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THE CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE ARMY

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THE SOLDIER'S POWER ASSERTS ITSELF

Waller: "The army achieves its results, but at a terrific cost. It is not really possible to annihilate the will of the individual soldier; it is merely possible to force that private will to express itself in some other form, which is often a vicious one. The army technique breeds its own forms of resistance. The attempt to annihilate the individual engenders a particularly vicious form of individualism. The one-way flow of will from the superior to the inferior generates a counterwill which resists authority in all its forms. The soldier traditionally shirks his duty; he "soldiers" on the job. The use in common speech of the words "soldiering" and "regimenting" is eloquent of popular recognition of these military vices. And 'passing the buck'...is widely known as the 'old army game.' After a time, the soldier spends his mental energy in figuring out ways to shirk his duty; it is as natural that he should do so as that a prisoner should try to escape from prison..."

In this paragraph Waller modifies his earlier statement about the army annihilating the individual's will. The army controls the individual will, as was pointed out before. But the soldiers express their individuality in "soldiering" on the job, in refusing responsibility - soldiering is a mechanism of opposition to the imperialist war in an individual manner. Soldiers find means to "resist authority," not in all its forms, but in the form of the army orders. Soldiers are not anti-authoritarian anarchists. Many are splendidly organized and disciplined men who show their hatred of capitalist military authority by shirking and soldiering. This is an individual resistance to war, though all lower ranks of the army resist - individually. The war experience teaches them to resist collectively. Then it is not merely a question of resisting military authority, but of crushing that authority, and supplanting it with a rank and file soldier authority - a collective authority based on selection and control of leadership by the soldier mass. The soldier's will has a part in selection of leadership and direction of policy.

Significantly it is as natural to shirk military duties and resist military authority, "as that a prisoner should try to escape from prison." The comparison is deserved. For the army is a prison, in which millions are jailed behind camp walls, obeying veritable prison regulations. The prisoners' desire to escape is strong. The soldier prisoner's desire is far stonger, and in addition is a formidable social force - when released. This force is suppressed by the officer, but generates and

grows within the confines of army discipline, until when soldiers break the chains of discipline they create enormous explosive force. No wonder they become the revolutionary leaders of millions.

WAR AND SEX, GAMBLING, DRINKING

Waller: "As to sex morality, anything is permitted except homosexuality. Naturally the soldiers do not expect to keep promises made to women. The soldier's life does not permit either privacy or fastidiousness in the sexual life; therefore he can visit a prostitute and afterwards stand in line with a hundred others while waiting for a prophylactic."

On his sexual life a soldier is probably treated worse than on almost any other aspect of his life. The War Department physically separates him from women. As a result he stores up sexual energy. When he does get a brief leave of a day or two this sexual energy is dissipated in the only normal way left to the soldier: prostitutes. This is true for two principal reasons in the soldier's case: the army does not give soldiers sufficient money to take out non-prostitutes; the army does not give soldiers sufficient time in which to see other women, and it frowns on marriage (see below). There are other reasons. But all are based on the simple army separation of men from women. This is a severe blow to both sexes. One of the chief sources of difficulty with soldiers is this separation. The army attitude when soldiers need women is to give them more ping pong games, more baseball. No amount of plays, ping pong, swimming and U.S.O. forms of recreation can possibly substitute for the natural sexual urge of soldiers. This reactionary army approach to sex is viciously inhuman.

One of the fruits of the army war against sex is perversion in some soldiers, as frequently happens to men in prison or other places where men are segregated from women. In a larger number of soldiers there is little opportunity to get to town and see women of any kind. The ground is laid for all sorts of minor mental disturbances resulting from severe sexual repression. This is given as one of the chief causes of the war psychoses which afflict hundreds of thousands of soldiers, resulting in insanity for untold numbers during the war, and especially in later life after the war.

To properly appreciate sexual degeneration and its effect on the minds and bodies of soldiers, it is necessary to repeatedly focus attention not merely on the thousands who become emotionally unbalanced in the war, but on the hundreds of

thousands who suffer all the rest of their lives, and their children who, psychologists claim, are also affected. The ramifications of the mental diseases produced by the medieval attitude of the U.S. Army toward sex are as numberless as they are degrading. In few other aspects of soldier life does the destructive character of the capitalist army system reveal itself as in the war against sex.

It is particularly important to fully expose the army war against sex for the added reason that such exposure illustrates the defects and evils of the army system as a whole to thousands who would not be able to understand the army system if explained from any other angle. Sex is an excellent way to begin explaining the army.

Officer control of the soldier's actions was so complete and thorough that up to January 1942 weddings were permitted only by permission of the officer (and then not at all, as soldiers were forbidden to marry). The soldier could be punished if he married against the officer's command. But so many married in spite of War Department restrictions that by officially lifting the ban on marriage, the War Department recognizes it had failed. The individual will of the soldier had smashed another army regulation, and the war against marriage was another defeat for the army High Command.

Waller writes: "Of course there is no taboo upon such ordinary vices as drink and gambling."

There is a taboo on drinking and gambling. The War Department outlaws this. But though officially banned, the soldiers drink and gamble, mainly because THERE IS NOTHING ELSE TO DO in the long, dreary days of army life. Soldiers stationed in town either do not drink at all or drink very little as they are able to find other amusements and pleasure than drinking and gambling. With their few pennies soldiers cannot purchase anything because most of them never get to a town to do so. Gambling is the natural result. As to drinking, as in their attitude toward sex, soldiers have only fleeting moments of pleasure and, most important, of escape from the horror and brutality of their existence. It is no lie that many soldiers go around drunk as often as possible to be able to forget their troubles.

Singularly enough, on the battlefield, drinking and other forms of doping is not only permitted, but it is fostered, as many reports from the battles for Europe (and of World War I) indicate. In the last war it was found that men however well trained

in killing find difficulty in going over the top. Drinking at the last minute partially, momentarily, drowns these inhibitions. It is a truism of military life that no war can be won without hard drinking. The case of General Grant who could not go into battle without heavy drinking is illustrative of this conception. Grant had powerful scruples against killing in any form, and only strong drink could dull this human feeling.

WHAT SOLDIERS THINK OF PRIVATE PROPERTY

Waller: "The sense of property is completely metamorphosed in the army. Partly this is a matter of the want of goods and the lack of money... The soldier has little respect for the property of others."

What is meant by the "sense of property" is difficult to understand, particularly since the majority of soldiers' relation to property is one of non-ownership. The lack of goods and the lack of money produce two main reactions: on the one hand, petty stealing of the personal property of other soldiers and civilians. Looting is an old soldier custom. The moral sense of right and wrong - that is, the fear of punishment if capitalist property is violated - is lost. On the other hand, the soldier is receiving his essential needs from the government. He buys no food, clothing, or shelter. All this is furnished him. The government becomes not merely his employer, but his source of all his essential needs (in however small quantities.) The soldier sees the value of a centralized source of distribution of the necessities, though he rapidly learns that the capitalist government uses mass distribution for a purpose far removed from concern for the welfare and the class interests of the soldier. Soldiers lose the dependence on money. They become enemies of property. They hate police who are protectors of property. They hate the Military Police (soldiers have a vulgarity far more expressive than this which aptly describes the MPs) who are defenders of property.

As the soldiers travel - and the army built for OFFENSE is doing more traveling than all previous American armies - his experience broadens, his attitude toward property develops. He learns gradually - but thoroughly - that a tiny minority of the population (not his relatives, friends, and buddies) are making huge sums of money from their property in war materials, and that his fighting is making these investments safe for them. The soldier sees that economies have developed beyond national boundaries, that the basic cause of the war for the world is this development of economy beyond national boundaries.

which have failed to expand because the world is already divided up among various expanding economies.

The soldier achieves an international outlook - (in the case of sailors it is a well known fact that because of their wide travelling experience they are probably the most enlightened section of the proletariat) by travelling, fighting, starving, - and thinking.

The airplane, steamship, tank and auto, annihilate distance, and show him how close and interconnected are all countries. He sees the vast flow of goods from one country to another. He sees the advantages of standardized products, and of standardized production; first he sees this for war materials, then for other goods. He meets people of various languages, and achieves a method of speaking and associating with them. He learns there are other peoples in existence besides Americans, that they feel, think, live and die. In many cases he is fighting and dying side by side with Negroes, Chinese, Filipinos, whom at home he would shun, ignore, and refuse to be seen with.

WAR IS THE GREAT LEVELLER. Incipient American nationalism will receive its death blow in the war.

In the great Crusades of the Middle Ages, soldiers from all over Europe traveled to the middle East. They gained wide experience of the latest technical developments in that region. They brought back materials, language, culture.

In the present world struggle we see in part a duplication of the Crusades in the form of the rapid acquisition of worldly experience by the soldiers.

War forces the soldier to think internationally.

No one can better appreciate the significance of the early revolutionary slogan: "all men are brothers" than soldiers whose outlook has forcibly been torn out of the narrow confines of nationalism and focussed on the sufferings of the nations of the world.

From a narrow contempt for property we can thus trace in the soldier's mind the development to the most enlightened international world attitude. It may seem peculiar to thus link up internationalism with the simple attitude toward private ownership, but the soldier who finds he is being shot by Japanese and Germans and others using American shells, guns, oil, bullets,

and who in turn is using "foreign" inventions to crush other soldiers - this soldier links up these things.

THE PARALYSIS OF THE OFFICER CASTE

Waller: "Officers are under orders; they, too, are taught to believe that the man giving the commands is always right. There is little or no flow of ideas from the bottom to the top of the officer ranks, and, since one can come to the upper ranks only after long service in the lower, there is little creativeness on any level."

The whole army is a vast bureaucracy. Center of this bureaucracy is the officer caste, which is paralyzed by the mechanics of bureaucracy. The case of General Billy Mitchell who was court-martialed for urging the expansion of the air force indicates how utterly impossible it is for new ideas to be taken up by the high command in time. "The spectacular example made of General William Mitchell has so thoroughly succeeded in stamping out any traces of critical expression that the Regular Army has become as docile as the most sternly silenced totalitarian nations." (Major Wheeler-Nicholson, in "Battle Field of the Republic," 1940, a remarkable critique of certain features of the imperial army of America.) General De Gaulle in France suffered a similar eclipse. This from the standpoint of the capitalists' own class interests and war policy. The incompetence and un-receptiveness to new ideas is one of the chief if not the basic weakness of the officer caste, and thereby of the entire army disciplinary system based on class FORCE, or social fear. The inability of the officer caste to function in any other way than that prescribed by the orthodox regulations robs them of initiative of maneuverability, of the advantage of surprise. When soldiers begin to settle their score with the officers they will first complete the paralysis of the officer caste, so that - as in all revolutions - it simply will crumble to pieces. Unable to change plans, or grasp new ideas, or to cope with soldiers in any other way than by brute suppression, the officer caste is easily the central and most vulnerable feature of the army system. That is why it is so important to permeate it, demoralize it, break it up, win over some elements to the revolution.

Ponder well this phrase: "Officers are under orders"! They do not think for themselves. They do not lead. They WAIT for orders. They are thus robbed of initiative by the very army system itself. In this lies their fatal weakness, and the fatal weakness of every capitalist governmental bureaucracy. Red tape, incompetence, stupidity are all the overt signs of decay.

Other observers strengthen this conclusion. General Wavell ("Generals and Generalship" 1941) in comparing the versatility of politicians to officers, makes the telling remark: "The mind of the soldier (he means: officer), who commands and obeys without question, is apt to be fixed, drilled, and attached to definite rules." This is entirely true, so much so that many military observers compare the officer caste to the priestly caste.

In battle the results of such leadership are disastrous. Even the unsatisfactory results of the U.S. Army 1941 Louisiana war maneuvers were explained by General Brees of the Army High Command: "In most cases the fault lies with our senior officers."

They just weren't competent leaders. If the General representing the High Command considers the senior officers - the generals and colonels - at "fault," that is, incompetent, what is the soldier to think whose life is in the hands of these incompetents!

A favorite expression which illustrates officers' incompetence relates to officers' ignorance of the orders they sign. The soldiers say: "He'll sign anything." And the officer does.

Many things make officers and senior officers incompetent. Chief in Wheeler-Nicholson's opinion is that "The American lieutenant's promotion depended upon time and age alone.

"By keeping on the 'good side' of seniors, obeying regulations, and avoiding the breaking of the more serious of the Ten Commandments, he can achieve the grade of colonel without ever having had a real test of his fitness to command." (Suckholeism)

Rising by age and favoritism alone, a second loonie eventually secures his brigadier generalcy. "He is very likely by now to be a full-fledged bureaucrat, ready to create more papers, forms, and red tape." (Wheeler-Nicholson) The army bureaucracy has completely corrupted him, made him a creature of the bureaucracy. His mind is sterile. Final proof of the lack of officer efficiency is that in the efficiency records of officers "there was no place provided for recording an officer's tactical ability as shown by handling his unit on field exercises or maneuvers." The test of the officer is BATTLE, but this test is not applied to the American officer.

This has led to the phenomenon of sterility of American military thought. Says Wheeler-Nicholson: "The vacuity of the

American military mind under our present methods is evidenced by the almost complete lack of any written contribution to military science by American army officers. Admiral Mahan has no counterpart in the army. Our officer corps has never produced any military writings such as those of the German von Clausewitz and von der Goltz, the French Marshal Foch, the British Colonel Repington and Colonel Henderson."

This includes that newspaper hero General Douglas MacArthur. Among military authorities it is generally agreed that the only great military mind produced in America - which heretofore has not been a militarist nation - was the Confederate General, Stonewall Jackson, one of the greatest military tacticians and masters of the basic principles of warfare.

Refusal of the High Command to adopt a competitive system of officer selection stems from the officer caste's fear that competition for promotion would expose its incompetence. Reserve officers are nearly all incompetent, as Wheeler-Nicholson's analysis shows: "It is either criminal or stupid to delude the American public with the idea that these Reserve officers... are a rock of strength to our national defense... Actually, the great majority of them had had less training than is considered necessary in the German army to make a good private soldier." In practice the High Command has found the 100,000 reserve officers were practically a hindrance to the development of the mass army of World War II. Only as a last resort did the War Department open the officer ranks to men who fitted rigid physical, mental, and most important of all SOCIAL requirements.

The sterility of the tradition-bound High Command was broken historically only by the rise of new social classes to power, and the consequent rise of new leaders to represent these classes. The revolutionist is free from the restrictions which limit the leaders of this old order. So noted an authority on (air) warfare, William B. Ziff (in his "The Coming Battle For Germany," p. 256) in comparing the abilities of the defense-minded General Gamelin, Commander of the defeated French Army, with the military achievements of a Trotsky, says:

"As far as capacity is concerned, the exact opposite (of Gamelin's limited theories and actions) may be true, as when an inspired dialectician like Trotsky, unencumbered by any great amount of classic military knowledge, succeeds in leading a rabble to victory over the best trained tacticians in Europe." This is a tribute not merely to the ability of Trotsky but is an indictment of the incompetence of the capitalist General

Staffs. The Red Army even under Stalin has shown itself superior to the German General Staff, in strategy and tactics, and this despite an almost fatal industrial inferiority. (The German General Staff is the most advanced among imperialist powers). Of course, Ziff's statement is, inadvertently, a tribute also to the "rabble", which used not only military, but also social weapons of class solidarity (fraternisation) to defeat the imperialist armies.

The very best of imperialist military theoreticians admit the seriousness of the inability of the High Command to change.

De Gaulle shows how imperialist army based on conformity to tradition "instinctively fears anything that tends to modify its structure."

The rigidity of the military mind is demonstrated by Pendleton Herrig: "We know that all professions develop rigidities." Particularly true of militarism.

The militarist subservience to the past is ably attested to by Alexander Severus: "There is hardly an aspect of military life which does not display an amazing collection of carefully preserved antiquities."

Literally dozens of examples of "carefully preserved antiquities" can be shown.

Waller: "The entire routine of army existence in the officer ranks contributes to the sclerosis of the army as a social system. The routinization of life, the emphasis upon ceremony and appearance, upon externals, the personal disorganization of the army officer in time of peace, the hierarchical system, the seniority system of promotion, the maddening slowness of promotion, lack of encouragement for originality and initiative, the freedom of military thought from vitalizing influences from the outside, emphasis upon past rather than future wars, the PREJUDICES OF CASTE AND CLASS unmodified by knowledge of or contact with the larger society and the changing world... contempt for the ideas of civilians - all these things conspire to make the army officer unduly conservative."

Of all the remarkable statements of this bourgeois writer, probably none is so loaded with crystal clear analysis as this paragraph. First he shows the superficiality of the officer caste:

Ceremony - parades, fancy dress balls.
Appearance - peacock strutting.

Externals - "uniform not the man" concept that all one has to do is look like an officer.

Disorganization of officers in peacetime - only partially caused by civilian frowning on military.

Hierarchical system - the opposite of democracy, stereotyped, incapable of change, characteristic of decaying bureaucracy.
Seniority system of promotion - by age, not ability.

And above all these the PREJUDICES OF CASTE AND CLASS refusing to be influenced by the outside world. The officer is "conservative." There is no more conservative group in capitalist society than the officer caste.

Many times prominent military writers have pointed out that for example, the army medical system is far behind the latest civilian developments, as is the quartermaster, engineering, ordnance, and other departments and services. The army system moves rigidly, dogmatically. Experiment is forced on it.

The basis of the system is POLITICS. The army is ridden with politics, being the creature of politics. See the hue and outcry over retiring senile generals, fat like pigs, living in Spanish-American war days. Even from the standpoint of the best interests of the capitalist class the politics of the army prevents emergence of younger leadership. The senior officers of the American Army average close to 60 years of age, compared to the 46 years of the German army. In the case of the American high officers this long age is most remarkable because of the sharp contrast 60 years makes with the brief life of a soldier!

The politics which is the army is based on the social fact that officers come from the upper classes. It is a profound error to say officers come from the capitalist class. This class never does its own fighting. Even the bourgeois revolutions were made by other classes - the petty capitalists and the lower masses - and utilized by the capitalists who were strong enough to seize state power. It is better to say that the capitalist class obtains its thousands of officers from the middle classes who wish to rise in the capitalist world, and are therefore willing servants of the wealthy. Who controls the politics of the country, controls the leading stratum of the army. Every lower stratum merely follows orders of the top. We can see better now that what makes the army officer "unduly conservative" is not only the army system itself, but the fact that the officers represent the class interests of the ruling CONSERVATIVE class. Waller does not emphasize this central point of the army system: the army is a class army; the officers are representatives of the capitalist class; the mass of the army comes from the oppressed classes.

A study of the class origin of West Point Cadets (principal source of Regular Army officers) shows the overwhelming majority came from the middle class, only a bare few from the capitalist class. It is no lie to state that the rulers of America do not consider the army a career for their sons, but considers army service socially beneath their dignity. The aim of capitalist society is money and power. The capitalist class has this already. The army does not give its sons money. To the petty bourgeois, the army gives money and an increased sense of power, and opens the high road to more of each. Reserve officers also come from the middle class, as the lower classes do not have the money to send their sons to college. It is wise to bear in mind that these middle class officers have completely taken over the capitalist ideology, and that the middle class has always been the "mass" base of the government and chief source of officers.

The selection of officers in the American revolution of 1776-87 was not autocratic as it is today. Officers in many cases were elected by the soldiers and were responsible to them (Ganoe, History of U.S. Army). "Washington...had the special task of making and unmaking officers. He eliminated as far as possible the democratic process of selection and ELECTION and in its stead employed his own authority as general." (Vogt "History of Militarism" p. 102). The masses who supported the revolution demanded and obtained the right of election and control over officers. Later, these masses were disarmed, and their control over officers crushed.

In the French revolution of 1789 the new revolutionary army was thoroughly democratic. The law of 1790 provided "that everyone had to start at the bottom and rise necessarily through each grade... The elective principle was introduced in the promotion of French officers and noncoms." (Vogt, History of Mil.) Vogt, incidentally, opposes the election of officers.

Waller: "In sum we may say that the social system of the army is one of dominance and subordination made bearable by social distance."

It is false that "dominance and subordination" of the soldier mass by the officer caste is "made BEARABLE by social distance." The officers would like it to be that way. Their approach to soldiers is like the approach to the untouchables in India, or the negro in the South. But this does not become "bearable" to the soldier merely because of "social distance." Social distance is basically class distinction, class antagonism, class struggle.

No amount of "distance" makes this bearable to the soldier. As Waller elsewhere points out, especially in his conclusion, the individual will of the soldier asserts itself through and despite all the "dominance and subordination" efforts to drown it out. In sum we may say that this analysis of the social system of the army is descriptive of the facts, but not analytical of them.

HOW WAR DESTROYS THE ARMY

Waller: "The process of levying and training a large civilian army puts great strain upon the army system. There is a shortage of officers in both commissioned and non-commissioned ranks. The army's caste system comes dangerously close to breaking down. In the peace-time army, the caste system works fairly well because there is in fact a great social gap between officers and men. Under war conditions this tends to be less true."

The war forces the raising of a large army, the arming of many millions of workers, their training in the use of arms. The large army in turn places the previously stabilized officer-domination-over-the-soldier relationship in a rapid state of flux, in which the soldier is constantly beating more and more strongly on the officer's hold on him. The officer caste system suffers from taking fairly large numbers of elements from the upper strata of the proletariat and the lower petty bourgeoisie into the officer caste. These have largely forsaken their class for petty advancement. (Where else would the War Department get the 90,000 officers they need in this war for an army of over five million men?) But these go with the stronger class. When the tide changes and the proletariat is on the move - in its own class interests - these new officers, the 90 day wonders, will possibly be of considerable use to the revolutionary soldiers. The raising of an army of millions of men forced hundreds of changes in the American Army: for example, saluting in town was abandoned, as the soldiers ignored the officers there. The War Department recognized the situation by "allowing" soldiers the right to salute or not as they saw fit. And soldiers saw fit not to salute. A big breach in the officer caste system had been created under pressure of the lower depths.

Waller: "When the actual fighting begins, the ritual of the army undergoes rapid simplification. No longer does the private ask the permission of the non-com before speaking to the captain. Salutes are often overlooked; the salute becomes a real mark of respect to officers whom the men admire. They salute the man and not the uniform. NATURAL LEADERS APPEAR AMONG

THE MEN, and the men are apt to pay as much attention to them as to their officers. Once the men have tasted blood, it is not easy to get them into the training-camp and parade-ground state of mind again. There is more than humor in the statement that war certainly plays hell with the army."

On the field of battle the ceremonies, externals, and deadening slowness of the red tape (bureaucracy) system face the crucial test. And they fail. After all the long months of mentally beating soldiers over their heads with clubs in an attempt to make them robot killers, the soldier raises his head ("individual will" to use Waller's expression) and with one fell blow of his powerful mind and courageous heart, dashes the entire capitalist caste system aside. Gone is the petty ritual of approaching the officer caste through the intermediation of a noncom. Social distance is bridged; the men press more closely on the officer, who is in a painful minority among armed soldiers. Saluting in blackouts, in fast moving situations, on fast moving trucks, tanks, planes, in tactical situations - saluting is meaningless in all these places where the hand and the eye have more important things to do than bow and scrape and cringe before the master, the officer. In the American army maneuvers of 1941 saluting in the field was the exception. From lack of water, the High Command had to permit the men to go unshaven, often unwashed. Clothing was not cleaned. There were no cleaners, and little money. In battle the situation is far worse. The statement "WAR CERTAINLY PLAYS HELL WITH THE ARMY" is even better expressed by the Russian Grand Duke who admitted he hated war because "War spoils the armies." ("History of Mil." by A. Vagts, p. 13)

The "parade ground state of mind" is left far behind once the men have participated in bloody combat, and see the foolishness of this fancy ritual, its uselessness for combat purposes.

And like a beacon stabbing its penetrating light into a black sky, "NATURAL LEADERS APPEAR AMONG THE MEN." These leaders have developed from drafted political elements of from workers whom the war has pushed to class consciousness. They have proved themselves in battle. They have shown initiative, courage, intelligence, their fitness to survive and to lead. The men "pay as much attention to them as to their officers." These are the men who will do great work in the army for the revolutionary movement, men who have risen from the ranks to positions not of caste-appointed leadership, but of NATURAL, lower class leadership. No capitalist official appoints these soldier leaders. They rise out of the soldier's struggles. And they will lead

the soldiers in eliminating the artificial, appointee "leadership" of the officer caste.

These natural leaders are the equivalent of the worker Bolsheviks who arose in the Russian Army and population and led the struggle to overthrow Czarism. This is contrary to the false impression that the Russian revolution was "spontaneous" and without leadership. It had NATURAL leadership FROM THE RANKS. (See Trotsky "History of Russian Revolution" chapter on "Who Led February Insurrection?") The disorganization of the capitalist army is not done spontaneously or anarchistically, or in a disorganized manner. It is a solid fact of class warfare that the disorganization of the capitalist army is accomplished in an ORGANIZED way, by trained and organized revolutionists, by organized class warriors!

Waller:

"At the present time, modifications of the army system are also being forced by changing technologies...there is nothing very military in the business of overhauling airplane motors, and the orthodox military procedures are likely to interfere with such necessary jobs. As the army comes to use more and more machines, it must devise new social techniques to handle men who are technicians and mechanics rather than simple soldiers."

The increasing mechanization of the army calls for a majority of highly skilled workers to work on planes, tanks, guns, and other instruments of war. The War Department estimates it requires 18 to 20 men behind the lines to keep one man in the front lines equipped for battle at all times. Civilians rarely appreciate that half of this number of men comes from the ranks of army mechanics and technicians. The "simple soldiers" who know how to walk in formation and shoot a rifle are being replaced by the mechanics and technicians -- skilled workers.

Speed, speed, speed -- is the law of the blitzkrieg and of the total war of which blitzkrieg is a part. The "orthodox military procedures" militate against speed and efficiency; they "interfere with such necessary jobs."

Skilled technicians are disciplined and organized by the process of production itself; and the repressive military discipline serves not to help production, but to hinder it. Imagine airplane mechanics stopping work every few minutes to salute one of the hundreds of officers in army air fields!

These mechanics are not only organized and disciplined by production but are many of them staunch union members forced into the army, used to a higher standard of living, and the rights of labor. On their shoulders rests much of the burden of disorganizing the old imperialist army and building the new revolutionary army.

A decisive aspect of the change in military procedure forced by changing technology is:

The mechanics and other skilled workers are all of them well trained, intelligent. They know their planes, tanks, guns better than any officers. The saluting and other subservient forms of disciplinary domination in past armies were based on the officer's mental, social SUPERIORITY over the soldier. Today the soldier knows far more than the officer about the instruments of war, because the officers have been largely divorced from the process of production, repair and handling of machines, and retains the supervisory function. The attitude toward the officer who is not superior in knowledge, is thereby changed from the beginning. "The American soldier's...wonder at the less capable of the 190 day wonders is equalled only by his whole-souled contempt for an officer whose brains and ability do not match the marks of rank upon his shoulders." (Wheeler-Nicholson) Soldiers look upon officers in such cases, as panty-waists rich-bitch sons out to make a name for themselves over the soldier's dead body, and in the process escape the horror existence which going into the ranks entails. Respect for officers ignorant of technology is in the nature of the American worker excluded. Can such stupid officers lead skilled workers? No. This links with the point that many functions of the army -- overhauling airplane motors, fixing tanks, repairing trucks and guns--could be done faster, better, more economically by industry. The new revolutionary army, based on the productive unit, will utilize this conception. Significantly among unskilled workers in line organizations of the army, the old time army discipline of mental brow-beating is as strong as ever, always stronger than among the skilled soldiers.

"His (modern infantryman) life is practically filled with fetching and carrying heavy loads, and with performing hard labor of one sort or another whilst actual fighting belongs to the rarer happenings in his much plagued existence. However, just because the activity of the modern infantryman in war time is taking on more and more the character of work the soldier is inclined to compare his lot as a worker at

home, and to find similarities which officers are usually anxious to ignore." (Warfare, by Ludwig Renn). Most soldiers labor with their hands. The army is also a huge labor force, on a concentration camp basis.

The U.S. Army knows only one way to handle ALL soldiers, skilled and unskilled: smash their wills into one mold by punishment. This will not work with American workers. The High Command's inability to handle masses in any but the totalitarian way is its own doom. The German General Staff faced with the same problem scrapped the old Prussian discipline's worst features, as W-N pointed out before. For example, the Germans allow all privates to salute one another, an extension into the Army of the incessant Heil Hitler salute of both civilians and soldiers, part of the deification of Hitler. (see page 10)

The U.S. Army with its system of grades and ratings to keep soldiers divided up and competing among themselves has attempted to meet the problem of keeping the more skilled soldiers in line, with their latest technician ratings. Under the old army (pre-1942) system of grades and ratings, generally the skilled soldier did a skilled job, and had no authority over men, though this was not too clear a proposition. Under the system of 6 classes of specialists, a specialist first class made more money than a corporal and as much money as a sergeant, but had no authority, whereas the corporal and sergeant had. This discrepancy is now eliminated. Under the new "simplified" ratings (only three grades of Technicians instead of six classes of specialists) the technician ranks below the noncommissioned officer receiving the same pay of that grade, e.g. a Technician Third Class, receives the same pay of that of a Staff Sergeant. The Staff Sergeant has disciplinary authority. The Technician has no such authority. The War Department has removed the technician from any close connection with disciplinary functions of non-commissioned officers, and has restricted them to the highly skilled jobs. In other words, it has reduced their function to one of skilled labor, and thus has attempted to lighten the discipline over them. This sounds complicated, and it is on paper, and even more so in life. The War Department will never solve this problem.

"War produces revolution because it weakens the influence of the mores," says Waller.

In plain English "mores" means a combination of moral standards, customs, traditions. Since we are living in capitalist society the "mores" are capitalist mores--not those of

the oppressed masses. The mores are weakened by war because war is the most violent form of scrapped for thou must kill. Similarly with all the eternal truths of capitalism. Human decency so believed and beloved of bourgeois apologists is scrapped. In the army and in civilian life, crimes against property multiply. The mores' chief use was in bringing social pressure to bear on the underprivileged to make them respect property. War unlooses this grip of the mores on the minds of the mass. Moral standards in re sex are considerably looser for a larger section of the population, whereas before the war a degree of moral looseness was permitted only the very wealthy. Money could counteract the pressure of the capitalist mores. Soldiers are more blunt and outspoken in their manner towards women, as women of necessity are towards soldiers. The war creates a contempt for human life in many at first, and later, a deep respect for this most precious heritage of nature.

Looking at the mores from the revolutionary point of view, we conclude that the weakening of the capitalist mores is in actuality a weakening of capitalist control of the minds of the mass of the population, including the soldiers. The old method of ruling our brains and thereby our bodies no longer functions properly. And we, in turn, will not stand for the old symbols which so vividly express the bankruptcy of the moral ideals of decadent exploitative society, like "war to end war", "save the world for democracy," and similar tripe.

Waller:

"War produces widespread poverty, which acts as a solvent of all existing institutions. The object of economic warfare is to starve the enemy into submission. Its basic conception is that if a man is hungry enough, and his wife and children are hungry, he will revolt...When that security is gone, he becomes dangerous to the established order."

The British blockade is designed to starve Germany into submission. The German submarine warfare aims to starve Britain. Thus are all the achievements of civilization utilized to starve millions and subject them to imperial masters. No oppressed class in history has not fought starvation. But it is a gross error to think starvation alone will drive a man to revolt, and a historical calamity to imagine successful revolutions can arise from starvation alone. Starvation will make men foes of "all existing institutions" (compare to the concluding words of the Communist Manifesto: "overthrow of all existing social institutions," of the

bourgeoisie, which is more the point as the starving man is certainly not opposed to his union or political party which defends him.) Starvation is needed to make men fight. Many European peoples are starving today.. Yet there is no widespread movement of open war against Hitlerism by them.

Men have to see that an opportunity exists to WIN their fight, and to have created an organizational apparatus to lead their fight and point out the way to win. This exists when they see the government has been weakened, and can no longer hold them in check. There is little doubt that the European peoples know their governments cannot feed them, but so long as these governments have atomised the proletariat by crushing its organizations, and maintain and extend a monstrous police system, uprising is still not on the order of the day. When these governments become weakened at the front by defeat in the war, at home by the pressure of the workers for bread and the peasants for land--the way opens before the great lower masses.

Though starvation alone will not bring about a successful revolution, it is a compelling historical fact that every starving class comprising the majority of the population HAS CREATED THE CLASS ORGANIZATION which alone has successfully led previous struggles to overthrow exploiting systems of society! And out of the starving millions of the capitalist world another organization will be created by the mighty hands of the toiling masses to lead their struggle.

Waller:

"War exacerbates all existing social struggles. It begins, of course, by having just the opposite effect, by producing a heightened sense of social solidarity. But a long war ends by producing great embittering of class relations, by setting the...rich and the...poor at one another's throats."

Thus far we have shown in conjunction with Waller how the class struggle continues in the army. Now we are come to the point where this class struggle in the army and in the civilian population begins to rise and turn in favor of the lower masses. In his entire passage on how war produces revolution Waller approaches the central core of the concept of the revolutionary situation and the strategy of revolutionary defeatism. His most estimable virtue is that he can see some of the important ramifications of this world problem. His sharp vision is shown by the statement that war produces a superficial national unity at first--"social solidarity". In this period the class struggle is submerged by government repression and connivance with the false labor leaders, succeeding

between them in bottling up the expanding power of the mass. In the army there are no false labor leaders as there are no unions. This period is supplanted by a fresh outbreak of tremendous organized class struggles, "great embittering of class relations," in which the struggle becomes a showdown FOR THE WAR or FOR THE REVOLUTION--who shall rule becomes the question. The relentless pressure of the war day after horrible day "exacerbates all existing social struggles." The swift rise in the cost of living, the overpowering increase in income and other taxes, the inflation of currency and its consequent lowering of the real wages of labor, the longer hours of labor, the cutting of production of consumer goods, the denial of civil liberty (workers' rights), and the visible destruction of sons, friends, and wealth--all combine to make worse class relations. The "remember Pearl Harbor" enthusiasm wears off as rapidly as it was assumed, and the day to day dreary struggle to maintain one's head above water against the continuous encroachments of the capitalist government gradually assumes the ascendancy in everyone's mind again--the struggle takes to the streets.

War exacerbates all existing social struggles.

War is the concentrated essence of capitalist carnage, rampant throughout the planet. War becomes the Frankenstein which will destroy capitalism its creator for modern times--unless the human instruments of war can halt the holocaust before the destruction has gone so far as to be irreparable. When one considers that the total government expenditure of the U.S. for 163 years from its birth in 1776 to 1939 the beginning of the war in Europe, was approximately 195 billion dollars, and that already the U.S. government has allotted for war OVER 240 billion dollars MORE THAN 10 TIMES AS MUCH AS THE 18 BILLIONS allotted for World War I, and comprising two-thirds of the total wealth of the richest country in the world--the end is not hard to see. It is: Fascism or revolution!

CLASS HATRED ENGULFS THE ARMY

Waller:

"The iron repression of war creates rebellion. Waging a war involves great regimentation of the lives of the people... this regimentation in the army, creates rebellion and a corrosive individualism. The greater the sacrifices demanded of the nation, the greater must be the regimentation and the accompanying rebellion. The individualism...of shirking is only one aspect of rebellion; this rebellion also involves a strange kind of solidarity, the SOLIDARITY OF THE OPPRESSED.

As repressive measures increase, they tend to lose their effect and must become ever harsher. Propaganda also loses its effect, and the people become unified in a leaderless, aimless opposition to the existing regime. This as the soil in which revolutionary movements grow."

Nowhere does the dialectic better express itself than in the amazing transformation of regimentation into corrosive individualism, of repression into rebellion, of war into revolution. Repression creates rebellion! The more repression the more violent the rebellion. The more hardened the people become. The more the repression must be increased to keep the mass down. Until the U.S. will have caught up to Nazi Germany--and far surpassed her in repressive technique.

Before our eyes Waller is sketching the steady development of the breakdown of a whole society, the development of the class consciousness of the mass, and its expression in their class policy:--revolutionary defeatism.

Regimentation wears off. Propaganda loses its effect. "Remember Pearl Harbor" is another lost illusion, crumpled to bits as all false capitalist slogans lose their force despite (and this case, because of) ceaseless repetition. When the soldiers begin to break the army domination over their wills, the Army knows of no other way to keep them in line than to continue and increase the repressive technique, which has failed to keep soldiers down. This is a fatal policy. For as the class struggle grows, the repression grows, the resistance of the mass grows--AND THE FURY OF THE MASS AGAINST THE CAPITALIST GOVERNMENT RISES TO NEW HEIGHTS.

"This is the soil in which revolutionary movements grow."

This is the world today, on the brink of the greatest upheaval of world history: the revolution against the vampire economy of capitalism, against the would-be world totalitarian states, against the war.

A new world-wide phenomenon arises: "THE SOLIDARITY OF THE OPPRESSED," the world's suffering oppressed, united by repression, united by regimentation, united in their pitiful degradation, united by their class hatred for the governments driving them to kill their oppressed brothers, "UNIFIED IN A LEADERLESS, AIMLESS OPPOSITION TO THE EXISTING REGIME." The solidarity of the oppressed increases as the destructive days of the war grow heavier, bloodier, longer. The "leaderless,

aimless opposition" finds its leaders (NATURAL leaders), finds its aim, organizes its opposition, raises its giant hands to throttle the existing social order.

"This is the soil in which revolutionary movements grow."

To paraphrase the words of the novelist--"You Plan the wars you masters of men. Plan the wars and point the way. And we will point the gun!"--("Johnny Got His Gun," powerful anti-war novel by Dalton Trumbo.) War creates revolution. Or to paraphrase this priceless phrase of Trumbo's.:

You teach us to march. We will know WHERE to march.

You teach us to be brutal. We will know to whom to be BRUTAL.

You train us to kill. We will not kill our class brothers.

We will be hard. We will be brutal. We will fight...not our drafted brothers on the other side of a line you established, but you, you who would seek power over the earth, who would control it and us. You will reap the wild wind of class hatred which you have stirred up to the boiling point.

Solidarity of the oppressed--class solidarity--is the first mass phase of class consciousness. In economic struggles it is expressed in fraternization -- solidarity of the oppressed soldiers on both sides of the war!

Fraternization is as old as exploitation. It may take place between soldiers of opposing armies or between soldiers and workers. As a form of class solidarity it is one of the chief social weapons of the mass to infiltrate and paralyze the armed forces.

Vagt shows how in the French revolution the king's guards turned against him, joined the people, helped storm the Bastille. "Thus even the elite Guards were no more immune to currents of thought running through society than were other regiments." Vagt shows how one feudal lord deemed it necessary "to confine soldiers closely, that is, protect them against thought in order to have in pressing cases the children of the canaille to use on the canaille. But these hopes were disappointed; the two kinds of canaille fraternized." Class solidarity was stronger than all the influence and training and social bridery of feudalism. This proves in passing that historically fraternization was a practice of the exploited mass long before Lenin developed it in the strategy of revolutionary defeatism. Many of the tactics of revolutionary defeatism are as old as the bourgeois revolution. (See Vagts History

of Mili. p. 116) Fraternization was widespread in the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-5 (see "Tsushina") It is still a stirring memory of international class solidarity to recall how Plekhanov representing Russian workers and Katayama representing Japanese workers rose at the congress of the 2nd International in the very midst of the war, and shook hands, pledging the solidarity of workers in both countries.

DEVELOPMENT of the REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION

Waller:

"War creates social chaos, under cover of which revolutionary movements can form and gain headway. War dislocates whole populations, creates millions of refugees, takes millions of individuals out of the communities where they are known, disorganizes all institutional routines. If there is a nucleus of revolution anywhere in the population, it now has an opportunity to gather other elements to it and organize for action."

War in creating "social chaos" tears the mass of the population out of their accustomed routine, upsets the entire old system of organization of their lives. The mass can no longer live in the old way, as the old way of life is uprooted by dislocation of whole populations, millions of refugees, disorganization of all institutional routines. This latter means that the various institutions by which governments maintain their control over the population have lost their influence. The government and the ruling class it represents can no longer rule in the old way, just as the mass can no longer live in the old way. In the struggles of the classes neither the rulers nor the ruled can go on in the old way.

The clash between the government no longer able to rule as before, and the mass no longer able to live as before, is the climax of all the gigantic changes wrought by the economic breakdown of the War.

This heightened stage of class war, or relations of classes in war, is known in revolutionary literature as the "revolutionary situation."

To this revolutionary situation one element is needed to consummate these changes with the final change to revolution: a "nucleus of revolution." This is the revolutionary party. Its opportunity exists in the disorganization of all institutional routines and the mass discontent with the government, the war, and the entire old way of life.

"It now has an opportunity to gather elements to it and ORGANIZE FOR ACTION."

This action will be directed at shattering the imperialist war,--stopping the imperialist war and the slaughter of the oppressed on both sides--and transforming the war into its opposite: a war against the imperialists by the mass on both sides of the lines, a REVOLUTIONARY WAR directed at seizing state power by shattering the capitalist state, and gaining control of industry.

This nucleus of revolution will not exist "anywhere in the population," but primarily in the working class--the main oppressed class--although it will have extensive connections with every strata of the population from top to bottom, with the farmers, will have penetrated the army officer system, the government civil service, to disrupt it, to disorganize, to win over recruits to help "organize for action."