

A better title: the consciousness of a liberal. Laughable, pathetic as it unravels in 2016

Liberals argue backwards. They start with the conclusion and build the argument to measure. This book has sat on my shelf since I read it as it came out in 2007. Rereading it, I got no further than the first chapter. It provides quotes that substantiate Krugman's biases before he even gets into the detail.

He praises the time of his youth, the 60s and 70s, as a time of moderation:

"Republicans were no longer trying to undo the achievements of the new deal; quite a few even supported Medicare." "Despite the turmoil over Vietnam at race relations, despite the sinister mash in a station's of Nixon and his henchmen, the American political process was to look for the most part governed by a bipartisan coalition of men who agreed on fundamental values."

Any bias in here? To Krugman, it goes without saying that Johnson's Great Society and FDR's socialist programs were all for the good, and Nixon and those who supported him unqualified evil.

He continues "now that America was all grown up, we thought, a relatively equal society with a strong middle class and an equitable political scene was a normal state."

Krugman supports the Social Gospel mantra that equality is the highest good. An absence of observed equality is taken as prima facie evidence of sinister machinations.

He writes "there have, then, in two great arcs in modern American history – an economic arc from high inequality to relative equality and back again, and a political arc from extreme polarization to bipartisanship and back again."

Though it has become absolutely, totally untrue in 2016, he found that in 2007 "The Republican Party chose to cater to the interests of that rising elite, perhaps because what the elite lacked in numbers it made up for in ability and willingness to make large campaign contributions." No, the big money and the neocons managed to seduce Republican officeholders away from supporting the interests of their constituents. It was even more blatant in the case of the Democrats, epitomized by Hillary Clinton's almost universal support on Wall Street and in the press. Even when Krugman wrote, most of those who had made fortunes in Silicon Valley and on Wall Street were supporting Democrats. Nobody was supporting the interests of the common man – keeping jobs in America, keeping immigrants from competing for those jobs, balancing the budget so as not to encumber the rising generation, and defending freedom of the press from pernicious political correctness.

He writes "I'd suggest an alternative story for the last 30 years that runs like this: over the course of the 1970s, radicals of the right determined to roll back the achievements of the new deal over the Republican Party, opening a partisan gap with the Democrats, who became the true conservatives, defenders of the long-standing institutions of equality. The empowerment of the hard right and bold in business to launch an all-out attack on the union movement, drastically reducing the workers bargaining power: freed business executives from the political and social constraints that had previously placed limits on runaway executive paychecks; sharply reduced tax rates on high incomes; and a variety of other ways promoted rising inequality.

That takes one only to page 7 in the book. There were several causes for decline of the union movement. First of all, both major political parties supported globalization of international trade, moving jobs offshore. Secondly, computer technology – introduced by supporters of the Democrats such as Bill Gates, Larry Ellison and Pierre Omidyar - eliminated millions of union jobs. Third, the Democrats supported widespread and even illegal immigration in order to dilute Republicans at the polls. Most of these immigrants were not union members, and they competed against them.

Krugman laments that the top 1% did not pay their share of taxes. CNBC reports that as of 2015 they paid one half of all federal income tax. The question should not be one of gouging the rich even more, it should be a matter of increasing the overall wealth of society. This question does not even seem to interest Krugman. He is a partisan warrior.

I read the entire book in 2007, but nine years later the gag reflex caps my reread about 5% of the way through. The corruption of the Democrat party has become so thoroughly evident as I write in 2016 that a total outsider named Donald Trump appears poised to win the election from the woman that Krugman supports, despite the fact that she so thoroughly sold her office as Secretary of State to the highest bidder, has so blatantly rigged the electoral process, absolutely and thoroughly ignored national security in her careless handling of secret data, supported her lying, philandering, rapist husband by destroying the women who've made charges against him, and whose opponents have a mysterious way of dying unexpectedly. Krugman has absolutely no sense of embarrassment, either at the appallingly corrupt people he supports or the appalling failures of the policies he supports.