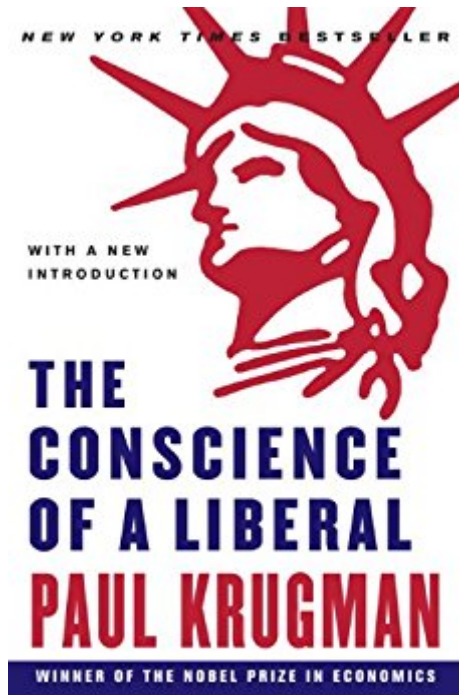




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The Conscience Of A Liberal



Synopsis

"The most consistent and courageous—and unapologetic—liberal partisan in American journalism." —Michael Tomasky, New York Review of Books
In this "clear, provocative" (Boston Globe) New York Times bestseller, Paul Krugman, today's most widely read economist, examines the past eighty years of American history, from the reforms that tamed the harsh inequality of the Gilded Age and the 1920s to the unraveling of that achievement and the reemergence of immense economic and political inequality since the 1970s. Seeking to understand both what happened to middle-class America and what it will take to achieve a "new New Deal," Krugman has created his finest book to date, a "stimulating manifesto" offering "a compelling historical defense of liberalism and a clarion call for Americans to retake control of their economic destiny" (Publishers Weekly). "As Democrats seek a rationale not merely for returning to power, but for fundamentally changing—or changing back—the relationship between America's government and its citizens, Mr. Krugman's arguments will prove vital in the months and years ahead." —Peter Beinart, New York Times

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Customer Reviews

Obviously, as the title of the book implies, there is a significant partisan component here. You will find much to like if your political views align with Krugman's, and much to disagree with if you don't. I enjoyed this book quite a bit, so take this review with a grain of salt, I guess if you generally find yourself disagreeing with him. Krugman is a highly engaging writer. He manages to be both breezy and serious at the same time, and someone without a modest economics background will still find the book easily accessible. One of the strengths of this book is its methodical approach to storytelling. The first portion of the book is a historical review of movement conservatism, including some interesting demographic comments on the switch of the South from historically voting D to now voting R. At every turn, numerous quotations and data are supplied. I was surprised, for example, to learn of the verbal support given to Generalissimo Franco by William F. Buckley in National Review. I guess I have the hindsight of history uncovering Franco's perpetrated atrocities, but yeesh. Krugman makes a compelling case that there is a correlation between income inequality and partisanship, and that it is the Republicans who have veered to the right, rather than the Democrats veering to the left that is the root of our recent divisive Congresses. Particularly instructive in his case is a chart showing the propensity to cross party boundaries to vote for bills, and the lack thereof during the Gilded Age (pre-New Deal) and now, whereas in the post-New Deal era (approximately the 50s through the early 70s), there was a significant amount of crossover and bipartisanship, along with a general sense that the country was doing alright. The latter part of the book is where he provides his vision for how we (Americans, and Liberals) could get back on track. This includes enacting universal health care and confronting income inequality. These present great rallying cries (admittedly, for *both* parties), and are one of the best parts of the book, because he's looking forward rather than back. The history part is great to be sure, but the last few chapters are actionable, and I was glad that the book included a to-do list of sorts, that he wasn't just lamenting a change but suggesting meaningful ways to correct problems. Unfortunately, one weakness of this book is that it is a bit dated. Written in 2007, you catch glimpses of his thoughts on the future (now our recent past), and you wish that he would go back and update the book to take the last 6 years or so into account, particularly now that we have a new, albeit very different from what he suggests, health

care law. He has somewhat done so in other books he's written, particularly "End This Depression NOW!", published in 2012. In general, they form a nice set of bookends on the recession and financial crisis of 2008-2009. As I said at the outset, your enjoyment of this book will probably depend to a large degree on your political leanings, and that will undoubtedly color your thoughts on whether you believe him. If you're willing to listen and give him a chance, the book will not disappoint. The historical chapters are quite good, and there's a clear plan at the end.

Outstanding Due to the writings of Krugman, Stiglitz and others I have gone from Conservative to something in between that and liberal. Maybe more like a Eisenhower Republican. In my view the people who take campaign money from Wall Street are destroying our Democracy and 2008 is evidence of that. I taught Securities in a law school for over thirty years. It goes to show how little attention the voters of this country pay to how they vote. I am very concerned for this country.

Hassel (Bud) Hill Jr

I found the The Conscience of a Liberal has broadened my attentiveness to inequality in the U.S. It was especially enlightening on the 2008 crisis and how inequality was increased as the results of the housing collapse. I don't agree with all points in the book, as blaming the other side is shallow. But I think any reader can get a sense of arguments made especially on healthcare and how it dramatically effects inequality. Good book.

Paul Krugman has become one of the most important spokesmen in the US on political/economic matters. Throughout the woeful years of the Bush Administration he has been an articulate, concerned, voice for those Americans whose needs W. and his henchmen have ignored, i.e. everyone except the ultra-wealthy. In The Conscience of a Liberal, Krugman hopes to help jump-start the beginning of a new liberal progressive era which can rebuild the country and repair the damage of the last seven years. Krugman often appears to be a professional contrarian, but that is because he is not afraid to challenge what has come to be perceived wisdom, revealing that that "wisdom" is nothing more than propaganda based on distorted reasoning and perverted statistics. Krugman tells the story of the Great Compression, the creation of a middle class America with lessening inequalities and increasing opportunities beginning in the 1930s and 1940s. He then reveals how what he calls "movement conservatives" who favor financial and social inequalities and the restriction of opportunity seized control, first of the Republican Party and then of the country,

and how they have been implementing their goals ever since. Next Krugman predicts the ultimate failure of these so-called conservatives (who are actually right wing radicals) and the rise of a new liberal/progressive era, which will be heralded by legislation allowing the US to join the ranks of every other industrialized, capitalist nation by providing decent, affordable health care to all of its citizens. The Conscience of a Liberal fills me with optimism for the future of our country for the first time since the coup d'etat of 2000. I trust Paul Krugman's immense talents will be employed by a new Democratic Administration and Democratic Congress after the next elections.

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