

4-1-1949

A DREAMER'S JOURNEY. By Morris Raphael  
Cohen. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949

Cliford Montgomery

Follow this and additional works at: <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr>

---

**Recommended Citation**

Cliford Montgomery, *A DREAMER'S JOURNEY*. By Morris Raphael Cohen. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949, 3 U. Miami L. Rev. 480 (1949)

Available at: <http://repository.law.miami.edu/umlr/vol3/iss3/23>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Miami Law Review by an authorized administrator of Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact [library@law.miami.edu](mailto:library@law.miami.edu).

cratic way, Americans must remember that the democratic process is one of intellectual fermentation from the bottom upward, not vice versa.

DUANE KOENIG

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

---

A DREAMER'S JOURNEY. By Morris Raphael Cohen. Boston: The Beacon Press, 1949. Pp. 375. \$4.00.

MORRIS Raphael Cohen was born in Czarist Russia, during the period of "Russification" and rather regular pogroms, both manifestations of a desperate government's effort to enforce its will by a standard of conformity. From the ghettos of Neshwies and Minsk he and his family escaped to the America of the 1890's, and an atmosphere completely alien. They found no paradise beyond Ellis Island, but on New York's East Side the young man laid the foundations for his life-long beliefs and also began the process of education culminating in a doctorate from Harvard in 1906.

In 1906 also began Morris Cohen's long affiliation with the City College of New York; first, to his dismay, as an Instructor in Mathematics, later as a Professor of Philosophy. He found time for marriage and a family, for numerous friendships, such as the long continued one with Felix Frankfurter, Holmes and Thomas Davidson. Through the latter he came to participate in the celebrated Breadwinner's College, an institution which fulfilled a strong need in advance of systematized night schools and a general adult education program. Under the influence of the same man Cohen also apparently modified some of his earlier Marxian affiliations. His friendship with Frankfurter gave him an interest in jurisprudence which he successfully integrated with philosophy in various professional studies. He also became an important figure in the Conference on Legal and Social Philosophy, a group aiming at new meanings for the law in our social order with an emphasis on a government of men and an attempt to clarify political issues from this viewpoint. The author's volume, *Faith of a Liberal*, published in 1944, was largely a compendium of articles on legal philosophy and related subjects which originally appeared in the *New Republic* over a period of years.

Cohen acquired a zest for teaching his chosen subject which endured throughout his full intellectual life at the City College. He retired from teaching in 1938, and afterwards until his death in 1947, spent most of his time writing and lecturing on subjects near his heart, a project not easily attainable by the constantly occupied college teacher.

Apart from the more or less standard autobiographical material one can discern in other portions of this work much information supplementary to

the previous volume, *Faith of a Liberal*. In a period when genuine political liberalism has fallen under something of a cloud, and when too many governments are ever more interested in establishing a mold of conformity, it is inordinately pleasing to read of a "road to philosophy" such as Cohen trod. Here one notes again his application of philosophic principles to the law, and also to science, to teaching, and to his multitude of published works.

He then deals with another subject of tremendous interest—his forsaking of the Orthodox Jewish faith, his reasons therefor, and his evaluation of this group as an integrated element in American democracy. One can discern sympathy with Zionism in principle, but a lack of firm conviction that it constituted the ultimate answer. The author in dealing with Jewish cultural interests assumed a much less belligerent position than, for instance, did Ludwig Lewisohn in his autobiographical volumes. In attempting to further his standard of integration Cohen worked indefatigably in the Conference on Jewish Relations and the Jewish Occupational Council, two agencies doing immensely valuable work for the nation and the group involved.

The final part of the autobiography contains an admirable series of fragmentary jottings by the author on a variety of subjects. They perhaps do not enhance this particular work, but they do further elucidate the intellect and beliefs of the man who wrote them, and as his son projects in an epilogue, may be useful for potential future biographers. The same is true of the very complete check-list of Cohen's publications included in an appendix.

The educational field is one of many unsung heroes, but few can surpass the figure here revealed. His influence can but grow as the years pass and some controversies of his lifetime take on the objectivity given only by time. This is, of course, assuming that our political structure will remain unchanged in its fundamentals. Our world, and others, has great need of more teachers and men like Morris Raphael Cohen.

CLIFFORD MONTGOMERY

INSTRUCTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY,  
UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

---

THE POWER OF FREEDOM. By Max Ascoli. New York: Farrar, Straus, 1949.  
Pp. 173. \$2.75.

THIS is a book of paradoxes. It is probably both profound and superficial in its treatment of the central problem of our time. It is crisp and epigrammatic, yet it is vague and ambiguous at vital points. The central concepts themselves are paradoxical. Freedom is power, freedom creates power, but freedom cannot exist unless power is restricted. Power can be the basis of either an expansion or contraction of freedom. Freedom can be created only when freedom exists.

Such word-problems are typical of the book. The author, in his preface,