

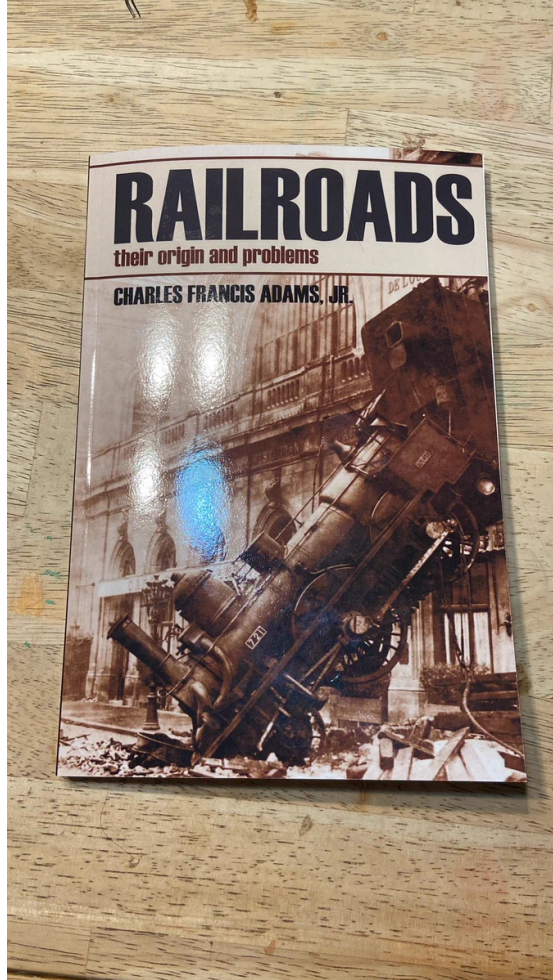
← Tweet



Reactionary_Retard
@TomBess1783



[#NowReading](#) Railroads: Their Origin and Problems by Charles Francis Adams Jr. (published 1878)



7:25 PM · Jun 21, 2023 · 797 Views


6 Retweets 16 Likes 2 Bookmarks














Post your reply!
Reply

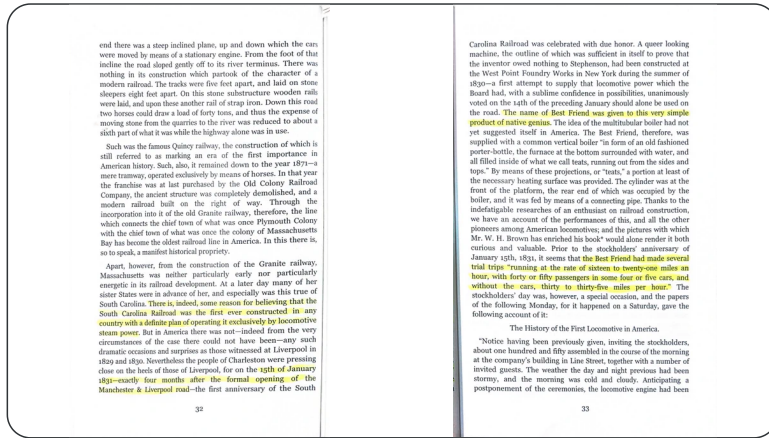

Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27
...

Alright so the first 30 pages basically came out of journal entries from the love interest of Mr Stephenson, the creator of the locomotive engine in England. Not interested in British personal drama ngl what the freak Charles Adams


 1
 
 2
  66
 


Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27
...

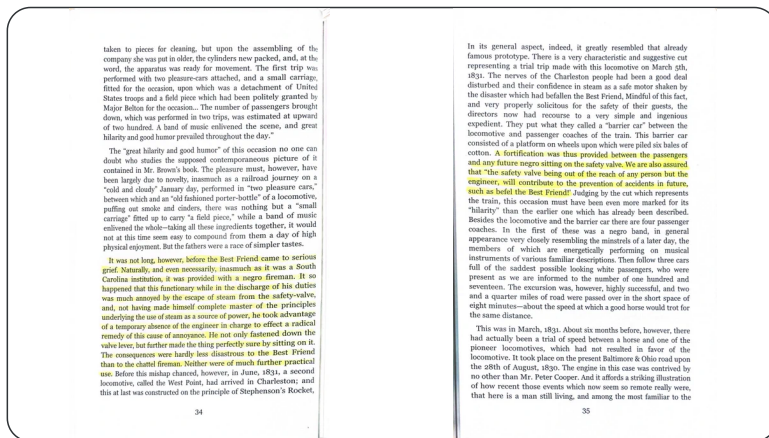
First locomotive steam engine debuted in the US on January 15th, 1831 named the Best Friend. It ran between 16 and 35 mph



 1
 
 5
  70
 


Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27
...

The epic dividends of slavery in the South was that you get your nice locomotive train engine blown up by a negro who sat on the safety valve because steam was coming out of it



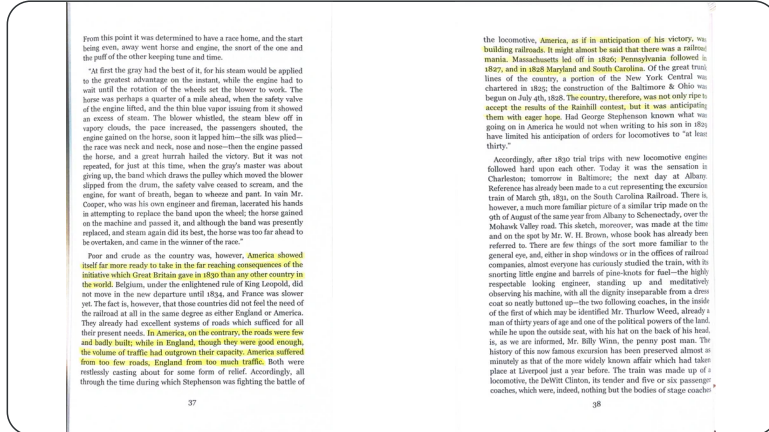
 1
 
 3
  61
 



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



America was much more receptive to a future with railroads because it desperately needed better transportation. Its roads were few and lacked quality. England was compact and had decent roads, and so railroads were more fitting to the US.



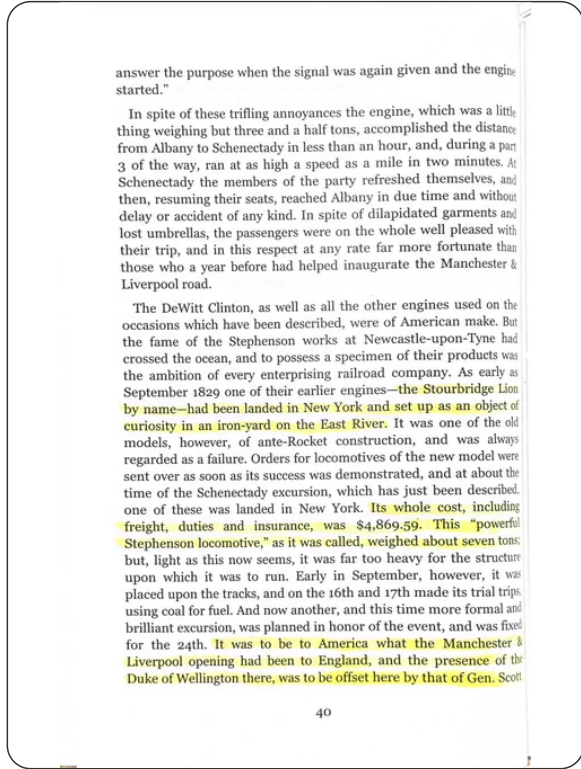
2 2 48



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



The Stourbridge Lion, an early train, would have cost nearly \$159k today, and its opening was attended by Winfield Scott.



1 1 69



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



If railroads never took off, a canal-tunnel method would have been implemented as a way to get across New York. It would have cost many billions of dollars and decades to build. Rails made jobs that much easier.



very explicable. Not only the Quincy railway, but the Middlesex canal as well, had been the first things of the kind brought to a successful completion in America. Just at this time, also, the significance of the Erie canal had given a new and portentous shadow over the future of Massachusetts. They seemed stationed on the western bank of the State, an insuperable barrier against which the eastward tide of commerce struck and then with a deflected course flowed quietly in the direction of New York. Erie in some way that barrier must be overcome or the material progress of the State would in the future be seriously threatened. So much was obvious before the year that this difficult problem had already occupied the attention both of the public and of the legislature. A commission had been appointed to survey a canal route from the water at Boston to the Connecticut, and thence to some point in the State of New York, near where the Erie canal emptied into the Hudson. The report of this commission was submitted by Gov. Lincoln to the legislature in January 1826, and today, after the lapse of more than fifty years, the document has a peculiar interest and significance.

The survey was made by Col. Loammi Baldwin, a civil engineer who has left his mark out deep on the Massachusetts system of internal improvements. There was no good route, and so he fixed on what has since become well-known as the Hoosac Tunnel line as being the best. Accompanying the report of 1826 is a map made by Col. Baldwin upon which is laid down a canal-tunnel exactly where the railroad tunnel now is. This canal-tunnel project was adopted by Col. Baldwin as a desperate alternative to a system of locks crossing the mountains at the same point. Not that he considered the lock scheme impracticable; on the contrary, he demonstrated in his report its perfect feasibility on paper. He objected to it solely on the score of expense. He accordingly had recourse to the cheaper expedient of a tunnel, and proceeded to estimate its cost. That long forgotten estimate is now one of the curiosities of engineering literature. It was made, he it is remembered, in the early days before tunnelling had become a science, and when the whole work would necessarily have been done by hand-drilling

42

and without the aid of any explosive more powerful than gunpowder. In making his estimate Col. Baldwin, as an engineer of character having a reputation at stake, was extremely cautious. He said, "In a tunnel, four miles in length, of the size named, there will be 211,200 cubic yards of stone to excavate, which at \$4.25 per cubic yard, amounts to \$892,800." But this he took pains to state was "beyond a doubt, the highest price" having been assumed. Even at the time, this conclusion, to which subsequent bitter experience has lent a grim humor, did not pass unchallenged. A writer in the Boston Courier, for instance, calculated that, on the data given in the report, it would take fifty-two years and nineteen days to finish the tunnel. The present Hoosac Tunnel was in fact finished a little over fifty years from the time when this report was laid before the Legislature; but, instead of having proved "not more difficult than the cut through the Mountain Ridge" on the Erie canal, the expense of which per cubic yard had been \$1.75, each new difficulty which developed itself was overcome only to make way for another, until the ultimate expense was about \$20 per cubic yard, and the total cost some ten times the original estimate.

Naturally enough, however, nothing was done in consequence of Col. Baldwin's report towards extending the Erie canal to a connection with the water at Boston. That such an idea should ever have been gravely entertained seems now almost beyond belief. Yet there, on file among the public documents of that day, is the record showing that some men actually dreamed that water could be made to flow over the Berkshire hills so as to compete with the untaxed current of the Hudson! Four years more passed by without contributing anything to the solution of the problem. In October 1829, however, the crucial test at Rainhill gave a new direction to men's thoughts in other places than in England. Nathan Hale at that time edited the Boston Daily Advertiser, and he had also been one of the commissioners under whom Col. Baldwin had made his survey. An editor of a school which has long since passed away, he not only occupied a prominent position in the business circles of the day, but by force of individual character he exerted through his paper a wide and useful influence. The Advertiser was Nathan Hale, and, as regarded this question, Nathan Hale moved in the front rank of

43



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

“We have tunneled the Alps and bridged the Mississippi”. Charles Adams leaning into that Faustian Spirit to conquer nature ⚡

thousands of miles of road, which yearly carry millions of tons of freight and tens of millions of passengers, while they wield hundreds of millions of capital—to men accustomed to the presence of these leviathans, the little original roads, the longest of which was but fifty miles, seem little more than toys. They were, however, the beginning of great things. We today are familiar with the names of enterprises which stretch out into what was then the undiscovered West, and the fabulous East. We can, whenever we please, read the last quotation of stocks representing a property lying on the shores of the Euphrates or among the steppes and gorges of the Rocky or Ural Mountains. We have tunneled the Alps and bridged the Mississippi. These great accomplished facts, however, only make the fresh, new impressions with which our fathers viewed the gradual completion of the little original lines more quaint and more interesting. The gossip, as it were, of those days is by no means the least attractive thing about them.

The Lowell was the first organized of the Massachusetts roads, as well as the first upon which the work of construction was actually begun, though the Boston & Providence was the first completed. But it was upon the Worcester road, and towards the latter part of March, 1834, that the first locomotive ever used in Massachusetts was set in motion. On the 24th of the month Mr. Hale advised the readers of the Advertiser that “the rails are laid, from Boston to Newton, a distance of nine or ten miles, to which place it is proposed to run the passenger cars as soon as two locomotives shall be in readiness, so as to ensure regularity. One locomotive, called the Meteor, has been partially tried and will probably be in readiness in a few days; the second, called the Rocket, is waiting the arrival of the builder for subjecting it to a trial, and the third it is hoped will be ready by the first of May.” The last named locomotive, the Rocket, was built by the Stephensons at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and “the builder” whose arrival was looked for must have been an English engineer sent out to superintend the work of putting it in operation. No allusion is made in the papers to the first trial of these locomotives, but we have the impressions which one who claims to have been an eye-witness of it long afterwards gave:—

45



1



2



96



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

Early trains were going from New York to Boston in 14 hours.

at Boston, left there at 2 A. M., and arrived in this city off Dry Dock in eleven hours and fifty-nine minutes from Providence—performing the entire distance in less than sixteen hours, and bringing with us the Boston daily papers of yesterdays morning for the benefit of our readers and those of our cotemporaries.”

In other words, General Webb had left Boston at two in the morning and arrived in New York at six o'clock on the evening of the same day, being the shortest time which had ever been made between those two cities. He then proceeds, in a strain of enthusiastic exultation over the prospect of “reducing the time of overcoming the distance between New York and Boston (250 miles) to fourteen hours,” and closes with a tribute which, though offered nearly half a century ago, still has an amusing significance:

“Other sections of the country will be equally benefited by this improvement of steam navigation by Captain Vanderbilt, and his name will in future be classed with those of Fulton and Stephenson, to the latter of whom we owe nearly all the improvements which have been made in the steam engine, since the death of that great

man to whom the world is indebted for that most important discovery which has ever been made except the art of printing."

Having given one side of the picture: it is but fair to present the other. The advent of railroad locomotion was not even in America hailed by ail in a similar spirit of exuberant satisfaction. A little over a month after the time when General Webb went from Boston to New York in sixteen hours, a gentleman of the very old school, then in his sixty-fourth year, made the same trip; and in his diary thus freshly recorded his experience and sensations:

"July 22, 1835.—This morning at nine o'clock I took passage in a railroad car (from Boston) for Providence. Five or six other cars were attached to the locomotive, and uglier boxes I do not wish to travel in. They were made to stow away some thirty human beings, who sit cheek by jowl as best they can. Two poor fellows, who were not much in the habit of making their toilet, squeezed me into a corner, while the hot sun drew from their garments a villainous compound of smells made up of salt fish, tar and molasses. By and by, just twelve—only twelve—bouncing factory girls were

55



1



46



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



By the 1840's railroads had become commonplace, their genesis complete.

evening of December 30th, 1841. Of the toasts and speeches given utterance to on this occasion there is little enough to say. In them honest astonishment had given place to a mouthing eloquence. Every one realized fully the importance and the far reaching consequence of the event they were met to celebrate—the fire companies and the military were all paraded and the air was filled with the strains of music—but none the less it was all a twice-told tale. Railroads had grown to be commonplace affairs. The world had already accustomed itself to the new conditions of its existence, and wholly refused to gape in childish wonder at the thought of having accomplished a journey of fifty miles more or less between the rising and setting of even a December sun. The genesis of the system was complete.

60



1



49



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



The railroad problem, according to Charles, is the monopolistic nature of their owners.

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM

DURING the last ten years there has been so much vague discussion of what is commonly known as the Railroad Problem, that many people, and those by no means the least sensible, have begun gravely to doubt whether after all it is not a mere cant phrase, and whether any such problem does indeed exist. Certainly the discussion has not been remarkable for intelligence, and the currency question itself has hardly been more completely befogged in clouds of indifferent declamation, poor philosophy and worse logic. No fallacy has been too thin to pass current in it; and the absolute power which certain words and phrases have held over the public mind has throughout seemed to set both argument and patience at defiance. Under these circumstances, before beginning to discuss the Railroad Problem, it might seem proper to offer some

definition of what that problem is. To do this concisely is very difficult. As an innovating force the railroad has made itself felt and produced its problems in every department of civilized life. So has the steam-engine; so has the newspaper; so has gunpowder. Unlike all these, however, the railroad has developed one distinctive problem, and a problem which actively presses for solution. It has done so for the reason that it has not only usurped, in modern communities, the more important functions of the highway, but those who own it have also undertaken to do the work which was formerly done on the highway. Moreover, as events have developed themselves, it has become apparent that the recognized laws of trade operate but imperfectly at best in regulating the use made of these modern thoroughfares by those who thus both own and monopolize them. Consequently the political governments of the various countries have been called upon in some way to make good through legislation the deficiencies thus revealed in the working of the natural laws. This is the Railroad Problem. Thus stated, it hardly needs to be said that the questions involved in its solution are of great magnitude and extreme delicacy. To deal correctly with them requires a thorough knowledge of intricate economical laws, superadded to a very keen insight into political habits and modes of thought. For not only is there a general railroad problem for all

61

1

1

2

136

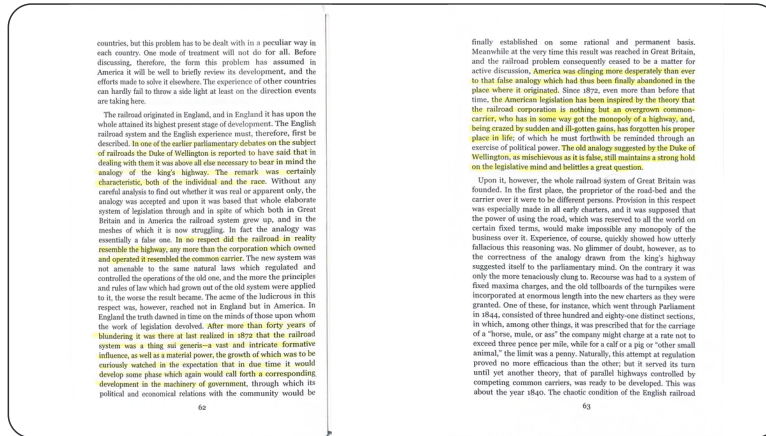
↑



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

Duke of Wellington compares railroads to the “kings highway” of old, and is a common-carrier which has gotten too big for its britches. Its actually much more than that, Adams says.



1

1

3

71

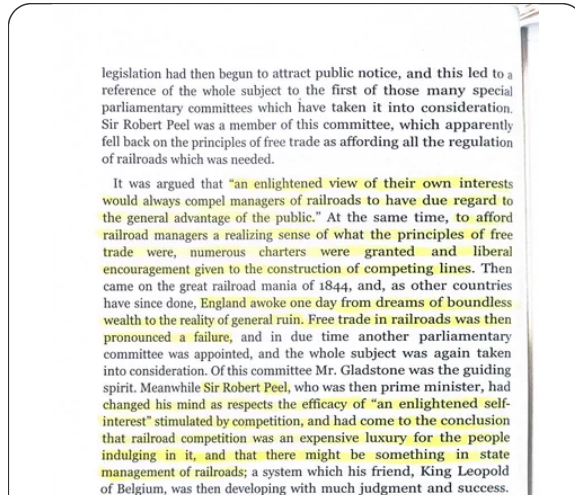
↑



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

“An enlightened view of their own interest would always compel managers of railroads to have due regard for the general advantage of the public” the free traders said, and to no ones surprise, free traders were wrong once again when owners abused the public with their railroads



Accordingly Mr. Gladstone's committee made a series of reports which resulted in the passage of a law looking to the possible acquisition of the railroads by the state at the expiration of twenty-one years from that time. With this measure as the grand result of their labors the committee rested. Not so the railroad system. The twenty-one years elapsed in 1865, and during that time Parliament sat and pondered the ever-increasing complication of the railroad problem with most unsatisfactory results. Competition between railroads through all those years was working itself out into combination; and, as the companies one after another asked and secured acts of amalgamation, obstinately refusing to compete, it was clearly perceived that something was wrong. The parliamentary

64



1



2



4



230



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



Either the railroads would dominate the state, or the state dominate the railroads.

mind was sorely troubled; but no way of deliverance revealed itself. In 1865 a new commission was appointed, which went again over the familiar path, this time in the direction of state ownership. The cry now was that the process of amalgamation, or consolidation as we in America term it, had gone so far that the time was close at hand when the railroads would manage the state, if the state did not manage the railroads. In truth there was something rather alarming in the speed with which illustrations followed one upon another of the truth of George Stephenson's aphorism, that—"Where combination is possible, competition is impossible." The thing, too, was now done upon a scale of magnificence which was not less startling than novel. The world had seen nothing of the kind before, and naturally paused to ask what it all meant and wither it was tending. For instance, one committee pointed out, as an example of what the process might lead to, that a single amalgamation was suggested to it through which a union of 1200 miles of railroad would be effected, bringing under one control £60,000,000 of capital with £4,000,000 of annual revenue, and rendering impossible throughout one large district the existence of an independent line of railway. A few years later, when the next committee sat, all this had become an established fact; only the mileage was 1500 instead of 1200, the capital £63,000,000 instead of £60,000,000, and the annual income £7,000,000 instead of £4,000,000. Nevertheless the commission of 1865 followed closely the steps of its predecessors." It dumped upon the tables of Parliament an enormous "blue-book," which left the matter exactly as dark as it was before. Still the amalgamations went on. All England was rapidly and obviously being partitioned out among some half-dozen great corporations, each supreme in its own territory. Then at last, in 1872, a committee on railroad amalgamations was appointed, the Marquis of Salisbury and the Earl of Derby being two of its members, which really gave to the whole subject an intelligent consideration. Unlike its predecessors, that committee did not leave the railroad problem where they found it. On the contrary, they advanced it by one entire stage on the road to its solution. In the first place, after taking a vast amount of

65



1



3



13



401



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



The English did not wish to intervene in railroads monopolizing, and held to a laissez-faire policy towards them. Tariffs, they concluded, were not practical to be applied to return rates on trains.

evidence, they proceeded to review the forty years of experience. The result of this review may be stated in few words.

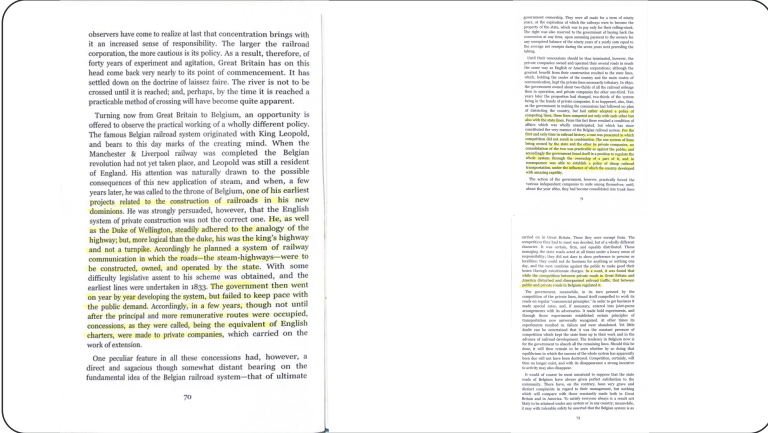
They showed with grim precision how, during that period, the English railroad legislation had never accomplished anything which it sought to bring about, nor prevented anything which it sought to hinder. The cost to the companies of this useless mass of enactments had been enormous, amounting to some \$200,000,000; for there were 3,300 in number and filled whole volumes. Then the committee examined in detail the various parliamentary theories

of each kind, as they were presented and discussed. But the result was in the end, that the English system was found to be the only one which had succeeded in accomplishing its purpose, and that the French system was the only one which had failed to do so. The English system was found to be the only one which had succeeded in accomplishing its purpose, and that the French system was the only one which had failed to do so.



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

In Belgium, the state developed and maintained railroad lines under the Belgian King. This policy helped to regulate the lines.

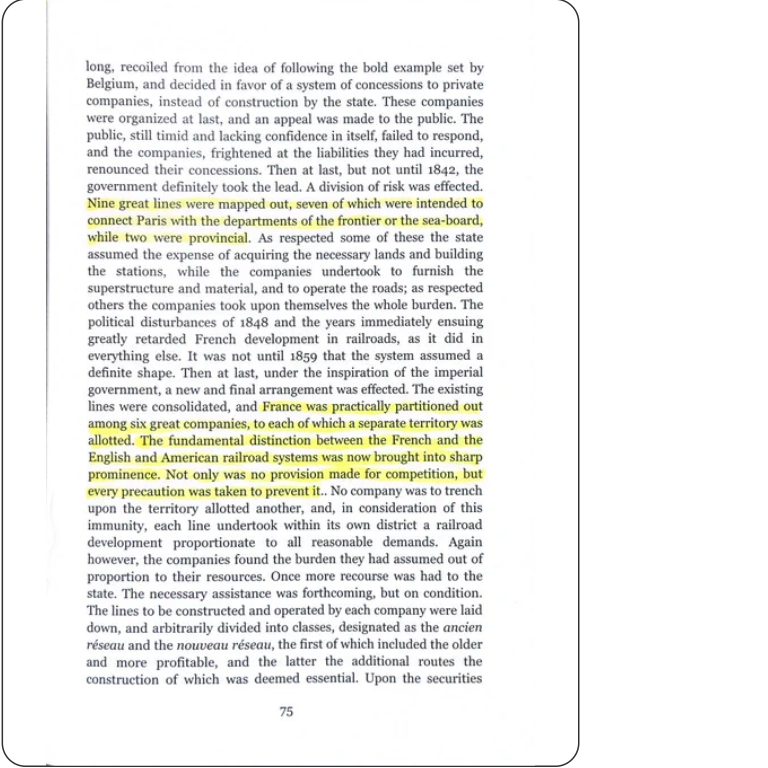


1 1 69



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

In France, six railroad companies were given exclusive territories to build in, eliminating competition and the tendency to monopolize.



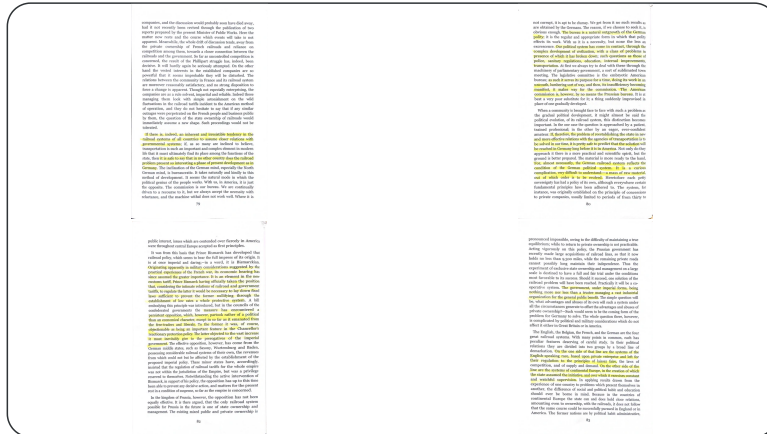
1 1 61



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

A sharp divide is now drawn in contrast to Germany's railroad systems, which were markedly protectionist and served the state's interests due to

their usefulness during the unification of Germany. Bismarck applied various tariffs on railroads, which free traders kvetched about.



1 3 7 198



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

“The government, under imperial forms, being nothing more nor less than a trustee managing a vast industrial organization for the general public benefit”

1 47



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

I love how Charles talks about Germany’s political-economic order, “it is a mass of raw material, out of which order is to be evolved”

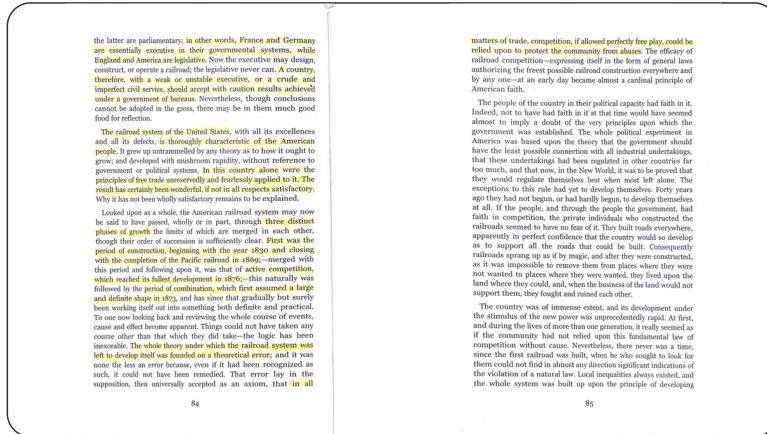
1 48



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

Charles says that the free trade rails of America have worked great (free trade at home, protection abroad?) however free trade was flawed in that it did not protect the public from abuses of the owners.



1 41

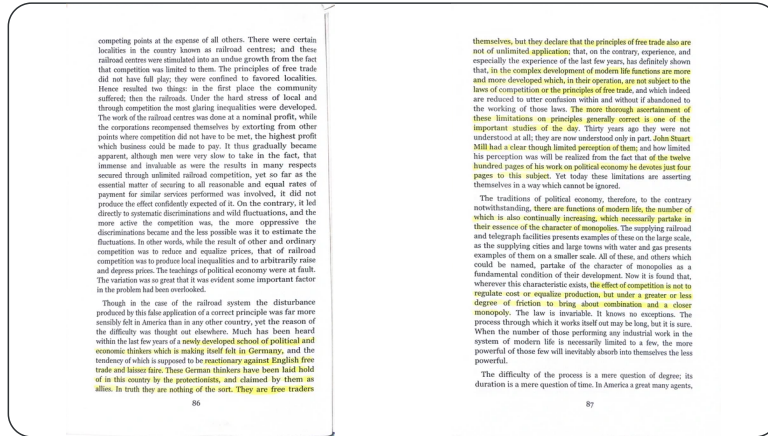


Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

...

Adams goes on to say the German protectionists are actually free traders who understand that free trade has limitations (I think I disagree). He also

mentions that John Stuart Mill dedicated just 4 pages out of 1200 to the ideas of protectionism.



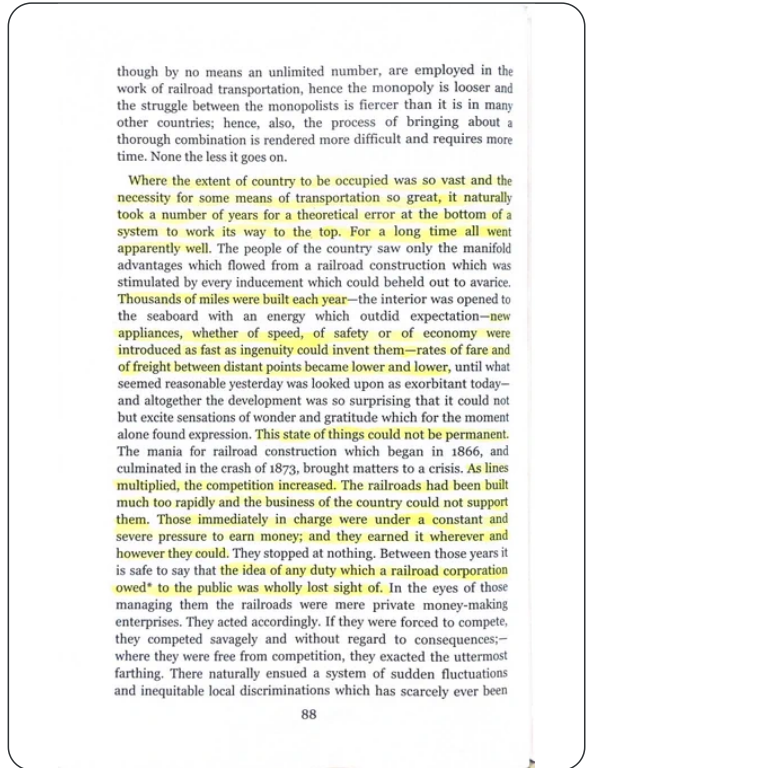
1 38



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



America is such a large mass that free growth of rails was almost necessary for them to cover it, however more was built than necessary and went unsupported, leading rails to find ways to make money any way they could.



1 35



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



Massachusetts developed its own solution to the railroad problem which was based on public opinion and a board of arbitration. It was unlikely to work in Western states due to the railroad owner's disregard for public opinion of them.

the large pecuniary interest the government had in the railroad properties. It was a partner, and as such concerned in all their transactions. In Massachusetts a different ground was taken. The indisputable fact was recognized that those corporations are so large and so far removed from the control of their securities, and the community is so deeply concerned in their doing and condition, that the law-making power both has a right and in its duty bound to insist on that publicity as respects their affairs without which abuses cannot be guarded against. Nowhere has the ascendance of the doctrine received such explicit illustration as in America during the last few years. Singularly enough, also, this act was passed not only without opposition from the railroad companies as a body, but with the active assent of many of them. When it took effect the corporations were summoned together by the commissioners and invited to assist, through a committee of their accountants, in preparing a uniform system of accounts. They did so; and the system thus prepared by them, after being approved by the board, was put in operation. The accounts of all the Massachusetts roads have since been kept in perfect accordance with it.

The measure carried the Massachusetts method of dealing with the railroad question to its ultimate point of development under a state government. No greater degree of publicity was possible. The system was perfectly simple, but none the less logical and practical. It amounted to little more than the establishment of a permanent board of auditors, acting without any of the formality, expense and delay of courts of law. On each question which came before it—whether brought to its notice by means of a postal card or through the action of a city government—this board was to make an investigation, if wrong and grievances were made to appear, and no measure of redress could be secured, the appeal was to the courts or the legislature; the board still being the motive force. Thus on all questions, not strictly legal, arising out of the relations of the railroad corporations—whether among themselves, with the community as a whole or with individuals—a body of experts, supposed to be impartial, was provided, who were clothed with full inquisitorial powers and whose duty it was, whether moved thereto by facts within their own knowledge or brought to their knowledge

through the intervention of others, to investigate the doings or condition of the corporations, and by the resulting facts in detail before the public. Without remedial or coercive power themselves, behind them stood the legislature and the judiciary ready to be brought into play should any corporate crime as unscrupulous spirit of persistence, when once clearly shown to be in the wrong.

The policy thus described would seem to have worked sufficiently well in Massachusetts. The commission has certainly succeeded in sustaining itself, for, while at every session the legislature has conferred upon it new powers, always in the same direction, the railroad corporations have never appeared in opposition to it as a body. The particular measures recommended by it have not, of course, always been looked upon with favor by the corporations, nor adopted by the legislature. This also has been fortunate, as the opposition and consequent delay thus encountered has given the commissioners time to reconsider many of the conclusions which they had reached, and it need be, to revise them. This they have frequently done. That a commission organized on the basis in any of the western states between the years 1870 and 1875, could have accomplished the work there to be done is, to say the least, improbable. It could have commanded the confidence of neither side, and would have been listened to by neither. The issue then and there presented had to be fought out with other weapons than written reports. Now that it has been fought out and decided, the question presents itself in a different aspect. But it has been deemed that a similar policy would, even under the conditions which now exist, succeed in the more western states, on the ground that the railroad corporations of that section are not so much in the public opinion about them as those of Massachusetts. They are not so opposed in the West, and the shrewd owner is currently supposed to care nothing for the West, its interests, feelings or sentiments. As to the local management, that is in the hands of inferior subordinates, every one at all acquainted with the real facts in the case knows perfectly well to how little weight this line of reasoning is entitled. The conditions stated are, on the contrary, exactly those in which such a machinery as that in use in Massachusetts would be peculiarly



Reactionary Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

Adams says that railroads cannot be tamed yet because they are still the defining force in society, however they could eventually be reined in with a policy of regulated combination. The goal should be stability and utility of rails to the public and business.

No comprehensive solution of the American railroad problem need, however, now or at any time, be anticipated from action of the government. The statesman, in a matter now upon his feet, he can but build with the materials he finds ready for his hand. He cannot call things into existence now, indeed, can he even greatly hasten their growth. If he is to succeed, he must have the conditions necessary to success. So far as the railroad system of this country is concerned in its relations to the government, everything is as yet dead in the formative condition. Nothing is ripe. That system is now, with far greater force and activity than ever before, itself shaping all the social, political and economical conditions which surround it. The final result is probably yet quite remote, and will be reached only by degrees. When it comes, also, it will necessarily work itself out, probably in a very commonplace way. The development will then unquestionably be found to have been correspondent, that is, consciously or unconsciously, the government on one side and the railroad system on the other will have worked towards each other. Whether travelling on lines nearly parallel, or which seem gently to converge or to sharply diverge, or even to run counter to each other, we may rest assured that, whether we see it or not, they are steadily in the United States, as in France, England and Germany, doing this now.

Hitherto the attempt has been to slow how far the process of governmental development has as yet gone in America towards this common ground. It is not much and can be briefly summarized. So far as legislation, pure and simple, is concerned, no progress at all has been made. The laws intended to abstractly solve the difficulties presented have been mere copies, whether intentional or not, of similar acts long since passed elsewhere, and the utter futility of which is denied by no one. Passing on to the more positive results, the essential fact that railroad corporations are amenable to the legislative power has been completely established in the West; while in the East the influence of publicity and the resulting force of public opinion as a power adequate to all necessary control of the railroad corporations have been tested to a certain extent. The real issue, however, has not yet been touched, for all that has yet taken place is little more than the skimming which precedes a decisive

combination of railroad companies, for the avowed purpose of controlling competition, might prove a most useful public agency. These persons control that railroad competition, if it has not already done its work, will have done it a time or two by no means remote. An enormous developing force, during the period of construction, its importance will be much less in the later periods of more stable adjustment. Under these circumstances, and recognizing the fact that this period of organization is now succeeding that of construction, these persons are disposed to see in regulated combination the surest, if not indeed, the only way of reaching a system in which the advantages of railroad competition may, so far as possible, be secured; and its abuses, such as waste, discrimination, instability, and bankruptcy, be greatly modified if not wholly gotten rid of. In conducting its traffic, they argue, each road or combination of roads is now a law unto itself. It may work in concert with other roads or combinations, or it may refuse to do so. It may make rates to one place, where it may think it for its interest that business should go, and may refuse to make them to another place where it is for its interest that business should not go. All this is essentially wrong. Yet the business community of America, from east to west of the country to the other, has been from the beginning so thoroughly accustomed to the extreme instabilities of railroad competition, that it has wholly lost sight of what its own interest requires. What, it needs a certainty—a stable economic transportation—something that can be relied on in all business conditions—a fixed quantity to the problem. That, of all results the most desirable, is now even looked upon with apprehension. There is an idea, the result of long habit, in the public mind, that, so far as transportation is concerned, property is to be secured through a succession of temporary local advantages—an unending cutting of rates. The idea of a great system of internal transportation at once reasonable, equitable, and certain—permitting traffic to flow and interchanges to be made just here and there at intervals of hours and solar diaries—never disappearing—rarely, and then only slowly, fluctuating—this is a conception very far removed from the reality, and it may well be doubted whether now it even commends itself when stated to the average man of business. He clings, on the



Reactionary Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27

Railroads need to be amenable to the law. A solution must force railroad companies to be legal, public and responsible, of which they were not at the time.

country, to the burden of inequality to which he is accustomed, and is inclined to doubt whether he could live without them. It is as if a mariner had become so habituated to a constant succession of squalls and storms, that he questioned whether it would be possible to satisfactorily navigate a ship in trade-winds; especially if the trade-winds blew for all. Accordingly, equal rates, no matter how reasonable, the moment they are applied are looked upon by the favored points of competition, like Chicago or New York, as in some way an outrage. These points have become so accustomed to discrimination against others and in their own favor that they regard it as a species of vested interest. Their boards of trade call upon their legislatures to secure it to them. They have even gone further than this, and presented the somewhat ludicrous spectacle of modern communities claiming that their own want of enterprise and wasteful methods of doing business should be prevented from bringing forth their legitimate results through an unending railroad war. So reasoned are they, in fact, with this idea, that it may safely be predicted that the principle of absolute freedom and strict impartiality in the management of the railroad system of America as a whole will only be reached as a result of long discussion and in the face of strenuous resistance. Meanwhile, until it can be reached, those composing the business public, as well as the stockholding class, must reconcile themselves as best they can to frequent repetitions on an increasing scale of those wild fluctuations and ruinous discriminations which have just been described in detail in the account of the railroad complications since 1873. Nothing of the sort exists in any other portion of the world.

If, however, any approach is ever to be made towards that ideal state of affairs which has just been suggested, it can apparently be made only in one way. The direct incident to substantially railroad competition must cease, and undoubtedly the first step towards getting rid of those abuses is to "reindeer" the railroad system throughout all its parts amenable to some healthy control. The present competitive chaos must be reduced into something like orderliness to law. Yet this apparently can only be effected when the system is changed into one orderly, confederated whole. To attempt to bring it about during an epoch of wars, and local pools, and

conflicts for traffic, would be as futile as it would have been to enact a code of laws, unsupported by force, for the government of the Scotch Highland clans in the sixteenth century, or a parcel of native African tribes now. A confederation, or even a general combination among all the railroad corporations having some degree of binding force, might, therefore, as has been suggested, not improbably prove the first step in the direction of a better and more stable order of things. But to lead to any results at once permanent and good this confederation must, in three respects, differ radically from everything of the same sort which has hitherto preceded it. It must be legal; it must be public; it must be responsible.

Tried by this standard, it is safe to say that none of the combinations now existing are consistent either with sound views of public policy, or have in them the elements of permanence. They are, in the first place, secret combinations of great public agencies in the next place, as respects the ends they have in view and the means they use to attain those ends, they are amenable to no law; and, finally, they are all in greater or less degree responsible even to public opinion. They fail, moreover, even to accomplish the one result which, if practically thought about, might justify their existence—they do not afford to the community a reasonable and equitable system of charges for carriage, permitting an uncheckered flow of travel and commerce, the continuance of which may with safety be entrusted upon. A local and makeshift character is apparent in them all, and is not ignored even by those who are parties to them.

Indeed, every disturbing element which has hitherto broken up other combinations is here in those now existing, the individuality of organization, the distinct separation of traffic, the armies of local freight agents, the extending of connections. While the process of pooling are going on and during the very periods of time, there is not a single considerable line in any one of the combinations which is not always anxiously looking about to strengthen itself in case of an ever-expected renewal of war. Under these circumstances, they will probably last only so long as the recollection of recent loss and the costly pressure of the last railroad war is fresh in the minds of

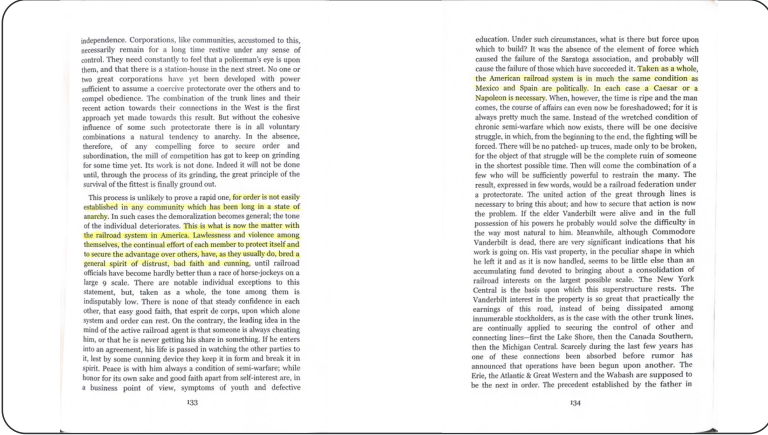


Reactionary Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27





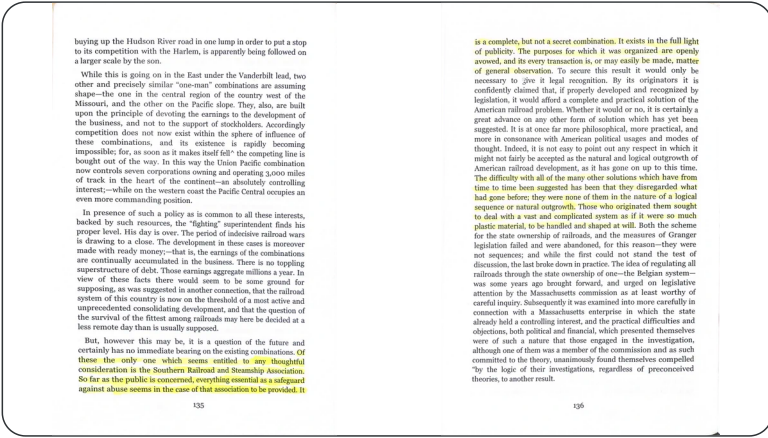
Railroads were in a state of anarchic war, which Adams says is comparable to the politics of Spain or Mexico. To this, Adams says, there is one solution: a Caesar or Napoleon is necessary.



1 1 2 258



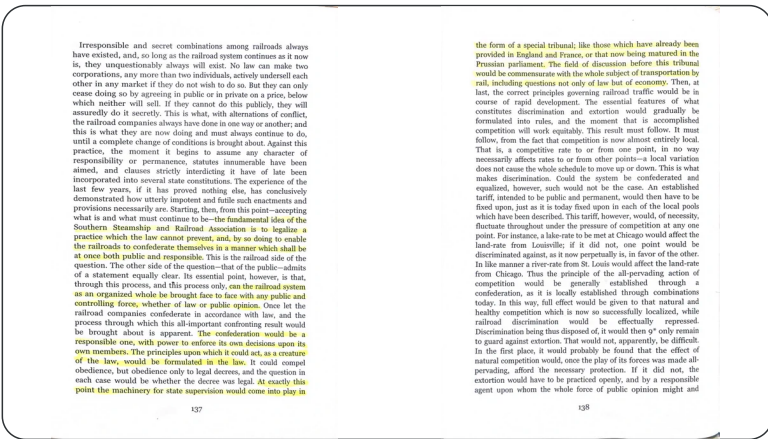
Reactionary Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27 ...
 The Southern Railroad is a potential model for the rest of the country: legal, open to public, responsible. Adams also remarks that the solution needs to be a natural outgrowth of the problem; theorycelling about how to control railroads would not be practically implementable.



1 1 38



Reactionary Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27 ...
 There would need to be a railroad confederation, accountable to the law and state government on behalf of all railroad lines in the country.



1 1 38



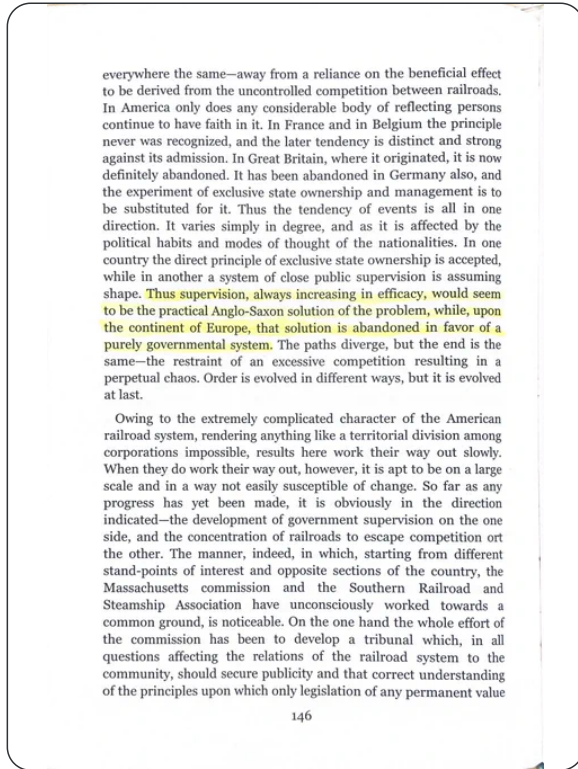
36



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



Adams says that governmental supervision is the solution of the Anglo-Saxon people to the railroad problem, whereas continental Europe took a much heavier handed approach using state power.



53



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



All in all, solid read from an Adams on an important subject.



2

45



Blotinus @bloatinus · Jun 27



"Rationalizing the railroads" was a big theme in the early days of the USSR



1

28



Reactionary_Retard @TomBess1783 · Jun 27



Its no wonder given how central railroads are to an industrial society.



1

20



Show replies