

Dear Reader,

In recent years we have become all too familiar with the rise of right-wing nationalist political parties all over the world, in India, Hungary, Brazil, France, and even the Scandinavian countries. What is less familiar is the other side of the same phenomenon, the decline of the traditional liberal or social-democratic parties that once seemed to be on their way to political dominance in much of the world. What happened to them?

This is the subject of the young historian Tim Shenk's new book, *Left Adrift*. Shenk tells his story over the span of half a century, through the lives of two leading, and bitterly rivalrous, American political professionals, Stanley Greenberg and Douglas Schoen. Both began working at a time when the Democratic Party's once unbeatable New Deal coalition was beginning to come apart. Both wrestled, in their early academic work and later through their political clients, with fundamental questions about the future of the party. Should it move to the left or to the center? Should it stress cultural or economic issues? Their competition led them all the way to the White House, where Greenberg advised Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign and Schoen advised his second.

Shenk follows his main characters to the other countries where they worked, and where similar political dilemmas presented themselves: the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Israel. Greenberg wound up frustrated at the difficulty of getting politicians to focus on an economic agenda aimed at the working class; Schoen wound up often advising Republicans. The larger issues they wrestled with are still very much with us, with both parties fighting for the loyalties of the descendants of New Deal voters. *Left Adrift* makes for a perfect conceptual playbook for understanding this presidential campaign.

Best,



Nicholas Lemann
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