ORBITS

Wake Up Everybody!

JULY 16, 2021 | PRAXIS CIRCLE

https://youtu.be/u6pcO882Jec?list=TLGGQweaUVQygHYyMjAzMjAyMg

Dr. Deirdre McCloskey's Personal Page

Wokesters, Wake!

Our *Orbits* blog features the work of our PC Contributors, and today we highlight a recent article by Dr. Deirdre McCloskey. She's hitting the bullseye with her comments in the clip above based on a career's review of Western economic history since the Renaissance. Warning: Do not enter the intellectual arena with her unless you're ready to go the distance.

But are you woke yet? It's about time.

No more sleepin' in bed, as Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes say in their song, "Wake Up Everybody." (See and hear at bottom. The familiar pop song begins with a soft instrumental.)

Ever heard of them? Motown greats like The Temptations, Four Tops, Supremes, Smokey Robinson, Stevie Wonder, and Aretha Franklin might overshadow them now, but Melvin and his band members, who included at one point the great Teddy Pendergrass, had an entire stable of R&B and national hits from the 1950's to the 1990's.

Listed in order of release primarily from the 1970's: I Miss You, If You Don't Know Me by Now, The Love I Lost, Wake Up Everybody, Bad Luck, and the remake, Don't Leave Me This Way.

Chances are, if you "got woke" in the past few years, the word capitalism has progressively left a very bad taste in your mouth (while "eating the rich" has somehow become perfectly

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palatable). The term capitalism itself has come to represent everything evil in the world—greed, exploitation, inequality—while socialism seems to embody all things good and altruistic.

Just look at the names. Clearly, this is the tale socialists tell about themselves, but it isn't based on fact.

In her video and recent article linked above, PC Contributor Dr. McCloskey agrees with wokesters on one point—there *is* a problem with capitalism. Well, not a problem with the political-economic system itself necessarily, but the *name* to which it has been attributed. Dr. McCloskey explains that it was a "term invented by our hateful enemies" and suggests the key to prosperity is pure capital accumulation.

Just as science says nothing about morality, however, capital accumulation says nothing about what creates wealth and feeds the poor and the less fortunate. The global results of the last 200 years tell us what does that on a sustainable basis.

According to Dr. McCloskey, the idea of capital accumulation as capitalism's secret sauce couldn't be further from the truth—a more accurate definition would be the freedom to have mutually beneficial exchanges—with the innovation that results being its key. We at Praxis Circle would add that so-called "capitalism" (and we completely agree it's alarmingly misnamed) is the only way to serve human needs best. It allows addressing them at the individual or group levels, where those most affected can nimbly craft solutions closer to human needs or problems themselves.

A government-controlled economy, where leaders constantly change and bring mixed motives to the situation, to say the least, creates false information in prices and costs that confuses the search for the best solutions. We know this to be true; it's been proven in spades.

Indeed, big government makes good solutions in quality product and services at the right price impossible to find. The history of government-controlled economies over the last 100 years (and since the beginning of recorded time) shows that large governments are almost always too remote from real people and economic needs & problems to deal with them. Such governments make life and the world much worse.

Furthermore, political leaders in democratic governments are constantly changing, frequently catering to a powerful minority or even mobs-of-the-moment. Central government dictates almost never work economically, lacking free people and groups applying improvements, adjustments, and pressure, in part, through good management disciplined by selling and purchasing power, also freely-used.

While not wanting to put words in her mouth, we believe Dr. McCloskey suggests there are two basic alternatives facing America today: (1) one rooted in Western and Christian tradition that emphasizes faith, family, and freedom, coming out of the Bible and based on personal duties and rights where the primary group is the family that "hires" (either through votes, agreement, or purchase) the rest (including government), (2) one rooted in top-down large government hovering over its people that dictates to all.

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These two alternatives are in many ways independent of the system used to implement them: monarchy, dictatorship, oligarchy, communism, socialism, fascism, administrative bureaucracy (welfare or corruption state, depending on POV), republic, pure democracy, representative and limited democracy, tribalism, anarchy. Every government is no better than the people running it, governing it, and offering sovereignty. Its moral nature depends on the version of morality it supports, if any (nihilism being a moral option, actually).

To date in America, it is The People who are sovereign, and we submit they retain sovereignty only under Option 1 above, not Option 2.

While the Bible is just one historical proxy, it certainly is not overly friendly to dictatorial large governments, though we would not suggest it necessarily favors one form of government consistently over another. (Though some would suggest that it does, and perhaps rightly so. We won't get into that issue for now.)

In sum, it seems secular government (the City of Man) has been delegated to us as our business, while God reserves for Himself at least the Kingdom of Heaven (the City of God).

Even we believing and/or cultural Christians at Praxis Circle would agree that the "gold rules," however, but only in the sense that you can always follow the money for clues as to what's really going on. Talk about deconstruction! Though not original to him, Karl Marx got this insight right, among others.

Just as science has nothing to say about morality as we argued here, money has nothing to say about morality.

People do. People are moral. And if the people are not moral, neither will be their systems. Central control cannot fix that, as China and Cuba are proving everyday. The citizens of these Communist regimes certainly are waking up (even as we send them home).

What can we learn from them (yet again)?

The answer: System #2 above means oppressive government, taxes that eventually own their citizens, and, then and rapidly approaching now, a government's control of its people. There is much monetary graft today at the top between governments, near government institutions, and large corporations that goes beyond party lines. Every human group is flawed by nature. When accepted, serious flaws become corruption.

Oppressive government is what our Founders rebelled against in 1776, and it's gotten much worse on a relative basis today.

Above, Dr. McCloskey explains that free, empowered innovation (almost identical to "human capital" which we discussed recently here) is what ultimately caused the Great Enrichment (mentioned previously here), which produced a sustained boom in worldwide wealth starting in the 1800s. The Great Enrichment resulted in household incomes increasing by 3,000 percent

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from then to present day. Take 3:04 to watch her video clip packed full of insights. Read her article linked above. Then read her books. They are persuasive.

For centuries, nations accumulated massive wealth (often through systems of greed, exploitation, and inequality, mind you), yet it was only beginning primarily in the 1700's when the middle class was allowed to develop freely and innovate that the world truly began to experience the prosperity we have today. In America now, even the poor can live without fear of starvation with advantages that no kings enjoyed even a hundred years ago. This is a phenomenal human achievement we are in the process of squandering.

And the world is on track to eliminate raw poverty worldwide. Christianity has always had this goal, though we haven't thought it possible until recently.

The key: Only the poor can do it for themselves (and, we would say, with family, primarily personal, and God's help).

Here's a simple proposition that might summarize Dr. McCloskey's astute comments in the video above: While the elites in *government of the moment* socialism would purport to tell us what we must do, capitalism, or a free, liberal, and innovative society, actually gives us the freedom to be moral and meet human needs as well as possible, without limits on how to improve over time. Dr. McCloskey's *Innovism* never stops. It can't or it dies. All businessmen know this.

If you're woke, and Harold Melvin says it's about time, perhaps Dr. McCloskey's article has "awokened" to the idea that solutions don't come from orders but from people—the brilliant, innovative, *free* minds of people at literally every intellectual level. This is why she calls her economics *Humanomics*.

As Dr. McCloskey closes in her interview clip, we need to give people permission, not orders. The permission to work. The permission to innovate. The permission to serve others, in both a mutually beneficial and sacrificial way. We supply the human talent; American humanomics will supply the economic tools.

So, in the words of Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, it's time to "Wake Up Everybody!" A timeless song just as relevant in 2021 as it was in 1975. And it's up to you to determine how to live the Blue Notes' words:

https://youtu.be/2HhV3Slqtvw

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