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The Oil Monopoly Plays No Favorites in the European War

REMARKS

OF

HON. JOHN M. COFFEE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 19, 1941

Mr. COFFEE of Washington. Mr. Speaker, we hear much about the patriotism of the industrialists and manufacturers of America. The President has told us that we are determined to befriend democracies and aid them in resisting invasion at the hands of aggressor nations. We have been led to believe that our country should, and is, standing as a unit in refusing to do business with Fascist governments, and in aiding democracies at all times.

With what amazement then do we learn the true situation. During World War No. 1, we knew that French, English, and German industrialists sold each other implements and supplies of war throughout the more than 4 years of bloody contest. The Nye committee showed that the munitions makers—the merchants of death—continued that shoddy business practice uninterruptedly thereafter. It appears that when these gentlemen found that wars were dying of inertia and inanition, they would send their best agents, provocateur to the respective belligerents and practice subtle, though effective, methods to foster and foment new enthusiasm for continuing the war. These gentlemen always utter oratorical philippics against peace. To them, war is a glorious sight. They heartily concur in the mouthings of young Mr. Mussolini and Count Ciano, Il Duce's son-in-law, when these noble

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souls pronounce pontifically that it is a beautiful sport to shoot down civilians and noncombatants from a war plane flying overhead. They are partners in the same mental bed with the late Gen. Frederick von Bernhardi, who wrote *Deutschland und der Nicht Krieg*, that war is a biological necessity and should be indulged in frequently by progressive nations as a means of disposing effectively of their surplus populations and thus solving their problems of unemployment.

Right now Standard Oil subsidiaries are carrying gasoline to both sides in the European war. They carry supplies to Britain, to Japan, and to Spain. In the latter country, they are reshipping to Italy and Germany; yet we are told that there is an embargo on the exportation of gasoline, scrap iron, and matériel of war to Japan. The sale of cotton to Nippon continues in unabated volume.

We considered loaning Fascist Spain \$100,000,000, evidently at the suggestion of the British Foreign Office, in the hope thereby to bribe Spain into neutrality and persuade that unhappy country not to become an active participant in the war on the side of the Axis Powers. Because of the tremendous furor raised in this country by such a loan, we decided instead to loan a similar sum to the Argentine Republic, while the Argentine incidentally loaned an equivalent amount of money and/or merchandise or its equivalent to Fascist Spain. A roundabout method was thus employed for achieving the same objective. No one can contend that helping Spain is helping a democracy or quarantining aggressors.

We have loaned \$100,000,000 of the taxpayers' money to the Republic of China to enable them to carry on their fight against Japan, but we continue to buy quantities of toys, fruit, and silk each year from Japan, and, more amazingly yet, are exporting in increased quantities to Japan. If that is befriending democra-

cies, I fail to comprehend the simple definition provided by the dictionary.

The Standard Oil tanker *Libby* recently made a trip to Cartagena in the United States of Colombia, where she loaded up with oil which she took to Free-town, West Africa, for British use. Having pumped out this oil at its destination, the *Libby* raced back to Venezuela, where at Carapito she loaded another cargo, which she took to the historic and beautiful harbor of Teneriffe in the Canary Islands, a possession of the Spanish Fascist state. Here the cargo of oil was transferred to tankers, one flying the Nazi flag of Germany and the other the emblem of Fascist Italy.

Teneriff in the Canary Islands is a very busy port these days. Standard Oil tankers are pulling in and out in regular order. When the *W. H. Libby* departed from that port, there were eight Italian and German tankers awaiting the opportunity to load cargoes sent to them from West Indian and South African oil companies, through the courtesy of American oil companies operating the ships under foreign flags and foreign names.

What a travesty. What a farce. Some people would sell out their country for the sake of profit. While we are training draftees for \$21 a month for the first 4 months of their service, the service which subjects them to military discipline for 24 hours a day, and, in many cases, requires them to live in drafty, ill-heated tents in winter's cold and soggy rain, we see "patriotic" industrialists fostering the shoddy business of selling war materials to our potential enemies. Now is the time for everyone to make a corresponding sacrifice. Let our wealthy businessmen and industrialists set the example. The Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion for 20 years have preached the gospel of "take the profit out of war." Let us demand that that objective be attained.