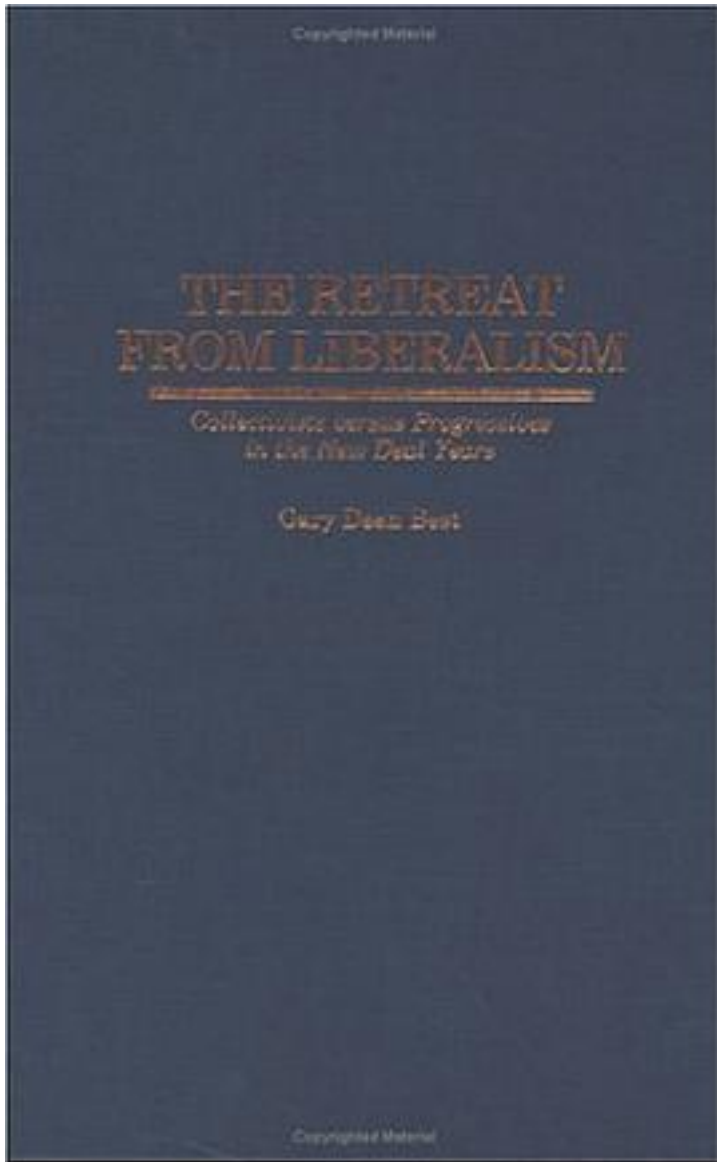


The Retreat from Liberalism



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出版者:

出版时间:2002-8

装帧:

isbn:9780275946562

Challenges the existing stereotypes and conventional wisdom concerning liberalism during the 1930s. During the 1930s, a battle was waged over both philosophy and policy between those who described themselves as liberals, both inside and outside the Roosevelt administration. On one side were those who viewed themselves as "modern" liberals; who saw capitalism as a failure and sought to replace it with a collectivist society and economy. On the other were more traditional American liberals or progressives who aimed merely to reform capitalism, in the belief that individual liberty and a free economy were synonymous. This study examines the role of each during this vital decade. Instead of reaching its high point in the New Deal years, Best argues, American liberalism retreated from most of its major tenets as a result of the popularity of collectivism. Challenging existing stereotypes and conventional wisdom concerning the 1930s, this study delves into the controversy between the "new" liberals and the free enterprise group. Included in this latter category were the Brandeisians, who exercised considerable influence within the Roosevelt administration, as well as a variety of more traditional liberals who worked through other channels to achieve their goals. Many of those who called themselves liberals in the 1930s had, Best contends, actually abandoned their basic liberal tenets. This included the president as well.

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