



The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression

By Amity Shlaes

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In *The Forgotten Man*, Amity Shlaes, one of the nation's most-respected economic commentators, offers a striking reinterpretation of the Great Depression. She traces the mounting agony of the New Dealers and the moving stories of individual citizens who through their brave perseverance helped establish the steadfast character we recognize as American today.

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The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression By Amity Shlaes Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This breezy narrative comes from the pen of a veteran journalist and economics reporter. Rather than telling a new story, she tells an old one (scarcely lacking for historians) in a fresh way. Shlaes brings to the tale an emphasis on economic realities and consequences, especially when seen from the perspective of monetarist theory, and a focus on particular individuals and events, both celebrated and forgotten (at least relatively so). Thus the spotlight plays not only on Andrew Mellon, Wendell Wilkie and Rexford Tugwell but also on Father Divine and the Schechter brothers—kosher butcher wholesalers prosecuted by the federal National Recovery Administration for selling "sick chickens." As befits a former writer for the *Wall Street Journal*, Shlaes is sensitive to the dangers of government intervention in the economy—but also to the danger of the government's not intervening. In her telling, policymakers of the 1920s weren't so incompetent as they're often made out to be—everyone in the 1930s was floundering and all made errors—and WWII, not the New Deal, ended the Depression. This is plausible history, if not authoritative, novel or deeply analytical. It's also a thoughtful, even-tempered corrective to too often unbalanced celebrations of FDR and his administration's pathbreaking policies. 16 pages of b&w photos. (*June 12*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Its duration and depth made the Depression "Great," and Shlaes, a prominent conservative economics journalist, considers why a decade of government intervention ameliorated but never tamed it. With vitality uncommon for an economics history, Shlaes chronicles the projects of Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt as well as these projects' effect on those who paid for them. Reminding readers that the reputedly do-nothing Hoover pulled hard on the fiscal levers (raising tariffs, increasing government spending), Shlaes nevertheless emphasizes that his enthusiasm for intervention paled against the ebullient FDR's glee in experimentation. She focuses closely on the influence of his fabled Brain Trust, her narrative shifting among Raymond Moley, Rexford Tugwell, and other prominent New Dealers. Businesses that litigated their resistance to New Deal regulations attract Shlaes' attention, as do individuals who coped with the despair of the 1930s through self-help, such as Alcoholics Anonymous cofounder Bill Wilson. The book culminates in the rise of Wendell Wilkie, and Shlaes' accent on personalities is an appealing avenue into her skeptical critique of the New Deal. *Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

"Amity Shlaes is among the most brilliant of the young writers who are transforming American financial journalism." (**Paul Johnson, author of *Modern Times***)

"I could not put this book down. Ms. Shlaes timely chronicle of a fascinating era reads like a novel and brings a new perspective on political villains and heroes—few of whom turn out to be as good or bad as history would have us believe." (**Arthur Levitt**)

"Americans need what Shlaes has brilliantly supplied, a fresh appraisal of what the New Deal did and did not accomplish." (**George F. Will**)

"*The Forgotten Man* is an incisive and controversial history of the Great Depression that challenges much of the received wisdom." (**Harold Evans, author of *The American Century* and *They Made America***)

“*The Forgotten Man* offers an understanding of the era’s politics and economics that may be unprecedented in its clarity.” (Mark Helprin)

“Shlaes’s account of The Great Depression goes beyond the familiar arguments of liberals and conservatives.” **(William Kristol, Editor of *The Weekly Standard*)**

“Amity Shlaes’s fast-paced review of the [Depression] helps enormously in putting it all in perspective.” (Paul Volcker)

“*The Forgotten Man* is an epic and wholly original retelling of a dramatic and crucial era. There are many sides to the 1930’s story, and this is the one that has largely been lost to history. Thanks to Amity Shlaes, now it’s been re-found.” **(Peggy Noonan)**

“Entertaining, illuminating, and exceedingly fair. . . . A rich, wonderfully original, and extremely textured history of an important time. **(*The American Spectator*)**

“A well-written and stimulating account of the 1930s and its often dubious orthodoxies. . . . Ms. Shlaes rightly reminds us of the harmful effect of Rooseveltian activism and class-warfare rhetoric.” **(*The Wall Street Journal*)**

“The finest history of the Great Depression ever written. . . . Shlaes’s achievement stands out for the devastating effect of its understated prose and for its wide sweep of characters and themes. It deserves to become the preeminent revisionist history for general readers. . . . Her narrative sparkles.” **(*National Review*)**

“Captivating. . . . Illuminating. . . . *The Forgotten Man* is an engaging read and a welcome corrective to the popular view of Roosevelt and his New Deal. . . . A refreshingly critical approach to Franklin Roosevelt’s policies.” **(Clive Crook, *The Financial Times*)**

“Amity Shlaes tells the story of the Depression in splendid detail, rich with events and personalities. . . . Many of Shlaes’s descriptions make genuinely delightful reading.” **(*The New York Review of Books*)**

“*The Forgotten Man* by Amity Shlaes will forever change how America understands the causes of the Depression and FDR’s policies that prolonged it for a decade.” **(Grover G. Norquist, *The American Spectator*)**

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Diane Dean:

Do you have favorite book? For those who have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to learn everything in the world. Each reserve has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that reserve has different type. Some people feel enjoy to spend their time for you to read a book. They are reading whatever they take because their hobby is usually reading a book. How about the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, individual feel need book after they found difficult problem or even exercise. Well, probably you will want this *The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression*.

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