

**“The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”**

**—George Washington  
First Inaugural Address**

Dear ARI Contributor:

A few years ago a reporter called the Ayn Rand Institute and asked me why Americans are anti-intellectual. “That’s easy,” was my response. “Americans are anti-intellectual because America’s intellectuals are anti-American.”

Unfortunately, these intellectuals train the teachers who educate America’s children and the journalists who interpret news in our media. Most of these intellectuals long ago abandoned the principles of the Enlightenment, which were the basis of the fundamental ideas of the American Revolution defined and established by the Founding Fathers—such as reason and individualism. The Ayn Rand Institute seeks to reinstate these principles, rather than surrender our schools and the battle of ideas to an irrational elite of collectivists. We seek to develop and support new intellectuals who respect the achievements of Western Civilization and the freedom and potential achievements of each individual. This is a major goal of the Ayn Rand Institute.

A century and a half after the American Revolution, Ayn Rand, at the age of 21, escaped from the Soviet Union to the one country that respected her ideal of individualism—the United States of America. During her life in America she became one of the greatest beneficiaries and advocates of that ideal by writing such novels as *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged*. In 1974 she described what America meant to her in an address to the graduating class at the United States Military Academy at West Point:

“I can say—not as a patriotic bromide, but with full knowledge of the necessary metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, political and esthetic roots—that the United States of America is the greatest, the noblest and, in its original founding principles, the *only* moral country in the history of the world.” (*Philosophy: Who Needs It*)

The leaders of the American Revolution fought for their own right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Ayn Rand appreciated this achievement of the Founding Fathers because by defending their own freedom they made our freedom possible:

“The basic premise of the Founding Fathers was man’s right to his own life, to his own liberty, to the pursuit of his own happiness—which means: man’s right to exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself; and that the political implementation of this right is a society where men deal with one another as *traders*, by voluntary exchange to mutual benefit.” (*For the New Intellectual*)

The Founding Fathers understood that they were fighting for the future while fighting for their own liberty. Thomas Jefferson understood the potential for America to transform the world:

“We are destined to be a barrier against the return of ignorance and barbarism. Old Europe will have to lean on our shoulders, and to hobble along by our side, under the monkish trammels of priests and kings, as she can. What a colossus shall we be when the southern continent comes up to our mark! What a stand will it seem as a ralliance for the reason and freedom of the globe!” (letter to John Adams, August 1, 1816)

At the Ayn Rand Institute we are committed to fighting for the future with America’s Founding Fathers. Ayn Rand once observed, “The Founding Fathers were America’s first intellectuals and, so far, her last.” Their ideas have been under attack for over two hundred years by collectivists, elitists, racists, and other enemies of individualism—and most of our intellectuals have abandoned American principles. Our schools have deteriorated as they have replaced respect for reason and freedom with political correctness and social conformity. Our entire culture has decayed as respect for the individual has been replaced with the idea that identity comes only from whatever group or classification in which people are placed.

The Ayn Rand Institute has established programs to return our universities and schools to the rational principles of the Founding Fathers. Our programs defend liberty and reason throughout the culture. We publish opinion pieces in hundreds of newspapers defending individual rights and free markets. We defend business from government controls through such programs as our *Self-Defense Kit for Capitalists*. We introduce thousands of high school students each year to Ayn Rand’s novels through our essay contests. We help college students survive in an environment hostile to reason and the values of western civilization by supporting Objectivist Campus Clubs and with our *Student Survival Guide* on our web site.

You are invited to join us and the Founding Fathers in fighting for the future and for American values. It can be a hard fight sometimes, but a rewarding one. As Ayn Rand wrote, “Anyone who fights for the future, lives in it today.” Your contribution in the enclosed envelope will help keep alight “the sacred fire of liberty” that George Washington entrusted to the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Ralston". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "E".

Richard E. Ralston  
Managing Director

P.S. Now, more than ever, we hope you will join us in fighting for the future and for American values.

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