

“Manufacturing Dissent”: The Corporate Financing of the Protest Movement

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Theme: [History](#)

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In the light of recent developments regarding the Occupy Wall Street Movement, we are reposting Michel Chossudovsky’s article on Manufacturing Dissent. Below are selected excerpts. [To access the complete article click here](#)

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[“Manufacturing Dissent”: the Anti-globalization Movement is Funded by the Corporate Elites](#)

The People’s Movement has been Hijacked
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The People’s Movement has been Hijacked

“By providing the funding and the policy framework to many concerned and dedicated people working within the non-profit sector, the ruling class is able to co-opt leadership from grassroots communities, ... and is able to make the funding, accounting, and evaluation components of the work so time consuming and onerous that social justice work is virtually impossible under these conditions” (Paul Kivel, *You Call this Democracy, Who Benefits, Who Pays and Who Really Decides*, 2004, p. 122)

“We need to challenge the right of the “Globalizers” to rule. This requires that we rethink the strategy of protest. Can we move to a higher plane, by launching mass movements in our respective countries, movements that bring the message of what globalization is doing, to ordinary people? For they are the force that must be mobilized to challenge those who plunder the Globe.” (Michel Chossudovsky, [The Quebec Wall](#), April 2001)

The term “manufacturing consent” was initially coined by Edward S Herman and Noam Chomsky.

“Manufacturing consent” describes a propaganda model used by the corporate media to sway public opinion and “inculcate individuals with values and beliefs...”:

....

“Manufacturing dissent”

In this article, we focus on a related concept, namely the subtle process of “manufacturing dissent” (rather than “consent”), which plays a decisive role in serving the interests of the ruling class.

Under contemporary capitalism, the illusion of democracy must prevail. It is in the interest of the corporate elites to accept dissent and protest as a feature of the system inasmuch as they do not threaten the established social order. The purpose is not to repress dissent, but, on the contrary, to shape and mould the protest movement, to set the outer limits of dissent.

...

To maintain their legitimacy, the economic elites favor limited and controlled forms of opposition, with a view to preventing the development of radical forms of protest, which might shake the very foundations and institutions of global capitalism. In other words, “manufacturing dissent” acts as a “safety valve”, which protects and sustains the New World Order.

To be effective, however, the process of “manufacturing dissent” must be carefully regulated and monitored by those who are the object of the protest movement.

“Funding Dissent”

How is the process of manufacturing dissent achieved?

Essentially by “funding dissent”, namely by channelling financial resources from those who are the object of the protest movement to those who are involved in organizing the protest movement.

The mechanisms of “manufacturing dissent” require a manipulative environment, a process of arm-twisting and subtle cooptation of individuals within progressive organizations, including anti-war coalitions, environmentalists and the anti-globalization movement.

....

The inner objective is to “manufacture dissent” and establish the boundaries of a “politically correct” opposition. In turn, many NGOs are infiltrated by informants often acting on behalf of western intelligence agencies. Moreover, an increasingly large segment of the progressive alternative news media on the internet has become dependent on funding from corporate foundations and charities.

Piecemeal Activism

The objective of the corporate elites has been to fragment the people’s movement into a vast “do it yourself” mosaic. War and globalization are no longer in the forefront of civil society activism. Activism tends to be piecemeal. There is no integrated anti-globalization anti-war movement. The economic crisis is not seen as having a relationship to the US led war.

Dissent has been compartmentalized. Separate “issue oriented” protest movements (e.g. environment, anti-globalization, peace, women’s rights, climate change) are encouraged

and generously funded as opposed to a cohesive mass movement. This mosaic was already prevalent in the counter G7 summits and People's Summits of the 1990s.

There can be no meaningful mass movement when dissent is generously funded by those same corporate interests which are the target of the protest movement. In the words of McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation (1966-1979), "Everything the [Ford] Foundation did could be regarded as 'making the World safe for capitalism'".

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