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PROLETARIAT

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SYNOPSIS

	Page
<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Freedom and the Class Struggle</i> PROFESSOR JOHN ANDERSON, M.A.	2
<i>Japanese Imperialism in China</i> JOHN FERGUSON	6
<i>Imperialism and War</i> I. McDONALD	9
<i>U.S.S.R., 1931</i> L. MORONEY, M.A. (Melb.)	11
<i>Swan Song</i> E. E. JONES, LL.B. (Melb.)	14
<i>Notes on the Lang Plan</i> E. M. HIGGINS, M.A. (Oxon.)	15
<i>Health and the State</i> G. P. O'DAY, M.D. (Melb.)	19
<i>The World Economic Crisis</i> CHARLES SILVER	21
<i>Reconstruction and Intervention</i> RALPH GIBSON, M.A. (Manch.)	23
<i>The Class Fronts in Germany</i> SAM WHITE	24
<i>From Commerce School to Communism</i> ALICE STEWART, B.Com.	26
<i>Towards Fascism</i>	28
<i>Cover Design</i> N. CUNNINGHAM	

EDITORIAL

"Proletariat" has been greeted with numerous criticisms. The official University organ found it depressing: "In one word, you reproach us with intending to do away with your property. Precisely so; that is just what we intend." Some weeks later, the editors of that organ liquidated their "depression" by urging the student body to assault one of our contributors. Academic circles, especially in Adelaide, were appreciative. But the most important criticisms were those received from working-class people and organisations.

On the one hand, letters were received from numerous people expressing surprise and pleasure at University students taking any interest in working-class movements. On the other hand, "J.B.M." of the "Workers' Weekly," attacked us severely from the orthodox Communist point of view—because we confuse the worker by putting before him a mixed diet and letting him take his pick. To the first group of people we would say this: The proletarian movement as such gains nothing from the sympathy of middle-class "intellectuals"; on the contrary, it is only by

identifying himself with the revolutionary working class that the intellectual can deliver himself from sterile individualist abstractions. We must disclaim any desire to seem "patrons" of the workers; they are the superior social and ethical force, and should look down on us. As for "J.B.M.'s" criticism, there is really no adequate answer if you start from his point of view. "Proletariat" was never intended to compete with the "Workers' Weekly." It represents the effort of a small group soaked in middle-class ideas to struggle towards an effective Socialist ideology. There is one constant factor in the evolution of all middle-class Socialists: they always start from radical liberalism. The true proletarian needs nothing but his class position on which to build; the student, though he may finish at Marx and Lenin, has to start from Bertrand Russell and G. B. Shaw. For people in a similar position to the middle-class student, "Proletariat" may be valuable. The working-class reader should maintain the attitude of a hostile critic, realising that this magazine must contain many theoretical weaknesses.