

The American Railroad Problem: A Study in War and Reconstruction (Classic Reprint)

Isaiah Leo Sharfman



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Excerpt from The American Railroad Problem: A Study in War and Reconstruction

The object of this book is to provide for the intelligent citizen - including the large inarticulate public, as well as the student, the publicist, the legislator, the business man, the shipper, and the railroad security holder, executive, and employee - an analysis of the American railroad problem as it presents itself to-day. Of all the great current social and economic questions, it is doubtful whether any domestic problem is as significant or far-reaching, from the standpoint of the general welfare, as the problem of the railroads. Not only is every citizen vitally concerned in its satisfactory adjustment, but the degree of success which crowns the joint efforts of private enterprise and government activity in its solution will constitute the most convincing test of the efficacy of our democratic institutions in meeting the dominant tasks of this generation. At every point, therefore, the essential issues must be conceived in terms of their public bearing, and each measure designed to adjust conflicting claims must be assessed with reference to the common good. A great complexity of interests is involved. Even when reduced to most general categories, they comprehend those of the users of the transportation service, of the owners of the railroad properties, and of the employees engaged in the performance of transportation tasks. While each of these interests must be adequately safeguarded, the public stake in the proper functioning of the transportation industry transcends them all. "Justice," once wrote Dean Roscoe Pound, "is the ideal compromise between the activities of each and the activities of all in a crowded world."

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