

Rep. John Campbell (R-Calif.), who gives his departing interns copies of Ayn Rand's novel "Atlas Shrugged," told me today that the response to President Obama's economic policies reminded him of what happened in the 51-year-old novel.

"People are starting to feel like we're living through the scenario that happened in 'Atlas Shrugged,'" said Campbell. "The achievers, the people who create all the things that benefit rest of us, are going on strike. I'm seeing, at a small level, a kind of protest from the people who create jobs, the people who create wealth, who are pulling back from their ambitions because they see how they'll be punished for them."

In Rand's novel, creative people (the "Atlases" of the title) are hounded and punished for their labor by an oppressive, socialistic state. In response, they retreat from society to a hidden enclave where they watch civilization's slow collapse.

How far, I asked Campbell, are we from the final chapters of the novel? **"We're still a ways away," he said. "That will happen when people expect that there ought to be a recovery going on, and it isn't going on."**