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Principle #5: Attack Solidarity

Chomsky: Solidarity is quite dangerous. From the point of view of the masters, you're only supposed to care about yourself, not about other people. This is quite different from the people they claim are their heroes like Adam Smith, who based his whole approach on the economy on the principle that *sympathy* is a fundamental human trait - but that has to be driven out of people's heads. You've got to be for yourself; follow the vile maxim: "don't care about others," which is okay for the rich and powerful, but is devastating for everyone else. It's taken a lot of effort to drive these basic human emotions out of people's heads.

We see it today in policy formation. For example, in the attack on Social Security. Social Security is based on a principle. It's based on a principle of *solidarity*: solidarity - caring for others. Social Security means, "I pay payroll taxes so that the widow across town can get something to live on."

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For much of the population, that's what they survive on. It's of no use to the very rich, so therefore, there's a concerted attempt to destroy it. One of the ways is defending it. You want to destroy some system? First defend it. Then, it won't work. People will be angry. They want something else. It's a standard technique for privatizing some system.

We see it in the attack on public schools. Public schools are based on the principle of solidarity. I no longer have children in school. They're grown up, but the principle of solidarity says, "I happily pay taxes so that the kid across the street can go to school." Now, that's normal human emotion. You have to drive that out of people's heads. "I don't have kids in school. Why should I pay taxes? Privatize it," so on. The public education system, all the way from kindergarten to higher education, is under severe attack. That's one of the jewels of American society.

You go back to the Golden Age again, the great growth period in the 50s and 60s. A lot of that is based on free public education. One of the results of the Second World War was the GI Bill of Rights, which enabled veterans, and remember, that's a large part of the population then, to go to college. They wouldn't have been able to, otherwise. They essentially got free education.

Archival voiceover
Where a community, state or nation courageously invests a substantial share of its resources in education, the investment invariably returned in better business and the higher standard of living.

Chomsky: U.S. was way in the lead in developing extensive mass public education at every level. By now, in more than half the states, most of the funding for the colleges comes from tuition, not from the state. That's a radical change, and that's a terrible burden on students. It means that students, if they don't come from very wealthy families, they're going to leave college with big debts. And if you have a big debt, you're trapped. I mean, maybe you wanted to become a public interest lawyer, but you're going to have to go into a corporate law firm to pay off those debts. And by the time you're part of the culture, you're not going to get out of it again. That's true across the board.

In the 1950s, it was a much poorer society than it is today but, nevertheless, could easily handle

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Principle #7: Engineer Elections

Chomsky: Concentration of wealth yields concentration of political power, particularly so as the cost of elections skyrockets, which forces the political parties into the pockets of major corporations. The Citizens United - this was January 2009, I guess - that's a very important Supreme Court decision, but it has a history and you got to think about the history.

The 14th amendment has a provision that says, "No person's rights can be infringed without due process of law." And the intent, clearly, was to protect freed slaves - says, "Okay, they've got the protection of the law." I don't think it's ever been used for freed slaves, if ever, marginally. Almost invariably, it was used for businesses - corporations - their rights can't be infringed without due process of law. So they gradually became persons under the law.

Corporations are state-created legal fictions. Maybe they're good, maybe they're bad - but to call them persons is kind of outrageous. So they got personal rights back about a century ago, and that extended through the 20th century. They gave corporations rights way beyond what persons have.

So if, say, General Motors invests in Mexico, they get national rights, the rights of the Mexican business. While the notion of person was expanded to include corporations, it was also restricted.

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If you take the 14th amendment literally, then no undocumented alien can be deprived of rights, if they're persons. Undocumented aliens who are living here and building your buildings, cleaning your lawns, and so on - they're not persons - but General Electric is a person, an immortal super-powerful person. This perversion of the elementary morality, and the obvious meaning of the law, is quite incredible.

In the 1970s, the courts decided that money is a form of speech - Buckley vs. Valeo. Then you go on through the years to Citizens United, which says that, the right of free speech of corporations, mainly to spend as much money as they want, that can't be curtailed. Take a look what that means. It means that corporations, which anyway have been pretty much buying elections, are now free to do it with virtually no constraint. That's a tremendous attack on the residue of democracy.

It's very interesting to read the rulings, like Justice Kennedy's swing vote. His ruling said, "Well, look, after all, CBS is given freedom of speech - they're a corporation - why shouldn't General Electric be free to spend as much money as they want?" It's true that CBS is given freedom of speech, but they're supposed to be performing a public service. That's why. That's what the press is supposed to be, and General Electric is trying to make money for the chief executive and some of the shareholders.

It's an incredible decision and it puts the courts in a position where business never is morally

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Principle #6: Run the Regulators

Chomsky: If you look over the history of regulation, say, railroad regulation, financial regulation and so on, you find that quite commonly it's either initiated by the economic concentrations that are being regulated, or it's supported by them. And the reason is because they know that, sooner or later, they can take over the regulators. It ends up with what's called "regulatory capture". The business being regulated is in fact running the regulators.

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Bank lobbyists are actually writing the laws of financial regulation - it gets to that extreme. That's been happening through history and, again, it's a pretty natural tendency when you just look at the distribution of power.

One of the things that expanded enormously in the 1970s is lobbying, as the business world moved sharply to try to control legislation. The business world was pretty upset by the advances in public law in the 60s, in particular by Richard Nixon. It's not too well understood but he was the last New Deal president, and they regarded that as class treachery.

In Nixon's administration, you get the consumer safety legislation, safety and health regulations in the workplace, the EPA - the Environmental Protection Agency. Business didn't like it, of course. They didn't like the high taxes. They didn't like the regulation. And they began a coordinated effort to try to overcome it. Lobbying sharply increased. Deregulation began with a real ferocity.

There were no financial crashes in the 50s and the 60s because the regulatory apparatus of the New Deal was still in place. As it began to be dismantled under business pressure and political pressure, you get more and more crashes. And it goes on right through the 70s. It starts to begin. 80s really takes off.

News announcement
Congress was asked to approve federal loan guarantees to the auto company of up to \$1,500,000,000...

Chomsky: Now, all of this is quite safe as long as you know the government's going to come to your rescue. Take, all, say, Reagan. Instead of letting them pay the cost, Reagan bailed out the banks like Continental Illinois, the biggest bailout of American history at the time. He actually ended his term with a huge financial crisis - the Savings and Loan Crisis - and the government moved in and bailed it out.

News announcement

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Principle #8: Keep the Rabble in Line

Chomsky: There is one organized force which traditionally, plenty of flaws, but with all its flaws it's been in the forefront of efforts to improve the lives of the general population. That's organized labor. It's also a barrier to corporate tyranny. So it's the one barrier to this vicious cycle in which does lead to corporate tyranny.

A major reason for the concentrated, almost fanatic attack on unions - on organized labor - is they are a democratizing force. They provide a barrier that defends workers' rights, but also popular rights generally. That interferes with the prerogatives and power of those who own and manage the society.

I should say that anti-union sentiment in the United States among elites is so strong that the fundamental core of labor rights, the basic principle in the International Labor Organization, is the right of free association - which would mean the right to form unions. The U.S. has never ratified that, so I think the U.S. may be alone among major societies in that respect. It's considered so far out of the spectrum of American politics it literally has never been considered.

Remember, the U.S. has a long and very violent labor history as compared with comparable societies, but the labor movement had been very strong. By the 1920s, in a period not unlike today, it was virtually crushed.

Archival voiceover
A truck driver's strike was climaxed by severe riots with many casualties. Open warfare rages through the streets of the city as 3,000 union pickets battle 700 police. Guns, tear gas, clubs and fists bring injuries to more than 80 persons and caused the death of 2.

Chomsky: By the mid 30s, it began to reconstruct. Franklin Delano Roosevelt, he himself was rather sympathetic to progressive legislation that would be in the benefit of the general population, but he had to somehow get it passed. He informed labor leaders and others, "Force me to do it." What he meant is, go out and demonstrate, organize, protest, develop the labor movement. When the popular pressure is sufficient, I'll be able to put through the legislation you want.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
I am not for a return to that definition of liberty, under which for many years a free people were being gradually regimented into the service of a privileged few. I prefer that broader definition of liberty.

Chomsky: So there was kind of a combination of sympathetic government, and by the mid-30s, very substantial popular activism. There were industrial actions. There were sit-down strikes, which were very frightening to ownership. You have to recognize the sit-down strike is just one

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Principle #10: Marginalize the Population

Chomsky: One of the leading political scientists, Martin Gilens, came out with a study of the relation between public attitudes and public policy. What he shows is that about 70% of the population has no way of influencing policy. They might as well be in some other country, and the population knows it. What it's led to is a population that's angry, frustrated, hates institutions. It's not acting constructively to try to respond to this.

There is popular mobilization and activism, but in very self-destructive directions. It's taking the form of unfocused anger, attacks on one another, and on vulnerable targets - that's what happens in cases like this. It is corrosive of social relations, but that's the point. The point is to make people hate and fear each other, and look out only for themselves, and don't do anything for anyone else.

One place you see it strikingly is on April 15, April 15 is kind of a measure - the day you pay your taxes - of how democratic the society is. If a society is really democratic, April 15 would be a day of celebration. It's a day when the population gets together, decides to fund the programs and

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activities that they have formulated and agreed upon. What could be better than that? You should celebrate it.

It's not the way it is in the United States. It's a day of mourning. It's a day in which some alien power that has nothing to do with you, is coming down to steal your hard earned money - and you do everything you can to keep them from doing it. That is a kind of measure of the extent to which, at least in popular consciousness, democracy is actually functioning. Not a very attractive picture.

The tendencies that we've been describing within American society, unless there are reversed, it's going to be an extremely ugly society. I mean, a society that's based on Adam Smith's vile maxim, "All for myself, nothing for anyone else." A society in which normal human instincts and emotion of sympathy, solidarity, mutual support, in which they're driven out... that's a society so ugly, I don't even want to know who'd live in it. I wouldn't want my children to.

Archival Chomsky video
If the society is based on control by private wealth, it will reflect the values that it, in fact, does reflect. The value that is greed, and the desire to maximize personal gain, at the expense of others. Now, any society, a small society based on that principle is ugly, but it can survive. A global society based on that principle is headed for massive destruction.

Chomsky: I don't think we're smart enough to design in any detail what a perfectly just and free

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The trade system was reconstructed with a very explicit design of putting working people in competition with one another all over the world. What's its lead to is a reduction in the share of income on the part of working people. It's been particularly striking in the United States but it's happening worldwide. It means that an American worker's in competition with the super-exploited worker in China.

Meanwhile, highly paid professionals are protected. They're not placed in competition with the rest of the world. Far from it. And, of course, the capital is free to move. Workers aren't free to move, labor can't move, but capital can.

Again, going back to the classics like Adam Smith, as he pointed out, free circulation of labor is the foundation of any free trade system, but workers are pretty much stuck. The wealthy and the privileged are protected, so you get obvious consequences. And they're recognized and, in fact, praised.

Policy is designed to increase insecurity. Alan Greenspan. When he testified to Congress, he explained his success in running the economy as based on what he called, "Greater Worker Insecurity."

Alan Greenspan
A typical restraint on compensation increases has been evident for a few years now, but as I outline in some detail in testimony last month, I believe that job insecurity has played the dominant roll.

Chomsky: Keep workers insecure, they're going to be under control. They are not going to ask for, say, decent wages or decent working conditions or the opportunity of free association, meaning unionize.

Now, for the masters of mankind, that's fine. They make their profits. But for what population, it's devastating. These two processes, financialization and offshoring are part of the lead to the vicious cycle of concentration of wealth and concentration of power.

Archival Chomsky video
I'm Noam Chomsky and I'm on the faculty at MIT and I've been getting more and more heavily involved in anti-war activities for the last few years.

Archival announcement
Noam Chomsky has made two international repatriations. The widest is as one of the national leaders of American resistance to the Vietnam War. The deepest is as a professor of linguistics who, before he was 40 years old, had transformed the nature of his subject.

Archival interview
You are identified with the new left, whatever that is. You certainly have been an activist as well as a writer.

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Principle #9: Manufacturing Consent

Chomsky: The public relations industry - the advertising industry, which is dedicated to creating consumers - it's a phenomena that developed in the freest countries, in Britain and the United States, and the reason is pretty clear. It became clear by, say, a century ago that it was not going to be so easy to control the population by force. Too much freedom had been won. Labor organizing, parliamentary labor parties in many countries, women starting to get the franchise and so on.

So you had to have other means of controlling people. And it was understood and expressed that you have to control them by control of beliefs and attitudes. Well, one of the best ways to control people in terms of attitudes is what the great political economist Thorstein Veblen called "fabricating consumers".

If you can fabricate once, make obtaining things that are just about within your reach the essence of life, they're going to be trapped into becoming consumers. You read the business press in say, 1920s, it talks about the need to direct people to the superficial things of life, like "fashionable consumption" and that'll keep them out of our hair.

You find this doctrine all through progressive intellectual thought, like Walter Lippmann, the major progressive intellectual of the 20th century. He wrote famous progressive essays on democracy in which his view was exactly that. "The public must be put in their place" so that the responsible men can make decisions without interference from the "bewildered herd".

They're to be spectators, not participants. Then you get a properly functioning democracy - straight back to Madison and on to Powell's Memorandum, and so on. The advertising industry just exploded with this as its goal - fabricating consumers. And it's done with great sophistication.

TV advertisement voiceover
You don't see many wild stallions anymore. He's one of the last of a wild and very singular breed. Come to Marlboro Country.

Chomsky: The ideal is what you actually see today where, let's say, teenage girls if they have a free Saturday afternoon, will go walking in the shopping mall, not to the library or somewhere else. The idea is to try to control everyone, to turn the whole society into the perfect system.

Perhaps system would be a society based on a dyad, a pair. The pair is you and your television set, or maybe now you and the Internet, in which that presents you with what the proper life would be.

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