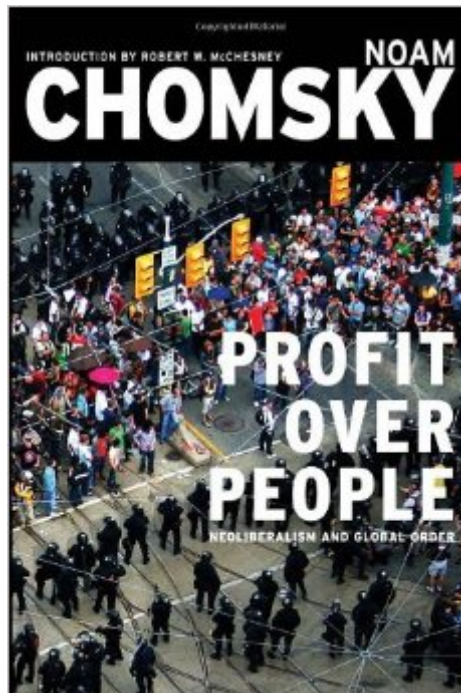


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Profit Over People: Neoliberalism & Global Order



Synopsis

Why is the Atlantic slowly filling with crude petroleum, threatening a millions-of-years-old ecological balance? Why did traders at prominent banks take high-risk gambles with the money entrusted to them by hundreds of thousands of clients around the world, expanding and leveraging their investments to the point that failure led to a global financial crisis that left millions of people jobless and hundreds of cities economically devastated? Why would the world's most powerful military spend ten years fighting an enemy that presents no direct threat to secure resources for corporations? The culprit in all cases is neoliberal ideology—the belief in the supremacy of "free" markets to drive and govern human affairs. And in the years since the initial publication of Noam Chomsky's *Profit Over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order*, the bitter vines of neoliberalism have only twisted themselves further into the world economy, obliterating the public's voice in public affairs and substituting the bottom line in place of people's basic obligation to care for one another as ends in themselves. In *Profit Over People*, Chomsky reveals the roots of the present crisis, tracing the history of neoliberalism through an incisive analysis of free trade agreements of the 1990s, the World Trade Organization, and the International Monetary Fund—and describes the movements of resistance to the increasing interference by the private sector in global affairs. In the years since the initial publication of *Profit Over People*, the stakes have only risen. Now more than ever, *Profit Over People* is one of the key texts explaining how the crisis facing us operates—and how, through Chomsky's analysis of resistance, we may find an escape from the closing net.

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Customer Reviews

Edit of 20 Jun 09 to add links (feature not available back then) This book begins with a very fine introduction by Robert McChesney, who defines neoliberalism as an economic paradigm that leaves a small number of private parties in control and able to maximize their profit (at the expense of the people). He goes on to note that a distracted or apathetic or depoliticized public essentially "goes along" with this, resulting in the loss of community and the rise of consumerism. Chomsky himself, over the course of 167 pages, points out the damages of neo-liberalism (public abdicating power to corporations), not just to underdeveloped nations and their peoples, but to the American people themselves, who are suffering, today, from a fifteen year decline in education, health, and increased inequality between the richest and the poorest. Over the course of several chapters, he discusses various U.S. policies, including the U.S. policy of using "security" as a pretext for subsidizing the transfer of taxpayer funds to major arms dealers. The declaration of Cuba as a threat to U.S. national security is one that Mexico could not support--as one of their diplomats explained at the time: "if we publicly declare that Cuba is a threat to our security, forty million Mexicans will die laughing." At the end of it all, Chomsky comes down to the simple matter of protecting both civilization and the civilians from their own governments in cahoots with corporations. His observations on the deaths by disease, starvation, and so on, at the same time that billions are being spent on arms which perpetuate the cycles of violence, are relevant. So also are his observations on the dramatic increase in both the extent and the damages caused by increasingly unregulated financial markets. He singles out the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) as an especially pernicious organization whose machinations are invisible to the public and harmful as well. I note with interest a review of this book that seeks to call Chomsky a liar, uninformed, and a laughingstock among "serious" scholars. I wish to address that point of view kindly. I can understand, when scholarship consists largely of going through the motions, reading a limited number of works, and answering by rote with the prescribed thought, how so many of our allegedly educated people in business and government are simply socially tuned in. I have myself come to the conclusion that Washington runs on 2% of the available international information (and is largely witless about the 75% or so that is in foreign languages), and I also agree with Howard Bloom's observation in *Global Brain: The Evolution of Mass Mind from the Big Bang to the 21st Century*, to wit, that half one's brain cells are killed off by the time one is an adult, due to normal biological adjustments to accommodate the prescribed social, cultural, and intellectual parameters that are demanded if one is to "get along." In that light, I view Chomsky as one of our more important vaccinations against premature stupidity among our loosely-educated adult policymakers. For

myself, with considerable reading and a 25-year national security career behind me, I find that while Chomsky is repetitious, he is generally meticulous about foot-noting (something that cannot be said for the lazy authors residing in most think tanks, all of them being paid to think along very specifically prescribed directions). The bottom line for me is clear: citizens must read and think, or perish from the earth as slaves to those who control money. There is only one thing that matters more than money in this world, and that is the vote. In a representative democracy, the vote can be bought with ease *until* the moment comes when citizens realize that they can combine the use of public sources to reach conclusions (open source intelligence) with self-organization via the Internet, with civil action (cyber-advocacy, street-advocacy, communication and voting) to *take back the power.* It is not terrorism that scares the corporate carpetbaggers, it is something much more powerful: thinking citizens willing to spend the time keeping their corporate servants in line. Chomsky has labored for over fifty years to keep that part of our brain alive that our schools, seeking to train obedient factory workers, have worked so hard to kill. It can be disheartening, to see citizens so freely give up their rights and their powers, but I do believe, that with the *The Radical Center: The Future of American Politics* (Halstead and Lind), *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World* (Rya and Anderson) and other books I have reviewed, there is, without question, a tipping point. The Internet has changed everything-now we need for the people to notice, and act. Chomsky sheds light in a way that no prostituted scholar or preppy business acolyte will respect-but if the workers wish to begin reading for the future salvation of their children's rights, Chomsky is as good a place as any from which to step off into true democracy. See also: *The Manufacture Of Evil: Ethics, Evolution, and the Industrial System* *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* *Screwed: The Undeclared War Against the Middle Class - And What We Can Do about It* (BK Currents (Paperback)) *The Working Poor: Invisible in America* *The Global Class War: How America's Bipartisan Elite Lost Our Future - and What It Will Take to Win It Back* *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* *The People's Business: Controlling Corporations and Restoring Democracy*

"Profit Over People" is very sobering work by McChesney and Chomsky about a topic that exists in virtually all aspects of our lives. However, it's rarely defined nor even mentioned in the American mainstream media. There are reasons for this. A lack of interest for details by the public and a mainstream media that doesn't cover the topic. In addition, the US was founded by and for the elitist oligarch minority that still runs the USA today. One powerful - yet peaceful - buffer to maintain power today, is by controlling of the mainstream media. In the beginning stages of the United States as a

nation-state, Madison wrote and voiced concerns over the masses participating in decision-making. He feared for interests of the small minority of aristocratic land-owners and wealth holders. This belief system and governmental structure continues to dominate, and is still reinforced by the mainstream media 235+ years later. The message is the same, but the medium of dissemination is different. During the height of the Cold War, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles commented that the US is "hopelessly far far behind the Soviet Union in developing controls of the minds and emotions of unsophisticated peoples" (page 48). There are those who study media and propaganda who disagree with this statement. The US propaganda during the Cold War was very effective and comprehensive. But Foster's statement reveals how propaganda and manipulating "belief" is so important to the maintenance, growth, and utter survival of a nation-state. Especially if it's ideologically competing with a rival or enemy. Today, Neo-Liberalism is a concept and contemporary policy composed of left, right, and center. Implicitly and explicitly influenced and controlled by, and motivated to focus on, benefiting the wealthy industries of less than 1,000 corporations. Ironically, as powerful a force as Neo-Liberalism is, this term is rarely if ever used in the the United States in the mainstream media. One of the major points of Neo-Liberalism is the advocacy of free markets and "entrepreneurial drive" which ostensibly opposes bureaucracy and governmental interference, but in reality often does not. It depends to which interests are being catered to. Because of the massive financial backing, organization, and PR campaigns, few people in the United States question the motivations, the negative, the benefits, and results of Neo-Liberal policies. These policies have permeated into almost every level of political, economic, and cultural realms of US society. Again, Neo-Liberalism is not only an economic system but a cultural and political system as well. All 3 are Intertwined. Enmeshed. All of these 3 reinforce and support one another, and the economic, cultural, and political systems, are constantly reinforced by the mainstream media. One example among many, is the "NY Times" being consistently cited throughout this book, as being in support of Neo-Liberal policies and philosophies. Question: who owns the top 5 media conglomerates in the USA? Chomsky notes what more and more (but not enough) of the US public is starting to realize and believe according to polls, as of 2009: that politically, both political parties engage in trivial debates over minor, cosmetic issues. The 2 parties have the same interests, and the same supporters. It's only the packaging that's different. Neo-Liberalism functions best when there are elections. The public is deluded into thinking they actually have a voice, and are actually participating in the falsehood of a "democratic" process that doesn't really exist. Today in the year 2008 and beyond, these 1,000 organizations that run the US are more powerful, organized, and aggressive than ever. They are the masters. This is where "democracies" inevitably lead,

historically. Apply "Profit Over People" to recent U.S. history and the last election cycle. The exclusive 2 parties: more similar than different. New faces, with basically the same policies and agenda. Both political parties lead the masses into the same direction, peppering us with the illusion of the two parties having differences with cosmetic and trivial sound-bites. As a distraction to occupy our myopic selves we have shopping malls, Costco, delicious foods, car payments, mortgages sports, Internet, and TV, to keep our minds occupied while the Neo-Liberal agenda progresses, solidifies, and expands worldwide. "Profit Over People" is both informative and reader-friendly. Here is a historical quote about the phenomenon called "Bread and Circuses." It dates back to Roman times but is just as applicable today. PANEM ET CIRCENSES "The Latin "panem et circenses" (literally "bread and circuses") is a derogatory phrase which can describe either government policies to pacify the citizenry, or the shallow, decadent desires of that same citizenry. In both cases, it refers to low-cost, low-quality, high-availability food and entertainment." --Unknown

This isn't the type of reporting you want to hear, but it is the type of reporting you must hear if you believe in the democratic ideals this country was founded upon. Some might find something wrong with whistleblowing, but if you don't and you're not afraid to confront some disturbing truths, then grab this book and read it and think about how you can change this world. There must be something seriously disturbing in Chomsky's writing to the right wing to provoke such truth twisting and distortion in order to attempt to discredit Chomsky. If you want to know what they're afraid of, read this book (or any of Dr. Chomsky's other books, for that matter!

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