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Occupy (Occupied Media Pamphlet Series)



Synopsis

PRAISE FOR NOAM CHOMSKY'S OCCUPY AND ZUCCOTTI PARK PRESS: Having spent so much time thinking about and engaging with social movements, Chomsky is both optimistic about the energy of Occupy and realistic about the challenges it faces. He appreciates the "just do it" ethos and embraces its radical approach to participatory democracy. What makes Chomsky's perspective so interesting, aside from the wealth of his political experience, is the range of his interests. He draws from examples around the world to demonstrate his points. ...It's a big agenda that Occupy has identified, nothing less than a complete renewal of U.S. society and the U.S. role in the world. Chomsky sees not only the radical agenda but also the radical practice of the Occupiers. Part of what functioning, free communities like the Occupy communities can be working for and spreading to others is just a different way of living, which is not based on maximizing consumer goods, but on maximizing values that are important for life," he concludes in this valuable set of remarks and interviews. John Feffer, Foreign Policy in Focus, Pick Review "For decades, Chomsky has been marginalized for his insightful, levelheaded, and accurate observations about how our society functions. In Occupy, Chomsky... sets the record straight. And he's got an answer for everything. It's necessary," Chomsky warns, "to get out into the country and get people to understand what this is about, and what they can do about it, and what the consequences are of not doing anything about it." Occupy begins with a powerful editor's note from Greg Ruggiero, who comments on "the heartlessness and inhumanity of the system, where people's stolen homes are sold off to the highest bidder. And if it isn't obvious to those who are still asking what the demands of Occupy Wall Street are, Ruggiero puts it plainly: Occupy embodies a vision of democracy that is fundamentally antagonistic to the management of society as a corporate-controlled space that funds a political system to serve the wealthy, ignore the poor." One can only cringe at the thought of what will happen if we continue to ignore the wisdom of Noam Chomsky. He gives a clue in Occupy; "The Coffin Factory, The Magazine for People who Love Books Occupy is another vital contribution from Chomsky to the literature of defiance and protest, and a red-hot rallying call to forge a better, more egalitarian future." Alnet Chomsky advocates intelligent activism by those who see the divorce between public policy and public opinion. He is both optimistic and realistic towards this "first major public response to 30 years of class war." IRISH TIMES, PICK REVIEW "Occupy, is at once a vivid portrait of the now-global movement and a practical guide to intelligent activism, infused with Chomsky's signature meditations on everything from how the wealthiest 1% came to steer society to what a

healthy democracy would look like to how we can separate money from politics. Alongside Chomsky's words are some of the most moving and provocative photographs from the Occupy movement. ... [One of] 10 essential books on protest.â€”Maria Popova, Brain Pickings

In Occupy, Chomsky discusses the cornerstone issues, questions and demands that have been driving ordinary Americans to critique the influence of the "1%." The book begins and ends with Chomsky celebrating the life and work of his longtime friend and colleague, Howard Zinn, author of A People's History of the United States. As a call to action, Chomsky encourages people to continue organizing, to continue struggling, and to continue defending citizenship and community-driven democracy from predation from the relentless encroachments of wealth and corporate power.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I bought the book earlier this afternoon, and just finished it. While it is rather short (about 120 pages), I think it's a worthwhile purchase for a few different reasons. One: The title of my review says it all- some fresh perspective on Howard Zinn! Zinn is discussed at length; primarily dealing with theoretical interpretations of how he would've approached the Occupy movement. Of course, Zinn isn't here to explain himself, but Chomsky does an admirable job of trying to relate Zinn and 'Occupy'. Agree or disagree with Chomsky; the fact is that you still are getting a fresh approach on one of the most beloved historians of our time. Two: Chomsky can come across as a simple and

boring read. This is mainly due to the fact that his written works are usually transcripts of prior speeches that he's made. Therefore, he repeats certain points numerous times, and his overall argument can seem disjointed or a bit sloppily put together. My advice is to read him as if he is speaking in front of you. This works great sometimes, and other times it is still a chore to get to his overall argument, but once you do, the argument is almost always compelling. Having said that, he still delivers a relevant argument for the need of 'Occupy' and movements similar to it. I think most people interested in the book are going to be familiar with his politics, and those of the larger movement. And this is only the first of a series examining the Occupy movement, and all are printed by Zuccotti Park Press. So if you are looking for a way to support the movement and show Solidarity, then I highly recommend that you read this book!

"Occupy" is a selection of speeches (as well as one interview) made by veteran radical Noam Chomsky at Occupy events in the U.S. late last year. The speeches are a mixture of Chomsky putting events into context, an extremely brief history of the Neoliberal era (the "Thirty Years of Class War" referred to in the title of this review), a eulogy for the late Howard Zinn (of *A People's History of the United States* fame) and some reluctant but spot on advice on the pitfalls and difficulties of organising and carrying forward the Occupy movement. A guide on what to do if your arrested at an occupy event in the U.S. (compiled by the National Lawyers Guild) has been helpfully included, and makes interesting reading even for those to whom it is not directly relevant. This is a fine short (probably not much more than 10,000 words in total) collection, though readers may wish to skip it for (or subsequently move on to) some of his more recent and substantial works such as *Hopes and Prospects*, or return to his earlier classics such as *Detering Democracy*, *Year 501: The Conquest Continues* or *Manufacturing Consent*. An interesting book for readers wishing to learn more about Occupy as well as the protests across Europe and the uprisings in the Arab World (which Chomsky touches upon) could do far worse than reading Paul Mason's *Why It's Kicking Off Everywhere: The New Global Revolutions*.

Simply put, the "Noam Chomsky Occupy" pamphlet is the blueprint for the global Occupy movement. This pamphlet can easily be the guide that occupiers, professors, activists and those seeking change can use to constantly navigate the uncharted territory. "Noam Chomsky Occupy" offers perspective and strategic vision. I am very honored to be a small part of this powerful and brilliant pamphlet! It is my guide! Mikal Kamil

Noam. He never disappoints. If Westerners listened to their elders, they'd listen to him. And then we'd have no more Bushes, Reagans or Clintons, and the occasional Obamas we got would have the courage of their alleged convictions.

This small book is a very quick read. It is a pamphlet sized book featuring 5 speeches and interviews with --and a short essay by--Noam Chomsky about the Occupy movement. It features Chomsky exhorting folks about how to build on the foundations laid by Occupy to build a far more just, equitable and democratic society than we Americans currently have. It is a very short book and the arguments are sometimes repetitive but it is very thought provoking and intelligent (as Chomsky's works always are). According to Chomsky the Occupy movement is the first substantial resistance nationwide to the neoliberal economic policies that have been oppressing us since the 70's. Since the 70's incomes have declined or stagnated for a large majority of Americans. While working Americans enjoyed a substantial benefit from the economic growth of the 50's and 60's, the benefits of economic growth since the 70's, have, according to Chomsky, been heavily concentrated in the top one tenth of one percent of the wealthiest Americans. Manufacturers have left for greater profits overseas and the economy has become increasingly reliant on the financial industry. Corporate profits are booming thanks to "greater worker insecurity"--as Chomsky quotes Alan Greenspan as saying in 1997--which means that workers are too beaten down to demand a greater share of the national wealth by striking for higher wages and benefits. Americans have been forced to keep their head above water by taking on a huge amount of debt and working longer hours. Meanwhile an 8 trillion dollar housing bubble kept the economy afloat during the Bush years as the tech bubble sustained the Clinton economy before it. Deregulation, purchased by the campaign contributions and lobbying of the financial industry, allowed the rich to achieve never before seen levels of wealth as they speculated in toxic financial instruments and real estate. But the housing bubble popped in 2008 and the wealth of tens of millions of Americans was destroyed. Now, social spending is being slashed while the US government spends as much on its military budget as every other country in the world combined. According to Chomsky, the Occupy movement has provided an alternative model to our corporate dominated society. In the Occupy movement, policies are discussed, debated and formulated in general assemblies. In Occupy, politics does not consist of corporate bribery of politicians or listening to speeches and commercials where politicians pretend to care about ordinary Americans. Rather, it consists of ordinary people formulating policy themselves. In a just society, workers should control economic enterprises for their own benefit. In a just society, according to Chomsky, control of General Motors would have been placed under the

control of its workforce and communities affected by GM's operations. Under the democratic control of workers and communities, GM plants could possibly have been reconstituted to produce more energy efficient technologies and transportation, for example high speed rail. The United States is far behind other countries in its development of high speed rail. But Chomsky notes that the Obama administration did not want to reconstitute the bankrupt auto industry for the purpose of allowing American workers to produce high speed rail (with stimulus money) but instead went searching in Europe for firms to do so. The Obama administration wants to protect corporate profits but not promote the utilization of America's resources for the needs of its ordinary people. The Occupy movement, with its model of cooperative living and solidarity, presents a potentially powerful model for ordinary Americans. The Occupy movement can possibly mobilize many more people by allowing ordinary Americans to control its direction and shape the movement to their everyday concerns. Polling data shows widespread sympathy with the beliefs of Occupy. Chomsky suggests that ordinary people can be mobilized to the Occupy movement by causes as diverse as putting in a new traffic light in a town or abolishing corporate personhood and money in politics. According to Chomsky, movements by communities and workers to take over workplaces are another possible cause to be exploited by Occupy. Chomsky cites the example of community members and US Steel workers attempting to buy a company factory threatened with closure in Youngstown Ohio in the late 70's and transform it into a worker run complex. They didn't succeed but the movement spawned the creation of hundreds of worker owned enterprises in Ohio. Chomsky says that a similar movement within the last few years took place at a plant in suburban Boston. United Electrical Worker members tried to organize the purchase of this plant to transform it into a worker owned facility--when it was on the verge of being shut down--but the company refused to sell. This effort in Massachusetts ended before the Occupy movement arose but Chomsky suggests that Occupy might have created a more favorable outcome for the cause. This movement of worker owned enterprises in places like Ohio is something that I have never heard about before and I wish Chomsky would have elaborated a little more about it. Chomsky heavily stresses the lessons in the life and historical work of his old comrade Howard Zinn that people trying to build on the successes of Occupy can learn from. The last chapter is a short Q & A provided by the National Lawyers Guild to help Occupy protestors understand the basics of dealing with the police.

This is not very deep - just sort of an action guideline for folks in line already, not a strong philosophical piece.

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