

The Rockefeller Boys

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Abstract

Rockefeller’s global reach — from the University of Chicago to the Holy Land.

FROM THE ARTICLE: John D. Rockefeller knew a thing or two about power. His Standard Oil of New Jersey became a blueprint for corporate centralization. He pioneered new methods of stock rigging and financial mischief. He destroyed competition wherever he could and set new standards for industrial sabotage and union busting. He manipulated the tastes of “rational consumers” and made “policymakers” dance to his tune. He used violence to expropriate from indigenous Americans their resource-rich lands, and religion to pacify their

resistance. He harnessed the U. S. military to impose American “free trade” on the rest of the world. Raw power made Rockefeller and his family enormously rich. And yet, to the end of his life, John D. insisted that his best investment ever was the \$45 million he donated to rebuild the Baptist University of Chicago. Rockefeller saw Chicago as a religious asset. The philanthropy helped silence his critics in this world and pave his way to heaven in the next. It bought him the loyalty of spiritual shepherds and academic retainers, all eager to sing the praise of Standard Oil and glorify its devout owner. But in the long run the biggest yield came from the university’s department of economics.

[. . .]

A FEW WORDS ON THE HISTORY OF THIS ARTICLE: The paper was originally commissioned in August 2003 by the Journal of Cold War Studies. Following our explicit inquiry, the journal confirmed that our text would be published “as is.” With this assurance, we submitted the paper in January 2004. The paper was longer than the journal’s standard review. We explicitly drew attention to the extra length and explained why a longer article was necessary given the subject matter. The journal accepted the review and scheduled its publication to the Fall of 2004.

But then the editor, Mark Kramer, had a change of heart. Having read our paper, he must have realized he had made a big mistake. This type of criticism had no place in his respectable journal. He began evasive actions. Without notice, our paper was postponed to the next issue, and then to the following one. We protested the censorship. Kramer assured us there was none. There was simply a long backlog of reviews, he said. Our paper would be published as is and without editorial intervention.

Finally, in April 2005, the truth came out. We were notified that the paper would not be published at all. It was simply . . . too long. We could, if we wanted to, cut the article in half. Or, alternatively, we could enlarge it into a review essay and re-submit it to the journal’s referees. But then the Journal would have to re-consider it. . . .

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