

twentieth-century intellectuals, one will find many intersections between religion and political economy. This is a valuable book, nicely produced, and deserves a place in every university and college library.

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Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right

Jennifer Burns

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One of the more interesting things about the study of the Right in America is the prevalence of women intellectuals and activists who are prominent figures in the movement. Some are not well known, if they have not been forgotten entirely, such as Isabel Paterson or Rose Wilder Lane; others, such as Ayn Rand and Phyllis Schlafly, were (and remain) incredibly popular figures, influential for their intellectual and political contributions to the movement. Recently, Schlafly, and now Rand, have received their due with solid academic biographies about their importance to the Right in modern America.

Jennifer Burns, a historian at the University of Virginia, has crafted an astute and well-written intellectual biography of Ayn Rand. Burns has no axe to grind in doing so: She is not an objectivist nor is she particularly sympathetic to Rand's ideas. Rather, as a professional historian, Burns has done some scholarly heavy lifting by using the Ayn Rand Archive and fairly assessing the Überfrau of Individualism's contributions to intellectual history in the twentieth century.

Burns paints a portrait of a gifted young woman deeply impacted by the Bolshevik revolution in her native Russia. What emerges from her discussion of Rand's formative years is not the original political philosopher who would come to fame later but rather a more mainstream Rand. Rand differed little from other conservative intellectuals in her hatred of the New Deal and her equation of it with communism. Early in her career, as she completed her first novel, *We the Living*, Rand could pass for a prototypical individualist conservative attempting to explain where America went wrong in its embrace of Franklin Roosevelt. In her disdain for the statism of FDR's New Deal, she is more akin to Garet Garrett than to John Galt. Indeed, Rand would be influenced throughout the 1930s by a variety of conservative-libertarian intellectuals who had been marginalized in the new age of liberalism.

Burns skillfully tells the tale of Rand's path to objectivism. Rand's "Manifesto of Individualism," published in 1941, which grew out of her involvement in the 1940 presidential campaign of Wendell Willkie, as well as her defense of capitalism, both emerged from her profound acceptance of American ideals—especially the natural rights philosophy of the Declaration of Independence. Yet, Rand went further than simply embracing a natural rights liberal view: She saw things in terms of a dyad, and in her creation of such

opposites as Active Man and Passive Man, and Political Sphere and Creative Sphere, Rand was sinking the roots of the philosophy of objectivism.

What we learn from Burns's history of the allegedly iron-willed individualist is how dependent—dare one say *needy*—she was. Burns focuses attention on a number of Rand's relationships, from her husband Frank O'Connor to Nathaniel Brandon to her long relationship with libertarian Isabel Paterson. All of them, with the exception of the pathetically sad spouse, burned out. Like moths to a flame, individuals were drawn to Rand, but when they got too close, the flame smothered them. Jerome Tuccille said it best: "It usually begins with Ayn Rand"—but it rarely continued with her or ended with her. One of the more interesting personal revelations Burns dug up had to do with a visit from Rand's sister, Nora, who continued to live in the Soviet Union. Rand invited her to stay with her but was horrified when the sister defended the Soviet state and Russian culture. Soon Rand refused to speak with her, and the sister returned to Russia.

What of Burns's argument that Rand impacted the Right in America? Burns does show how various individuals and groups were influenced by the mercurial author, from members of Young Americans for Freedom to the Circle Bastiat, from Students for Individual Liberty to the Libertarian Party. Prominent rightists such as Murray Rothbard, Alan Greenspan, and Robert LeFevre, among others, all embraced Rand and she influenced their thinking but never for very long. Libertarians were horrified at Rand's defense of the Constitution, which many saw as a tyrannical document, and of her pride in the launch of the space missions, such as Apollo 11 (which libertarians viewed as wasteful government spending).

However, aside from the important legacy of her books, particularly *Atlas Shrugged*, which continues to sell well and has seen a revival in the Age of Obama, Rand left no real legacy to the Right. There are no organizations that claim her ideas as a fountainhead for either political or policy action. She was an influence on many, but not causative to anything substantive in terms of practical action.

Still, Burns provides an important history of not only her ideas and how they fit within the context of twentieth-century intellectual history but also her contribution to the development of a new form of ethics (objectivism). Burns understands her importance in this respect, and while she may stretch her wider importance to the Right, to many a young conservative or libertarian, it often still begins with Ayn Rand.

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