

# WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL

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NEWS RELEASE NO. 24.

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## ELEVOINE SANTI.

This News Release gives further information concerning the Italian war resister Elevoine Santi supplementing details already sent out in News Releases Numbers 20 and 22.

It was reported in Release No. 22 that Elevoine Santi had received the maximum sentence of one year and that he was imprisoned at Naples. The trial was most unsatisfactory and the witnesses called by Dr. Bruno Segre were not heard. The President of the court practically prevented Elevoine Santi himself from speaking to such an extent that even the Prosecutor himself had to intervene and to beg for the accused rights to be respected. Dr. Segre himself pleaded for Santi's acquittal on the basis that he considered conscientious objection did not constitute a crime in the legal code of Italy. Also assisting at the trial was advocate Italo De Berardinis del Foro di Naples who in view of the fact that acquittal was not likely to be granted, pleaded for the minimum penalty, with the benefit of all possible remissions and reductions allowed by law under extenuating circumstances. Instead, as we have already announced, the court sentenced Santi to the ~~maximum~~ penalty of one year's imprisonment without the benefit of conditional suspension of sentence which is granted to all first offenders. The court was only about ten minutes in retirement considering its verdict. Following the trial Dr. Segre went to the prison but was not allowed to see his client.

The following is an extract from the Declaration presented or sent by Elevoine Santi to the President of the Italian Republic and the Defence Minister, explaining the reasons for his conscientious objection. This was sent in February before the trial.

"I mourn the death of every individual, because one of my family has disappeared. If men at certain moments turn wolves, this is no reason why I should turn one; why should I not love my fellow-men while other men murder one another. War destroys Human Kind; and armies, even in peace-time, prepare that destruction. That is why I refuse to serve in the army as long as it is an instrument of war. It is not out of cowardice that I take this step; nay, I beg for a harder service, even more dangerous and longer than military service, provided my work is helpful to a portion of humanity without offending the rest of humanity.

"I am a conscientious objector, I refuse to wage war, and to help in any way those who wage it. For this reason, though I answer the will of the Nation, thereby showing that I am ready to serve it, I am determined to disobey any order given in contrast with my conscience. As long as no law exists protecting my right not to kill, I am bound to disobey every order of military authorities".

Elevoine Santi has appealed against the sentence and has in the meantime been moved from the address previously given. Short messages of greeting and solidarity can be sent to him preferably on an open post-card addressed as follows:-

Carcere Militare,  
Gaeta,  
~~Italy~~,  
Italy.

Replies should not be expected since Santi may only write two letters a month which naturally go to his family. He will, however, be greatly encouraged to receive messages from his friends everywhere.

The case of Elevoine Santi is of especial interest because he is what might be termed a "volunteer war resister", meaning that on account of being a university student he was eligible for deferment until the age of twenty-six. He, however, felt most strongly that he wished to make his witness and not to claim the deferment due to him. At the moment we are not asking Sections to make appeals on his behalf, but the International is, after a further consultation with friends in Italy, taking such steps as they think most helpful. A wider appeal may be thought helpful later on.

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Please give all possible publicity to this case.

Grace M. Bealows.