

Military Murderers (December 31, 1910)

Soldiers under capitalism are workers hired by capitalists to murder their fellow workers for a pittance that would put a scab to shame. And this the capitalists, for very good reasons to themselves, pronounce “patriotism” and hail as military glory; and the gruesome game has worked like a charm these many years.

But at last these hireling soldiers are catching on. And no wonder. At army posts and in camps the officers are strutting tsars and the common soldiers cur dogs. The brutal treatment they are subjected to by the snobs and upstarts who lord it over them as their “superiors” I have heard from their own lips and it is revolting to the last degree.

Only a fool, a stupid, besotted fool, would submit to such brutality for such a pittance unless indeed he were a pervert and halfwit and gloried in his own degeneracy.

“Military glory” under capitalism has had its day. Its sun is setting. The suckers have about quit biting.

Special orders have just been issued by the war department at Washington to all the recruiting stations to increase the pressure and offer all possible inducements to secure recruits. The most glittering and highly colored pictured, displaying the dazzling and attractive beauties of camp life, cover the billboards wherever a recruiting station is located. On these pictures soldiers are in clover as deep as they are in hell in the real thing.

Lolling back in easy chairs, smoking fragrant cigars, and surveying with field-glasses the surrounding landscape of ravishing beauty, a soldier’s life at \$13 a month is made to appear a symphony of rapture that would excite the envy of the gods, but when he has enlisted and is securely harpooned the illusion vanishes. He sups on embalmed jackass and moldy beans, and a two-by-four “superior” spits on him for dessert. And to desert this dessert is a crime punishable by imprisonment.

Last year, according to the official report of the adjutant general, there were over 4,000 desertions from the army of the United States. The total number of desertions for the ten years ending with the report just issued is not quite 50,000, an average of a trifle less than 5,000 a year.

Think of the supreme significance of 5,000 desertions from the United States army every year! Over 400 a month or about 15 a day for every day of the week.

How is this for an exhibition of patriotism and military glory by the soldiers of the United States army?

A soldier has just told me that these unparalleled desertions are super-induced mainly by the teachings of socialism and the influence of the socialist movement. Thousands of soldiers have studied and understand more or less clearly the economics of militarism and they appreciate keenly the position they occupy and the moral degradation it entails, as well as the sickening service they are required to render as their “patriotic duty,” and there will be no unnecessary delay on their part in transferring their allegiance from murderous militarism to revolutionary socialism.

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