh insights on virtually every page." – Akira Iriye, Harvard University

*This book provides a radically new interpretation of a pivotal period in U.S. history. The first comprehensive study of the New Deal in a global context, the book compares American responses to the international crisis of capitalism and democracy during the 1930s to responses by other countries around the globe. Work creation, agricultural intervention, state planning, immigration policy, the role of mass media, forms of political leadership, and new ways of ruling America's colonies – all had parallels elsewhere and unfolded against a backdrop of intense global debates.*

