

## The Destroyer Party, circa 2008: Ayn Rand's Prophecy Of 50 Years Ago

**2007 WAS THE 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY** of one of the most influential books of all time, the 1,200 page novel by Ayn Rand, titled '*Atlas Shrugged*.' Most entrepreneurs and C.E.O.'s are familiar with this passionate defense of capitalism and success delivered through the fictional story of the destruction of the American economy by Socialists and "destroyers". Fifty years after its publication, the book still sells briskly; and has a loyal following among business and finance leaders famously including Alan Greenspan, a close friend and member of Rand's 'inner circle' when she was alive.

**When published, and today, '*Atlas Shrugged*' is a focus of debate** and criticism on university campuses and amongst intellectuals. Rand's underlying philosophy of rational thought (vs. 'mysticism') and unadulterated self-interest (quasi-libertarianism and free market capitalism) put her at odds with religious leaders and both political parties. Entrepreneurs, however, often embrace Rand's messages as needed permission to succeed and recognition of their value to society.

**Rand's freedom-to-pursue-self-interest zealotry was hard won.** She was born in 1905 in Russia. One night the Bolsheviks stormed her father's pharmacy and declared it and his livelihood the property of the government. Her fear and loathing for confiscatory government was born then and there, in childhood, only to deepen in adulthood. But dismissing her books as mere striking back at the socialists who destroyed her father and her family's life is simplistic. A New York Times critic once did so, calling '*Atlas Shrugged*' a "book written out of hate." He received a rebuke from Greenspan, describing it as "a celebration of life, happiness and justice."

**Ayn Rand fled the Soviet Union in 1926** and arrived later that year in Hollywood. One day, peering through the gate at a set where legendary director Cecil B. DeMille was filming a silent movie, '*King Of Kings*', he offered her a look inside, then a job as an extra, and next a job as a junior screenwriter. She supported herself for a time writing screenplays while also having several novels published that were all commercial failures. In 1943, fans of her novel, '*The Fountainhead*', a business/politics/philosophy precursor to '*Atlas Shrugged*' drove the book to bestseller status through word of mouth. '*The Fountainhead*' made Rand something of a cult personality and gave her ample opportunity to promote her philosophy, including her own magazine called '*The Objectivist*'. There is still today an Ayn Rand Society, regularly publishing countless authors', business leaders' and academics' analysis of her works.

**'Atlas Shrugged' followed '*The Fountainhead*' and it made Rand the lasting, influential figure she remains today. The book was released to terrible reviews.** Both conservatives and liberals were unrelenting in their criticism: the Right saw it as promoting godlessness, the Left saw it as a "greed is good" message contrary and dangerous in opposition to its re-distribution of wealth schemes. Despite the criticism then and now, '*Atlas Shrugged*' is spoken of reverently by contemporary business innovators. Mark Cuban, owner of the Dallas Mavericks, and John Mackey,

the C.E.O. of Whole Foods, both cite the book as critical to their success. James Kilts, a legendary turnaround wizard who worked his magic at different times at Gillette, Nabisco and Kraft points to 'Atlas Shrugged' as a motivating force for his entire career. There are even entire companies named after the 'Atlas Shrugged' hero John Galt. A contractor working at removing the rubble of the Deutsch Bank Building from the site where the World Trade Center Towers were destroyed by terrorists is The John Galt Corporation. In Chicago, there is John Galt Solutions, a software company providing systems to companies like Tastykake. Anne-Marie Omrod, the software firm's founder, said she considered Galt an inspiration; that she and her partners were reading the book when they decided to launch their company. I routinely encourage all my clients to read Rand and admit that my own political and personal philosophies as well as some of my writing, including significant portions of his 'No B.S. Wealth Attraction For Entrepreneurs', owes debt to her.

'Atlas Shrugged' was ahead of its time in many respects and is **a cautionary tale for our times**. The values and principles under assault in Rand's book are under assault in the United States right now: capitalism, ambition, the ultimate justice of unlimited reward for achievement, and the insistence that achievement is the product of behavior, thus equally available to anyone. In place of these bedrock principles with which America has been built and prospered, our Destroyer Party – the Democratic Party – promotes and is dependent on the ideas of victimhood, penalties for success and wealth creation, and government confiscation of private industry, the aim of socialized health care as conceived and promoted by Hillary Clinton – and even though discredited globally and disgraced here during the Bill Clinton administration – adopted by the present Democratic candidate Obama. Today, a plethora of limousine and Lear Jet liberals advocate public policy that would make Ayn Rand's fiction prove prophecy.

**AYN RAND CALLED 'ATLAS SHRUGGED' a mystery "not about the murder of a man's body but about the murder – and re-birth – of man's spirit."** The story begins in a time of deepening recession, in which the government turns increasingly socialist, fear reigns, and business leaders and industrialists become targets of confiscation and interference. Rand said that she set out to show how badly a nation needs its innovators, risk-takers and capitalists, how badly it treats them, and what happens without them. In a daring move intended to save the country, the hero, John Galt engineers a strike by capitalists; business leaders disappear, one after the other; factories, farms, stores shut down; riots break out as food become scarce. Galt and the other capitalists congregate in a secret, hidden valley to wait out the crash and return to build a better, freer society. The story is dramatic and suspenseful in its own right, but is mainly a device for exposing the ills of anti-success, anti-rich politics and social policy, an advocacy of her philosophies, and a heroic portrayal of the fiercely independent entrepreneur. If you have not read 'Atlas Shrugged' recently, you should, to understand the events leading up to that cataclysmic moment, as well as its aftermath. You will see both obvious and surprising parallels to the cliff's edge we are racing toward in this country today. Just as sci-fi writer Jules Verne prophesied modern undersea and space exploration decades in advance, with amazing accuracy, Rand foresaw the brink of economic and social destruction at which we stand in the United States, fifty-one years after her epic novel's publication.

In a commencement address, the False Messiah Who Would Be President, Barack Obama said: **"Our individual salvation is dependent on our collective salvation."** This is Communism-speak, nearly verbatim from Chairman Mao. Accurately describing the failed philosophy of the old Russian Empire; never about America. **Obama has it backwards.** Our collective salvation is

dependent on the individual. But **he has clearly stated a philosophy of Collectivism**, where all is for the common good at expense of personal liberty, private ownership, and individual achievement yielding unlimited rewards. Nations currently enforcing Obama's philosophy of collectivism against individualism – and it is such a failure, such an abusive approach, it must be enforced – include China, Russia, Venezuela, Cuba. This is the "CHANGE!" that Obama envisions for America; a government no longer subservient to its citizens but a citizenry subservient to and entirely dependent on the government. Reading 'Atlas Shrugged' may help you recognize him for what he really is, rather than how he has carefully packaged himself and appears to be.

