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Tom Mann

Open letter to all soldiers

Murder is Murder

1912

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Men! Comrades! Brothers!

YOU are in the Army.

So are WE. YOU in the Army of Destruction. WE in the Industrial, or army of Construction.

WE work at mine, mill, forge, factory, or dock, producing and transporting all the goods, clothing, stuffs, etc., which make it possible for people to live.

YOU ARE WORKING PEOPLE'S SONS.

When WE Fight to better OUR lot, which is the lot also or YOUR FATHERS, MOTHERS, BROTHERS, AND SISTERS, YOU are called upon by your officers to MURDER US.

DON'T DO IT!

YOU know how it happens always has happened.

We stand out as long as we can. Then one of our (and your) irresponsible Brothers or Sisters, angered by the sight and thought of their loved ones' misery and hunger, commits a crime on property. Immediately YOU are ordered to MURDER US.

Don't YOU know that when YOU are out of the colours, and become a 'Civy' again, that YOU, like US, may be Struggling, and YOU, like US, be liable to be MURDERED by other soldiers.

BOYS, DON'T DO IT!

'THOU SHALT NOT KILL,' says the Book.

DON'T FORGET THAT!

It does not say, 'unless you have a uniform on.'

No! MURDER IS MURDER, whether committed in the heat of anger on one who has wronged a loved one, or by a soldier with a rifle.

BOYS, DON'T DO IT!

ACT THE MAN! ACT THE BROTHER! ACT THE HUMAN BEING!

Property can be replaced! Human life, never.

The Idle Rich Class, who own and order you about, own and order us about also. They and their friends own the land and means of life of Africa.

YOU DON'T. WE DON'T.

When WE kick, They order YOU to MURDER US.

When YOU kick, YOU get court-martialled and cells.

YOUR fight is OUR fight. Instead of fighting AGAINST each other, WE should be fighting WITH each other.

Out of OUR loins, OUR lives, OUR HOMES, YOU came.

Don't disgrace YOUR PARENTS, YOUR CLASS, by being the willing tools any longer of the MASTER CLASS.

YOU, like US, are of the SLAVE CLASS. When WE rise, YOU rise, when WE fall, even by your bullets, YOU fall also.

Africa with its fertile valleys and rolling hills, its mineral resources, its seas, is the heritage of ages to us.

YOU no doubt joined the Army out of poverty.

WE work long hours for small wages at hard work, because of OUR poverty. And both YOUR poverty and OURS arises from the fact that Africa with its resources belongs to only a few people.

These few, owning Africa, own OUR jobs. Owning OUR jobs, they own OUR very LIVES.

Comrades, have WE called in vain? Think things out and refuse any longer to MURDER YOUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS. Help US to win back the WORLD for the WORKERS and the POOR.