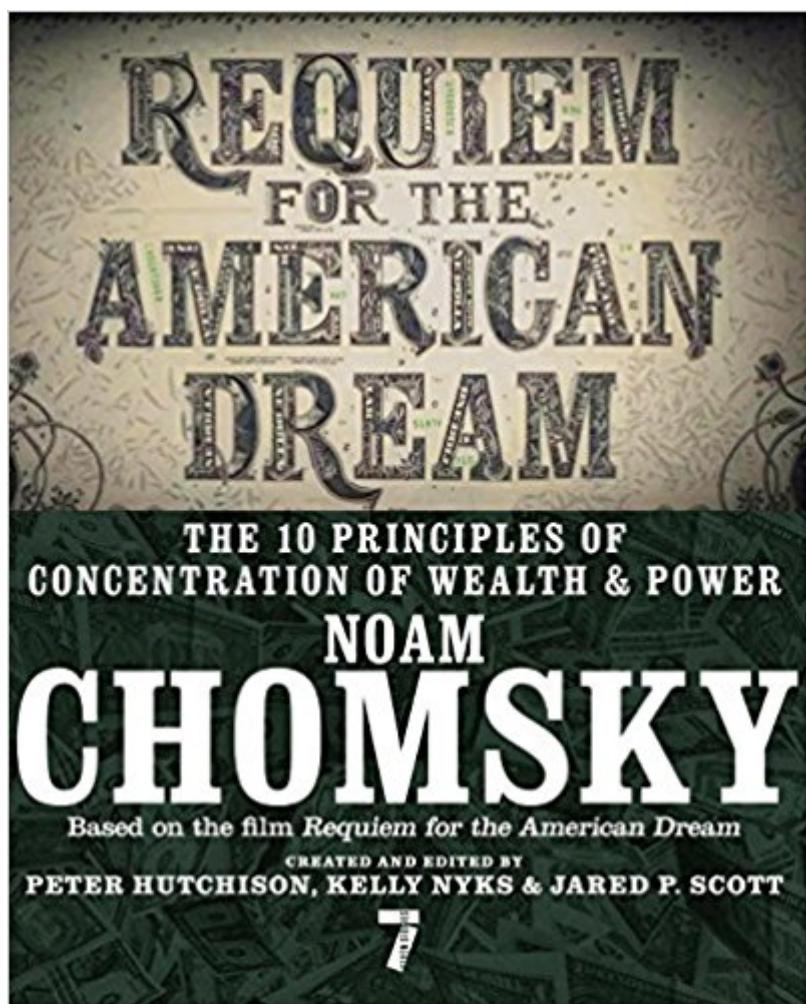


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# Requiem For The American Dream: The 10 Principles Of Concentration Of Wealth & Power



## Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER! In his first major book on the subject of income inequality, Noam Chomsky skewers the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism and casts a clear, cold, patient eye on the economic facts of life. What are the ten principles of concentration of wealth and power at work in America today? They're simple enough: reduce democracy, shape ideology, redesign the economy, shift the burden onto the poor and middle classes, attack the solidarity of the people, let special interests run the regulators, engineer election results, use fear and the power of the state to keep the rabble in line, manufacture consent, marginalize the population. In *Requiem for the American Dream*, Chomsky devotes a chapter to each of these ten principles, and adds readings from some of the core texts that have influenced his thinking to bolster his argument. To create *Requiem for the American Dream*, Chomsky and his editors, the filmmakers Peter Hutchison, Kelly Nyks, and Jared P. Scott, spent countless hours together over the course of five years, from 2011 to 2016. After the release of the film version, Chomsky and the editors returned to the many hours of tape and transcript and created a document that included three times as much text as was used in the film. The book that has resulted is nonetheless arguably the most succinct and tightly woven of Chomsky's long career, a beautiful vessel--including old-fashioned ligatures in the typeface--in which to carry Chomsky's bold and uncompromising vision, his perspective on the economic reality and its impact on our political and moral well-being as a nation. "During the Great Depression, which I'm old enough to remember, it was badâ "much worse subjectively than today. But there was a sense that we'll get out of this somehow, an expectation that things were going to get better . . ." â "fromÂ *Requiem for the American Dream*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A primer in Chomsky's analysis of the faults of the American political and economic system. Taking as its backbone the idea that a significant part of the American Dream is class mobility: You're born poor, you work hard, you get rich." Chomsky systematically documents the many ways the system is rigged from top to bottom to ensure that corporations always win."

--Billmoyers.com "Since Thomas Piketty's Capital in the 21st Century, income inequality has not been novel material for a book. Nevertheless, the latest book from famed activist and linguist Chomsky (Who Rules the World?) seems fresher than almost any title on the subject in recent memory. The book, based on the documentary of the same name, is a compilation of interviews that the film's directors conducted with Chomsky from 2011 to 2016. Chomsky observes the present-day United States with such lucid clarity that readers may feel they are viewing familiar terrain for the first time. He offers a "10 Principle" formula for how plutocratic interests operate (Principle No. 7 is "Engineer Elections"; Principle No. 3 is "Redesign the Economy"). Chomsky observes that much of what made the 1950s and '60s the "Golden Age" of the U.S. economy was that, at the time, what was good for General Motors really was good for America: "When the U.S. was primarily a manufacturing center, it had to be concerned with its own consumers." Chomsky also touches, fascinatingly, on subjects as diverse as "the psychology of nagging" (as employed by the advertising industry) and the disappearing sense of solidarity in our civic life. Chomsky and his collaborators have created a perceptive and revelatory examination of the forces driving America inequality." "Publishers Weekly" Noam Chomsky in Requiem for the American Dream directs the fierce light of his intellect on the utopian ideology of neoliberalism, the absurd idea that markets should dictate all aspects of human society. He dissects the disastrous consequences of this ideology for our society, culture, and politics. He explains how corporations indoctrinated the public, academia, and the mass media to sign on for a project that has devastated the lives of working men and women and obliterated the common good. Every promise made by the proponents of neoliberalism is a lie. Its power to write its own laws and regulations, Chomsky points out, has ultimately created a mafia economic system and a mafia political system that is exemplified in the rise to power of the demagogue Donald Trump." "Chris Hedges, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and author of Wages of Rebellion: The Moral Imperative of Revolt" While many books attempt to explain how we got to this political moment (some successfully), Noam

Chomsky's latest, *A Requiem for the American Dream*, provides necessary historical context. Zooming in on ten ways that government and corporate interests have kept the American people down, Chomsky offers a compelling history that explains today's economic and political landscape. At 157 pages, it's a short, beautifully put together book." --Huffington Post

Political philosopher, activist, and linguist NOAM CHOMSKY is beloved around the world for the strength of his personal commitment to the truth as he sees it and for the brilliance of his ideas. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on December 7, 1928, he studied linguistics, mathematics, and philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania and received his PhD there in 1955. Chomsky has taught at MIT for fifty years and is currently Institute Professor Emeritus in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy. His linguistics work is widely credited with having revolutionized the field, and his political writings have made important contributions for decades. In 2001, he published *9-11*, which became his first international bestseller and was arguably the single most influential post-9-11 book. Chomsky is the author of many other best-selling political works, including *Profit Over People*, *Media Control*, *Hegemony or Survival*, *Failed States*, *Hopes and Prospects*, *Masters of Mankind*, *What Kind of Creatures Are We?*, and *Who Rules the World?* PETER HUTCHISON is an NYC-based filmmaker, educator, and activist. His documentary work includes *What Would Jesus Buy?* with producing partner Morgan Spurlock; *Split: A Divided America*; *Beyond Activism: Four Decades of Social Justice*; and *Awake Zion: Rasta, Reggae & Judaism*. KELLY NYKS is an award-winning writer/director of documentary films and has worked across Europe, Asia, and America. His prior films include *The Age of Consequences*, *Disobedience*, *Disruption*, *Do the Math*, *Split: A Divided America*, and *Split: A Deeper Divide*. Award-winning writer, director, and producer JARED P. SCOTT's other films include *The Age of Consequences*, *Disruption*, *Do the Math*, and *The Artificial Leaf*. His films have screened at Tribeca, Hot Docs, Sheffield, and IDFA, and have aired/streamed on Netflix, Starz, PBS, and Al Jazeera.

For decades, economic scholars have commented on the dangers inherent in the growing concentration of wealth in Western society. Though misleadingly referred to as "income inequality" in the new media, this critically important topic actively entered public debate in 2011 with Occupy Wall Street. Nobel Prize-winning economists Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman and others added to the debate in the years that followed. Then, Senator Bernie Sanders flogged the issue at every opportunity in his presidential race in 2016, giving the issue further prominence. If there's anyone alive and alert in America today who isn't aware that the

concentration of wealth is a growing problem for our society, IÃ¢Â™d be surprised. Few contemporary American observers have a clearer-headed understanding of the issue and its causes than Noam Chomsky. Chomsky, born in 1928, is widely regarded as the father of modern linguistics and one of the founders of the field of cognitive science. HeÃ¢Â™s also well knownÃ¢Â”some might say notoriousÃ¢Â”as an activist and social commentator. He has written dozens of books on the technical aspects of his academic work, and even more on politics. But his latest, *Requiem for the American Dream: The 10 Principles of Concentration of Wealth & Power*, is not a book he wrote. Instead, the book was distilled from a 2015 film of the same name, a documentary patched together using interviews filmed over four years with Chomsky. Unlike the books he has written, most of which are slow going and many (the texts on linguistics, impenetrable), *Requiem* consists entirely of transcriptions from the spoken word. The style is conversational and uses only a bare minimum of jargon. ItÃ¢Â™s a quick read, and an enlightening one. As Chomsky notes, Ã¢ÂœPower has become so concentrated that not only are the banks Ã¢Â”too big to fail,Ã¢Â™ but as one economist put it, they are also Ã¢Â”too big to jail.'Ã¢Â• Given our experience over the past decade, it would be difficult to argue with that. And anyone who closely follows events in American society today would say the same about this observation by Chomsky: Ã¢Âœthe rich and powerful, they donÃ¢Â™t want a capitalist system. They want to be able to run to the Ã¢Â”nanny stateÃ¢Â™ as soon as theyÃ¢Â™re in trouble, and get bailed out by the taxpayer.Ã¢Â• If the American people fully understood how much tax money is funneled to corporations as subsidies, and how much the tax code has been distorted to favor them and their shareholders, they would storm Washington DC by the millions. In *Requiem*, Chomsky presents ten Ã¢ÂœprinciplesÃ¢Â• that together explain how the massive concentration of wealth in America today has come about. (His analysis applies to other wealthy countries as well, but it fits the U.S. best.) His argument is best summed up as what he calls a vicious circle: Ã¢ÂœConcentration of wealth yields concentration of power, particularly so as the cost of elections skyrockets, which forces the political parties even more deeply into the pockets of major corporations.Ã¢Â• The 10 principles underlying this reality, as Chomsky sees them, are: Reduce Democracy Shape Ideology Redesign the Economy Shift the Burden Attack Solidarity Run the Regulators Engineer Elections Keep the Rabble in Line Manufacture Consent Marginalize the Population!Ã¢Â™ve never seen a more comprehensive or economical explanation of how wealth has come to be so concentrated in so few hands in the U.S. today. Most of these principles are self-evident at a glance. Only two may require explanation. Chomsky uses the word Ã¢ÂœsolidarityÃ¢Â• as a synonym for empathy, caring for others, or Ã¢Âœconcern for your fellow man,Ã¢Â• to cite another archaic expression.

His Principle #8, "Keep the Rabble in Line," refers to the coordinated 45-year effort by Big Business and Right-Wing ideologues to destroy the labor movement. The editors of *Requiem*—Peter Hutchison, Kelly Nyks, and Jared P. Scott—have interspersed short passages from other sources among the 10 Principles. The sources range over the centuries: from Aristotle and James Madison to Harry Truman and Martin Luther King Jr. These short excerpts from classic documents, speeches, press reports, and social commentaries add depth to the book's presentation and enhance understanding of Chomsky's message. Chomsky's views have often been regarded as extreme. Certainly, he is vilified by commentators and scholars on the Right. But if you read *Requiem for the American Dream*, I think you'll find his reading of history is accurate, his logic is sound, and his view of America today is—sadly—right on target.

Clear summary of the fundamentals and history of the mechanisms enabling and sustaining concentration of power to the few with wealth. Included are excerpts of related writings supporting the topics from a variety of sources: Adam Smith, James Madison, Aristotle, Alan Greenspan, Citigroup document, Standard and Poors research, John Dewey, etc. The related material gives you a hint that what Chomsky is writing about is not far fetched but grounded in a rich history of ideas about how the world should work.

Chomsky's elaboration of how we got to now and the techniques and strategies of the wealthy ruling elite is delivered in a succinct and easy-to-understand text. Essential reading for those trying to make real sense of the world today or looking for ways to take control back from the few and give a voice to the masses.

Very timely. Very interesting. It's the companion book to the documentary by the same name. I liked that he went back 50 years to put what is happening today in our government and society in prospective and giving us the history of what has led up to today. He gives examples as well as excerpts of his source materials. This is written so it can be understood by everyone. I learned a lot. There is a lot to think about in these pages.

How is power eroding from citizens to elites. A gradual disenfranchising of the commons in favor of power concentration and elitism.

Ever since the mid 1960s when he decided to take an incredibly insightful, courageous and ethical stand just before the thick of the Vietnam War, Chomsky's been expounding and writing at length about Washington-Israeli lawlessness and brutality across the globe. In so many of those magnificent works (roughly over 70 books!) he'd occasionally toss in a few passages about the American domestic politico-economic scene as well. These chapters started to increase in frequency in the early 1990s when the stark reality of the decline U.S. working people were experiencing and massive runaway inequality were too blatant to ignore. By then the ruling class' assault on unions and workers' solidarity had been a relentless undertaking for well over a decade. As to be expected most of the establishment press gave the desperate plight of American workers and struggling middle class folks short shrift, not Chomsky. Along with a handful of other intellectuals at the time (Alexander Cockburn, Adolph Reed, Michael Parenti, James Petras, Holly Skar, committed labor activists, and some other intellectuals I'm forgetting at the moment) Chomsky delivered truth trips detailing exactly what was occurring and how we got to the point of a tiny obscenely rich parasitic financial elite pounding the bottom 90% of the population over the head.'Requiem for the American Dream' is solely focused on this economic crisis the vast majority of us are now suffering under. It's simply spectacular in that among other domestic issues it concentrates on this recent post Occupy Wall Street period of the last several years. From runaway debt peonage to 70 hour work weeks to the plethora of bankruptcies and the decline in life expectancy for struggling folks across the nation, it's all documented and explained by Chomsky in his usual cogent and hard hitting manner, of course stunningly well-sourced and documented. He's always had that gift for cutting through the fog and baloney and actually saying something forthright and galvanizing, this gift is once again brought forth in this most recent work. *Requiem for the American Dream* must be read by anyone who recognizes the developing politico-economic nightmare and craves the historical background along with the contemporary analyses and critiques to formulate a strategy to wage class war against the elites who increasingly find themselves fearfully sequestered in their gated communities with gun toting security at the ready.

My only problem with Noam's talks is that he'll say something outrageous and saddening, and I often won't know where to find the sources of his information to review myself. This is the much needed missing link, a lot of the stuff you can hear him talking about on YouTube is properly grounded in references here.

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