

CURRENT BOOKS

FELLOWS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows of the Wilson Center

**FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
AND AMERICAN FOREIGN
POLICY, 1932-1945**

by Robert Dallek
Oxford, 1979
657 pp. \$19.95
L of C 78-7910
ISBN 0-19-502457-5

Troubles overseas faced FDR soon after his election to the U.S. Presidency in 1932: German Nazism, Italian Fascism, Japanese militarism. Yet, during the Great Depression of the 1930s, isolationist sentiment dominated Congress and the electorate. Roosevelt, always a believer in a strong U.S. role in world politics, was ultimately successful in convincing the American people that freedom and democracy at home were inevitably linked to their fate abroad. He moved cautiously as he prepared the country for World War II—artfully exploiting Americans' sympathies and cultural affinities for embattled Britain. During the 1940 presidential campaign, while pledging to keep the U.S. out of a foreign war, he and Winston Churchill boldly closed a deal that traded 50 overage U.S. destroyers for naval and air bases in seven of Britain's Western Hemisphere possessions. Dallek, a U.C.L.A. historian, argues that FDR's latter-day critics have underestimated his dilemma before Pearl Harbor as he contemplated both the people's desire to avoid war and their hopes for an Axis defeat. Dallek's balanced analysis leads to a disturbing question: If so masterful a politician as Roosevelt had such difficulty persuading Americans to accept uncomfortable truths, what can we expect from less skillful leaders?

—Stephen Pelz ('79)

NAPLES '44

by Norman Lewis
Pantheon, 1979
206 pp. \$8.95
L of C 78-13060
ISBN 0-394-50354-6

Most books about war stress battles and military heroics; this World War II diary focuses on the messy side effects. Lewis, a British intelligence officer attached to the U.S. Fifth Army, arrived in Naples a month after the Italian surrender in September 1943. As the fight against the Germans went on to the north, liberated Naples was plagued by