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Microsoft Attack Creates Opportunity for Activism

THOUSAND OAKS, California — AOB-member Betsy Speicher sent the following message regarding the latest attack against Microsoft:

"I'm sure you were appalled by the recent action by the Justice Department in its unprecedented attack on Microsoft. It is a tragedy, but it is also an opportunity.

"A great deal of media time and space will be taken up in discussing Microsoft, Bill Gates, and antitrust and we have something unusual to say. We Objectivists have a monopoly on the proper moral defense of capitalism and of human achievement. It is time to cash in.

"WRITE SOMETHING NOW. Your topic might be the difference between economic and political power, the evil of non-objective laws, the role of the innovator in human life, the envy and hatred of the good motivating the attacks, the way Ayn Rand predicted this, and other rational perspectives. One or two paragraphs are best. E-mail your opinions to your local newspapers and radio stations. (Include your home address and telephone numbers.) You will make a difference."

Ms. Speicher also informs *AOB News* that Ralph Nader has plans to "destroy Bill Gates and Microsoft with antitrust laws. He will be hosting a big public conference in Washington, D.C., [in November]. Information on the whole sordid campaign against Microsoft can be found at Nader's Web site (http://www.essential.org/appraising/microsoft/) which has further links."

ARI Director Interviewed Over Nationwide Canadian Radio

CALGARY, Alberta, Canada — AOB-member Glenn Woiceshyn reports that Mike Berliner, executive director of the Ayn Rand Institute, was interviewed over nationwide radio on CBC's "As It Happens" program on October 7.

Mr. Woiceshyn wrote the following E-mail response (parts of which were broadcast over a later CBC program) regarding Mike Berliner's interview:

"Many thanks for your interview with Dr. Mike Berliner of the Ayn Rand Institute.

"As a great admirer of Ayn Rand, I can tell you from personal experience that it's very difficult to get the media to discuss Ayn Rand. And when they do, they usually distort her views or smear her character. (See the two-hour CBC 'Ideas' program on her, done about 5 years ago.)

"Your interview was a refreshing exception. My favorite part was Dr. Berliner's evaluation of Mother Theresa as evil for being an altruist. Since many of your listeners were likely horrified by this evaluation, I would like to ask them the following rhetorical question: Why is it moral to sacrifice oneself to others, yet immoral to pursue one's own life and happiness—neither sacrificing oneself to others or others to oneself, but dealing with others via voluntary association and trade?

"No rational answer has ever been given nor could ever be given.

"Altruism is irrational and impossible to live by—consistently, as a matter of principle—but serves as a rationalization for inducing guilt in people in order to rob and enslave them. Nazism, Fascism, Communism, and all dictatorships, are based on altruism.

"Altruism is the prime justification for our destructive social programs which punish people for their ability and success while encouraging envy, irresponsibility and failure. A great way to destroy a person's self-esteem is to help him become a parasite.

"Many people naively believe, or want to believe, that altruism is about helping people. In reality, it destroys people.

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"If Mother Theresa truly wanted to help 'the needy,' she would have told the world to reject mysticism, altruism and collectivism—and embrace reason, selfishness and capitalism. That's what Ayn Rand told the world (even though her prime concern was not 'the needy').

"Thank you again for the wonderful interview with Dr. Berliner."

Mother Teresa or Thomas Edison —*You* Choose

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island — The *Providence Journal-Bulletin* published parts of the following letter (September 14) by AOB-member Adri Kalisvaart, an electrical engineer from Lincoln, Rhode Island. Mr. Kalisvaart had titled his letter "The Tragedy of Self-sacrifice," but the newspaper changed it to "Musings on Mother."

"Strange—Mother Teresa in her long and busy life did not create even a molehill of wealth; yet, she is slated for sainthood. We, in prosperous America, are the beneficiaries of a handful of men who created sky-high mountains of wealth; yet, we remember them as Robber Barons.

"For most of history, men lived in a state of nature, that is, they lived in misery and poverty. The 17th century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes wrote of life being 'nasty, brutish and short.' Even today excruciating poverty is the normal state of affairs for most people around the globe. It is not poverty we should study since it is common, but wealth since it is unique.

"What India, what the world needs, is not more religious Mother Teresas, but rational men like Edison, Ford, Rockefeller, Carnegie, Morgan, etc., and in our times men like Bill Gates. But above all, what India, what the world needs, is the philosophical and intellectual climate that made such remarkably productive and benevolent men possible. A philosophical climate of reason and individualism as opposed to a climate of faith and collectivism.

"We revere Mother Teresa as a paragon of the virtue of self-sacrifice. Unfortunately, we are taught that the alternative to self-sacrifice is sacrificing others to self. This is a false (Nietzschean) alternative.

"A rational egoist deals with others as a trader, trading value for value to mutual benefit. However, because of this false alternative, the Great Industrialists became targets of the muckrakers. Even more unfortunate, businessmen and industrialists, like most of us, accept that self-sacrifice, that altruism, is morally superior to rational self-interest.

"This failure to understand their own moral greatness causes businessmen to cede the moral high ground to the likes of Mother Teresa; making

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