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The Letters of
SACCO AND VANZETTI

The Letters of
SACCO AND VANZETTI

Edited by

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“If it had not been for these thing, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for joostice, for man’s onderstanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing! The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all! That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph.”

FROM A STATEMENT MADE BY VANZETTI
AFTER RECEIVING SENTENCE, APRIL 9, 1927.

MANUFACTURED IN THE U. S. A. BY H. WOLFF ESTATE

PREFACE

THE letters contained in this volume were written by Sacco and Vanzetti during the seven years they spent in prison. At the time of their arrest in 1920, they spoke and understood English with difficulty. Sacco could read but could not write the language, and for some time after his imprisonment showed no interest in learning. It was not until the summer of 1922 that he asked for an English dictionary and wrote his first English letter. The following winter Mrs. Cerise Jack, a member of the New England Civil Liberties Committee, who had attended the trial, began to give Sacco English lessons, which continued for six months or a year. Though he learned to spell and write well enough to make himself understood, his sentence structure remained substantially the same. He used to say that he could never learn English in prison, but if he were free, he would learn in a week.

Vanzetti, on the other hand, applied himself to the study of English as soon as he was confined. He attended evening classes in Charlestown prison, and when he felt that he had learned as much as he could in this way, began to take a correspondence course with Mrs. Virginia MacMechan, who, like Mrs. Jack, had become interested in the two men during the trial. Vanzetti became a prolific correspondent, writing every night in his cell until the lights were extinguished. His

prison tasks he completed with all possible speed, so that there might be more time for writing and reading.

The lives of the two men in prison were unlike in other ways. Vanzetti, it must be remembered, was convicted of an attempted hold-up before their joint trial on May 31, 1921, and was serving a sentence for that crime.¹ He was therefore employed in the prison industries in Charlestown like any other convicted prisoner. Sacco, throughout the seven years of his confinement, was awaiting the final disposition of his case. He had been convicted but not sentenced, and according to the practise in Massachusetts in such cases, was unemployed during most of those seven years. At one time, a friend arranged to have lessons given him in some form of handicraft, but after quickly mastering the technique, he no longer found the work interesting and flung it aside. He wanted to work in the engine room and the kitchen, where he could learn English from the other prisoners, but this was not allowed.

In the course of seven years, hundreds of letters were written by the men. In addition to those in English, there were many in Italian, addressed to family and friends abroad. The letters in this volume

¹ In this attempted hold-up at Bridgewater the police at first sought to implicate both men, after their joint arrest on May 5, 1920. But Sacco was able to prove an invincible alibi, and the charge was therefore dropped against him. Vanzetti was a fish peddler and hence had only his customers as alibi witnesses. While Sacco was held in Dedham Jail awaiting trial with Vanzetti on the South Braintree murder charge, the Bridgewater charge against Vanzetti was tried at Plymouth, Mass., in June-July, 1920, before Judge Thayer.

are a portion of the English letters only. With one or two exceptions they were written to friends who became so after the arrest and trial of the men, and as a result of the interest evoked by their efforts to free themselves of the charge of murder. The Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, which assisted them in those efforts, collected and assembled the letters, turning them over to the editors to prepare for publication.

Some of the letters received by the Defense Committee were copies of the originals. Undoubtedly errors have thus crept into the text, partly because the handwriting was in some cases illegible. A few of the Vanzetti letters have been published previously and the originals lost, so that only the printed copy was available. But the editors feel sure that such slight changes in the text as have occurred in transcribing leave the authentic character of the letters unimpaired.

The reasons for the omission of material are several. Personal references, allusions to incidents of interest only to the particular correspondent, repetition of matter in other letters, passages whose meaning is entirely obscure, or lengthy recitals of fact relating to political movements in other countries, have all been omitted for the sake of brevity and a greater degree of unity. A minimum number of textual changes has been made, chiefly where comparison with other parts of the text has revealed mistakes in spelling due to carelessness or stress.

Readers of these letters of Sacco and Vanzetti will be struck by the depth of their reliance on the doctrines

of anarchy, and the consistency of their belief that what happened to them in those fatal seven years happened because they were anarchists. It explained to them the relentless failure of every effort to secure justice through the courts, and in the extremity of their suffering became their pride and solace. Who can say they were mistaken? Certainly no one who knew the passionate hatred of them and of their views which dominated opinion in Massachusetts during all those years. At the end, as doubt of their guilt grew, the desire to see them dead and forgotten increased in intensity, and it was said openly that "they ought to hang anyway," because they were bad men and dangerous to society.

This, Sacco had always maintained, was the true explanation of their plight. In the record which Mr. William G. Thompson made of his last interview with the men the night they died, occurs this passage:

"It was magnanimous in him [Sacco] not to refer more specifically to our previous differences of opinion, because at the root of it all lay his conviction, often expressed to me, that all efforts on his behalf, either in court or with public authorities, would be useless, because no capitalistic society could afford to accord him justice. I had taken the contrary view; but at this last meeting he did not suggest that the result seemed to justify his view and not mine."

To their friends, the calm with which they accepted the failure of their long struggle for freedom was a manifestation of their innocence and a confirmation of their true character. To the rest of the world, their character can only be revealed by these letters, written for their own and others' comfort during the years of

waiting, and by the simple courage with which they met their death.

Sacco, who was executed first, walked firmly into the death chamber and, at a motion from the guard, took his seat in the electric chair. As he did so, he shouted in Italian, "Long live anarchy!" He then paused, growing calmer, and said, in broken English: "Farewell, my wife, and child, and all my friends." Then, glancing around the room which he seemed to see for the first time, he said to the assembled witnesses, "Good-evening, gentlemen." And as the hood was being slipped over his head, he murmured in Italian, "Farewell, Mother."

Vanzetti was brought in a few moments later. He was calm and alert. Advancing steadily into the room, he shook hands with the warden of the prison and three of the guards whom he knew. He sat down in the electric chair and before any move was made to strap him into it, he began, in a low voice, to speak to those present. "I wish to tell you," he said slowly, "that I am an innocent man. I never committed any crime, but sometimes some sin." Turning to the warden he continued: "Thank you for everything you have done for me. I am innocent of all crime—not only this one, but all crime. I am an innocent man." Another pause, and then, with the explicitness which was so characteristic of him, Vanzetti spoke his last words: "I wish to forgive *some* people for what they are now doing to me."

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Part One
NICOLA SACCO

CHAPTER I

NICOLA SACCO was twenty-nine years old when with Vanzetti he was arrested on a street car in Brockton, Massachusetts, on May 5, 1920. Neither he nor Vanzetti had been arrested before. His preceding twelve years in America had been spent mainly as a shoemaker in the manufacturing towns surrounding Boston, where he landed from Italy. His first job was that of water-carrier for a road-construction gang in Milford, Massachusetts. After a period in the foundry room of the machine shops at Hopedale, Massachusetts, he secured employment in a shoe factory at Webster and then in the factory of the Milford Shoe Company at Milford. He worked there steadily from 1909 to 1917, setting aside in the bank regular weekly savings. There he learned the skilled trade of edger.

In 1917 Sacco went to Mexico to avoid the draft. Returning after the war, he was employed at the Three K Shoe Company factory in Stoughton, Massachusetts, by Michael J. Kelley, the owner, at whose school for shoeworkers in Milford he had previously learned his trade in "off" hours. He was working for Mr. Kelley at the time of his arrest and occupied a house on Mr. Kelley's land immediately adjoining the latter's home. In addition to working as an edger, Sacco was employed as watchman of the factory. Mr. Kelley also

turned over to Sacco a large section of his property to work as a vegetable and flower garden.

Sacco came to this country from the village of Torremaggiore, province of Foggia, in the extreme south of Italy. His father, Michele, owned substantial olive orchards and vineyards there. Roaming these vineyards and orchards, and sharing their care and supervision, Sacco grew up passionately fond of nature and the out-of-doors. He had no formal schooling, but studied under the devoted eye of Catholic parents and an elder brother who was his constant companion.

He was markedly vigorous and muscular in body and possessed a warm, buoyant personality. To all outward appearances his chief preoccupations were with the things he could see or touch—his tools, the vegetables and flowers which grew in his garden, the trees and the sky.

He was an Italian Republican when he arrived on American shores, but soon changed to socialism and later to anarchism. Pursuing his inquiries and activities as an anarchist, he became a follower of Galleani, an intellectual anarchist, who was living in Massachusetts at the time.

Sacco took part in a number of strikes during this transitional period from republicanism to anarchism. He is described by co-workers in these strikes as having been conscientious to a fault—saying little, but picketing longer hours than anyone else and always willing to run errands or do anything to help the cause.

In 1912 he married a handsome, Titian-haired Italian

woman named Rosa whom he met in Milford. Together they gave plays in the Italian districts to raise funds for strike relief. A son, Dante, was born two years after their marriage, and a daughter, Ines, several months after Sacco's arrest. Sacco was deeply devoted to this family.

The letters written by Sacco from Dedham Jail during the first six years of imprisonment show his struggle to adjust himself to his environment. Denied the usual privilege of physical labor because of a technical rule governing the handling of unsentenced prisoners charged with murder, Sacco discovered that daily exercises in his small cell were a poor substitute.

The rebellion of his body and his spirit found expression in a month's hunger strike in 1923 and in various letters, the one to Fred H. Moore, his first counsel, being a typical example. He abhorred "speculation" on the case and resented the interest of "philanthropist friends." Yet he cherished no grudge against those whom he attacked, no matter how violently. He had satisfied the demands of his integrity. Thereafter he regarded the occurrence simply as a difference of opinion and did not let it interrupt his cheerful conversation on other subjects.

Sacco was not of studious bent. He was not given to reading, nor had he written many letters before his imprisonment. In these prison letters of the first six years is disclosed his effort to overcome this inexperience and to voice the reaction of his vibrantly responsive senses to their environment.

November 30, 1921. *Dedham Jail*

DEAR BARTOLO:¹

Saturday the 26th my Rosie and the children came to visit me, and this was the first time I seen the children² since the time you left Dedham. You can imagine how happy I felt to see them so joyful and so gay and in the best of health, if only you could see little Ines. She got so fat, she is really a dolly, Dante also looks very good. He writes to me every week. Rosa³ also looks very good after the operation she is gaining daily. I feel very good and I don't do nothing but exercise, read and write. I am very sorry that no one comes and see you, no one comes to see me neither, but Rosie. . . .

¹ Bartolomeo Vanzetti. After their joint arrest, Vanzetti was sent to Plymouth, and Sacco to Dedham Jail. Following his conviction for the Bridgewater hold-up, Vanzetti was committed to Charlestown Prison. Sacco remained at Dedham, save for the time spent in Bridgewater Hospital, until July 1, 1927, when he was removed to Charlestown State Prison. In the spring of 1923, following a 31-day hunger strike, he was taken to the Boston Psychopathic Hospital for observation and thereafter committed to the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminal Insane, where he spent several months.

The two men were therefore separated during most of their seven years' imprisonment. They saw each other daily during the trial, May 31 to July 14, 1921, and during the four brief periods when arguments were heard on motions for a new trial. At such times Vanzetti was transferred from Charlestown to Dedham. After sentence was pronounced, April 9, 1927, they were together until the end—in Dedham until July 1, 1927 and in Charlestown thereafter till their execution a few minutes after midnight of August 22, 1927.

² Dante, Sacco's son, was seven years old at the time of Sacco's arrest. Ines, his daughter, was born four months thereafter.

³ He called his wife variously, Rose, Rosina, Rosie, Rosa and Rosetta. This letter was dictated to her.

Do you still exercise? I do every morning. I will close now with best regards.

Your faithful comrade,

NICK SACCO

October 23, 1922. *Dedham Jail*

MY DEAR MRS. C. CERISE JACK:¹

After all I have idea to write my self in English so then I will be sure you will receive my letter, and same time you weell excuse me for my poor English. Before in othor I weell thank you for you modest and noble sentiment you have towards humanity oppressed. So you con imagine ou glad I was to see you, and more because you was look in best health.

Rosy was hea the other dey whit my dear little Ines and I found her moch better from two weeks ago. Rosy from when she went to live in farms shi bin look very fine. So I to feeling weell my self, from the dey I beginning to work; yes because I am joy whin I am work.

P.S. I hope my dey in court bi well and I weell come see you whit my dear Rosy in this beautiful farms.

October, 1923. *County Jail, Dedham*

DEAR MRS. EVANS:²

You never can imagine how much it was great the

¹ Mrs. Cerise Jack of Sharon, Mass., who, as a member of the New England Civil Liberties Committee, had attended the trial and visited the men in jail. During the winter of 1923-24 she gave Sacco English lessons.

² Mrs. Elizabeth Glendower Evans of Brookline, who became interested in the men during the trial and remained throughout a firm believer in their innocence.

joy of the recluse when I see in that court room all the noble legion of our friends and comrades, which they are work hard for forty-one month for the triumph of that consecration and inviolable of the human justicy and for the liberty of Sacco and Vanzetti.

By the way, my dear mother, you believe we will have a new trial? I am tol you the truth Mrs. Evans, I did like very much the way Mr. Thompson and Mr. Hill¹ they did present the new evidence, and for some moment they did relief the soul of the sad recluse. If you happen to see Mr. Thompson and Mr. Hill give for me my dear and best rigard and for the splendour defence they have made. So I will hope they will finish this long and dolorus calvary.

Meanwhile salute fraternally all our friends and comrades, and you dear mother of the human oppressed have one of my warm affectionate embrace from your now and for ever friend and comrade, Nicola Sacco.

October 13, 1923. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

Just a few line to say that afte all your flower I

¹ Mr. William G. Thompson and Mr. Arthur D. Hill of the Boston bar became counsel for Sacco and Vanzetti on March 8, 1923, for the limited purpose of arguing motions for a new trial based upon disclosures which came to light after the verdict, affecting the misconduct of some of the jurors. Later, when the case reached the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, Mr. Thompson took charge of the defense and continued in this capacity until the Governor decided to allow the men to be executed.

Mr. Thompson associated with himself a younger member of the Boston bar, Mr. Herbert B. Ehrmann. Following Mr. Thompson's retirement, a series of legal efforts on behalf of the men was undertaken by Mr. Arthur D. Hill both before the Massachusetts and the Federal Courts.

been ricieved and with the other several boxs of sea flowers you been sent to me through the last of month, one of the better flower that the perfume will never fail. . . . Monday it was hi my comrade Rosina with my little dear Ines and I did show to her your photograph, and after word she said it is wonderful picture. I wish I could have hi my dear and poor mother photograph where I could put her picture on right sid of yours. Yes, because like you she was good and generous, like you she used to love affectionately all the legion of the human oppressed. Poor mother! All of those noble heart they ought not to die. By thes time I think you no that Monday we must go to the court,¹ so I will hope to see you there. . . .

November 3, 1923. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. JACK:

Just a fiu line for sey that behind theso dark shadow the beautiful of that light it is begin to come upon, and will be light more light always more brite. Believe me Mrs. Jack that theso today Mr. Tompson was in court he did relief the soul of thes sad reclus. . . .

November 23, 1923. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

Of course, I will try to read aloud for your sake, and for my own. Of course, I will try to satisfy as best I can that generous mother who for three years has done everything she could for my soul and the

¹ Hearing of arguments for a new trial based on the testimony of gun experts.

soul of my poor family. I begin to read aloud from the day you and Mrs. William James came to see me. I don't read very loud, so as not to disturb anybody. So you see I always try to do the best I could.

Yesterday all the prisoners went out in the yard for two hours because of Thanksgiving Day, and when I come in I feel a little hunger, but when I don't have much air I don't feel hunger at all. So I need air,—air, just as much air as I can have.

I always remember when my brother Sabino and me were on ship board on the way to this free country,¹ the country that was always in my dreams. I was very sick of the seas and one morning my brother conducted me to the Doct and he order for me a good purge and for my brother that felt fine he ordered a good soup. . . .

So that is just the same here. The prisoner who don't like to work, they send him to work, and who really feels like work and need to have air, air, just as much air as he can, they keep him in a cell all day long.

November 24, 1923. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR MRS. JACK:

A few line Mrs. Jack to say that does not make any difference if wi dont have any more the opportunity to see out every morning and to could show one to the other that sincere affection and that smile blessed;

¹ Sacco landed with his brother in Boston from Italy in April, 1908. He was seventeen the twenty-second of that month.

but in my mind, in my heart, in my faith they are always the noble ligion of friens and comrades.

Monday I did wrote a letter to our dear Mrs. Evans, and in that letter I was say to Mrs. Evans, that was really a crime and injustice and inhuman to keep in back these terrible bar a hondred and hondred victims among the young people—guilty just because they been oppressed and love the liberty of the human oppressed. It is shame for the humanity and for the good citizen of thes country who are believe in good with the freedom of thes country. I know it is not for me to say that, but believe me Mrs. Jack that sometime you cannot help to put in the truth. . . .

P.S. Give my dear regard to Mrs. M—— and tell her that if my face shows some smile yet after all . . . it is my nature, because I remember my dear and poor mother when she use say that not matter if you work hard the smile shining always on your face.

December 6, 1923. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR MRS. JACK:

I can not the scritto in my poor English the joyful that is manifest in a soul of the reclus when he receivid a visit from e friend who he believe in her or in him to find the sincere brotherly affection. To say Mrs. Jack that I was very how glad to see you last night.

Dante, Mrs. Jack, hi is always in my heart and hi always my dear and lovely boy; many a time I did believe that hi will ben promising boy yes because hi always was my dear comradship and I could read in

is brite eyes and tru of his little intelligent head the better day. I remember when wi youst live in South Stoughton Mass in our little sweet home and frequently in evening Rosina, Dante and I, we youst go see a frend about a fifteen minute wolk from my house and bey away going to the my friend house hi always surpriset me bey aske me a such heard question that some time it was impesseble for me to explain. So wi youst remain there a few hour and when was about nine ten oclock we youst going back home and Dante in that time of hour hi was always sleeping, so I youst bring him always in my arm away to home; some time Rosina she youst halp me to carry him and in that same time she youst get Dante in her arm both us we youst give him a warm kisses on is rosy face. Those day Mrs. Jack they was a some happy day. . . .

December 14, 1923. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR MRS. JACK:

In the book I have read with you at Tuesday night if you remember when I have read the word *gorgette*, you asked me if I know what *gorgette* was, and I said yes Mrs. Jack I know what *gorgette* is, because I used to buy for wife; and I after say that is not the only *gorgette* waist I used buy for my comradeship, but almost everything; and another word she wont not go buy anything with out me. I remember Mrs. Jack a years go on our love day when I bouth the first an lovely blu suit for my dear Rosina and the dear remembrance is still rimane in my heart.

That was the first May nineteen twelve in Milford Mass.¹ the celebration day of the five martyrs of Chicago, that in the mind of humanity oppressed it never will be forgot. So in morning May first nineteen twelve I dress up with my new blu suit on and I went over to see my dear Rosina and when I was there I asked her farther if he wont let Rosina came with me in city town to buy something and he said yes. So in after, about one o'clock we both us went in city town, and we went in a big stor and we bouth a broun hat a white underdress a blu suit one pair broun stocking one pair broun shoes and after she was all dress up Mrs. Jack I wish you could see Rosina how nise she was look, while now the sufferance of today had make her look like a old woman.

But Mrs. Jack I never was ambitious to buy her a diamonds and so-so but I always bouth everything would be natural and useful. . . .

February 12, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

. . . . I was so glad to hear from you that after our lesson you went back home happy and cheerful, and so I Mrs. Jack! And I think that you should not bother yourself to buy a dram play because it will be really a drama play right here every once a week! So lat me say right now that every time you are out here I feel that same feeling like when I am near to

¹ Sacco was at this time working in the factory of the Milford Shoe Company. He worked there from 1909 to 1917.

my dear family, and I could hear the sound of your voice full of sincere gratitude that I have heard many time from the lips of my little Rosina and from the goot friends who have loved in good faith the cause of the humanity oppressed.

To day it is Abraham Lincoln birthday and I think that the citizens of this country they should be proud of thier own President, and in my little force of intellectual I always thought that Abraham Lincoln was one of the most respectable and humanity President that ever thought. Of course I have not read much history of this country but I have read little of George Washington and Jefferson and all thi history of Abraham Lincoln. The history of those three great President strike the feeling of the humble reclus. . . .

February 26, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

. . . . Every night when the light goes out I take a long walk and really I do not know how long I walk, because the most of the time I forget myself to go to sleep, and so I continue to walk and I count, one, two, three, four steps and turn backward and continue to count, one, two, three four and so on. But between all this time my mind it is always so full of ideas that one gos and one comes. . . . I find one of my mostly beautiful remembrance while I am thinking and walking, frequently I stop to my window cell and through those sad bars I stop and look at the nature into crepuscular of night, and the stars in the beauti blue

sky. So last night the stars they was moor bright and the sky it was moor blue than I did ever seen; while I was looking it appear in my mind the idea to think of something of my youth and write the idea to my good friend Mrs. Jack first thing in morning. So here where I am right with you, and always I will try to be, yes, because I am study to understand your beautiful language and I know I will love it. And I will hope that one day I could surprise the feel of my gratitude towards all this fierce legion of friends and comrades.

The flowers you send to me last week it renew in my mind the remembrance of my youth. It complete sixteen years ago this past autumn that I left my father vineyards. Every year in autumn right after the collection I usd take care my father vineyard and sometime I usd keep watch, because near our vineyard they was a few big farmer and surronder our vineyard they was vast extension of prairie and hundreds animal they used pasturage day and night on those vast prairie. So the most of night I remane there to sleep to watch the animal to not let coming near our vineyard. The little town of Torremaggiore it is not very far from our vineyard, only twenty minete of walk and I used go back and forth in morning an night and I usd bring to my dear an poor mother two big basket full of vegetables and fruits and big bounch flowers. The place where I used to sleep it was a big large hayrick that my good father and my brothers and I build. The hayrick it was set in one corner near the well in the middle of our vineyard, and surronde this

sweet hayrick they was many plants and flowers except the red rose, because they was pretty hard to find the good red rose and I did love them so much that I was always hunting for find one plant of those good—red rose!

About sixty step from our vineyard we have a large piece of land full of any quantity of vegetables that my brothers and I we used cultivate them. So every morning before the sun shining used comes up and at night after the sun goes out I used put one quart of water on every plant of flowers and vegetables and the smal fruit trees. While I was finishing my work the sun shining was just coming up and I used always jump upon well wall and look at the beauty sun shining and I do not know how long I usd remane there look at that enchanted scene of beautiful. If I was a poet probably I could discribe the red rays of the loving sun shining and the bright blue sky and the perfume of my garden and flowers, the smell of the violet that was comes from the vast verdant prairie, and the singing of the birds, that was almost the joy of deliriany. So after all this enjoyment I used come back to my work singing one of my favourite song an on way singing I used full the bascket of fruit and vegetables and bunch of flowers that I used make a lovely bouquet. And in the middle the longest flowers I used always put one of lovely red rose and I used walk one mile a way from our place to get one of them good red rose that I always hunting and love to find, the good red rose. . . .

P.S. How you find the day of our dear Mrs. Evans

birthday? I have here very beauti bag to suprise her. If you hap to see her give my warm regard.

April 9, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

Yesterday I said to you that when a man remains all day long back of these sad bars you feel your mind sometime very tired and exhausted of ideas, but when we see a friend and especially a friend that we feel to be bound together in one faith and in one fraternal affection many ideas coming back again. It is sweet to see a friend after a little period of time. I remember another day that I had past like yesterday it was right after when I came back from Mexico sometime into the middle of September nineteen seventeen, and at that time I was unoccupied.

So in one lovely morning of September when the rays of sunshine are still warm in the soul of oppressed humanity, I was looking for a job around the city of Boston and away I was going towards South Boston, I met one of my most dear comrades, and just as soon as we saw each other we ran one into the embrace of the other and we kissed each other on both sides of the cheeks. And yet it was not a very long time since we had seen each other, because a few weeks before we were in Mexico together; but this spontaneous affection it shows at all times in the heart of one who has reciprocal love and sublime faith and such a remembrance it will never disappear in the heart of the proletarian.

So your surprise visit Mrs. Jack it was a great relieve for the reclus, and I was enjoy to see you back again in good health and always in that good old spirit. . . .

March 15, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

It has been past a few day now that I had in my mind to write you a letter and I always try to find some good idea, but it was hard because the sky it has been covered for several day now with full of cloud; and you know that my most beauty idea I find by looking at the clear and blue sky. . . .

So Wednesday night I went to sleep with idea to write you at first thing in morning but when I was into bed I began to turn this way an the other way and I was try my best to sleep. So after while I fall sleep, enddid I do not know how long I been sleep when I was up again with a terrible dream . . . terrible I said yes, but beauty at same time, and here way it is. The dream it was develope in one place in mine camp of Pennsylvania state, and here it was a big large number of laborers in strike for better wages and the masses of workers they was impatient tired of long waiting, because the bos who own the col mine there threw out of the house a big number people, of poor mother and child and for the moment they were living under the tent in one concentration camp. But here the poor mother they was not pacific yet, because they know that they would soon send the soldiers to chase the mother out of the camp.

And so the big masse of the workers they was in complete revolt from the cruelty the bos of the mine. In this camp they were two or three speakers and every one of them they was used a kind and warm word for the freedom of the people. While the immensity of the work masses they were applauding the speakers, the soldiers comes with bayonet gun for chase the crowd, but after word they find out they was wrong because every one of the strikers they stand still like one man. And so the fight it was beginning, and while the fight was begin I jump upon a little hill in meddle of the crowd and I begin to say, Friend and comrade and brotherhood, not one of us is going to move a step, and who will try to move it will be vile and coward, here the fight is to go to finish. So I turn over towards the soldiers and I said, Brothers you will not fire on your own brothers just because they tell you to fire, no brothers, remember that everyone of us we have mother and child, and you know that we fight for freedom which is your freedom. We want one fatherland, one sole, one house, and better bread. So while I was finish to say that last word one of the soldiers fire towards me and the ball past through my heart, and while I was fall on ground with my right hand close to my heart I awake up with sweet dream! So when I was awake I had my right hand still tightly upon my heart like if it was hold back the speed of the beating of my heart. I turn over towards my window cell and through the shade of night I was looking at sky, and while look the stars it bright my face and the shadow soon disappear. Soon the idea it comes in

my mind to write my dream to my dear teacher and for moment I thought that Fairhope, Alabama was to far away but the spirit, the voice the lesson of my dear and good friend and teacher Mrs. Jack it is remained in my heart and blessed my soul. . . .

May 21, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR FRIEND, MRS. JACK:

. . . . I want that you would believe me in good faith that if I didnt write a letter to you in those few weeks it is not mean that I do not study my English lesson, no, no, nothing like that, because you know that I do like to learn this beautiful English language, and I do love to know it so some day I will be able to express my gratitude to all my friends and comrades. So you can be sure about that because even when I am feel depressing I use always try to find a few hours to study my English lesson. . . .

I was very sorry when I here from you that you was very sick, and I had in my mind to write you a letter right way but I was so *sad* that day that I could not write you any more. So today I thought to not wait any more long and sent you my most love and warm regard with hope you are feeling well.

In your last letter you asked me to tell you about the books that I am reading now. . . . I have read Gandhi Mahatma and Eugene V. Debs, and in both books I enjoyed the read, and I am glad to have read the history of life of those two human and great men in the history of the world. I am enjoy also reading

the book that you brought to me several weeks ago *Why Men Fight*, by B. Russell. It is a very good book and I find it little hard for me, but I will read it over again. . . .

August 18, 1924. Dedham Jail

FRED H. MOORE:¹

Sir:—Saturday I received your letter with enclose the post card that Mrs. M—— R—— sent to me—and the little pamphlet that you use to send to me it just to insult my soul. Yes, it is true, because you would not forget when you came here two or three times between last month with a groups people—that you know that I did not like to see them any more; but you brought them just seem to make my soul keep just sad as it could be. And I can see how clever and cynic you are, because after all my protest, after I have been chase you and all your philanthropists friends, you are still continue the infamous speculation on the shoulder of Sacco-Vanzetti case. So this morning before these things going any more long, I thought to send you these few lines to advise you and all your philanthropist friends of the "New Trail League Committee"² to not print any more these letters with my picture and name on, and to be sure to take my name out if they should print any more of these little pam-

¹ Counsel for Sacco and Vanzetti at the Dedham trial.

² A group formed after the original Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee had disagreed with Mr. Moore so that they could no longer work together. The new group disbanded a few months after forming, and several of its members joined the Defense Committee.

phlets, because you and your philanthropists has been use it from last three years like a instrument of infamous speculation. It is something to carry any man insane or tuberculosis when I think that after all my protest to have my case finish you and all your legione of friends still play the infame game. But, I would like to know if yours all are the boss of my life! I would like to know who his this men that ar abuse to take all the authority to do everything that he does feel like without my responsibility, and carry my case always more long, against all my wish. I would like to know who his this—generous—ma!!! Mr.—Moore—! I am telling you that you goin to stop this dirty game! You hear me? I mean every them word I said here, because I do not want have anything to do any more with "New Trail League Committee," because it does repugnant my coscience.

Many time you have been deluder and abuse on weakness of my comrades good faith, but I want you to stop now and if you please get out of my case, because you know that you are the obstacle of the case: and say! I been told you that from last May 25th—that was the last time you came to see me, and with you came the comrade Felicani and the Profess Guadagni.¹ Do you remember? Well, from that day I told you to get out of my case, and you promised me that you was goin to get out, but my—dear—Mr. Moore! I see that you are still here in my case, and

¹ Aldino Felicani, a printer and friend of both men, who founded the Defense Committee; Felice Guadagni, a radical professor, one of his early helpers.

you are still continued to play your famous gam. Of course it is pretty hard to refuse a such sweet pay that has been come to you right long—in—this big—game. It is no true what I said? If it is not the truth, why did you not finish my case then? Another word, if this was not the truth you would quit this job for long time. It has been past one year last June when you and Mr. Grella from New York came to see me into Bridgewater Hospital¹ and that day between you and I we had another fight—and you will remember when I told this Mr. Moore! I want you to finish my case and I do not want to have anything to do with this politics in my case because it does repugnant my coscience—and your answer to me was this: Nick, if you don't want, Vanzetti does want! Do you remember when you said that? Well, do you think I believe you when you said that to me? No, because I know that you are the one that brings always in these mud in Sacco-Vanzetti case. Otherwise, how I could believe you when you been deluder me many times with your false promise? Well—! anyhow, wherever you do if you do not intent to get out of my case, remember this, that per September I want my case finish. But remember that we are right near September now and I don't see anything and any move yet. So tell me please, why you waiting now for? Do you wait till I

¹ Sacco was committed for observation to the Boston Psychopathic Hospital on March 17, 1923, at the end of a 31-day hunger strike. On April 20, an order was issued for his commitment to the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminal Insane. He remained in Bridgewater till early fall and was then returned to the Dedham Jail.

hang myself? That's what you wish? Let me tell you right now don't be illuse yourself because I would not be surprise if somebody will find you some morning hang on lamp-post.

Your implacable enemy, now and forever,

NICK SACCO

P.S. Enclose in this letter you find the letter and the pamphlet that you sent to me and I return to you, so if your philanthropist friends of the "New Trail League Committee" should print some more these or any kind these letters and pamphlets, you can show them just the way to print next time. So you be advised now, that if any other my post card or letter should come to you address, please sent to me just my own, and not . . . these.

December 28, 1924. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR BARTOLO:

This morning only I have received your dear kind letter that you sent to me in Nov. 26, and you can imagine how glad I was to get it. Yes, it is great for me to get once in a while one of your letter, because they are always full of thought and faithful. Well I have here a mount of things to tell you but however that would be too long, and so I will only say that I hope that we will see each other soon.

You are quite right when you say—that after all we are still on our feet—of course, because we are always keep in our soul the hope and faithful in our

innocent; and I am sure that we will keep this hope and faithful till the bright day of our triumph.

Yes Bartolo, it is very croock means, but the comrades and the proletariat of the world they are always with us, indeed much more today than ever was. Therefore, you will let me say to you courage my dear friend, because this fight we are going to win, because I am faithful to this new legion of our dear comrades.

I will close now to say that I was glad to hear from you that you are feeling good and so am I. Meanwhile have my warm embrace with my most brotherly affection.

Your faithful comrade now and forever,

FERDINANDO ¹ SACCO

May 23, 1925. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR BARTOLOMEO:

The day before yesterday our dear comrade Fabbri ² were out here to see me, and he give to me your letter of April 24th. I was so glad to get your welcome letter, and I was glad also to hear that you are feeling well.

In your letter you say that meanwhile you thought to write me,—well, my dear comrade, it was very kind when you thought of it, and you can so well

¹ A family name often used by Sacco instead of Nicola or Nick. He was christened "Ferdinando," but adopted his elder brother's name, Nicola, when that brother died.

² Amilco Fabbri, Italian shoe-worker, secretary of the Defense Committee from 1924 to 1926.

imagine how joyful I felt when I received it. And if you please let me explain to you that, I also did myself wrote you a letter, right after they did brought you back to Charlestown prison. And so, I thought to do better by give it to my dear wife, because I was pretty sure that she would come down to see you soon, because I know that many times she did express to me the wish to see you. So, you see that it is not my fault if you didn't get my letter before. I said before, yes, because Fabbri told me that Rosina was out here to see you with my little beauty Ines, and certainly she brought to you my letter.

Yes Bartolomeo, I will send your regards in every-one of my letters, that I do send to the friends and comrades. I do forget sometimes, but I always did send your regards. Meantime I will hope that you are in the best of health with surely to hear from you soon.

With all my warm and brotherly embrace,
Your faithful comrade,

FERDINANDO

June 6, 1925. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. SHURTLEFF:¹

June the 4th, our dear friend Mrs. Evans was out here to see me, and she brought me the little small elegant sweater which you send it for my little dear Ines, and I thank you ever so much for it and for the

¹ Mrs. Arthur A. Shurtleff of Boston.

kind and excellent thought that you had towards my little beauty Ines.

I was so glad to get it because I know that it will prepare a great surprise to my little Ines. She is so dear to me that I cannot express myself how I do love her. Everytime that she does come see me, she always hug me, kiss me and kept on asking me if I have something for her, because she know that I do always prepare for her some little thing which my friends they bring to me. One of this most active friend which does always bring to me little of something or other for my little Ines, it is our dear friend Mrs. Jack. But, it is for few times now that she didn't feel cheerfully that she used to, of course, poor little dear!—she didn't feel good, specially last time that she was out here to see me with her dear mother, she felt so badly that her mother she had to bring her at home right way. And the mother! she was also look so depressed that I don't remember to have see her so badly. . . . Poor little dear mother! If they do not finish this iniquitous case sooner, I am afraid, that they will kill her before long. This . . . to much sufferince all together insed and outside the prison. . . .

June 18, 1925. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR COMRADE VANZETTI:

This morning right after I was waken my first thought it was to write you these few lines, and send you my most kind and warm wish for your birthday, with hope that it will be the last of yours and mine

birthdays that we spend in this terrible and iniquitous bastille, of the land of the free . . . country!

The last time that my comrade Rosina was out here to see me, she told me that she was out here to see you with my little Ines, and you can so well imagine how glad I was when I heard it. Afterwards I asked her why she didn't bring Dante too, and she said that he had to go to school, but she will bring him to see you just as soon she will have the chance. And therefore, I suppose that they will be over to see you pretty soon because June 21 Dante will have the school vacation, and I know just how much anxious my boy is to coming over to see you yes, because he told me so. . . .

Well, my dear comrade, it seems to me that this old degenerate world has not shown any better day for us yet, but we will always hope that someday the sunshine will bright our souls again. Meanwhile, I will close to say, that in spite of all I do feel pretty good, and I hope to hear from you the same. . . .

August 2, 1925. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

I have received your welcome card the other day, and I was glad to hear from you that you are feeling good and enjoy the vacation.

In your card you ask me to know how goes the life with me. Well, my dear Mrs. Evans, I think I did told you once that since I was a little boy and in all my life of adolescent, it was pretty hard work for my

family to know from me something about the pain of my ill, but only my poor old dear mother she used succeed to know from me once in a while, the pain that I was suffering when I used be sik. And that is why I am telling you sincere from the deep of my heart, because since the day that I have meet you, you been occupied in my heart my mother her place, and so I been respect you and I been loved you, that this terrible life it is insupportable, and I feel so nervous and tired of this miserably life that I hate to see my own shade. . . . And therefore, you can so well realise how hard it is after I been shut up for five long dolorous years in this terrible hole, away from the warming kisses of my dear companion and children, and from all what's nice and beauty, and from the joy of the liberty.

I understood from your card that you will be out here to see me sometime this month, and without doubt you will be always the dear welcome for me. . . .

August 18, 1925. Dedham Jail

MY DEAR COMRADE BARTOLO:

I have your both welcome letters—one of May 30th and the other of June 21st, which our dear comrade Fabbri brought to me Thursday night of August 13th, and you can so well imagine how glad I felt to get them. It is so pleasure to hear your voice once in a while for the reciprocal fraternal warm words that they use bring to us. Yes, Vanzetti, Ines she is a dear

little child and I knew that you have enjoyed very much seeing her, and really I felt very sorry when I heard from my dear companionship that she brought with her to see you only Ines. I knew that Dante will bring you a great surprise; he is quite a boy now, almost big as his mother, and he seemed to me that he does love his mother very much and certain it does bring a relief to me. I love him so much and without doubt I do love also my little dear Ines, and I wish you could see us out here when they came to see me how happy and joyful we feel nearest one another. Yes, I am happy of them, and I love them so much that I couldn't describe you how much I do love them. Hence, I will write my companionship right away and I will tell her that you like to see Dante, and I will tell her also to not forget to bring him over to see you before they will open the school. . . .

Thank you comrade, ever so much for the congratulation that you have sent to me for my progress English language. Yes, Bartolo, I do study all the time with very care to get near always nearest to definite and perfection this beautiful English language, but woe is me! it is very hard for me to reach into definitely perfection and final pronunciation of Shakespeare language.

It is very true indeed, what you saying—that we can never be good and well again for the future—as we want to be. No, I guess not: we can never get back that old young energy again, because of these dolorous long years confinement waiting for the new trial today and tomorrow. . . .

September 13, 1925. Dedham Jail

DEAR COMRADE DONOVAN:¹

Your welcome visit with our dear Comrade Fabbri was a very surprised visit for me, while I was thinking that you were in the great city of London at the time. . . .

We had discussed a whole lot of things, but one thing which I was very anxious to tell you I did forget. And so this morning I thought to write to you about what I promised to tell you. If I am not mistaken, one week or so after you went to Europe, my dearest family came to see me, and just as soon as they came, I gave to my dear little Ines the beautiful dolly that you sent to me by our dear Comrade Fabbri, and I wish you could have been here to see how happy and joyful my little Ines was. She jumped on my neck, hugged me and kissed me, and smiled at me with that smile of joy. Oh, she is a bright little dear child, and I do love her so much, that I could not describe to you how much I do love her. . . .

September 16, 1925. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

I just finished to write my dearest companionship a letter and I felt that I could not go without write you an letter; no, I couldnt, you are the next to my companionship. Yes, because you being occupied in my

¹ Mary Donovan, who became recording secretary of the Defense Committee in 1924.

heart the place of my good and poor old dear mother that I have been love her so much.

Your surprised visit certainly it were dear and welcome to me because . . . your motion, your act, the way you describe your young thought, your ineffable smile that I have read in your noble soul in all this time of these dolorous long years of my struggle fight, it is more sincere and dear to me than that I have seeing on your face. And that is exactly why I have being told my dear Rosetta and also my dear comrade Fabbri, that you wish with us to see to finish these sad and long angry way. . . .

P.S. Thank you mother, for the nice things you have brought to me.

September 25, 1925. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

I know it is very hard to make understanding on a dumbling like me and I can't help it, but I understood very plainly that you wish just as much as we wish to finish this struggle fight; and that is all the end.

About the old time then, I should say that the old law they was much less cruil when they used hang a man after few weeks, and not the civilisation . . . law of today, that they do kill a man too hundred thousand time before they hang. . . .

June 18, 1926. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

It was an earely bright morning when the harmony of the nature were resting upon the soil of the mother nature, while I were looking through the iron bars and contemplate the little sweet space of the nature, a noble old image in mine eyes appear—while she were coming toward me, a little gay breezes blow from the azure river seaside moving her lovely gray hair. Then, sudden after I wake from this bliss sweet vision I could see that were none other than the idea that I had since several day before . . . to write you to-day. . . . Therefore, this morning—in spite of all, I could not go any longer without write you these few lines, I stood so long without write you a single word, but after your last welcome visit you give to me I could never rest without sent you—that through all the struggle long year have been kind to me as an dear mother can be—my warm heart greeting.

Yes, your last grateful visit were a good relief for me because, after you had read to me your truly and good faithful article that you wrote for our freedom, I felt such commotion that remind me of the same commotion that I felt in my sweet youth in the embrace of my poor dear good mother, for I have find in you that same sincere and faithful that my dear mother she always had toward me. Therefore, let me tell you right now that if the puritan of Massachusetts they

have lost all the sense of the human feeling, your image should live forever as example of noble tradition of English woman, while surely if you should die you will leave the proselytes among your friends that I know and unknowing that I love. . . .

October 19, 1926. *Dedham Jail*

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

I have just finished to read a comment article about your dear friend LaFollette into *The Christian Science Monitor* of Oct. 16th. Therefore, I thought to cut it and sent it to you at once because I know that it will please your noble heart a great deal. It seems that the hope and the fate is with Bob LaFollette for the next re-election of 1926.

Here mother, the days are increasing always more rigid and sad and I do feel always more thoroughly loneliness away from those image whom are dearest to me. Have you know any news yet? Oh, how impatient I am to hear this answer. . . .

October 24, 1926. *Dedham Jail*

DEAR ABBOTT:¹

I have your welcome letter of Oct. 20th, and I was going to answer you right away, if it weren't that I had some other hurry duty that was calling me. But this morning, my first idea went toward you, and so I thought to send you these few lines to tell you that you didn't trouble me at all, but that I was pleased to send you the book.

¹ Leonard Abbott of New York, an anarchist friend.

Yes, the great noble soul of Eugene Debs has gone forever! And with him disappears one of the most model and sincere faithfulness to the class workers of the American socialist movement, but the example of his noble faith has remained with us to continue the struggle fight into the bright road for the conquest, the joy of liberty and the happiness of all. I do not remember to have met Debs personally in the past years, and I am very sorry to not to have seen him the last time he was out here, but I think I have heard him speak and I have read lots about him and loved him. . . .

November 12, 1926. *Dedham Jail*

DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

I have not forgot you and not your dear household no, I haven't, and I want you to know that on the contrary often I were thinking of you, even in the sad days your image appear to my vision always with more vividly remembrance. . . . I could see your dear household, the green grass, the beautiful flowers and the lovely fruit trees that only Mr. Jack can take care.

For also, you will excuse my poor Shakespear English: poor, yes, because I have not get yet all the song and the harmony of this beautiful language, as I have promise you that some day I would have surprise you with one of my good English letter. But, I want you to believe me sincerely, my dear teacher, that if it didnt succeed at my promise it is not my fault. No, it isn't, because I have tryed with all my passion for the success of this beautiful language, not only for the sake

of my family and for the promise I have made to you—but for my own individual satisfaction, to know and to be able to read and write correct English. But woe is me! It wasn't so; no, because the sadness of these close and cold walls, the idea to be away from my dear family, for all the beauty and the joy of liberty—had more than once exhaust my passion.

And then, you be surprise that after all these cruel and long sagregation years, they still have courage to bring me an English teacher—while they keeping my family away from me that I long so much to see them at least once a week. It is a real shame. Poor humanity! . . .

November 21, 1926. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. HENDERSON:¹

I have received a letter from Mrs. Evans the other day, and I leave it to you to imagine how badly stroke me the sad announcing of the death of your poor husband. Here the life in this terrible hole cell, is so thoroughly loneliness that I couldn't describe you how sad it is, but through all my struggle life, since my young adolescent till today, through all these long segregation years away from all the beauty and joy of liberty, away from all the heart caress and affectionate care of my dearest family, and from the smile sincere gaze of the friends and comrades that I love and loved, here—in the heart of this humble reclus

¹ Mrs. Jessica Henderson of Wayland, Mass., a constant observer at the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti, who was early convinced of their innocence.

were always a place to embrace the pain of the other sufferant. Yes, and especialy the mother pain because I do sincerely believe that they are more sensitive and the ones who swallow the bitterness and the sufferance of all the family . . . Therefore, please Mrs. Henderson, let me join together with my family for the loss of your companionship and the father of your dear children, with hope that it would bring you relief as much relief your letters have brought to me. Therefore, comfort yourself between your lovely daughters that you love and love you so dearly, and don't you forget that late and first one after another we all have to pass to the eternity world; and for the unfortunate creature that they have been condemn to suffering all their life long, more than once the death has appear more sweet than the life itself. . . .

November 28, 1926. Dedham Jail

DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

Those beautiful clove flowers surprised me so deeply in my unrest heart that I could not describe you how deeply touch I felt. Really, I do not remember to have seen so big size and beautiful clove flowers like those in my life. I do remember very well that my father had several plant of cloveflower—but not so large size as those you sent me no, not so large, but they perfume immensely, and if you could see the peasant when they come back home from the work at the night, you would be surprise to see everyone of them

picking every kind of flower here and there along the road side.

Then Monday, when Miss Betty¹ brought me the cloveflower and the bag of lovely and delicious apples with enclosed letter, I were reading *The Maritime History of Massachusetts* by S. E. Morison that Mrs. Evans brought me a few weeks ago, and I were immersed profoundly in it with idea to get all the description of this particular history, because very often happen during the day that I have to re-read over and over again the same pages with a poor result.

It is true that all the best philosophers, the poets and the biologists—when they have the idea to write a good masterpiece of work, they untiring seek the solitude; yes, but not here close behind these sad bars, into an cold unjust walk where is not life and not hope; where all the making energy and the study passion are exhaust. No, not here, indeed! But there between all the harmonies of the mother nature, under the radiant rays of sun where everything grows so vividly in the human mind and in the heart, love, life and all the vegetation beautifully. Oh life! . . .

December 27, 1926. Dedham Jail

DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

After the good and unexpected visit that Miss Betty paid me, I thought to sent you those few lines to tell you that Miss Betty she does look perfectly fine; and full of an bright health that I have remember seeing

¹ Elizabeth Jack, daughter of Mrs. Jack.

in her. Moreover, in her lovely big eyes are always full of thoughts and dreams, but her dreams are still resting in her sweet and gay adolescent.

The lovely apples, the candy, the nice sort primiture for my dearest darling Inez and the beautifully pink flowers that Miss Betty brought me for the Christmas gift did please very much my sad soul. That brought me new ideas toward always the beauty and oppressed humanity!

P.S. I hope from the bottom of my heart that the new year would bring us a pardon and in the embrace of mine and in the great human family.