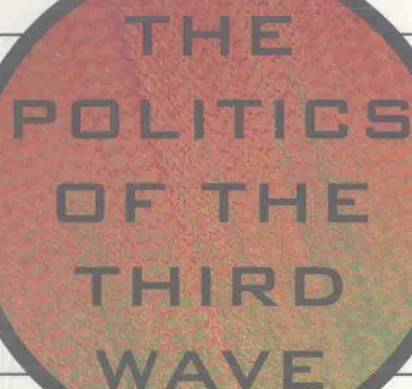


CREATING A NEW CIVILIZATION



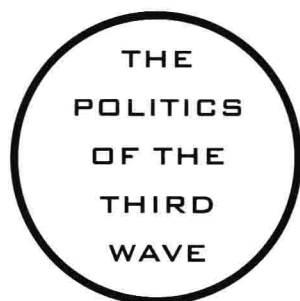
THE
POLITICS
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ALVIN AND HEIDI
TOFFLER

AUTHORS OF FUTURE SHOCK

FOREWORD BY NEWT
GINGRICH

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ALVIN AND HEIDI TOFFLER

FOREWORD BY NATHAN S. GRINGRICH



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PREFACE

America faces a convergence of crises unmatched since its earliest days. Its family system is in crisis, but so is its health system, its urban systems, its value system and above all, its political system, which for all practical purposes has lost the confidence of the people. Why should these—and many other crises—all strike at approximately the same time in our history? Are they evidence of terminal decay in America? Are we at the “end of history”?

These pages tell a different story. America’s crises stem not from its failure but from its earlier successes. Rather than the end of history, we are at the end of *pre*-history.

Ever since 1970, when our book *Future Shock* introduced the concept of the “general crisis of industrial society,” our smokestack industries have been laying off masses of manual workers. Precisely as first forecast in that book, our family structure has fractured, our mass media have de-massified, and our life styles and values have diversified. America has become a radically different place.

This explains why all the old forms of political analysis no longer apply. Terms like “right-wing” and “left-wing” or “liberal” and “conservative” are drained of their familiar meanings. In Russia these days, we speak of Communists as “conservatives”

and reformers as “radicals.” In the U.S., economic liberals may be social conservatives and vice versa. “Left-wing” Ralph Nader unites with “right-wing” Pat Buchanan to oppose NAFTA.

Even more jarring and significant, however, is the growing transfer of political power away from our formal political structures—the Congress, the White House, the government agencies and political parties—to electronically-linked grassroots groups and to the media.

These and other massive changes in American political life cannot be explained in political terms alone. They are related to equally deep changes in family life, in business, in technology, culture and values. To govern in this period of high-speed change, disillusionment, and almost fratricidal conflict in society, we need a coherent approach to the twenty-first century. This book presents a powerful new framework for change. Once this framework is understood, we can take practical steps to shape the even greater changes that lie ahead—to direct them, rather than allow ourselves to be victimized by them.

A defining characteristic of change today is its pace. Events move swiftly, and acceleration affects everything—even, it seems, the fate of books.

Barely a month after this volume was first issued in a limited educational edition by the Progress and Freedom Foundation in October 1994, an election propelled Newt Gingrich to the office of Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. The resultant furor swept this book onto the front pages and television screens of the nation. Not only does this book carry a foreword by Gingrich, but it appears on a “reading list” that he recommended to members of Congress and to the nation, alongside *The Federalist Papers*, the works of DeTocqueville, and other classics of political philosophy.

Moreover, in speech after speech and in one press conference after another, Gingrich has referred to our 1980 work, *The Third*

Wave, from which parts of this book are drawn, as “one of the seminal works of our time.”

One result of the election and the appearance of this book has been an unprecedented clamor by the media for information about our friendship with Newt Gingrich. After all, we have been publicly identified with many political positions that are at odds with his. How strange, reporters repeatedly say, that social thinkers and futurists like you should have anything to do with a conservative politician like Gingrich. Don't all conservatives want a return to the past?

The answer is no—not necessarily. It's not that simple.

To those who wonder why Gingrich urges Americans to read our books—the work of authors who oppose prayer in schools and who are pro-choice—and to those who wonder why we proudly claim Gingrich and his wife Marianne as personal friends, this brief introduction to our ideas is the best answer.

We have known Newt Gingrich for almost a quarter century. Shortly after we published *Future Shock* in 1970, a young teaching assistant with longish hair and Elvis-proportion sideburns flew up from Georgia to hear us speak at an educational conference in Chicago. He was impressed by our book and introduced himself to us. It was years before he first ran for political office.

In 1975 at the request of Congressional Democrats, we organized a conference on futurism and “anticipatory democracy” for senators and members of the House. We invited Newt Gingrich, probably the only Republican among the many futurists we knew. He attended.

That conference led to the creation of the Congressional Clearinghouse on the Future, a group eventually cochaired by a young senator named Al Gore, now vice president and the man who has placed the need for an information infrastructure on the national agenda.

In the intervening years we have developed a close personal relationship with the Gingriches, and have argued endlessly not simply about specific political issues but about broad social theory, philosophy, world events, and the future. Often when our arguments reach a high decibel level, we find ourselves bursting into laughter. Caricatured by the media as some kind of conservative Savonarola, Gingrich has a trait fanatics typically lack, a keen sense of humor.

Our personal relationship with the Gingriches has been warm and our intellectual relationship has been wide ranging and combative. Newt is interested in everything—the space program, dinosaurs, the daily troubles of a young district attorney, learning theory, military history, Hollywood movies, and of course politics, politics, and still more politics. So we have plenty to argue about. And while our arguments do not necessarily end in agreement, they do sharpen our minds.

Newt once said to us, as we are sure he has said to others, that we might easily agree with eighty percent of his views and simply *detest* the other twenty percent. Since then the percentage has risen and fallen sharply from time to time.

If Gingrich is not the single smartest and most successful intellectual in American politics, he is surely one of a very small group. A former professor of European history and environmental studies, he thinks in long sweeps of time and regularly infuses his speech with words like “civilization” and “revolution.” But unlike most historians who look only backward, and politicians who look no farther forward than the next election, Gingrich is exactly what he says he is—a revolutionary and a conservative futurist. As a futurist he thinks strategically and looks thirty and forty years ahead, even when he is engaged in immediate tactical struggles.

Thus any voter, citizen, reporter or politician who imagines that Gingrich is just another “pol” is buying into a sound bite image of him that distorts the reality. The fact is, whether or not

you like what he has to say (and he sometimes blurts words he is sorry for the next day), Gingrich has thought very long and hard about what he is doing and where he thinks America should go in the first quarter of the next century.

As the authors of *Creating a New Civilization*, we should state for the record that we are neither Republicans nor Democrats. And we not only consult with Gingrich on occasion, but were delighted when, after the recent election, the Democratic leadership in the Congress began to express renewed interest in our ideas. They invited us to discuss the political meaning of the Third Wave and began to circulate copies of this book among themselves. Of course they know of our long-standing friendship with Gingrich, and Newt, when told we are talking to Democrats, said "that's terrific." The future shouldn't be the property of any one party.

This brief book will explain why, in our opinion, the time has come for the next great step forward in American politics. It is not a matter of Democrats versus Republicans, or of left and right, or even of liberals and conservatives, but something more significant. What is needed, we believe, is a clear distinction between rear-guard politicians who wish to preserve or restore an unworkable past, and those who are ready to make the transition to what we call a "Third Wave" information-age society.

If nothing else, global competition means we cannot go back to the conformity, uniformity, bureaucracy and brute force economy of the assembly-line era. But the Third Wave is not just a matter of technology and economics. It involves morality, culture and ideas as well as institutions and political structure. It implies, in short, a true transformation in human affairs.

Just as the industrial revolution destroyed or rendered irrelevant many of the political structures that preceded it, the knowledge revolution—and the Third Wave of change it has launched—will do the same to America and many other countries. Political parties and movements that recognize this

historical fact will survive and shape the future for our children.
Those that fail to do so will swirl down the storm drain of history.

ALVIN AND HEIDI TOFFLER
JANUARY 1995

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

BY NEWT GINGRICH

The 1990s have initiated a wave of political and governmental change of historic proportions: the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the replacement of the post-World War II Italian political structure, the virtual elimination of the Canadian governing party in the 1993 elections (they dropped from 153 seats to 2 in the Parliament), the collapse of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party after a forty-year virtual monopoly of power (and the rise of a new reform movement), the rise of Ross Perot and the United We Stand movement and the election of 1994 in America. Again and again there are startling changes under way in politics and government.

Politicians, columnists and academics all seem confused by the scale of change. There is an inevitable focus on the pain of those who have been dominant and the disorientation of those who have been powerful. The agony of the past is outweighing the promise of the future. This is an old phenomenon. Huizenga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* made this point about the Renaissance: looking back in history, what seems to us a brilliant, exciting period of innovation seemed to its contemporaries a terrifying collapse of the existing order. Similarly, the collapse of Confucian China from the 1850s on was seen as a terrifying decline of order and stability rather than the

precursor of a new, more productive and more open future.

Alvin and Heidi Toffler have given us the key to viewing current disarray within the positive framework of a dynamic, exciting future. They have been teaching, speaking and writing about the future for a quarter century. The title of their first bestseller, *Future Shock* (1970), became a universal term for the scale of change we are living through. (It was an even bigger bestseller in Japan than the United States on a per capita basis.) *Future Shock* called attention to the acceleration of change that was threatening to overwhelm people everywhere and the way in which it often disoriented individuals, businesses, communities and governments.

If *Future Shock* had been their only work, the Tofflers would have been recognized as important commentators on the human condition. However, their next major work, *The Third Wave*, was an even more important contribution to understanding our times. In *The Third Wave*, the Tofflers moved from observation to creating a predictive framework. They placed the information revolution in historical perspective, comparing it with two other great transformations, the agricultural revolution and the industrial revolution. According to the Tofflers, we are feeling the impact of the third great wave of change in history, and we are, as a result, in the process of creating a new civilization.

The Tofflers correctly understand that development and distribution of information has now become the central productivity and power activity of the human race. From world financial markets to the worldwide, twenty-four-hour-a-day distribution of news via CNN to the breakthroughs of the biological revolution and their impact on health and agricultural production—on virtually every front we see the information revolution changing the fabric, pace and substance of our lives.

Because *The Third Wave* makes sense of this transformation,

it has had a powerful impact on the strategies of business and political leaders outside the United States in China, Japan, Singapore and other fast-rising regions that now focus on high-tech, information-intensive development. In the United States too, many business leaders have been influenced by the book, as they have restructured their organizations to prepare for the twenty-first century.

One of the most important and successful applications of the Third Wave model occurred when General Donn Starry, commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), read *The Third Wave* in the early 1980s and decided the Tofflers were correct in their analysis of the future. As a result, the Tofflers were invited to Fort Monroe, the headquarters of TRADOC, where they shared the Third Wave model with doctrine developers throughout the Army. The Tofflers describe this model brilliantly in their recent book *War and Anti-War*. I know how influential the concept of a Third Wave information revolution was in the Army doctrine development effort from 1979 to 1982 because I spent a lot of time as a junior congressman working with General Starry and General Morelli (now deceased) developing the concepts which became Air/Land Battle.

The new Army doctrine led to a more flexible, fast-paced, decentralized, information-rich system which assessed the battlefield, focused resources and utilized well-trained but very decentralized leadership to overwhelm an industrial-era opponent.

In 1991 the world witnessed the first war between Third Wave military systems and an obsolete Second Wave military machine. Desert Storm was a one-sided annihilation of the Iraqis by the Americans and their allies largely because Third Wave systems proved overwhelmingly that sophisticated Second Wave anti-aircraft systems were useless against Third Wave stealth aircraft. Entrenched Second Wave armies were

simply outmaneuvered and annihilated when faced with Third Wave information systems for targeting and logistics. The result was a campaign as decisive as the defeat of the First Wave forces of the Mahdi of Omdurman by the Second Wave Anglo-Egyptian army in 1898.

Despite evidence that something radically new is happening in politics, in economics, in society and in warfare, there is still remarkably little appreciation of how crucial the Tofflers' insight is. Most American politicians, reporters and editorial writers have ignored the implications of *The Third Wave*. There is even less systematic effort to integrate the concept of a Third Wave of human change into policy proposals, political campaigns and the operations of government. This failure to apply the Toffler Third Wave model has kept our politics trapped in frustration, negativism, cynicism and despair.

The gap between objective changes in the world at large and the stagnation of politics and government is undermining the very fabric of our political system. Aside from the Third Wave concept there is no effective system of analysis which makes sense of the frustration and confusion which characterizes politics and government virtually everywhere in the industrial world. There is no language to communicate the problems we face, no vision to outline the future towards which we should strive, and no program to help accelerate and make easier the transition.

This is not a new problem. I first began working with the Tofflers in the early 1970s on a concept called anticipatory democracy. I was then a young assistant professor at West Georgia State College, and I was fascinated with the intersection of history and the future which is the essence of politics and government at its best. For twenty years we have worked to develop a future-conscious politics and popular understanding that would make it easier for America to make the transition

ALVIN AND HEIDI TOFFLER