

# THE SPUR

**Because the Workers Need a Spur More Than Ever.**

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LONDON, MAY 1916.

[ONE PENNY MONTHLY.]

## Sara Jailed.

MAY, 1916

Our colleague, Henry Sara, was called to the colours on March 18th last. He returned his "call paper" to the Recruiting Authorities registered, together with the following letter:—

"17 Richmond Gardens, Shepherds Bush, London W.,  
March 7, 1916.

"To the Officer Commanding, Shepherds Bush, W.

"Sir—I am returning herewith notice paper addressed to me as Private Henry Thomas W. Sara, calling upon me to attend at the White City on March 18th at 9 a.m. o'clock. I refuse, and will continue to refuse, to look upon myself as a soldier of the Crown under any circumstances. In my registration form, I stated that I was opposed to war. To a letter received from the Mayor of Hammersmith, asking me to join a local battalion, I replied at length, emphasising my opposition to assisting war in any way. For various reasons, which I am prepared to state in the civil court when and if necessary, I refuse to take the oath of allegiance or accept military instructions. Yours faithfully (signed) HENRY SARA."

This letter was ignored or noticed duly and on Monday, April 3rd, Sara was arrested at the *Spur* office. He was detained in a police cell for 24 hours—with no proper means of sleeping—and then hustled into the West London Police Court on Wednesday, April 6th, where he was charged before Mr. de Grey. Asked if he were an absentee, Sara replied:—"I am opposed to the Act entirely."

Mr. de Grey: Are you an absentee?—Yes, but as a public speaker for some years opposing military service, I resist the Act.

Mr. de Grey: I was a public speaker once, but I should certainly not have objected if my country had called upon me. Unfortunately I am too old. If you have no other objection than that of the public speaker the sooner your mouth is closed the better. You must pay 40s., or go to prison for one month, and you will be handed over to escort.

As Sara left the dock, he attempted to hand some papers to ourself at the back of the court. We admit that he should have asked the Magistrate's consent. But this error hardly justified the way in which the officials of the court seized him and pushed and hustled him through the door leading to the cells. Rose Witcop, who was with us at the back of the court exclaimed:—"Is there any necessity for that?" "Is that treatment necessary?" She was requested to leave and did so, in company with ourself and other comrades.

Sara was taken to the White City where he refused to strip or to don Khaki. He was passed as medically fit for the army, though his eyesight is known to be wrong. He was taken to the Harrow Road Barracks, of the 3rd London Regt. Here he refused to put on uniform. Those around him said he ought to be dressed and put into line. About a dozen men tore off his clothes and forced khaki on him after twisting his arms and punishing his face, and his eye remained coloured and painful, and his head was swollen from the treatment received for some days after. He refused to obey orders in line, and was taken into the yard, and doubled between two soldiers, who were relayed, but to no avail, despite the kicking and the punching. The Captain rang up the War Office, as he was undecided what to do. He seemed to think that Sara was genuine, but apologised that he had to obey orders. Sara was conveyed to Hurdcott Camp, Thursday evening.

On the Friday morning he refused to "form fours" on parade and was taken before the Colonel, who asked him if he (Sara) thought that he was God Almighty. He asked Sara this question twice, and told him to choose either to take things quietly or—Hell. Sara said he would stand by his opinions. He was sentenced to 28 days imprisonment in Parkhurst Jail, Isle-of-Wight, and was placed in the Detention Room until Monday morning, April 10th, when he was conveyed to Parkhurst.

At Parkhurst Barracks, we understand, a gun was carried down for Sara, but he refused to touch it. He was told that at the jail, they could break in lions let alone men. Also if, when his sentence expired, which will be on May 4th, he still refused to handle a gun, he might have his hand-cuffed hands put above his head, and feet fastened to the floor, in a cage until he gave way. Sara was offered N.C.C. or a job at the Rifle Depot, but refused both offers, as his stand was against all war. He signed no papers and took no oath. His money was taken away, and he has been allowed neither to send nor to receive letters. The foregoing particulars are gleaned from two letters that were smuggled through. The first was dated from Hurdcott Camp, Friday, April 7th, and the second from Parkhurst Barracks, Monday, April 10th. 6504 is Sara's Army number.

## Sara Defence Fund.

N. Lon. Her. League	...	...	...	...	£1 0 0
F. Hannington	...	...	...	...	0 2 6
W. W. Kensett	...	...	...	...	1 0 0
Pacifist	...	...	...	...	0 10 0
Anon.	...	...	...	...	0 10 0



## Militarism Unmasked.

"Mr. Aldred strongly denounced Militarism," said the *South Wales Argus* next day, in reporting the meeting which we addressed at the Metropole Theatre, Abertillery, on Sunday, April 16th last. Mr. T. J. Davies presided.

Our subject was "The Compulsion Act At Work." We dwelt at length on the circumstances of our arrest and prosecution, but as these details are stated elsewhere in these columns, there is no need to record them here.

A good report of the meeting appeared in the *South Wales Gazette* for April 21st. The following points from our speech are noted exclusively in the *Gazette* report:—

"He (Mr. Aldred) as a Socialist believed in the right of a man and woman to live together without going to the State or to the Church to ask permission, and he held that if that man and woman faithfully discharged their obligations to each other and to their children for a period of time they were morally and in fact married."

"He was prepared to defend himself in such a way that if he went down there would, within a few days, pass over the length and breadth of Great Britain such a wave of indignation that the Government would give in."

"Men like himself did not stand out against the Act because they were shirkers, but because they were convinced the war was not right, and because they held that the workers of both Germany and England were deluded by interests at work behind the scenes."

"He held that the Tribunals of to-day were in the position of the Chief Priests of the Temple, and they would turn down Jesus Christ as they to-day turned down the conscientious objector. That was why they were most up against the Act."

From the lengthy report which appeared in *The Pioneer* (Merthyr) for April 29th, we cull the appended excerpts:—

"What he wanted was to inquire into the Military Service Act, and to show up the cant and humbug the military authorities were prepared to resort to, when they wished to remove an obstacle from their path. When a man transgressed under the Defence of the Realm Act this was easy, but when he revealed a 'crooked genius' and kept within the bounds of the Defence of the Realm Act, then they resorted to other methods; and it was this that he wished to reveal."

"In January, 1908, he formed a free love union with a friend of his—Rose Witcop. Unlike many orthodox persons, they did not enjoy clandestinely all the privileges of married life, and then go through the orthodox marriage service a month or two before their child was born."

"When his friend Mr. Scott Duckers, who was defending his (the speaker's) position, asked the military representative if he would produce an Army Register with his (the speaker's) name enrolled, the military representative said he was not prepared to produce it. After pressure he admitted that his (the speaker's) name was not on an Army Register. Therefore, said Mr. Duckers, there is no case against him (the speaker) as an absentee. This was a sample of militarism. 'Crush Prussian militarism' was the outcry of the Jingoists; better crush British militarism by raising an outcry here at home."

"He had been kept in a dark cell all night, with a plank for a bed. Why? Simply because the authorities thought that this treatment would daunt him and dull his brain, so that in the morning, when he was charged, they—fresh from their beds and nice breakfasts—would be able to put their case the better because of his condition. But it was not so. Every hour he had spent in that cell had only made his determination the stronger to beat them and expose their methods. And if Mr. Scott Duckers had not been there in the morning to take his case, he would have entered the court with as much sangfroid as any of them. He had no doubt that the Government meant to crush him. They had had one try, and if a year's imprisonment could not crush him, they would not crush him now."

"The Tribunals were a mere farce. In all parts of the country complaints were heard of these institutions, which sat in judgment on their fellow-men. Of what did these Tribunals consist? The local parson; retired grocer; cheesemonger, etc., and sometimes a Labour man or two if he suited. Who were they, to judge—or pretend to—the conscience of their fellow-men. There had been case after case of men who had been known to be against war for years, and when appealing before Tribunals have either been dismissed, or relegated to the non-combatant corps. Such cases were of common occurrence. He could say more on this subject, only we lived under the Defence of the Realm Act; and, as Christ once said, 'His hour was not yet come.' But it was, to say the least of it, a farce, to find that a man who had been a Socialist for years—and as such opposed to war—was not a conscientious objector, and that he must serve under the colours."

"Again, in the Act it provided that a widow's son should not be taken; yet they were being taken. There were not many cases of widows' sons being exempted. And in his own case, if his friend (or wife) died, then he would be treated