Noam Chomsky

Popular Modern American Anarchist
Author, Linguist, Scientist, and Historian

(1928 - )

Description: Though his stance on these issues is that of an admitted anarchist/libertarian, Noam Chomsky prefers to act as an analyst and critic of the state rather than a social theorist.... Chomsky continues to teach at MIT, where he holds an endowed chair in linguistics. (From: Anarchy Archives)

Tags: anarchist, iww, american, jewish, analytic philosophy, mathematician, linguist, professor, scientist, historian.

Quotes:

"Neoliberal doctrines, whatever one thinks of them, undermine education and health, increase inequality, and reduce labor's share of income; that much is not seriously in doubt." (From: "Profit Over People," written by Noam Chomsky, page 32, chapter 1.)

"The enormous public relations industry, from its origins early in this century, has been dedicated to the 'control of the public mind,' as business leaders described the task. And they acted on their words, surely one of the central themes of modern history." (From: "Profit Over People," by Noam Chomsky, page 45, chapter 2.)

"The importance of 'controlling the public mind' has been recognized with increasing clarity as popular struggles succeeded in extending the modalities of democracy, thus giving rise to what liberal elites call 'the crisis of democracy' as when normally passive and apathetic populations become organized and seek to enter the political arena to pursue their interests and demands, threatening stability and order. As
Bernays explained the problem, with ‘universal suffrage and universal schooling... at last even the bourgeoisie stood in fear of the common people. For the masses promised to become king.’" (From: "Profit Over People," by Noam Chomsky, pages 53-54, chapter 2.)

"...international solidarity can take new and more constructive forms as the great majority of the people of the world come to understand that their interests are pretty much the same and can be advanced by working together. There is no more reason now than there has ever been to believe that we are constrained by mysterious and unknown social laws, not simply decisions made within institutions that are subject to human will -- human institutions, that have to face the test of legitimacy and, if they do not meet it, can be replaced by others that are more free and more just, as often in the past." (From: "Profit Over People", by Noam Chomsky, page 62, chapter 2.)

"There are many factors driving global society towards a low-wage, low-growth, high-profit future, with increasing polarization and social disintegration. Another consequence is the fading of meaningful democratic processes as decision making is vested in private institutions and the quasi-governmental structures that are coalescing around them, what the Financial Times calls a 'de facto world government' that operates in secret and without accountability." (From: "Profit Over People", by Noam Chomsky, page 127, chapter 5.)

"The decisions reached by the directors of GE affect the general society substantially, but citizens play no role in them, as a matter of principle." (From: "Profit Over People", by Noam Chomsky, page 132, chapter 6.)

"Systems of unaccountable power do offer some choices to citizens. They can petition the king or the CEO, or join the ruling party. They can try to rend themselves to GE, or buy its
products. They can struggle for rights within tyrannies, state and private, and in solidarity with others, can seek to limit or dismantle illegitimate power, pursuing traditional ideals, including those that animated the U.S. labor movement from its early origins: that those who work in the mills should own and run them." (From: "Profit Over People", by Noam Chomsky, page 132, chapter 6.)

"Labor and environmental issues, which 'barely featured at the start,' are becoming harder to suppress. It is becoming more difficult to ignore the paranoids and flat-earthers who 'want high standards written in for how foreign investors treat workers and protect the environment,' and 'their fervent attacks, spread via a network of Internet web sites, have left negotiators unsure how to proceed.' One possibility would be to pay attention to what the public wants. But that option is not mentioned: it is excluded in principle, since it would undermine the whole point of the enterprise." (From: "Profit Over People", by Noam Chomsky, pages 151-152, chapter 6.)

**Biography:**

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Noam Chomsky's parents, Dr. William (Zev) Chomsky and Elsie Simonofsky, were both Russian Jews and also teachers and linguists. His father was the author of a seminal book on the grammatic structure of Hebrew and the faculty president of Gratz College for eight years. Noam grew up in an intellectual atmosphere, and several members of the extended family had ties to labor or communist movements. He attended a progressive elementary school, where he wrote for the school newspaper. His first article was about the fall of Barcelona, during the Spanish Civil War. (Barsky, 9-17.)

He later attended Philadelphia's Central High School. He did not enjoy his experience with the public education system, but during this period he began to pay regular visits to relatives in New York City, especially an uncle whose newsstand served as a literary and political salon for members of the Jewish intellectual community. During this period he began reading anarchist literature.
Chomsky attended the University of Pennsylvania, where he met and married Carol Doris Schatz in 1948. Finding his college experience similar to that of his high school, he considered dropping out, only to find the intellectual atmosphere he desired with linguistics chair Prof. Zelig Harris and his friends, who also shared an interest in politics. He received his B.A. in linguistics in 1949 and embarked on postgraduate work in the subject. Harris' work on linguistics was part of the inspiration for Chomsky's own, though Chomsky's would follow a radically different path. He received his Ph.D. in 1955 and joined the faculty of MIT the same year. In his doctoral thesis and his first publications, Chomsky began the creation of a body of work that would transform the study of linguistics. (Barsky, 47-53.)

At the time, linguistics was dominated by the Bloomfieldians, followers of Leonard Bloomfield, a behaviorist who theorized that language was acquired through a process of conditioning and reinforcement. Critical of behaviorist theories and curious how children could formulate all the complex rules of language based on the limited amount of speech they heard, Chomsky decided that human language ability must have a genetic basis. As the basis of his theory, Chomsky developed the idea of a Universal Grammar, a set of principles that describe the formulation of all human languages. With a more or less instinctive knowledge of this Universal Grammar, an infant could construct the rules for a language using the random pieces it was exposed to. Other avenues of Chomsky's work led to the creation of an entirely new field of linguistic research known as transformational grammar. (Lyons, 29-30, 117-19.)

Around 1961, Noam Chomsky began to speak and write on political topics, finding an audience among the student-protest movement. In 1967, he joined the March on the Pentagon and wound up briefly sharing a jail cell with author Norman Mailer. Despite marginalization by the mainstream press, his books have gained considerable recognition and he has been recognized as one of the most outspoken critics of U.S. foreign policy. In such works as For Reasons of State, (1973) Manufacturing Consent(1988), and Secrets, Lies and Democracy(1994), Chomsky addresses such subjects as American involvement in Latin America and Indochina, the Cold War, the media's manipulation of the public in respect to these and other issues, and the responsibility of intellectuals to address these problems.
Though his stance on these issues is that of an admitted anarchist/libertarian, Noam Chomsky prefers to act as an analyst and critic of the state rather than a social theorist. Ultimately, the decision of how to make a better society lies with the individual. Chomsky continues to teach at MIT, where he holds an endowed chair in linguistics.

From: Anarchy Archives.

**Works:**

Author of Red and Black Revolution Interview (April 30, 1995)
Author of Notes on Anarchism (November 30, 1969)
Author of On Libya and the Unfolding Crises (November 30, 2010)
Author of The Relevance of Anarcho-syndicalism (July 25, 1976)
Author of What Makes Mainstream Media Mainstream (November 30, 1996)
Author of Who Are the Global Terrorists? (November 30, 2001)

**Chronology:**

- **December 07, 1928:** Noam Chomsky's Birth Day.
- **April 21, 2019:** Noam Chomsky's Last Updated on http://www.RevoltLib.com.

**Links:**

- **Anarchy Archives: Noam Chomsky Archive**
  http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/chomsky/Chomskyarchive.html
- **Anarchist Library: Noam Chomsky**
  https://theanarchistlibrary.org/category/author/noam-chomsky
- **Wikipedia: Noam Chomsky**
  https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky

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