Distributive Justice and Access to Advantage

G. A. Cohen was one of the world’s leading political theorists. He was noted, in particular, for his contributions to the literature of egalitarian justice. Cohen’s classic writings offer one of the most influential responses to the currency of the egalitarian justice question – the question, that is, of whether egalitarians should seek to equalize welfare, resources, opportunity, or some other indicator of well-being. Underlying Cohen’s argument is the intuition that the purpose of egalitarianism is to eliminate disadvantage for which it is inappropriate to hold the person responsible. His argument therefore focuses on the appropriate role of considerations regarding responsibility in egalitarian judgment. This volume comprises chapters by major scholars addressing and responding both to Cohen’s account of the currency of egalitarian justice and its practical implications, and to Cohen’s arguments regarding the appropriate form of justificatory arguments about justice.

Alexander Kaufman is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Georgia, where he has taught political theory since 2000. His research and teaching interests include distributive justice, theories of equality, social contract theory, German idealism, philosophy of law, constitutional law, and the theory of the welfare state.
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Contributors

Elizabeth Anderson, Department of Philosophy, University of Michigan.

Richard J. Arneson, Department of Philosophy, University of California, San Diego.

Joseph H. Carens, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto.

Adam Cureton, Department of Philosophy, University of Tennessee.

Alexander Kaufman, Department of Political Science, University of Georgia.

Chandran Kukathas, Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science.

David Miller, Nuffield College, University of Oxford.

Serena Olsaretti, ICREA-Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

Patrick Tomlin, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Reading.

Peter Vallentyne, Department of Philosophy, University of Missouri-Columbia.

Gabriel Wollner, Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, London School of Economics and Political Science.

Lea Ypi, Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method, London School of Economics.
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