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us who see our task as aiding in the utter abolition of our "Modern industrial society," it is repellent in the extreme to find its realization abjectly celebrated.

Noam Chomsky is probably the most well-known American anarchist, somewhat curious given the fact that he is a liberal-leftist politically, and downright reactionary in his academic specialty, linguistic theory. Chomsky is also, by all accounts, a generous, sincere, tireless activist — which does not, unfortunately, ensure his thinking has liberatory value.

Reading through his many books and interviews, one looks in vain for the anarchist, or for any thorough critique. When asked point-blank, "Are governments inherently bad?" his reply (28 January 1988) is no. He is critical of government policies, not government itself, motivated by his "duty as a citizen." The constant refrain in his work is a plea for democracy: "real democracy," "real participation," "active involvement," and the like.

His goal is for "a significant degree of democratization," not the replacement of political rule by a condition of no rule called anarchy. Hardly surprising, then, that his personal practice consists of reformist, issues-oriented efforts like symbolic tax resistance and ACLU membership. Instead of a critique of capital, its forms, dynamics, etc., Chomsky calls (1992) for "social control over investment. That's a social revolution." What a ridiculous assertion.

His focus, almost exclusively, has been on U.S. foreign policy, a narrowness that would exert a conservative influence even for a radical thinker. If urging increased involvement in politics goes against the potentially subversive tide toward less and less involvement, Chomsky's emphasis on statecraft itself gravitates toward acceptance of states. And completely ignoring key areas (such as nature and women, to mention only two), makes him less relevant still.

In terms of inter-government relations, the specifics are likewise disappointing. A principle interest here is the Middle East, and we see anything but an anarchist or anti-authoritarian analysis. He has consistently argued (in books like *The Fateful Triangle*, 1983) for a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. A characteristic formulation: "Israel within its internationally recognized borders would be accorded the rights of any state in the international system, no more, no less." Such positions fit right into the electoral racket and all it legitimizes. Along these lines, he singled out (*Voices of Dissent*,

1992) the centrist Salvadoran politician Ruben Zamora when asked who he most admired.

Chomsky has long complained that the present system and its lapdog media have done their best, despite his many books in print, to marginalize and suppress his perspective. More than a little ironic, then, that he has done his best to contribute to the much greater marginalization of the anarchist perspective. He has figured in countless ads and testimonials for the likes of *The Nation*, *In These Times*, and *Z Magazine*, but has never mentioned *Anarchy*, *Fifth Estate*, or other anti-authoritarian publications. Uncritically championing the liberal-left media while totally ignoring our own media can hardly be an accident or and oversight. In fact, I exchanged a couple of letters with him in 1982 over this very point (copies available from me). He gave a rather pro-left, non-sequitur response and has gone right on keeping his public back turned against any anarchist point of view.

Chomsky's newest book of interviews, *Class Warfare*, is promoted in the liberal-left media as "accessible new thinking on the Republican Revolution." It supposedly provides the answers to such questions as "Why, as a supporter of anarchist ideals, he is in favor of strengthening the federal government." The real answer, painfully obvious, is that he is not an anarchist at all.

Long a professor of linguistics and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he achieved fame and fortune for his conceptions of the nature of language. Professor Chomsky sees language as a fixed, innate part of some "essential human nature" (Barsamian, 1992). Language develops along an intrinsically determined path, very much like a physical organ. In this sense, Chomsky says language "simply arose" (1988) and that we should study it as "we study any problem in biology" (1978).

In other words, language, that most fundamental part of culture, has no real relationship with culture and is a matter of instinct-driven formation through biological specialization.

Here, as everywhere else, Chomsky cannot even seem to imagine any problematics about origins of alienation or fundamental probings about what symbolic culture really is, at base. Language for Chomsky is a strictly natural phenomenon, quite unrelated to the

genesis of human culture or social development. A severely backward, non-radical perspective, not unrelated to his unwillingness to put much else into question, outside of a very narrow political focus.

The summer 1991 issue of *Anarchy* magazine included "A brief Interview with Noam Chomsky on Anarchy, Civilization, & Technology." Not surprisingly, it was a rather strange affair, given the professor's general antipathy to all three topics. The subject of anarchy he ignored altogether, consonant with his avoidance of it throughout the years. Responding to various questions about civilization and technology, he was obviously as uncomfortable as he was completely unprepared to give any informed responses. Dismissive of new lines of thought that critically re-examine the nature of civilization, Chomsky was obviously ignorant of this growing literature and its influence in the anti-authoritarian milieu.

Concerning technology, he was, reluctantly, more expansive, but just as in the dark as with the question of civilization. His responses repeated all the discredited, unexamined pro-tech cliches, now less and less credible among anarchists: technology is a mere tool, a "quite neutral" phenomenon to be seen only in terms of specific, similarly unexamined uses. Chomsky actually declares that cars are fine; it's only corporate executives that are the problem. Likewise with robotics, as if that drops from heaven and has no grounding in domination of nature, division of labor, etc. In closing, he proclaimed that "the only thing that can possibly resolve environmental problems is advanced technology." Yes: more of the soul-destroying, eco- destroying malignancy that has created the current nightmare!

In the fall of 1995, Chomsky donated much of the proceeds from a well-attended speech on U.S. foreign policy to Portland's 223 Freedom and Mutual Aid Center, better known as the local anarchist infoshop. As if to honor its generous benefactor appropriately, the infoshop spent the money first of all on a computer system, and several months later financed a booklet promoting the infoshop and the ideas behind it. Among the most prominent quotes adorning the pamphlet is one that begins, "The task for a modern industrial society is to achieve what is now technically realizable . . . " The attentive reader may not need me to name the author of these words, nor to point out this less than qualitatively radical influence. For those of