

Brave Capitalists

By Daniel De Leon

A number of our “Captains of Industry” met recently to consider the aspect of the pending war with Spain; they sat and talked; and the sum total of their joint efforts was a series of resolutions, in which this passage occurs:

“We do not shrink from the troubles, sacrifices and afflictions which war brings with it, whenever war is peremptorily demanded by the safety or honor of the republic.”

So bold a statement, uttered in broad daylight, causes one to inspect more closely the self-sacrificing pillars of patriotism who “do not shrink from the troubles, sacrifices and afflictions” that war brings with it, etc. In approaching the investigation, one expects to find men scarred with the marks of the late Civil War, at least men who stood the brunt of battle, and, even if they be no “generals,” or so we feel in approaching the veil that covers their past, to at least find them distinguished in the Commissary Department—a department that has furnished more generals and such to the square inch than any other.

Prominent among the resoluters we find ex-Gov. Levi P. Morton, Alexander E. Orr, J. Edward Simmons, Roswell P. Flower. Now, who are these gentlemen? What evidence have they ever given of “not shrinking from the troubles, sacrifices, afflictions,” etc., of war when the safety of the nation was at stake in '60-'65? Let us see.

Levi P. Morton bravely braved the troubles, afflictions, etc., of war by doing business, failing and starting a bank in New York—beyond the reach of troubles and afflictions.

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Roswell P. Flower self-sacrificingly got a substitute, stayed at home selling cheap jewelry, and, when he became governor, got a law passed that reimbursed him his substitute “troubles and afflictions.”

Alexander E. Orr and J. Edward Simmons placed all the real estate they could between themselves and the “troubles, afflictions,” etc., of war; to the motto, “’Tis sweet and proper to live for the fatherland,” they saw to it that they remained in good health; as health is predicated upon wealth, they gobbled up all of this that they could; and now they are ready to face the “troubles, afflictions,” etc., in similar way.

If war breaks out again, we shall have a repetition of the experience of ’60–’65: all the trouble, affliction and hardships will be rolled upon the shoulders of the working class; this class it is that will bleed during the war; and this class it is that, after the war, will have to stand the consequences of the industrial stagnation that will follow. During and after the war, the same as before it, the idle capitalist class will swagger with the “honors” and enjoy life on the spoils.

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