

THE HOUSTON OBJECTIVISM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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HOS TO SOLVE MURDER AT NEXT MEETING

On September 21 at 7:30 p.m. HOS will attempt to solve "The Stern Affair," a murder/mystery staged by Brian Phillips and Dwyane Hicks. Interrogation of the suspects will take place in the Tejas Room in the Student Center on the University of Houston campus.

HOS members will be the detectives in this case, which promises to receive world-wide coverage, and threatens to spark an international

HOS DIRECTORY

To facilitate communication between HOS members, the next issue of the HOS Newsletter will include a directory of all current members. Any member wishing to be omitted from this directory should call Brian Phillips (668-0453) by October 1.

INTELLECTUAL ACTIVISM

(Editor's note: The following letter, received by HOS member Dawn Phillips, illustrates one way we can spread Objectivism through the culture. We encourage all HOS members to engage in similar activities. Those interested in sending a copy of "Medicine: The Death of a Profession" to their doctor can obtain a free copy from Warren Ross.)

Dear Dawn,

Thank you very much for your nice letter and the most interesting and educational booklet "Medicine: The Death of a Profession".

Your concern over medicine is exceptional-- I wish the population at large was educated on the subject as well as you are. One thing I've done is to order copies of the booklet for the waiting room.

Warmly,

George Hetherington, M.D., P.A.
(Signed)

incident. Due to the sensitive nature of this case, details cannot be divulged at this time.

The evening promises to be an entertaining way to sharpen thinking skills. Bring your thinking caps and help HOS put a fiendish murderer behind bars.

NATURE'S CANCERS

At the July 27 HOS meeting, the video "Nature's Cancers," by Dr. Bruce Ames was viewed. Dr. Ames, Chairman of the Department of Biochemistry at the University of California at Berkeley, presented a rational refutation of the hysterical assertions that technology and industrialization are increasing the cancer rate. Indeed, Dr. Ames showed that the rate for every kind of cancer, with the notable exception of lung cancer, is either decreasing or remaining steady.

Dr. Ames showed further that there are as many carcinogens in the natural environment as are produced by industry. All plants produce their own natural pesticides. About 30 per cent of these natural pesticides are carcinogenic, about the same rate as industrial pesticides. Recent attempts to eliminate man-made pesticides have actually backfired: Plants not protected by man-made pesticides compensate by developing increased levels of their own pesticides.

Like many cancer scientists, Dr. Ames opposes the methodology of feeding very high doses of chemicals to animals and then extrapolating cancer rates for lower dosages. The underlying premise is that there is no threshold at which risk is reduced, a premise which runs counter to an enormous body of evidence in biology and epidemiology.

Dr. Ames has been vehemently attacked by environmental scientists for his maverick positions. One criticism of the video was that Dr. Ames did not address the motivations of his critics, and in fact, gave them too much credence as serious scientists. Despite this, the video presented information that can be useful in counteracting the myth that industry is an ominous threat to human life.

EMERGING DEMOCRACIES NEED IDEAS

by J. Brian Phillips

(Editor's Note: The following Op/Ed article was distributed to approximately 100 newspapers by the organization In Self Defense. For more information regarding ISD, write to: In Self Defense, 5 Town & Country Village, Box 709, San Jose, CA 95128.)

As the nations of Eastern Europe move toward democratic governments and increased freedom, President Bush and Congress have increasingly argued for the necessity of American aid to these nations. If the democratic movements in these countries fail, the argument goes, we will witness a return to the communist dictatorships of the past. Material aid, the argument implies, will ensure the triumph of freedom.

This argument brings to mind an old adage: If you want to feed a man for a day, give him a fish; if you want to feed him for a lifetime, teach him to fish. While these fledgling democracies are certainly in need of material goods, including food, their "lifetime" hunger is ideological. These nations are starving for the proper ideas.

Financial aid to Eastern Europe will assure neither its "lifetime" freedom nor its "lifetime" prosperity. It is not sufficient for East Europeans to reject communism and embrace democracy. Democracy may lead to individual freedom, but only if the voters have the proper ideology. Without that, the voters can easily be persuaded to vote for yet another form of tyranny. Lest we forget, the German electorate voted Adolf Hitler into power.

Throughout history, East Europeans have embrace individual subservience to one collective or another: the tribe, the Church, the Kingdom, the State, the Fatherland, etc. Under collectivism, the lives of some men are sacrificed for the benefit of others. It occurred in the theocracies of the Dark Ages and the feudal kingdoms of the Middle Ages. It still occurs today in every modern variant of collectivism--communism, socialism, fascism, nationalism and welfare statism. (Note the current popularity of nationalist movements in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The freedom they seek is not for individuals, but for their fatherland.)

If the nations of Eastern Europe are to successfully make the transition from communist dictatorship to freedom and prosperity, they

must do more than merely reject communism and embrace democracy. They must reject the moral justification for tyranny: collectivism. They must embrace its antithesis: individualism.

Individualism holds that each individual is a sovereign being, that each individual has a moral right to pursue his own values without intervention from others. Individualism is the moral premise which underlies America's freedom and prosperity.

America's Founding Fathers, influenced by the writings of Aristotle and Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke, rejected collectivism. They led a revolution of ideas; those ideas were expressed in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," wrote Thomas Jefferson, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

These rights-- rights possessed by each individual-- had never before been recognized and protected in a social system. The result was the freest nation in the history of mankind.

That freedom transformed a poor agrarian nation into the world's preeminent economic power. Individual freedom permitted scientists to make new discoveries about nature; it permitted industrialists and entrepreneurs to apply that knowledge and create new and better products. The result of individual freedom was material prosperity and a higher standard of living for all Americans. However, the justification for freedom is not its economic superiority. It is an objective requirement of human nature.

Everything we need to survive and prosper ultimately rests on the thinking of individuals. From the food we eat to the cars we drive, from the clothes we wear to the televisions we watch, the material prosperity we enjoy has been made possible by man's most distinctive attribute: his reasoning mind.

But ideas are worthless without the freedom to act on them. As the author/philosopher Ayn Rand wrote, "Freedom is the fundamental requirement of man's mind." Freedom permits individuals to put their ideas into action.

Those advocating material aid to Eastern
(continued on page 3)

MOVIE REVIEW: PRESUMED INNOCENT

by Dwyane Hicks

Courtroom dramas attract me. The dignity of the movie courtroom seems to screen out a great deal of nonsense: the issues examined are serious and the characters are not only articulate but have been shaving for more than a few years.

Given the context of law and the goal of getting at the truth, we enter a civilized world primed for the assertion of values.

Presumed Innocent betrays that potential by attacking integrity as impossible.

Harrison Ford plays a prosecutor accused of raping and murdering a fellow prosecutor, a woman who has just ended a three month, illicit affair with him. Ford's wife is privy to his affair but remains loyal to him when all evidence indicates him as the murderer. This is not surprising since she knows something the audience knows: Ford's character is irrevocably dedicated to his job and justice. His boss has even offered him a judgeship. We can scarcely believe that he is the murderer, but then this is the movies, not television, and a blow to our hopes at film's end is "high art". It's the possibility of Ford's character being guilty that keeps us on edge.

This movie is a well-done mystery, but the impossibility of integrity is the theme. No one has it, major and minor characters alike. It's a rough world out there, and you can't get by without some major compromise. You'll pay for it, in court or out, but only the young are unsullied.

In addition, you can't help it because free will is a freak, in this story, to all but the victim-- and she deserved what she got. As for the rest, they get uncontrollable obsessions, obsessions to love, to kill, to blur one's judgment of a friend over jealousy, to sacrifice justice in order to hide a past obsession, to hide one's knowledge of a crooked judge for the sake of a client, to hide evidence for friendships and, finally, to betray justice concerning murder in order to protect the feelings of a child.

I don't recall ever seeing so many scummy people portrayed as reasonable, well-intentioned mortals who couldn't help it.

UPDATE ON ANTI-ZONING PROJECT

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Defense of Property Rights continues to fight against the movement to bring zoning to Houston. Brian Phillips and Dwyane Hicks attended the August 14 public meeting of Kathy Whitmire's Land Use Strategy Committee. They distributed pamphlets and flyers, and spoke to members of the committee.

On August 19 the *Houston Chronicle* printed an Op/Ed article by Brian Phillips. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the article can contact Brian.

On September 5 Brian Phillips will speak to the Greenway Plaza Rotary Club.

EMERGING DEMOCRACIES

(continued from page 2)

Europe to assure freedom are attempting to reverse cause and effect. Material prosperity is the result, not the cause, of individual freedom. Prosperity flows from a system of government that recognizes individual rights, not the "rights" of the State or "the people". But East Europeans will choose such a government only if they grasp the moral superiority of individualism.

The nations of Eastern Europe lack neither the skilled manpower nor natural resources to be prosperous. But they are starving for the ideas which will make their future freedom and prosperity possible: individualism as their moral premise and individual rights as its political manifestation.

If President Bush and Congress want to feed Eastern Europe and make it free "for a lifetime", then the aid that they should be sending is the individualist ideology that will make it possible.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September

3- Labor Day
21- HOS meeting

October

8- Columbus Day

November

2-4- TOS Conference
22- Thanksgiving

December

BOOK REVIEW: THE MAN WHO NEVER WAS

by J. Brian Phillips

The Man Who Never Was has all the makings of an exciting novel: An anonymous corpse is given the identity of an officer in the Royal Marines. Highly important military papers are planted on his person and the body is dumped off the coast of Spain. The body is found by a Spanish fisherman and the papers make their way to the German High Command in Berlin. Acting on the information contained in the papers, the Germans divert troops from Sicily, making the subsequent invasion of the island much easier for the Allies.

But *The Man Who Never Was* is not a novel; it is an account of "Operation Mincemeat," perhaps military history's most imaginative operation of its kind.

Ewen Montagu, author of the book and main instigator of "Operation Mincemeat," explains the operation from its conception to its final effects. The most challenging aspect of the operation was making this apparent intelligence

leak appear genuine to the Germans. To do this, Montagu and his colleagues literally created a life for their corpse. The corpse carried love letters, theater tickets and other personal items to provide the Germans with hints about "Major Martin's" life.

The very nature of the mission required that the British anticipate how the Germans would examine the documents and other materials on the body. To do this, they had to "think like Germans." Knowing that the Germans would initially be skeptical, Montagu and his colleagues wanted to provide information which would lead the Germans to make certain deductions.

The Man Who Never Was provides an exciting look at an historical event. A word of warning: Ewen Montagu's literary talents do not match his military talents. But the book is short, and the story itself is enough to make it an interesting book.

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The Houston Objectivism Society Newsletter is published bimonthly for members of the Houston Objectivism Society. Membership dues are \$10 per year. Unsolicited manuscripts on issues of interest to Objectivists are welcome.

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