

## The Precipice: Neoliberalism, the Pandemic and the Urgent Need for Radical Change

**Noam Chomsky**

**C. J. Polychroniou**

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In *The Precipice*, noted scholar Noam Chomsky and interviewer C. J. Polychroniou review Donald Trump's presidency and its possible short- and long-term consequences for the world.

In a series of interviews conducted over several years, Chomsky explains his charges against former President Trump and the harmful effects the administration had on Americans' health, freedom, and political system. More than these, Chomsky continues, Trump has endangered the future of the world itself by contributing to climate change and increasing the likelihood of nuclear war. Chomsky reviews his subject, showing what can be done to mitigate the damage.

The book covers many topics, both foreign and domestic. Chomsky argues that, while Trump and the Republican Party did not create America's problems, they made matters much worse. Cruel economic policies, and the prioritization of profit over common good, harmed ordinary Americans across decades. But, he says, the Democratic Party also inflicted damage, ignoring large swathes of suffering Americans and quashing popular candidates like Bernie Sanders. Chomsky uses these factors, in conjunction with widespread racism and xenophobia, to explain Trump's rise and the Republicans' continuing popularity, despite the harm they do.

The interviews are arranged in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent and moving back in time. Their short lengths allow for easy digestion of the material. Within the exchanges, Chomsky's talking points are often repeated; still, they are important points that tie into a range of interrelated topics. When asked what the future holds, Chomsky states that the only way to survive is by increasing public engagement and education—but, as he admits, this is easier said than done.

*The Precipice* is a vehement discussion of how American politics have changed, particularly over the past forty years.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (July / August 2021)

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