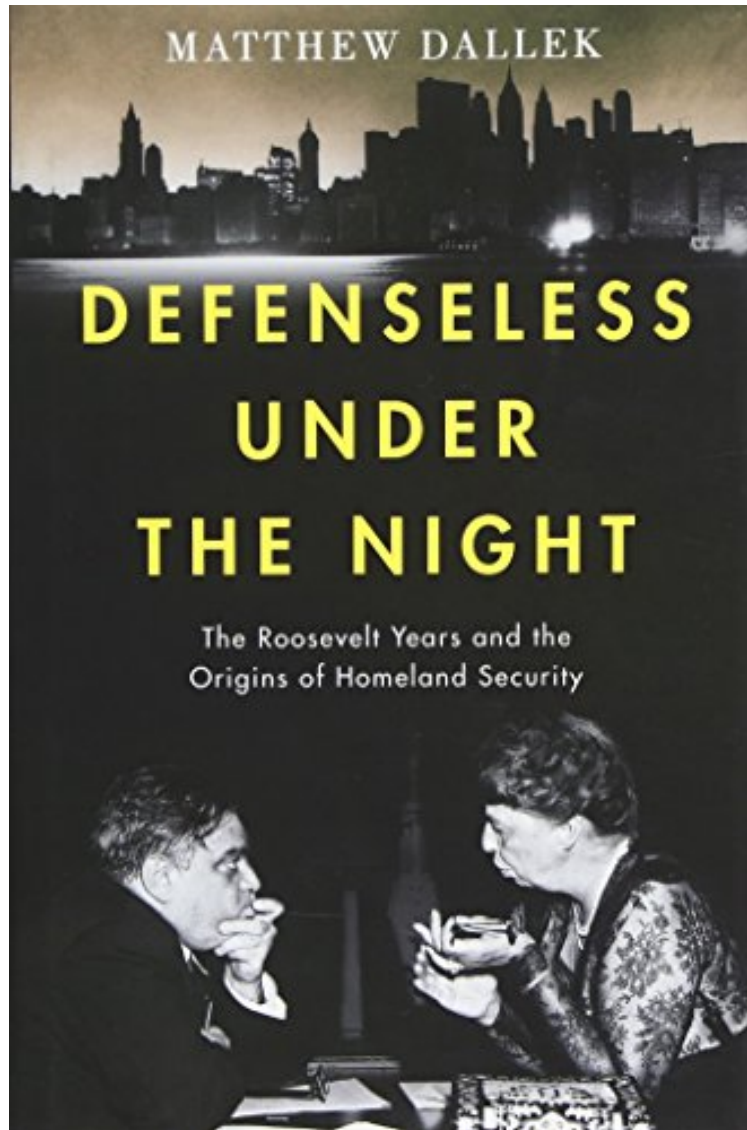


(Download) Defenseless Under the Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security

## Defenseless Under the Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security

*Matthew Dallek*

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In his 1933 inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt declared that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Yet even before Pearl Harbor, Americans feared foreign invasions, air attacks, biological weapons, and, conversely, the prospect of a dictatorship being established in the United States. To protect Americans from foreign and domestic threats, Roosevelt warned Americans that "the world has grown so small" and eventually established the precursor to the Department of Homeland Security - an Office of Civilian Defense (OCD). At its head, Roosevelt appointed New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia; First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt became assistant director. Yet within a year, amid competing visions and clashing ideologies of wartime liberalism, a frustrated FDR pressured both to resign. In *Defenseless Under the Night*, Matthew Dallek reveals the dramatic history behind America's first federal office of homeland security, tracing the debate about the origins of national vulnerability to the rise of fascist threats during the Roosevelt years. While La Guardia focused on preparing the country against foreign attack and militarizing the civilian population, Eleanor Roosevelt insisted that the OCD should primarily focus on establishing a wartime New Deal, what she and her allies called "social defense." Unable to reconcile their visions, both were forced to leave the OCD in 1942. Their replacement, James Landis, would go on to recruit over ten million volunteers to participate in civilian defense, ultimately creating the largest volunteer program in World War II America. Through the history of the OCD, Dallek examines constitutional questions about civil liberties, the role and power of government propaganda, the depth of militarization of civilian life, the quest for a wartime New Deal, and competing liberal visions for American national defense - questions that are still relevant today. The result is a gripping account of the origins of national security, which will interest anyone with a passion for modern American political history and the history of homeland defense.

"Dallek provides us with a haunting account, one highly relevant to the anxiety-ridden nation of today."--H-Diplo"Following sudden and unexpected assaults [on the United States], presidents of all ideological stripes typically call on the public not to be afraid. The tradition, as historian Matthew Dallek shows in a fascinating new book, 'Defenseless Under The Night: The Roosevelt Years and the Origins of Homeland Security,' goes back to the fear Americans felt in the 1930s."--Newsday"The fascinating story of the rise and fall of the Office of Civilian Defense (OCD), America's first federal office of homeland security. FDR created the OCD less than six months before the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Drawing from a broad range of primary and secondary sources, Dallek, Assistant Professor of Political Management at George Washington University, focuses his attention on the personalities at the top of the OCD as well as the politics surrounding its creation and development."--Jourden Travis Moger, Naval Historical Foundation"This is a great book. Rarely do readers get to experience the unique combination of fascinating history, contemporary relevance, drama, and intrigue in wonk-policy detail in a single, enjoyable work Dallek (GWU) takes readers through all of the touch points, which actually read like modern headlines in The New York Times: government propaganda, militarized civilian life, competing political visions for national defense, and the evolution of national security into the public consciousness."--Choice"Immensely readable 'Defenseless' is a meticulous account of an epic battle that set Roosevelt, the first lady, against La Guardia, the mayor of New York, as the two created the country's first Office of Civilian Defense (OCD), the precursor to what we know today as the Department of Homeland Security They ignited an important conversation about liberalism and its role in times of crisis."--Washington Post"Matthew Dallek's powerful history of America's wartime needs from civil defense to homeland security is urgently needed now. Deeply researched, vividly written, this splendid book highlights Eleanor Roosevelt's prescient 1940 effort to launch a movement for civil defense, citizen empowerment, human rights-and the widespread opposition to those goals - which reflect our ongoing political divisions." --Blanche Wiesen Cook, author of Eleanor Roosevelt "Ever since 9/11, Americans have yearned for a return to an idyllic earlier time when no one in this country had to fear a rain of death from the sky. But in this fascinating book, Matthew Dallek reveals vividly that anxiety about terror from abroad began as early as 1938. He also gives readers a fresh appreciation of Eleanor Roosevelt, who viewed civil defense as an opportunity for social advance - an emphasis that has been discarded in today's concern with 'homeland security.'" --William E. Leuchtenburg, author of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940 "Matthew Dallek's book represents political history at its very best. Informed by meticulous research, written in vivid prose, and full of shrewd insight, *Defenseless Under the Night* shows how the Roosevelt administration struggled to maintain the proper balance between protecting individual rights and ensuring the nation's security. It is an issue that is as relevant today as it was in the 1930s and 1940s." --Steven Gillon, author of Pearl Harbor: FDR Leads the Nation into War "An engaging and thoughtful portrait of the United States on the cusp of World War II. Dallek's book offers a gripping account of the little-studied civil defense program and its influence on American society. The conflicts among Dallek's rich main characters, including Eleanor Roosevelt and Fiorello LaGuardia, show that World War II

was not just a fight against fascism abroad; it was also a struggle over the future of liberalism at home."--Beverly Gage, author of *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror* About the Author Matthew Dallek is Assistant Professor of Political Management at George Washington University. He is also the author of *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics*.