

Civil War – Propaganda Letter

To the People of Connecticut:

The undersigned, your fellow citizens, temporarily separated from you by the stern necessities of crushing the conspirators who have banded together to destroy our country, desire to address a few words to you in reference to the approaching State election.

The privilege of voting is denied us. Of this we do not complain. We assure you, however, that the 20,000 Connecticut soldiers now facing the enemy, feel an intense interest in the contest at home, and would make short work of this business could they reach the ballot box. For it looks as if Treason were lifting its viper head in old Connecticut – as if a wily enemy were making a desperate effort to render fruitless the great sacrifices of the past twenty months.

Since the first shot was fired at the flag on Fort Sumter, we have known neither party nor political creed. It was enough that a gigantic conspiracy had clutched our country by the throat, and was endeavoring to tear it limb from limb. Piracy on the high seas – Perjury, Theft, Robbery and Murder, on the land – thus they commenced this parricidal war against the Government they had so often sworn to support, and whose banner over them had been a banner of love. The contest has swollen to an appalling magnitude; but the issue is still the same. Shall the Nation put down the traitors, or the traitors put down the nation? We have but one party – OUR COUNTRY; - one creed – the triumph of that country over every armed foe.

You sent us here (did you not?) to bear onward the stainless folds of Connecticut's flag, side by side with the glorious Stars and Stripes, until perjured Secession should be ground to powder beneath the iron heel of War. And we will do it; but do not place us between two fires. Today treason is more dangerous in Connecticut than in Louisiana.

You promised us to stand by us and sustain this sacred cause, and make the name of every disloyal man a hissing and a by-word. But we are now told, that one Thos. H. Seymour is a candidate for the high office of Governor of Connecticut. Is this the same Thomas H. Seymour whose picture within two years past has been taken down from the walls of our Senate Chamber, because he sympathized with Southern Treason, and disgraced the long and illustrious line of Patriot Governors whose likenesses adorn that hall? Is this the same Thomas H. Seymour who a few years ago was sent Minister to Russia, and who now repays the Nation by encouraging its destroyers, and never lifting a finger to aid it in its life-and-death struggle? Is this the Thomas H. Seymour, whose military training and experience and the high honors he had received from the State of Connecticut, ought to have made him forever in leading her sons to victory; but who – either a traitor or a coward – has shamefully slunk away from his duty, and not only refused to fight himself, but has constantly endeavored to prevent and discourage others? Is this the Thomas H. Seymour who scornfully refused to attend a patriotic war-meeting, who has never lisped a word against the assassins who made war upon the Government, but has kept up an incessant growl against every measure devised by the Government, to vindicate its authority? Who has dared to denounce the government for sending provisions to Anderson and his immortal band – the starving heroes of Fort Sumpter [sic]- saying that it was “breaking faith with Southern troops?” Who hoped that we and

“all who enlisted in Connecticut might never return”? Whose letters and speeches are quoted with delight by the perfidious gang of usurpers whom he styles his “Southern Brethren!” Aye! HIS “Southern Brethren!” The pirates that burn our peaceful merchant ships! The guerrilla wolf-packs that stealthily murder our pickets at midnight! The conclave of demagogues that first plotted by fraud and force to ruin the country they could no longer rule, and now insult the civilization of the age by their barbarous and force of legislation at Richmond, and mock Heaven by their pretended piety? Let Cataline join his “Brethren!”

Has he ever repented of his fraternal sympathy for rebels? Has he ever proved false to them, as he has proved false to us? Has he in any moment of forgetfulness, said a patriotic word or done a patriotic deed during this war?

Other Northern allies of Rebellom we may forget; but Thomas H. Seymour, never. He has fallen “like Lucifer, never to rise again.” Such a man nominated for office! For office in Connecticut! For the highest office in Connecticut! Shame! Oh, Shame!

Do we write too strongly? It is the sound of traitor rifles that gives emphasis to our words. At this very moment the treacherous firing of Seymour’s friends upon our pickets, in violation of the rules of civilized warfare, is ringing in our ears; and another Connecticut father, son, or husband may have fallen a victim to this infernal Treason.

A Patriot above suspicion – our foremost patriot, ought to fill the Governor’s chair. We suggest no names. We care for no party. Away with political creeds and faction strifes in a day like this.

On the eve of battle, expecting every moment to receive orders to move against the entrenched traitors, we solemnly protest against the election of this chief of the nest of Connecticut Copperheads. We mean to defeat him and his “Southern Brethren” at Port Hudson. We ask you, voters of Connecticut, to complete the victory by defeating him and HIS Northern brethren at home. Let us make a clean sweep of the Secessionists; you, at the ballot box – we on the battlefield.

Note:

Thomas H. Seymour had been governor of the state of Connecticut from 1850 – 1853, when he resigned to accept the ambassadorship to the Imperial Court of Russia. He was a member of the Democratic Party. The infant Republican Party, first represented in the governor’s chair in Connecticut in 1857, held that position for the next ten years. In 1863, the year this letter was penned, the man running for the highest office was William A. Buckingham, (R), who sat from 1858 – 1866. Although the author of this letter claimed not to have any political motives, he most surely did. The relatively new Republican Party had become a force to reckon with when Abraham Lincoln ran successfully on their ticket for the highest office in the nation. It was a political high that was to make them the only real opposition to the Democratic Party, a position they retain to this day.

Seymour was not the only Democratic candidate to fall before the juggernaut of the Republicans during the Civil War period. Republican leaders, solely because of his political alignment with the Democratic Party, never called General Edward A. Phelps of Colebrook to lead his forces because they questioned his loyalty.