These extracts are taken from the service record of Second Lieutenant Siegfried Sassoon who served in the British army during World War One.

Siegfried Sassoon was a published poet when he joined the army in 1914. A respected officer, he was awarded the Military Cross in 1916 and served in France and Palestine.

Sassoon was invalided out of the war on a number of occasions. During one of his recovery periods back at home, he made contact with a group of pacifists which fuelled his growing disillusionment with the war.

In July 1917, Sassoon wrote a letter expressing his anti-war sentiments which was published in The Times and read in the House of Commons, a copy of which is included in this selection.

This was a difficult event for military authorities - a respected, decorated, published Officer speaking out publicly against the war - a political nightmare. Sassoon was in danger of being court-martialed, but thanks to an appeal by his friend and fellow poet, Robert Graves, it was accepted that Sassoon's outburst could be blamed on 'war neurosis' and required treatment rather than punishment. He was transferred to Craiglockhart hospital in Edinburgh, where he met the poet Wilfred Owen and developed a close friendship.

Both Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon are widely considered to have had relationships with men, although there is no evidence to suggest they were romantically involved with each other. Both Owen and Sassoon produced some of their most famous works while at Craiglockhart together before Owen was killed in action on 4 November 1918 while Sassoon was in England, permanently invalided out of service.

One of Sassoon's poems included in his service record is also selected here.
Mr. S. Sullivan, Birmingham, forwards a document which he says he found open on the luggage rack of a railway carriage compartment when travelling between Birmingham and Preston.

The document, dated July 1917, purports to be "a statement made by 2nd Lieutenant Siegfried Sassoon, 3rd Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers" regarding what he terms the deliberate prolongation of the War by those having power to end it.

On 26/11/17 a Medical Board found this Officer fit for General Service after service in France - neurasthenia and gun shot wound.

A.C.3.
18/1/18.

Aknowedged receipt

L.S.

I think you or like to see
this. Sassoon was undoubtedly
the author but who it was written
by was a lunatic / be medical
board it is? It seems that
it is possible that some pacifist or
executing Sassoon in an effort

13/1/18

[Signature]

18/1/18

[Signature]
I am making this statement as an act of wilful defiance of military authority because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it. I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers. I believe that the war upon which I entered as a war of defence and liberation has now become a war of aggression and conquest. I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them and that had this been done the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust. I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.

On behalf of those who are suffering now, I make this protest against the deception which is being practised upon them; also I believe it may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share and which they have not enough imagination to realise.
Dear Sir,

Attention has been drawn to some verses on p. 394 of your issue of the 13th. July, 1918, signed by Siegfried Sassoon. Presumably, therefore, the author is Captain S. L. Sassoon, M.C., of the 3rd. Bn. Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

This Officer in July 1917, was reported by a medical board to be suffering from a nervous breakdown and not responsible for his actions, but at the end of November, 1917, he was found to have recovered and to be fit for General Service. He is now serving in France.

Your Reviewer on p. 400 of the same issue recognises clearly what was the state of Mr. Sassoon's mind when he wrote "Counter-attack and other Poems", but if Capt. Sassoon were now writing verse such as that printed on p. 394, it would appear that his mind is still chaos, and that he is not fit to be trusted with men's lives. I should therefore be grateful if you would let me know when you received his verses "I stood with the dead". It may be, of course, that they have been in your possession some months. The information, which is desired solely in the public interest, will of course be treated as confidential.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd) George Cockrell

The Editor, "The Nation".

[Signature]

A.W. Mussoham, M.G.
THE FUNDS OF THE BRITISH WORKERS’ LEAGUE.

Str—In this week’s issue you are good enough to devote some space to the British Workers’ League, and in the course of the article to which I refer, you ask certain questions and make certain assertions with regard to this organization. Perhaps you will permit me to comment on some of your assertions.

You ask, “What is our financial basis?” In that question I beg to rule that every farthing of money we have is received absolutely without conditions whatever, on our published programme; and every receipt issued to subscribers is issued with that proviso.

Our funds are under the control of two trustees, quite unnecessary. The “Herald” is not a magazine, it is a monthly organ, “The British Citizen,” and has been, and is still, a victim and dupe of the King, of that wholesale lying family associations with the Liberal party. Our other trustee is an agricultural expert of national repute, and may be regarded as a faithful friend. The “Herald” is not a magazine, it is a monthly organ, “The British Citizen,” on March 16th.

I beg to say that our propagandists, up to the present moment, have not obtained a farthing from any political party, or other organization. May I, in my turn, inquire respecting the financial basis of the Russian revolution, and urge our inquiries in that direction. For instance, he might get into touch with Mr. George Lansbury and inquire what is the foundation of that violent rebel and Socialist Syndicalism. He might also completely destroy the publication of the “Herald” and to support the propagandists of the “Herald” League from the proceeds of his wild career.

The “Herald” is reputed to have a very large circulation, but practically has no influence from advertisements; unlike almost any other paper in the kingdom, it continues to appear week by week at the pre-war price of 1s., with paper five times the price, then before the war, and printing charges increased three or four hundred per cent. How is it done?

I am sure that a careful investigation would follow up my suggestion and pursue his inquiries in that direction. Our chief aim seems to be that we are prepared to start the lessons of the war, that is, to bend the knee to the blessed gospel of Cohnen, “and that, for which heinous crime we are appointed to carry the cross, the cross of a revolutionary body.” If it be to substitute a system of national and imperial economy for the present world system of capitalist economy, then it may be something; and I mean nothing. I must protest it to derive a reconciliation between the administrators of industrial capital and the national working man, and the guaranteed wages of all wage-earners, or, in the words of our friends of the old Left, contrary to the spirit of Liberalism, then indeed our European hosts have obtained for us the blessed teachings of the leaders of Victorian economics, whose names the writer of the article quotes with such unmixed joy.

Victor Fisher, Hon. Sec.

Mr. Fisher has not answered the question whether the funds of a body desiring itself a “Workers’ League” are in any degree with party politics, and if so, could be described as the bourgeois Gradgrinds of Victorian capitalism.—Ed. The Nation.

RUSSIAN AND BRITISH DEMOCRACY.

Str.—May I bring to your notice that a number of British working men have founded in London the Union “Russian Commonwealth” (“Narodopatriotka”), 1,600 members, with the object of uniting Russians who are under the so-called Bolshevik rule as tending to disintegrate the Russian state and to endanger the industrial life of the people of Russia?

Advocate the summoning of a democratically elected Congress, representing as the only expression of the free will of the whole people.

Consider the republican order to be the latest guarantee of the peaceful and free development of Russia, and

4. Believe, that only in close union with the Allies can Russia regenerate her strength and avert the menace of German militarism.

5. Contemporary (Ed.).

6. The Russian is also in the position of inviting the British to participate in the problem. There is, of course, the possibility of repudiation between the British and Russian democracies.—Ed.

PROSPERITY.

Str.,—I am, etc.,

S. GOOD."
Poetry.

I STOOD WITH THE DEAD.

I stood with the Dead, so forsaken and still:
When dawn was grey I stood with the Dead.
And my slow heart said, “You must kill; you must kill:
Soldier, soldier, morning is red.”

On the shapes of the slain in their crumpled disgrace
I stared for a while through the thin cold rain.

“O, lad that I loved, there is rain on your face,
And your eyes are blurred and sick like the plain.”

I stood with the Dead... They were dead; they were dead.

My heart and my head beat a march of dismay;
And gusts of the wind came dulled by the guns—
“Fall in!” I shouted; “Fall in for your pay!”

SIEGFRIED SASSOON.