



The Faith of a Liberal

Morris Raphael Cohen

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The Faith of a Liberal is in part a misnomer, for the volume reflects the sentiments of a classical philosopher, one with intense curiosities about subjects onging from American literary tradition to the history of the physical sciences. The essays on liberalism as such do, however, bracket the volume—giving life to the title.

While Cohen shared many of the political persuasions of such other notables as John Dewey and Ralph Barton Perry, it was the distinctive spin that he gave to the iberal outlook that defines his work. His is a viewpoint stamped by the Jewish condition as a search for justice at one end, and the scientific effort at problem solving at the other. Indeed, the effort to link the two is the essence of *The Faith of a Liberal*

Whatever the subject matter or figures covered, the dorsal spine of the work is setting forth an agenda for liberalism that would clearly set it apart from the rising tides of left and right authoritarianism. The essay "Why I Am Not a Communist" remains to this day a blistering indictment of the Soviet regime and its Leninist presumptions. He saw the choice between fascism and communism as a "choice between being shot and being hanged."

The final essay, "The Future of American Liberalism," remains of wide current importance. For in it he attempts a synthesis of political individualism and economic collectivism. And even if issues have moved in different directions since that point, the emphasis on liberalism as a process rather than as a structure provides a philosophical basis to the liberal imagination that has rarely been equalled. This is a basic text for students of normative theory in politics and social thought in twentieth-century America.



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