



Objectivists Shrugged

by Noah Kristula-Green Jun 27, 2012 4:45 PM EDT

Here is an observation about the placement of John Allison as CEO of the Cato Institute: modern-day adherents of Ayn Rand's philosophy of Objectivism have become very comfortable with identifying themselves as part of the libertarian and broader conservative movement.

Allison is as mainstream Objectivist as you can get. He sits on the board of directors of the Ayn Rand Institute, he has given copious amounts of money to universities on the condition that they teach Ayn Rand in the classroom. His official bio even states that as CEO of BB&T "Mr. Allison used his knowledge of Ayn Rand's philosophy to create a mission statement and corporate culture based on the Objectivist values and virtues."

And now he is the CEO of a *libertarian* institution, not an *Objectivist* one. Here is a reminder of Rand's very low opinion of libertarians, courtesy of the institute that uses her name:

Q: What do you think of the Libertarian movement? [FHF: "The Moratorium on Brains," 1971]

AR: All kinds of people today call themselves "libertarians," especially something calling itself the New Right, which consists of hippies, except that they're anarchists instead of collectivists. But of course, anarchists are collectivists. Capitalism is the one system that requires absolute objective law, yet they want to combine capitalism and anarchism. That is worse than anything the New Left has proposed. It's a mockery of philosophy and ideology. They sling slogans and try to ride on two bandwagons. They want to be hippies, but don't want to preach collectivism, because those jobs are already taken. But anarchism is a logical outgrowth of the anti-

intellectual side of collectivism. I could deal with a Marxist with a greater chance of reaching some kind of understanding, and with much greater respect. The anarchist is the scum of the intellectual world of the left, which has given them up. So the right picks up another leftist discard. That's the Libertarian movement.

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Q: Why don't you approve of the Libertarians, thousands of whom are loyal readers of your works? [FHF: "The Age of Mediocrity," 1981]

AR: Because Libertarians are a monstrous, disgusting bunch of people: they plagiarize my ideas when that fits their purpose, and they denounce me in a more vicious manner than any communist publication, when that fits their purpose. They are lower than any pragmatists, and what they hold against Objectivism is morality. They'd like to have an amoral political program.

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Q: The Libertarians are providing intermediate steps toward your goals. Why don't you support them? [Ibid., 1981]

AR: Please don't tell me they're pursuing my goals. I have not asked for, nor do I accept, the help of intellectual cranks. I want philosophically educated people: those who understand ideas, care about ideas, and spread the right ideas. That's how my philosophy will spread, just as philosophy has throughout all history: by means of people who understand and teach it to others. Further, it should be clear that I do not endorse the filthy slogan, "The end justifies the means." That was originated by the Jesuits, and accepted enthusiastically by Communists and Nazis. The end does not justify the means; you cannot achieve anything good by evil means. Finally, the Libertarians aren't worthy of being the means to any end, let alone the end of spreading Objectivism.

But that was then, this is now. There is an old joke about how there are no atheists in foxholes, you might also say that there are no "True Objectivists" when Obama is president.