

1976 – The Best Year Ever?

It takes a special kind of blindness to believe that science can define the 'happiness level' of even a single person as a single, objectively measurable number. An even more dangerous delusion is that this can be done for society as a whole. This level of delusion typically results from years of specialist training in how to pretend that a bureaucrat with no knowledge or skills (that anyone would actually pay for if they had the choice) is nevertheless capable of running the world and making people happy by fiddling with numbers.

Capitalists look on the market as being a set of conditions under which which people can try ideas to see whether they sink or swim. Leftists, when they notice the market at all, judge it according to whether the values they happen to like are doing well.

So if you see a **story** about an economic think tank called the **New Economics Foundation** saying that 1976 was the **best year ever**, you know what to expect.

What did they actually do to reach this startling conclusion? They added up a bunch of arbitrary numbers, called it the Measure of Domestic Progress (MDP) and declared that it measures well-being. Since the MDP peaks in 1976, they say that it was the best year ever.

Of course, no piece of leftist nonsense is complete without some pat, fatuous pseudomoralising:

Too much food makes the nation obese.

No, it doesn't. Food consists of physical objects and objects that do not control people cannot explain behaviour. People who are obese have made choices that lead to them becoming fat, such as eating a lot or not exercising much.

More guns make our streets unsafe.

Again, the physical object fallacy. Also, this is **wrong** both morally and factually.

Endless choice leaves us hurried and harried.

All this choice may fluster some easily-confused leftist bureaucrats

who are only accustomed to choices involving paper and staples, but the rest of us are just fine.

Burning too much carbon threatens our climate.

No. And finally, the words we've been waiting to read:

Excessive commercialism erodes social value and strips our lives of meaning.

Leftists insulting people for wanting to have nice things to buy – they're so predictable.

However, in that very predictability lie the seeds of hope. Leftists do not understand why they are comically mistaken, about the greatness of 1976, the meaning of life, and everything else. But many people today, such as **The World**, understand what is wrong with that kind of nonsense and can argue against it.

When they've stopped laughing.

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Overindulgence Starts at Home

1976 was a very good calendar year. It has been all downhill from there. Don't blame the world. In the words of Pogo, we met the enemy and it was us.

How to improve the comedy? Rethink the excuses above.
Possible rewordings and slogans to go along with the reality:

Too much food - eaten by one person - makes the person overly full.
(Stop personal overindulgence !)

More guns - shot at people on the street - make a street unsafer.
(Don't be crazy with a gun !)

Endless choice - unmade - leaves one hurried and harried.
(Make choices, please !)

Burning too much carbon - without oxygen - threatens one's breathing.
(Stop smoking cigarettes, you idiot!)

Excessive commercialism erodes social value and strips our lives of meaning.
(Stop complaining, don't buy the useless stuff !)

by a reader on Thu, 03/18/2004 - 19:54 | [reply](#)

ho ho

It's already been garbled.

A complete stranger told me yesterday, absolutely seriously, that

1966 had been identified as the best year ever.

"Ah" I said, nodding sagely. "Of course, that was in the days before normal people could afford dishwashers"

Emma

<http://rationalparents.blogspot.com/>

by a reader on Fri, 03/19/2004 - 09:58 | [reply](#)

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