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Directors and Misdirectors

RULERS OF AMERICA. By Anna Rochester. New York: International Publishers. 1936. \$3.50.

Reviewed by E. D. KENNEDY

IF a pacifist were to write a treatise on 18-inch guns, his objection to heavy artillery would be colored by his objection to weapons of any description. When a radical writer bases a study of the connection between large American banking houses and correspondingly large American corporations on "the economic and political teachings of Marx as developed for the imperialist era by Lenin," her thinking is conditioned by her hostility to private property, the profit system, the position of labor and capitalism in general. Thus Miss Anna Rochester, attempting a restrained, factual, documented study of America's progress toward the complete Capitalist State, handles her material with an intemperate emotionalism that prohibits any scientific spirit of inquiry. She has, for instance, a weakness toward the use of the word "notorious." She refers, almost casually, to the notorious Charles Mitchell, to the Liberty League as supported by men whose anti-union policies are notorious, to the Mellons as having notoriously refused to make adequate contributions to the Pittsburgh Community Chest, to the notorious propaganda of public utility companies, to NRA as having notoriously backed down before open shop corporations. A good example of notorious (with context) is seen in the observation that

Rockefeller philanthropy and systematic publicity, put over by the late notorious Ivy Lee, have built up a picture of kindness and generosity which cannot fool the rank and file workers who are sweating to build up the Rockefeller wealth.

There is certainly no reason why a radical writer should not be entitled to speak her mind about bankers and industrialists. But Miss Rochester sees the capitalist evil only in the oversimplified, melodramatic terms of a physical devil with horns, tail, and pitchfork.

The rulers of America, as Miss Rochester defines them, are large industrial-bankers and large banking-industrialists whose ramifications extend through every branch of American industry. The Morgan interests, the Mellon interests, and the Rockefeller interests are the particular objects of attack. By an elaborate technique of listing interlocking directorates, Miss Rochester concludes that Morgan interests reach 362 corporations with assets of more than seventy-seven billion dollars; that Rockefeller influence reaches 227 companies with assets of nearly forty-five billion dollars; and that Mellon influence reaches 118 companies with assets of some seventeen billion dollars. After showing how interests influence corporations, Miss Rochester presents brief sketches of several key industries. Here she reverses the process, listing the corporations and going back to the interests behind them. Concluding

chapters give the history of American foreign investments in twenty-four pages, sum up the Depression in fourteen pages, and discuss the problem of "Will the Rulers Maintain Their Power?" in six pages. Miss Rochester says that "present trends foreshadow a revolutionary crisis at some future date."

It is obvious that a discussion of Morgan (or any other) interest depends upon the extent to which the banking house influences the corporations associated with it. Miss Rochester begins by listing corporations who have on their directorate a Morgan partner. Then she adds companies who have as a director anyone who is a director or an officer of the First National Bank or of Bonbright & Co. Next she lists companies which keep some of their cash on deposit with J. P. Morgan & Co., First National, or Bonbright. By this time her position is becoming distinctly insecure, for the fact that a corporation may have a balance in a "Morgan" institution does not establish it, in any significant sense, as a Morgan company. For instance, this classification includes the American Tobacco Co., Bethlehem Steel, and Eastman Kodak in a grouping at which Mr. George Washington Hill, Mr. Charles Schwab, and the late George Eastman would certainly protest. It also includes E. I. duPont de Nemours & Co., which the du Pont family probably imagines is controlled by the du Ponts and the Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey. It is really tearing a passion to tatters to put John D. Rockefeller's original Standard Oil trust into a Morgan sphere because the New Jersey company may keep a balance in a Morgan vault. Of course Miss Rochester realizes that Standard of New Jersey is primarily a Rockefeller company and it also appears, in full force, under the Rockefeller listings. American Telephone & Telegraph Co. also appears under both the Rockefeller and the Morgan influence and its \$4,235,000,000 of assets help mightily to swell both totals. But when Miss Rochester sets up a Morgan influence in a company which, like Standard of New Jersey, is so emphatically not a Morgan company in any proper sense, it is difficult to accept her ticketing in many other cases in which no more substantial connections are established.

Miss Rochester has still another Morgan classification, made up of companies whose directorate includes a "Morgan man" (not a Morgan partner) from Bankers' Trust, Guaranty Trust, Chase National, or National City banks. Here Miss Rochester overestimates the influence of a director, also the influence of a commercial bank, and follows her thesis through several removes from reality. Many of the officers of these Class IV Morgan companies are also directors of other corporations, and Miss Rochester could have added several hundred additional companies to the "interest" if she had pushed her interlocking directorates through one more step. She does come close to this fifth step in discussing the Rockefeller interests by counting as

Rockefeller corporations various companies who have as directors anyone who is a director or officer of the many Standard Oil companies which now function as separated successors to the old petroleum trust.

In making specific listings of influence, Miss Rochester distinguishes between inner and outer spheres of influence and distinguishes between influence and control. But the reader is certain to remember the tags without the qualifications and emerge with the impression that the companies cited belong to Morgan or Mellon or Rockefeller in a significant and inimical sense. To this objection Miss Rochester replies that she is not responsible for errors made by careless readers. But Professor Colston E. Warne of Amherst, praising Miss Rochester's book in the February *Book Union Bulletin*, says it has "broken down the isolation established by the fiction of the corporation—a fiction which has long caused individuals to differentiate between J. P. Morgan & Co., Bankers Trust Co., United Corp. and United States Steel Corp. . . . in the future these (and their numerous sister corporations) will appropriately be sifted into their place as parts of an empire." Professor Warne has specified companies in which the Morgan influence is most obvious, but a great deal more than a corporate fiction differentiates between companies such as Koppers Co., Continental Can, American Can, du Pont, American Tobacco, Eastman Kodak, Procter & Gamble, Radio Corp., and many other members of the Morgan sisterhood. And Professor Warne, presumably no careless reader, has carried Miss Rochester's implications to their logical conclusion with the reference to "parts of an empire"—a reference which certainly suggests influence of the strongest kind. When Miss Rochester was asked why, if she conceded that many of her "influences" in no way constituted control, she had called her study *rulers* of America, she replied with the amazing answer that she "had to have a title."

It is altogether possible to argue that in this country the concentration of credit in the hands of a few large financing companies and the concentration of production in the hands of a few hundred large industrial concerns constitutes an evil—although, from anything but a strictly Marxist standpoint, it does not constitute an unmixed evil. But Miss Rochester's study is a case of special pleading behind a superficial appearance of heavily documented fact. In the course of demonstrating the point that "large corporations and their executives dictate the policies of government," she says:

that the Morgan firm has had a considerable part, both direct and indirect, in the shaping of government policy and the molding of popular thought, is fairly obvious. They (the Morgans) are personally represented by several partners in the New York State Chamber of Commerce, of which Junius S. Morgan, junior, is treasurer.

Aside from the fact that it would be difficult for the Morgans to be impersonally represented by partners of the firm, their Chamber of Commerce membership hardly establishes their position as shapers of American thought.

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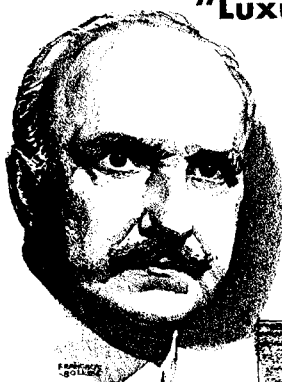
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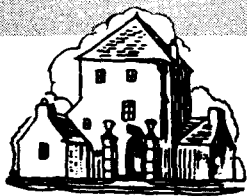
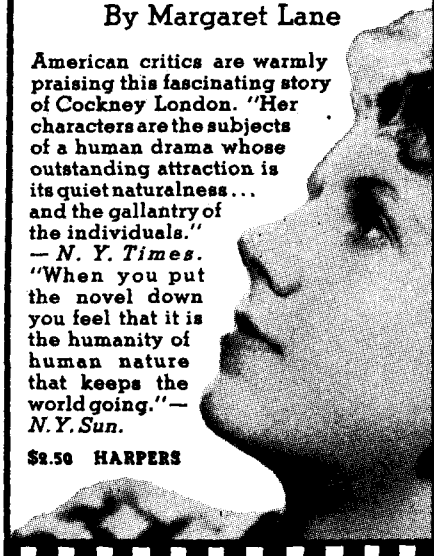
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A Great Man in Eclipse

THE ARCHITECTURE OF H. H. RICHARDSON AND HIS TIMES. By Henry Russell Hitchcock, Jr. New York: Museum of Modern Art. 1936. \$6.

Reviewed by AYMAR EMBURY II

IN architecture as in no other art is the taste of any age expressed, and Mr. Hitchcock has done a very great service in presenting both to the public and to the architectural profession the history of Richardson's time as reflected in the work of the greatest of its architects. Mr. Hitchcock does not pretend that this is a biography, although the bare facts of Richardson's life are given; the book is what its title describes it to be, a study of Richardson's time, with especial reference to the formative influences of his youth, and to the influence which in his maturity he in turn exercised upon his contemporaries and successors.

In the main it is a very satisfactory book, although the illustrations fall far short of what they might be (probably because the author has chosen contemporary photographs so far as they existed), and although the author has not apprehended exactly the qualities which made Richardson great. There are also substantial grounds for difference with the author on his opinions as to de-

sign, with which few architects of even the most catholic views will entirely concur.

But these are minor defects in a work in which so great a mass of apparently unrelated facts have been patiently discovered and assembled in a way so lucid and so simple that we can understand the difficulties under which Richardson labored and the magnitude of his achievement.

When he began to work, American architecture had reached its nadir. It was incredibly debased. There was literally nothing in contemporary American architecture which was useful to him, and he was forced, as much as any architect can be forced, to create for himself out of whole cloth as it were. The old Colonial architecture, which in my time had acquired respect through the mere fact of its age, must have seemed to Richardson what Richardson's architecture now seems to us, a past and outmoded fashion rather than a well of living inspiration. He, therefore, found himself compelled, if he were to do honest, decent, and sincere work, to develop a new style for himself, a thing thought to be impossible but in which he succeeded. His buildings are frequently said to be "Romanesque" although beyond his use of heavy round arches and columns shorter than the ordinary, there was lit-

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	Crime, Place, Sleuth	Summing Up	Verdict
THE SLEEPING DEATH G. D. H. and Margaret Cole (Crime Club: \$2.)	Nasty little girl properly poisoned at ultra-modern English school. Everard Blatchington discovers—and disposes of—poisoner.	Antics of pupils and mentors portrayed with so much humor and wisdom that "pat" solution doesn't matter much.	Veddy naice
THE CRIMSON PATCH Phoebe Atwood Taylor (Norton: \$2.)	Radio star with lurid past killed in Cape Cod farmhouse. Asey Mayo is called in.	Story is so full of plot it gets bogged down early and even the peerless Asey can't move it.	Disappointing
GOING TO ST. IVES Colver Harris (Macrae, Smith: \$2)	Dead scholar in Baltimore church involves intruding school-marm in pk. of trouble. Sleuth Tim Fowler unravels it.	Yarn begins well but motives and emotions get so tarnally tangled that solution doesn't make much sense.	Nope
THE ARABIAN NIGHTS MURDER John Dickson Carr (Harpers: \$2.)	False-whiskered corpse in oriental museum stumps 3 London police experts but Dr. Fell solves puzzle sitting down.	Cleverly engineered solution of intricate and involved mystery hindered by ultra-fantastic trappings and too much needless junk.	Annoying
THE PUZZLE OF THE RED STALLION Stuart Palmer (Crime Club: \$2.)	Hildegard Withers leads Oscar Piper to shotgun murderer via body found on Central Park bridle path.	Commonplace clues, plus horses, relatives, red herrings, and trips to Westchester, lead to cooked up denouement.	Hildegard getting dull
MANHATTAN MURDER Arthur Train (Scribners: \$2.50.)	Gang murder of N. Y. police inspector sets his son on torrid trail which leads to snatching and holocaust.	Ordinary gang plot, with Park Ave. love interest, and N. Y.'s finest at work, but the movies could do it better.	Hollywood bound