

unable to discover any of your books. Mr. Tallman states that he is sure that everything was boxed and returned to you at the State Prison. If anything does turn up in the future, I shall be only too glad to forward it, as you have requested. Very truly."

Well, I have been taken out from my room without being warned of my returning to the prison. It was said to me, "If you have something to eat in your room, take it with you." Being in the worst ward of the institution, I thought that they were about to have me changing the place. I was led to the store-room, seeing my old plain suit, I realized that I was about to be sent back here, and I said to the assistant, "I have left many books and things in my room." He replied, "Never mind, we will send everything to you. Your room is already closed with the key." This they did purposely, because it is simply impossible to do it involuntarily. If none had occupied my room, the objects should have been there and found. If my room was occupied, in changing the bed, washing the floor, etc., as they always do when someone changes a room, they would have found the books. I will give you a note of the books which I lost. 1st. *A Divine Comedy*, It was given to me by a far away comrade and friend, whom I fear, I will see no more. The binding itself costed me \$2.50 before the war. 2nd. *W. Emerson's Essays*, given to me by a most dear friend. 3rd. *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, given by a generous soul. 4th. *Thoughts of Nature*. 5th *Friendship* by Thoreau. These are the only ones which I now remember. Besides

I have left other personal effects; a valuable pipe, given to me by a comrade; brushes, combs, etc.

What shall I do? Write to Mr. Thompson? All is useless; they are right, I am wrong. So I will console myself, thinking that they have done me greatest damages when I was in their hands, and that this sorrowful loss is a trifle, for one who, as me, is robbed of all that is worthwhile in life, and who will soon be robbed of his own life. And this is all. . . .

I think that Mrs. O—— T—— is a little too optimistic. Meanwhile, we are slowly executed by five years, and to be conservative,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of our execution is already a fact—an irreparable fact. I cannot understand if Mrs. T—— means "by saving us" to obtain the commutation of pain, from an execution to a life long imprisonment; or if she is believing that, since it is inconvenient to the State to kill us, it will free us. Executive Clemency. That is what has been longly pre-established by our murderers, who are thinking to get square with everybody by killing us in 20 years, instead of in 8 or 12 minutes. That is what I expect. It will kill my father, and then me. To sign it would be worse than the three shakes for me. I have to see what Nick is thinking of such a signing. Were I fatherless, and alone in trouble, I would never sign the pardon, may be I will not. I do not know what I will do.

I cannot speak of my mother, having murder in my heart. I can only say that I am glad she died before my arrest. I think I will never be anymore able to speak of her.

July 22, 1925. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Since yesterday evening to now, this evening, I have read many times your letter, wondering if I understand it or if I utterly misunderstand it; its parts which treat of the case and the citation. I wish to elucidate it.

Our case is this: We were found guilty of first degree murder, which penalty is death. If the State Supreme Court will deny a new trial, we ought to be sentenced to death. Then the executive clemency *may* be obtained, but with what consequences or result? I believe that by executive clemency, you mean the grace by the Governor. Now, if it is that, and in our case, the result would be that the Governor will commute our penalty (death) with a sentence of life imprisonment, and such sentence being already a "grace," it will destroy every hope, in future, of "Grace." If you think of this in the same way as I understand your words as follows: "You will not be executed, but life imprisonment."

And if Mrs. O—— T—— also thinks of the case as I have exposed it, then her words: "I am certain that they will be saved," means; by execution alone, and not by perpetual chains.

As you see, I am compelled to understand your words in this signification because I do not know any other procedure of the "executive clemency," except the above stated one. If there are other way of proceeding and other power of the executive what I ignore, then your words may have all a different meaning.

Otherwise, people talk just like [that] about our case, no chair but life. The State is informed of everything, and of course, when it will be sure to satisfy everybody and to eliminate every danger by such a commutation, surely it will deny us a new trial and save us forever in prison. And consider, our accepting the *grace* would be equivalent to our confession of guilt. And this, after five years of struggle, after an expense of \$300,000, a three-fold mondial protest; after our comrades have given blood and liberty in our behalf; after all that we have in our favor, in spite of our innocence. We have said many times that we want either freedom or death.

Please Comrade Blackwell, use your means in this direction, let everyone know that we prefer the death to the chains—that not a word should be said, not a cent given, nor a finger raised, if not to give us freedom or death.

July 22, 1925. *Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR COMRADE M. DONOVAN:

. . . . Thank you very much for your happy idea and action to send me a picture of our John Larkin. He, Debs and Evel<sup>1</sup> are the three American men who have the admiration, love and respect of me and of my comrades, including Galleani, for, fanatic as we may be, we know a little about sincerity, character and faith, and those who have them. Nick will be as glad as I to have such a picture. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Hippolyte Havel, editor of *The Road to Freedom*, New York anarchist weekly.



I had understood at once why your letter was not signed—but the little note opened a vista to me: I see you typewriting, reading the letter, quite satisfied, closed it, went to the box, dropped the letter and—o my, o my, I forgot to sign it. I see your nose more than everything else. Do you see me laughing? Well, well. . . .

Yesterday, I also received a letter from Alice Stone Blackwell. She says: "I too, believe you and Nick will never be executed, even if the effort for a new trial will fail. I have good hope, if worse comes to worse, we may get executive clemency." And she quotes in a friend's letter: "I have not worried much about Sacco and Vanzetti, because I have felt all the time that there were too many people in Massachusetts who would never submit to the shame of their execution. I know it has taken, it will take, incessant hard work to save them, but I am certain that they will be saved. Even the bourgeoisie will get out and hustle now, rather than let them be murdered in the name of Capitalism."

It seems to me that the words of them both means; "they will be saved from the chair—the Governor will commute their sentence to life imprisonment." And I am sorry for such a letter through the official channel.

This is what the people are saying, and if the comrades and the prominent personalities begin to say it—showing that this result will satisfy them, surely a new trial will be denied. I wrote and told it to her.

You have already surprised me with your Italian—"In Morta del Bona"—splendid! But it takes a nose

as sharp as mine to understand what it means: "In Morte del Boia."

But you are brave typist and letter-writer.

Now, before to close, let me give you some advises, about traveling and seasickness, which I forgot to tell you when you were here. Eat plenty of garlic. It is good against seasickness. Provide yourself with a wide linen strap and tie it straight around your abdomen (on the skin) as a belt. It prevents the shaking of the intestines, which produces seasickness. Have your stomach as clean as possible before sailing—have some green or onions with olive oil each morning before eating, and hot coffee after it does very good. And above all, be at rest and of good cheer.

I would be but too happy to accept your cordial invitation. I like the country. I need it, and I am sure I would like your father and your sister as I like you. But the chance is thin—getting thinner.

You looked fine when you were here, and I hope you will be even finer.

Farewell, Comrade Donovan,

BARTOLOMEO

*July 31, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

GREETINGS TO MY DEAR FRIEND [IRENE BENTON]:

Your card is here and read with joy. Thank you for the picture of the road. I would walk it barefoot and light as a butterfly in spring days.

Things seems to be taking a good turn. It may be some day I will tramp that road.

The picture of the moccasin flowers are beautiful. I saw and plucked some on a hill near home in Plymouth, Mass. The spot where they were was shady and moist, strange creature of brightness.

Our dear E. V. Debs has plead masterly in our behalf here in Boston as well as elsewhere—wherever he goes.

I have been reading *Vedanta Philosophy*, much foolishness and err, and much wisdom and truth in it. Anarchy is my beloved.

Every little good thing is good but to prevent another world war greater and bloodier than this one only a revolution or danger of a revolution can be effective. We have seen the Socialist movement of Europe collapse at the first rumors of war, and becoming a tool of war.

A whole Italian opera was radio-telegraphed. Sometime I have wished before it and hoped after it that you might have listened.

*September 14, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letters of the 10th and that of Aug. 21st, and that of Sept. 5th were all received in due time. Before all, let me thank you very much for them. I am sorry to have been compelled to such a delay to answer. Even now, I cannot answer, as your letters deserves.

I have not been distressed, but a little enraged about the said "executive clemency." August 18th, Mr.

Thompson was here, and he told me that I am right, and I knew it before he told me, because it is six years that I am in prison, and I learnt something.

The loss of my books is but a joke. I am robbed of everything—and of life itself, and I do not worry for it all, so try to be of good cheer.

Nowadays are yet very many people who believe in witch-craft, and almost all of the people believe in something else not less absurd and bloody. Change of evils, errors and crimes, is taken as progress by many.

Your letter of Sept. 5th, has made me laugh. I will write longer letters to you as soon as possible. . . .

*September 15, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I am again answering your later three letters, in order to express to you, more thoroughly, my thoughts about the case.

The cases of Tresca and Debs were different from my case—they were sentenced to a definite term of time—I will be, to death. In their cases "executive clemency" means, in a way or another, freedom. In my case it means life imprisonment, as Mr. Thompson told me August 21st. I knew it before then. There are five lifers here, whose death sentence was commuted by the Governor<sup>1</sup>. . . .

As a matter of fact, the Governor can free us, if

<sup>1</sup> Vanzetti means former governors of Massachusetts, not Governor Fuller.

he wishes it. But why should he? Why should I expect clemency, from he who denies justice to me? My enemies: the judge, the prosecutor, my former lawyers, the Supreme Court, honors the Governor, his council, the Chamber of Commerce, the Plymouth Cordage Co. The Governor and the President himself are all of the same parties—all of one ring. Given this truth, all that has happened 'til now, proves that they want to keep us in prison all of our lives, that consequently, they will repeal the appeal. I don't pretend to be infallible, to know the secrets of the hearts and of the conscience, but I have a certain experience and a sharp nose. Why should the presiding judge have refused a new trial if his ring would wish to free us? To give trouble to them, or useless expenses to the State? Why should the Supreme Court grant a new trial, if the ring has ordered to the presiding judge to deny it? . . .

I hate to deceive myself with foolish hopes: I prefer to face the truth, nude, crude, horrible as it may be; to look the eye into the eye, the reality. Not to shrink from, not to fear the reality, is my chosen rule. To think, but not to be crushed by the thoughts, is what I like. . . .

You wish that I may bear as well as possible my imprisonment—so you name to me men and women who passed, or are passing through the crushing ordeal of prison and exile (prison is also exile, and worse) keeping themselves mentally and morally healthy.

But also this fact I like to look at and see it just as it is—dreadful as it is—enough if I can bear the spectacle; if I don't yield and become coward. There are

ordeals which shatter the flesh or the spirit or both of the men and women. Prison is one.

You speak of Ricardo F. Magon, who spent many years in prisons and in exile and kept his faith and courage and optimism to the last. To the last, for, strong and young he died in chains, maybe killed just because he was untamable, by his keepers, as the Mexican Comrade was chained, and since his death, the world became worse and worse.

Eugene Debs left just in time to care [for] and to recuperate his health; another few months of prison and we would have lost him. Bakounin, a healthy giant such as he was—died at 62 years—killed by the prisons, the exile, and the struggle. I wonder if Catherine Breshkovsky would have appealed the capitalist nations to invade the Russians and crush the revolution, were it not for her suffering in prisons and in exile.

Thousands, millions of the best men and women were crushed by the mercenary keepers, by the prisons and the scaffold. I would kill all the keepers of the world to save such as Debs or Magon. We fight for the triumph of a cause,—not to be crushed by the keepers—we will never win without vanquishing them. They are mercenary, we idealist; should a free man or a rebel allow them to do what they please to him? . . .

Yet, if I had renegated my faith, or become a degenerate, I would presently enjoy privileges and I could hope for freedom. But to the freedom bought at such price, I prefer the chains and the death.

I would like to answer to every argument of your



letter, also, to tell you many other things, but this letter is already very long. So I close with affection and with the most hearty regards to your cousin and to you.

P.S. I will write you something of my mother, in the near future, I hope. . . . Your last letter has made me laugh. I must laugh every time I think of it. Please take care of your eyes.

*September 18, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

MRS. L. N. RUSSELL:

Expecting a soon opportunity of mailing—I decided to and am writing to you, this evening.

My ancestors were farmers, my grandfather was an agriculturer and dealer in agriculture's products. My father is himself a land owner, gardener and an intelligent agriculturer. I hereditated their passion to the land. But I have no experience nor skill because I left home when 13 years old, to learn the trade of pastry cook, candy maker and liquorist. I only worked the land—some insignificant works—in my father's garden, when a boy, and afterward, few weeks, here in a farm of an American family.

My father own a beautiful garden and a good deal of land among the better veins and position of the town-territory, which extends itself at the feet of beautiful hills.

The most renditive crop of the place, is the hay, and, naturally, the land at meadow is the most valuable. Ordinarily, we have three yearly hay crops, but

when the Summer is a little raining, we have four crops of hay. Consequently, we have a great many bovines. The largest farms has an herd of 300 cows. Several other farms have over 100 cows—many have 10, 20, 30 to 80 and 100 cows. Thus, the amount of dairy products is very considerable. There is a Swiss-cheese factory which produced tons of cheese daily, and raises many hundreds of hogs. At the Autumn, the snow-storms chased the mountaineers out from the mountains—down to the valley they come. The young men and women and their children—with great big herds of cows or of sheeps, they carry their furniture in carts pulled by a pair of mules. They take shelter in the farms in which meadows (after 3 or 4 crops of hay) they pasture their herds—until near Christmas—when a heavy snow-fall covered the valley in a thick mantle of white, and they begin to feed their herds with the farmer's hay. Only their old folks remain at the mountain, blocked for months in their houses by high walls of snow.

All this will prove to you that the farms-building must be very big in my native valley—in fact they are, in spite that those farmers do not dwell so comfortable as the American farmers generally do. Much less, indeed. In my father's house, we had a family of tenants—composed of 3 brother and one sister, all old singles, who live in one large room. The poor ones were very clean and decent persons. In spite of their poverty, the poor sister fixed the only room of their habitation, quite well. Two of the brothers sleep in the stable at winter time—in the hay-barn, during the

summer. Many of the peasants like to do so. Next to the hay, the most important crop is that of the wheat; then, that of the corn, then the clover. We also cultivate beans, etc. We use the "rotation system" in our fields. Also, since we raise a great deal of silk-worms (a painful and hard work for the women), every field is planted of lines of mulberry trees. The fields and meadows' hedges are planted of wood trees.

In May, to cut the first hay, in June, to pluck the mulberry's leaves, in July to cut the wheat, thousands of young mountaineers come down to the valley—in numerous groups—riding in big carts pulled by mules. As they approach the towns and the village, they begin to sing—and they pass through the towns and the villages, singing in choir, throat-full, with stentorean voices their rough songs. They go directly to the valley's bottom—where the crops ripe first. At the evening, in the piazza, they bargain with the farmers about the wage and the conditions. At three o'clock next morning, they are in the field, ready to the tremendous task. The sun strikes providentially the soil of the turgid valley—but the sun strikes also mercilessly and often fatal upon the skulls of those poor creature, bended upon furrows, seeing red, sweating blood, to give the bread to the worthy and to the unworthy—alas!

Every years, some of those men fall into the furrows—for ever. They went to their death—singing. The valley's folks fear these groups of young mountaineers, especially the women. Once, they might have been dangerous. They are men of appalling force and carry with them the sharp, bright scythes—or the sacks, ac-

ording to the occasions. But, actually, my folks' fear is based only on legends. I know what has past in my town for twenty years; not even a case of rape or a homicide was committed by these mountaineers during those twenty years. Yet, my father told me many a time to have witness those mountaineers commit bad thing when he was young and my grandfather hired many of them.

Once, says my father, 10 of them went in the hay-barn and begin to smoke—a joke with intention to burn the whole farm to the ground. My grandfather—well, my grandfather chasted them out of the farm.

Returning to the farms-buildings, you may perceive, by what I have told, that they must be big. But they are also little farms and some farmers who lives in the town.

With the exception of olives, oranges, lemons, and the tropical and semi-tropical fruits—we raise many fruits, apples, pears, cherries, grapes, plums, figs, peaches, berries, etc. etc. The nearby hills are all a fruit-garden, wine yards and woods of chestnut and of hazelnuts. Blackberries, strawberries and mushroom grow wonderfully up there. Each farm has a vegetable-orchard, tilled by the women. The women work very hard there—beside to their householding—they till the orchard, raise the silk-worms, help in the field during the height of the hay's and wheat's works, care for the hogs—and raise hundreds of chickens, besides the dairy works.

Well, is not my story a long one? I don't know why, but in re-reading your letter over again, I was seized

by a strong desire to tell you of my valley, of my folks, of my native town. I love my valley and my folks as myself. I know their soul which is my soul. It is six years that I am in chains—I may suffer of prison psychosis—So I beg your pardon for my long letter, random and fragmentary, about such far away places and peoples—I carry it all within my heart—I would tell more of my native valley, town and folks, and of my home. But enough of it for now—If possible I will write some other times to you, especially because in your later letter are arguments of great moment, of which I would like to express my opinion—humble or wrong as it may be.

With warm heart I salute you and Mr. Russell—wishing to you, health and peace.

September 25, 1925. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE DONOVAN:

Your good letter of the 25th just received and read. Beside to be good, it has other qualities which made me admire and thank you. I would bet my neck that you are Irish as well as cosmopolitan.

Yes, our last visit was indeed short and so unhappy. The weather always influences us—I was particularly sensible of it even when living more normally than now. Now, my given particular environment and conditions, it asserts upon me a stronger influence. When the atmosphere is heavy, the gas floats lower in our shop, and stays longer, accumulating itself around

us, making us more blunt. The day was cloudy and wet, when you were here, and I was simply unable to think, to remember, and to speak. When you left, I was sorry for you, and sorry and shameful for me. But afterward, I consoled myself by the thought that it has been more worse for me than for you. Is not this a fair piece of philosophy. I know that you have understood and forgiven.

You are wise: I would not have lost your feeble attempts at writing Italian, for I would not have received it, and your letter freed my mind of a pre-occupation. I am inclined to believe that you are progressing in Dante's language. Next time I will examine you. . . .

I knew of the many anti-fascist meeting held all over the Union, and I am glad to hear of the future one to be held in Boston. I would even write something to be read at the meeting. But I am so caustic, so violent, realistic and impartial, that sometimes my thoughts are dreadful, even to myself, and almost my utterances are "*spiacenti a dio e ai nemici sui*" (displeasing to God and to his enemies). . . .

No honor was ever more deserved than our invitation to Miss Blackwell to speak at the meeting, and none can honor it more than she. She has only one fault; that to flatter the undersigned a little too much—spoiling them. I have no words to tell of the good that I received from her friendship and solidarity. As always, I was rough with her, and with all, and by gosh, I have been sad for it. She wants me to write her of my mother. I cannot speak of my mother, I told



her, but she insists. She says "that an exceptional man is always the son of an exceptional mother." Well, she might be right, at that—but I have never dreamt proud as I am, to be an exceptional man, though I adore my mother. But if the moon and the stars and everything in between will be prosperous to me, I shall try to answer the generous request of our noble Friend. To you, if you please, I ask to forward to her, at the meeting, my highest sentiments.

The man wants to boss the woman and therefore, the man invented many bunks to replace the reasons and justify their wrongs. (As always has happened and will happen in such cases.) I have always believed (since I begun it) that you women are not less, but more, courageous than us men. Yet, we call you the fair sex, and that seems true to me. Seriously, moral courage counts far more than physical courage. This is one of those things which negative side is superior to the positive.

But beside that, you women are also physically courageous. Kropotkin, as an historian, has sung epics to the courage and the heroism of the French and Spanish women. And I know that the Italian women have laid themselves, holding high their babies, across the railroads, before the trains, which, carried of soldiers, were moving to the war—to stop the train. And the Italian women did the same thing before the squadrons of cavallery charging the people. And the Irish women—stop—you know better than I do about them. So three cheers to all the good women of the land, of every province of the land. But I feel sure

that politics would spoil them as it spoiled "us men." You too? But our dear Alice is of a different opinion. But she is superior; she is high above the "suffragism" just as Eugene Debs is above the "socialist party." And both of them have done and are doing splendid and great works of education and of emancipation.

Now, I will stop before you say that I am loquacious. Your good wishes are most welcome to me. I do what the Galilee did with the breads and the fishes—, sending you seven baskets filled with them. *Mia buona* Maria Donovan. I salute you with great heart. *Arrivederci.*

October 27, 1925. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I understand that you must have been very sick. And I was about to write for information when Miss Mary Donovan came here and told me, with some assuring words that you were in the hospital, where you had undergone a serious operation. After her visit, I waited eagerly for your news, and the morning of the 25th Oct., Mrs. Evans told me, shining with gladness, that you were doing well. In the evening of that same day, I received the letter which you dictated for me. It shows that you are in good spirit, and I thank you a thousand times for it. I am happy that you are surviving after the operation, and for your doing well.

Yes, I have had to swallow things so bitter "that little more than death." It reduced me to a boney

pile of perambulating bitterness. Nor is it a matter of the past. It is six years that all my thirsts are quenched with gall and vinegar, and what is worse, I believe that the worst is yet to come. For I know the heart and the mind of my murderers, and the rest—to nourish empty hopes. My dignity refuses them—nor I feel the need of the help of self-illusioning. I am yet man enough to look straight into the eyes, the black ghastly reality and the tragedy of my life. And I would have the deadly joke to end, no matter how, this very moment.

But now, I want to congratulate you of your victory—not repeat my lamentation. That in spite of all, I can toast to your health, even after the gall and vinegar, and with great heart tell you that your flowers and your toast are most welcome here. To the triumph of your life, a worthy life, I drink. As even a nihilist, knowing you, would drink; if it is true that “In its gesture of death, there is nothing but a great dream of life.” . . .

Yesterday, I received a picture of Beltrando Brini, who was with me peddling fish the day and the hour in which the Bridgewater hold-up happened. He testified at the first trial—keeping the stand for over two hours in one day, and for over an hour the following day. I am proud of him for he is my spiritual son, and he is doing very well. At the age of 12, he bought a violin with the money he earned by picking blue-berries. He belonged to a Musicians' Union for 2 years. Last year he graduated from high school with an honorary record, and he is entering Harvard this year. He is

teaching violin to 11 pupils in Plymouth. A magnificent son of the people. . . . And now, three cheers to you, and my hearty greetings.

*November 13, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your most welcome letter of Nov. 4th reached me in due time. Its news about your health assured me of your recovering and its arguments rouse many thoughts and sentiments within my being. I am going to answer with an attempt to express myself—and this will be a long random letter.

You blame to me, anarchist, Miss H—— because “she hates politics and never votes.” Well, these facts cause me to add my admiration and my gratitude to her; and I don't believe that you have written in the hope that I would have approved your “blaming,” for, you should believe that I have changed my ideas, in order to expect it. And I cannot see any reason for such belief. I know that you are doing everything possible to my welfare. Therefore, I think that you have said it purposely to have me thinking of controversial arguments and forgetting my personal troubles and my environment. Thus, to beneficiate me. Most good of you. But, I will not discuss about yours and my different beliefs about ballot, etc., because I have many other things to tell you and I know that you know quite well the reasons of my disbelief—reasons advocate by men such as Bakounin, Kropotkin, Proud-

hon, Malatesta, Emerson, Shelley, William Goodwin, Reclus, Galleani, Tolstoy, Spencer, and, it seems, also Christ, are named for the love of my beautiful anarchy, not for vanity or worse than that,—and, forgive me.

Now, something about hope, hopes and hoping. A Damiani's paradox says: "There is no faith without desperation, and no desperation which does not hope to the last." It is right, I believe. It is more than logic,—fatal, that my friends and comrades shall hope in my freedom. For, it is human, and honors them and proves to me their love. The hope would be the last goodness, were it not for the desperation. Our difference is a psychologic one of persons in different conditions and natures and beliefs, thus psychologically different.

To me, my life and my liberty are in the hands of enemies who can do what they please of us, because to give or to deny us a new trial is absolutely arbitrary to them. Which, in the world, and where are the reasons that make it reasonable to expect from them a new trial? All that could have been, or is, favorable to us,—in the sense to compel the enemies to give us, against their own will and wishes, a new trial,—has failed or is failing. So that such hope is contrary to all reason, knowledge, realities, facts, experiences, criteria and logic. The hope of the doomed. Our enemies know very well that by another trial we would be free, and this is the reason why they will forget it; save that they want to free us. I have hopes—but I hope in me and in others.

Yes, I am disappointed already, without having to wait for further damages and offences. How could I not be disappointed? I should be insane and vanquished, while I have the soul of a winner. People have taken the bread out of their children's mouths to help us. Many have dedicated all their energy to the case; other prisoners were wronged; the same great cause has suffered because of us; we are chained, all our beloved in sorrow; the case is lost. We did not come to be vanquished but to win, to destroy a world of crimes and miseries and to re-build with its freed atoms a new world. I am disappointed, but not crushed. I have not become a rat or a renegade. And I can carry my burden to the last, and only that counts.

A good communist girl wrote me from Milwaukee: "We are celebrating the 7th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, and you too, I believe." How can I say to her that at the very thought of the Russian Revolutionary's failure all the sores of my heart open themselves, and all the anguish of my soul arises? Without hurting, or maybe, offending her? Ah, my passion for the truth! What a cross. Yet, I am glad of it, and I carry it with a strong heart. I adore freedom, it is my divinity, and the truth is its archangel of liberation. . . .

*November 18, 1925. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR FRIEND PETTYJOHN:

I had believed that one of the causes of your delay was that you were overworking, but I had also feared that you or some member of your family might have



been or is sick. So, your letter of October 30th has been a most welcome pleasure and relief to me.

To write me such a good and long reviewing letter as yours from amid your hardship, is most good of you, and commands all my appreciation and gratitude.

As for the political, economic means, tactics and actions to quicken the history toward our common good, your beliefs and criterion are quite different from my beliefs and criterion, so that, only to put clearly and exactly the differences, not a letter, but a book would be necessary.

The topics of your letter are so many, deep and vast, they involve so many problems, phenomena, beliefs and conceptions, that it is almost impossible for me to write enough in a letter to make my opinions clear and understood. Therefore, I will limit myself to say that your letters always make me thoughtful, which is good—and that I share with you, if not your conceptions about methods and means, all your ideals and intention, and the goal. Our beliefs and our minds may be very different, but our aspirations and our hearts are most akin.

I will soon begin the translation of *The War and the Peace*, by Proudhon, from Italian to English, and I hope that my labor will not be done in vain.

December 5, 1925. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letter of December 3rd was just read. Thank you for the waited *Unity*.

Well, I am laughing at the Matteotti's murderers' white-washing. My comrades are long tragically joking of it. One has said, "Not only the government will acquit his (Matteotti's) murderers, but it will prize them, and find out that the only and real guilty one of this atrocious crime is the victim himself. In fact, had not he permitted to be murdered, his assassins would not be such. And, since Matteotti's crime was a very anti-national crime, and his family has a discreet patrimony, we advice the fascista State to pass a big fine on the martyr's family."

Justice is suppressed with fire and iron, by the tyrants and their blackguards. And for iron and fire the liberation calls. For that Mazzini adviced the Italians to turn in daggers even the iron-cross upon the graves of their dead ones. . . .

All in all, the truth is that Italy has to choose; either fascimo, or revolution. And the oppositionists fear the realization of the socialism—to which a revolution would inevitably lead. Hence, their impotence, and the ruin of the People.

Well, I am translating the Proudhon's book about war. Today, Mrs. Evans has read and corrected the translation of its first chapter. She says it is well done.

December 5, 1925. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE DONOVAN:

. . . . You call my wish for freedom, a christian wish. It may be, but I know of so many Christians

who have perjured and framed me, who would be so happy to burn me, who enjoy so much of my chains and are so distressed at the thought of my possible but unprofitable future freedom, who are so beastial towards little criminals and so servil towards the great criminals, that I doubt if you can call your good wish a Christian wish. I know of professional Christians who have written and are doing the dirtiest tricks against me to send me to the chair. Last evening I wrote you 10 pages on this topic, but later on in the night, I decided not to deliver them. Thus, this morning, Dec. 30th, I am writing this hurried letter to you.

I hope you are well and I hope to see you soon again. And now, dear Comrade, I want to wish you with all my heart, Health and Vigor to Fight Joyfully the Heroic Battle of Life and Win, and Conquer Pains, Sorrow and Fatigue with the Flame of Force and of Courage. To know, to suffer is the sole, real, heroism.

### CHAPTER III

**I**N the year 1926, a series of important legal steps took place. Mr. Thompson was now in charge of the defense and on January 11, an appeal from Judge Thayer was argued before the Massachusetts Supreme Court. The decision went against the men. Then followed another effort to secure a new trial from Judge Thayer, based upon disclosures made by Celestino Madeiros, then confined in Dedham jail for another murder. According to Madeiros, he and a notorious band of professional criminals were the perpetrators of the South Braintree crime. Again Judge Thayer decided against Sacco and Vanzetti.

This increased activity had its effect upon Vanzetti. In previous years he had occupied himself by translating into English Proudhon's *War and Peace*, writing his autobiography, *The Story of a Proletarian Life*, completing a novel called *Events and Victims*, which was a first-hand account of his experiences in a munitions factory before America entered the war, and contributing articles to anarchist newspapers and to the Defense Committee's bulletin, often on matters not directly related to the case.

Now, he bent his energies to the task of aiding counsel and the Defense Committee. He began to translate Mr. Thompson's brief into Italian, for distribution in Europe. Most of his letters at this time indicate a

steadier preoccupation with the case. He conferred more frequently with members of the Defense Committee on steps to be taken.

*January 30, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR, DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

. . . . I am sorry that you were unable to hear the whole argumentation of Mr. Thompson. He has really been magnific. Also Mrs. Evans says so, but, and not wrongly, she adds, "I will believe it when it comes to pass." Yet, a denial of a new trial, after the work of Mr. Thompson would solely, most clearly and irrefutably mean: we care, we look, we consider, we want nothing except to doom the defendants. A dangerous answer to the conscience of the world. It could change the proletarian Jobs into a Sampson, the proletarian rabbit into a lion. There would be flames. Fatally. Nor I believe the five men capable of such monstrosity.

I am glad and grateful to the Mexican lady for her interest in our case, and sympathy to us. And if you please, tell her of these sentiments. . . .

*February 8, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR MR. THOMPSON:

Your letter of the 25th Jan., 1925, reached me at due time; and here, I wish, before all, ask your pardon for my delay to answer.

I was very glad that you like the little jewel-box, but your letter to me is hundred fold worth than that trifle, pleasend and artistic that it may be. Indeed, even if I could have filled the box of most precieuse jewels, your letter would be hundred time more worth, just the same. Jewels can be bought by money, but the contained of your letter is of such high and precieuse nature, that no money, not all the money of the world can buy it. This is very good and very great of you, Mr. Thompson; and very good and very great to me. Permit me to express my gratitude and my appreciation to you.

I understand that your work in our behalfe is underpaid; the most difficult test of you; the noble sentiments and impulse by which you were decide to take the side of two underdogs; this I understand. And I also hope to understand a little the brave, learned, beautiful fight that you are fighting in our behalfe, paying of it in peace, rest, interest and other universally desired things.

Ha! to have known you 6 years ago! I would never have been a convict.

Of what you are doing for us, Mr. Thompson, I am not only grateful and thankful for myself alone, but for my old father, for my brother, my sisters, for all those who I love and am loved.

Here, the men are wondering and enthusiastic of you.



February 13, 1926. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR FRIEND [MRS. MAUDE PETTYJOHN]:

Your letter of February 3rd has reached me this very evening, and also the clipping, and I thank you for both. I receive regularly the *Daily Worker*, the weekly *Nation* and glance daily at many American capitalists dailies. I receive free for several years an Italo-American, Fascista daily of N. Y., one (neutral) from Boston, and glance occasionally at some other Italo-American paper. Beside those, I receive the Socialist, communists, syndicalist, anarchists and Italo-American weekly. Their lectures, I mean the latest, makes my heart bleed, not to speak of the formers. . . .

I am, with due recognition of an overwhelming cosmic force, a voluntarist and an anarchist, that is, the opposite of a fatalist, and all of the fatalist are Musselman. Some of them style themselves "evolutionists." . . .

I despair, it seems to me that the world is going to hell by radio. Just that. But I cannot articulate my ideas, in no way, and even less in a letter.

Proudhon has illuminated me. My pessimism is based on the blindness of the more, the rascality of the few, the dreadful unconsciousness of all, the tragic destiny and impotence of the exceptional one, the indirect evils of civilization overwhelming the direct benefits and the capacity, bad faith, ignorance, greedness and dearth of power of those who claim to be revolutionists. Evil cannot breed good, to my understanding.

Well, some other time, I will talk even more. We are still waiting for the decision. There is much optimism in Boston, not so much in me, yet, things are looking well. . . .

April 24, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I have received your letter and also your Easter card. I have wished to answer you, but I have been unable to write before this.

Comrade Rivera has requested me to tell him all about our case, or at least its last part. But I decided to tell him of the first part of the case and furnish him with all the literature and documents of the Dedham trial. So I wrote him an outline of the Plymouth case and a list of statements of facts on the causes and factor of the whole case, and its outcome; 53 large sheets of paper. I was very eager about that writing, which I deemed important and urgent, and meanwhile I was not in good mental condition: altogether I have had to toil long and painfully. It was the cause of my delay to write. I do not ask your pardon, because I am sure that you will forgive me.

I have heard about our dearest Eugene Debs going to Bermuda and his friends claiming for the restoration of his civil rights, and his refusal to ask for pardon. He was always great. Always a master of human dignity and bravery. But what a shame, what a shame for his nation to deprive her best child of the civil rights. The future generation will blush with shame

in remembering the present ignomy of their ancestors. I wish to send a word to him, and I will. . . .

The delay is terrible, but I hope it will end soon.

The poetry on your easter card is really beautiful, but a bit too fatalistic. I would like, but I cannot believe, that the triumph of the good in this world is predestined. Yet, there is but two possible suppositions; either that we will be doomed, or else, by ourselves and other things, redeemed. The latter is hope no matter how foolish it may be; the former is despair, and better, a hundred times better, a foolish hope than a crazy desperation, for, all desperations are insane. But to keep myself near home, within the fence of the relative, I believe that a little more of voluntarism, and a little less of fatalism, in all what concerns the human powers and possibilities, would be more salutary to all. . . .

*May 13, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letter of today has reached me this evening, when I returned from school having obtained the permission to stay in my room this evening. I asked it, not because I am over-sorrowed by the refusal of the Mass. State Supreme Court, but because I expect to see Mr. Thompson tomorrow, and wanted to do my work.

Your letter cheered me; it proves how careful and

mindful you are in our behalf, in this black hour of vanquishment.<sup>1</sup>

Yes, I have been a facile prophet—no wonder of it—after my previous experience of what justice, law and their bosses are. Yesterday, we got the last stroke. It ends all. We are doomed beyond any kind of doubts. I am sorry for myself. It is cruel to be insulted, humiliated, wronged, imprisoned, doomed, under infamous charges, for crimes of which I am utterly innocent in the whole sense of the word. But more than for myself, I am sorry for my father, my sisters and my brothers, and for poor Rosa and her two children.

My friends and Mr. Thompson were so optimistic and confident in the decision of the State Supreme Court, that I have been affected by it, and fool enough to write words of cheers and encouragement to my family. Now more sorrowful the news of the denial will be for them—now—after having hoped for my freedom and rehabilitation. Last night I wanted to write to them, but I was unable to begin it. I do not know what to tell them.

Mr. Thompson has been here yesterday, and three comrades were here today. Mr. Thompson has new evidence to present to the Superior Court and he could appeal to the Federal Supreme Court. But, what is the use? We would only ripen new affronts and de-

<sup>1</sup> The first decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Court refusing to over-rule Judge Thayer's denial of motions for a new trial was handed down at this time.

nials. And if we give up the fight, the electric chair will be at hand. I would spare the people and my friends and comrades of other expenses and troubles—vain as I know that they would be, and, on the other hand, I hate to give up the struggle and surrender myself to the executioner.

They have started just now the prison electric plant, which they use for the electrocution, because the Edison Electric Company refused to provide the State with electric power for the executions. My new room, very much better than the old one (I can write on the table now) is very near to the electric plant. I am hearing them now, preparing for an execution, maybe for my execution—and that noise cuts my being all over. I suppose they are preparing it for Madieros<sup>1</sup> or for the convicted car-barn murderers.<sup>2</sup> (No, I broke the rule and asked another prisoner, in the next cell, about the engine noise. He told me that it goes every night, and that we did not hear it before because the windows were closed.)

I expect nothing more of good from the so-called men's justice. . . . Of course, its deadly outcome does not minimize my gratitude and my love for all those who have been so good to me, during my ascension to the Golgotha. They and you have done very much in

<sup>1</sup> Celestino Madeiros, convicted of murder in connection with a bank robbery at Wrentham, Mass. In November, 1925, Madeiros had confessed that he had a part in the South Braintree payroll murder and that neither Sacco nor Vanzetti was involved in that crime.

<sup>2</sup> Three young men convicted of the murder of a guard at the Boston Elevated Railway carbarns at Waltham, Mass.

my behalf, much more than I deserve, and only the death will kill my reconscience to them, and to you. If I have to die for a not committed crime by me, I will pass confiding in a future re-vindication of my innocence and of my blood.

*May 15, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR FRIEND [VIRGINIA MACMECHAN]:

Your letter of yesterday morning has reached me this evening and it was even more good to and for me than it had been for you, my dear friend. The refusal of the Mass. State Supreme Court has been an hard and most cruel blow to you and to all my friends and beloved ones, especially after the words of hope and of optimism which I had written to you and to them. I would never had written so, and you are begged to forgive it to me.

The confidence and optimism of all my friends, the strong proves and evidences of my innocence, of unfair trials, the magistral presentation and peroration of the case, made by Mr. Thompson; all this has induced me to believe that at the last I would have obtained justice by the State's Court. But there have been more and greater reasons and happenings than the above mentioned ones, to induce me to confidence. In Dedham jail is a man, Madieros, found guilty of first degree murder committed at the robbery of the Wrentham Bank. That man is a professional highway robber and his record is terrifying. He struck a guard at the Dedham jail, in an attempt escape.



There is no doubt of his guiltiness of murder: two of his partners pleaded guilty of second degree murder, and are now my companions of chain. Well, Madieros appealed to the State Supreme Court which, about a month ago, granted him a new trial on the ground of the presiding judge omission (I do not know if intentionally or not) to tell the jury that "*The defendant shall be retained innocent until he is proven guilty.*" Now, the defendant had, previously to his trial, confessed to have been the one who killed one of the bank's men, and asked to declare himself guilty of 2nd degree murder—which the Commonwealth refused.

Now, just compare his case with ours: he is an habitual robber; we were two real workers enjoying a good reputation. His record is most taint; ours were spotless. His conduct in prison was bad; we were publicly declared "model prisoners." There is no possibility of doubts on his guiltiness; there is at worse, many doubts on us. The State has not a single testimony to prove that I have been seen on the crimes place,—I have never been there. His exemption is of purely technical nature, insignificant before the certainty of his guiltiness; we have 35 reasons, unrefutable reasons of the most grave and vital character in our behalf.

How could I, before the State Supreme Court's granting of a new trial for such reason, to such man, have expected that the same Court which granted it would have denied us a new trial? . . . It is by all this that I have been decided and induced to write words of hope and of encouragement to my family in sorrow

and in anguish, and to all my beloved ones. And I have not yet written to my poor sister and old father, since the decision.

The later Supreme Court's delay arised in me the suspect that they were following Judge Thayer's conduct; that is to being favorable—to decide and give confidence to all our ones, and to delay and delay in order to test the situation, and, at the deemed moment, stab us again at the shoulders. So I decided to begin a fast, in protest to the delay from May 1st. Mr. Thompson dissuaded me, and made pressure to the State Supreme Court. They told him that they will assemble on the 17th of May. . . . Then, they gave their decision on May 12th even without warning Mr. Thompson, so that the New York people learnt of it from the newspapers before the defense. . . .

Now all is lost. That was the last opportunity to have justice. We are at the arbiter of our enemies. Our friends wish to be told by us what they shall do. Nick, poor Nick, he has been so confident and trustfull—want to drop at once every legal defense. He won't do nothing more. I agree with him on the uselessness of any further legal defense as for to obtain justice. But why should we surrender ourselves to the enemy before to have exhausted every means of defense? I do not believe that the better people of the world are willing to let our hangers to burn us as two wild turkeys on the electric chair; and consequently I believe that the legal defense should be carry to the last. . . .

I suppose you have seen, or will soon see Mr.

Thompson. He has, or will tell you, about his intention. He is surely a goodly heart and a great minded man, so sincere in himself. He works hard for us—he accomplished a chief work of judicial science in our behalf. But he found his whole world against himself as soon as he assumed the defense of two poor Christs. Yet I trust and hope in him.

This is a bitterly reasoning letter, my dear friend. And yet, there is a great fortitude into my breath, my abdomen, and my spinal cord. And it is there that our soul dwells, not in the skull. And I am proud and happy of your sureness in my innocence. The truth is that not only have I not committed the two crimes for which I was convicted, but I have not stole a cent nor spilt a drop of human's blood—except my own blood in hard labor—in my whole existence.

But I was prompted by my nature to an ideal of freedom and of justice to all—and this is the worst of the crime to my enemies. The fact that for it and for consciousness I have renounced to a life of ease and of comfort, to wealth, to worldly ambitions, goods and honors, even to the joys of love—make me a terrible criminal to the eyes of my judges—a criminal capable of every crime. In fact, I voluntarily submitted myself to hard labor, poverty, dangers and persecutions. Had I renegated my principles after my arrest, I would not find myself, now, on the threshold of a death-house. I neither boast nor exalt, nor pity myself. I followed my call, I have my conscience serene, I regret nothing except the unspeakable agony that my destiny causes to my most beloved ones. And

strange indeed, I cannot even hate my murderers and my diffamers. I even pity them. But oh! how they hate; how they fear; how unhappy they are! . . .

P.S. I am told that they burnt my anarchist journals which they found in my box in the store-house since my return from Bridgewater. By burning the symbols of thought and the thinker, they cannot destroy the thought itself—for it thrives and won in the ashes.

Mr. Thompson told me that Judge Thayer believes us guilty and that the well-to-do American people, whose will prevail, think very bad of us, that we are guilty and have had a fair trial. Nothing of more consequent and natural than their feeling and thinking against us and in favor of the harlots, the criminals who testify against us, of the jury, of the judge, and of the hanger. I understand it because having been myself one of them—I have been like them, and am shamed of it. But of Thayer—it is another thing.

*May 21, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letter of yesterday received. This is your 3rd one after the decision. You cannot know how good your friendship is to me in this hour of passion.

I have been very busy these last days, writing letters on the case and conferring with friends. This is why for my delay to answer you, and of this brief note. I have so much to tell you—volumes. Your letter in

the Boston *Post* is very good and beautiful, because it is truthful. . . .

P.S. Be of good cheer. We will fight to the last. Many people and reasons are with us. Augural greetings.

May 23, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR BALDWIN:<sup>1</sup>

Your letter of May 15th reached me last evening, but I had been previously informed of your opinion. As you know, I accepted the hiring of a good lawyer to present the case to the State Supreme Court, not because I trusted in a fair and favorable decision, but to avoid the mockery and the damage, as the case would have been had we assumed an incompetent lawyer. Now we have at least an incontrovertible historical document in our side.

I do not know how it is that you repute the actual Massachusetts' governor a liberal, contrary to the universal opinion and all his public act. Well, the life and the man are so mysterious, I know so little of them, that I would not wonder that a reactionary might be liberal in some circumstances, or that a libertarian might be reactionary in some other occasion. Yet, I will not lose a second in conjecturation, for, now and here, to act is more urgent than to phylosophy.

What is it that you would ask the Governor? A

<sup>1</sup> Roger Baldwin of New York City, director of the American Civil Liberties Union.

commutation of the sentence, or a pardon, or deportation, or what? What do you know, either directly or indirectly, but positively, about the Governor's intention towards us?

If it is for a commutation of the death sentence into one of the imprisonment, there would be no use to talk. In this regard, the *less* is contained into the more, which is, in this instance, a fight for freedom.

But if you know that the Governor will free us, even if through deportation, then, I ask you as I would to a brother of blood, faith and arms, jump to this shore, or appoint a person of your confidence to obtain it. We will accept and spare to us and to others further toil, sacrifices and anguish. If it is not so, I will remain for the continuation of the legal defence to the last, though I am convinced that it will be useless and we, beaten. . . . We will ask for revindication; we know that in digging our little graves, the reaction undermines its world, and anticipates its final collapse. . . .

We have still evidences enough to obtain a trial, but I know that all is useless in our case. So, let us fight to the last; if we will fall, thousands will arise, determined, implacable, daring of the supreme audacities and of the extreme perdictions. Let us fight!

Please answer me as clear and as soon as possible, if you know nothing positively. And act ever more quickly, if the other hypothesis is the true one. Another time, if you please, spell "coraggio" with a single 'r' and a double 'g'.



May 24, 1926. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR MARY [DONOVAN]:

Thinking about what you said to me yesterday, it came to my mind last night, that Mrs. C—— of Plymouth is keeping a lamp lighted to her saints and Gods and Madonnas, for six consecutive years in her home, to receive from them all the grace of my liberation.

On April 15, 1920, at the very hour in which the Braintree robbery was committed, I was on the North Plymouth shore, conversing with Mr. C——, who was putting his boat in order. Before to reach him at the shore I went to look for him at his home where I found Mrs. C—— and their boy. They told me that he was at the shore preparing his motor boat to be put on the water. There I went and was, while the robbery was committed, and the whole C—— family are positive of my innocence—and keeping a lighted lamp for my liberty. I really believe that many others are doing the same thing. . . .

May 31, 1926. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

Your letter of the 27 May is at hand and at heart. You are dearly eager to cheer me, dear Mrs. Evans and I will never appreciate enough your good friendship. That you and all my friends and comrades will never forgetting us—we are sure of it. It is our only confidence.

Yes, we still have more than enough proofs to ob-

tain a new trial—were our case an ordinary one and not a pre-established legal lynching. Well, we will see.

June 5, 1926. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I was told that you wrote in our behalf in the *Boston Traveler* of June 3rd. How thirsty for our blood all of them are! Knowing that they can do to us what they please, we know our fate,—but your solidarity is a balsamic dew to our dry leaves and exasperated souls—extremely disgusted with this most vile world.

With all my heart.

June 13, 1926. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Last Thursday, Mrs. Evans was here, and she gave me a copy of the *New Republic*, containing the editorial on our case, and indeed a splendid editorial. Oh, if everyone who wrote on our case would have had such a capacity and treated it so well as that writer, how much better it would have been for us. The indolence, the incapacity, the inexactness of those who have willingly or half-willingly wrote on our case, has always caused much disgust, and, often, indignation and wrath to me. I am sorry to say that the writings of the conservative or of the liberals have shown much more competence, sense of measure and of responsibility, than those of the more near to me. The writings of our Eugene Debs and those of the anarchist weekly,

*Fede* of Rome are the better of all; and good ones have been written by our affines. Yet, someone of our comrades made big errs and blunders. Thus the truth is spoiled, the seriousness of the case destroyed together with the trustings of the intelligent and impartial readers. What a contrast with the perfect, superfine ability of our enemies. Of all this I have spoken and lamented with one of the *The Masses* staff who was here a few days ago.

For several weeks I received *Il Nuovo Mondo*, an anti-fascist daily of New York, sustained by the American Clothing Amalgamated Union, and edited by the ex-Italian congressman, Vincenzo Vacirca, a unitario-socialist. I must say the following, even if it tears my heart. If we do not know to do better, we are doomed by our incapacity to a perpetual vanquishment—we will ruin even the most complete victory of a revolution brought first by other historical factors than ourselves. That anti-fascism has in itself, endemic, the fascism. It is as equivocal as that anticlericalism which consist in fighting the clergy by revealing the priest's sins through pornographic expositions and in a false, unilateral historical philosophy, which consist in a wrong and partisan interpretation of the churches history. Equivocal as that atheism that affirms itself with blasphemous bravados, with dogmatic criterion on the creation and on the universe, with a trumpeting ignorance of the human nature and a self-imposing simpleton philosophy. And I could go on, on, and on.

Well, the *Nuovo Mondo* has talked a great deal about our case, within these last few weeks. But, oh, how badly! As for the Bridgewater explosion,<sup>1</sup> and the letter to Mr. Cox,<sup>2</sup> it limited its fatigue by copying from the American newspapers. Not a single rectification of the many voluntary inexactnesses divulged recently on our case by the capitalistic American press, and with many inexactnesses of itself. It even said that I was sentenced to 50 years for the Bridgewater robbery. In one writing it exposed the Braintree crime with an astonishing inexactness. It was most humiliating and painful to be compelled to recognize that the fascisti or philofascisti Italo-American *Progresso* and *Popolo*, New York dailies, have shown more earnestness and intensity of feeling in helping us, according to their character and thought and skillful journalistic ability. Well, I take it easy and am more displeased for the great than for my personal little cause.

I would like to read the anonymous letter that you have received. I am rather inclined to believe it of some police, as I feel was the one to Mr. Cox. The

<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1926 in West Bridgewater, Mass., there was an explosion in the home of Samuel Johnson, a brother-in-law of Mrs. Johnson who claimed the reward for information leading to the arrest of Sacco and Vanzetti and who testified against them. The explosion, in which nobody was hurt, was never explained, being attributed variously to dynamite and to a still. Samuel Johnson later testified for the defense before the Governor and the Lowell committee.

<sup>2</sup> Cox was driver of the pay-truck in the attempted Bridgewater hold-up and was a witness against Vanzetti in the Plymouth trial, June-July, 1920.

contrary may be the truth in both cases, but the style and the words of the last letter smelt of the police station to the nostrils of my political nose. No, no, it is not the style and the phrasing of a presumable Italian radical. Not at all. Beside this, Mr. Cox did his best to have us convicted, but he was also the only one of the State perjurer at the Plymouth trial, who refused to identify me positively. He is therefore the less guilty one. Also, he had a good job; he was paymaster of the shoe company, and urged by it to hurt us. I was told that the public voice said that Mr. Cox lost his job because he refused to identify me positively.

I am sure that you will not be embarrassed to answer to that letter, and sorry for the trouble. I hope and wish that you will do it.

That our framers and doomers might be afraid of punishment, it is well comprehensible. Moved by greed, hatred and prejudice, or compelled, they have determinedly acted against us and disposed to kill us. Being themselves actual murderers, they cannot help but to measure the others with themselves and to fear. And I not christian, am for vindication—but rather than to spill a single drop of innocent blood, I prefer to be electrocuted for a crime of which I am utterly innocent. In six years of wrong, abuses, outrages, persecution, revenges and of too slow murdering, none of our enemies have been touched. If they fear, the justification and the source of their fearing is in themselves. . . .

*September 1, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR COMRADE [OSKAR CREYDT]:<sup>1</sup>

Your letter of July 14th, 1926 has been received the day before yesterday, and I have no words, dear Comrade, to thank you adequately for the good that your letter has done and is doing me.

I count on you as one of those who will uphold the flag of freedom and justice when our dead hands will be no longer able to uphold it.

*September 26, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR BALDWIN:

Your letter of the 24th of September reached me last Saturday, and I was glad to hear from you and of the going on of our work. I hope to live long enough to read the printed book.

When you were here, I forgot to ask you several informations on things that I have at heart. Will you please tell me, if during your turn through the State, you have detected certain reactionary elements or associations to be against us? I remember to have read that you were hindered to speak, somewhere in California, by the American Legion. Were you to speak on the case? I pray you to inform me on all that you may know of this matter, and to do it without hesitations or regards. Because I am writing on the case, and need to know the truth. And since I am remem-

<sup>1</sup> Oskar Creydt of the Instituto Paraguayo, Asuncion, Paraguay.



bering: tell me if the Massachusetts American Legion has been or is against us.

Also, I am sure that you, together with the other friends and comrades of us, are doing everything possible in our behalf. But, alas! the case is too beaten, and I believe that we are lost.

No one here, who knows Thayer, believes that he is going to grant us a new trial.<sup>1</sup> The only way to kill us is to deny a new trial. And if you wish to foresee the "*crucifige, crucifige*" of the reactionary press, for when Thayer will give us "no," just read the editorial "Sacco and Vanzetti again" of the Gloucester, Mass. *Daily Times* of Sept. 23rd.

*Saluti a tutti.*

October 7, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND:<sup>2</sup>

Your letter of the 1st of October was handed to me the day before yesterday. I am grateful for all you are doing in our behalf, and glad that you appreciate the little pen-holder.

Your letter voices your hopes and optimism on the good outcome of the case. Would it be as you believe—but I cannot share your good expectations. I know too much our deadly arch enemy. Thayer, my experience, his words and behavior during the recent hearing,

<sup>1</sup> Motion for a new trial based upon the Madeiros confession and supplementary affidavits.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. M. O'Sullivan of Kansas City, Kan.

his delay to give the decision, the fact that we do know nothing of what is going on, all proves to me that they are going to doom us.

I would already have began a hunger strike and give a declaration, had it not been because Mr. Thompson strongly opposes it with such arguments and reasons which sound to me as a death sentence. He has done wonders in our defense, and I dislike to contradict him so much. Of course, all his arguments, reasons and proofs, cannot compel the enemy to give us justice. Only the thunders of a mighty, world-wide agitation and protest could induce the enemy to free us. In Europe it cannot be done; in America it is not done—to explain why, would drive me crazy.

You speak of wheat farms . . . My Father has plenty of good land and a beautiful garden. They grow corn, wheat, sugar-beets, silk worms in my district, but the grass meadows are the more renditive and dear, fairly being the greatest resource of the place. . . .

As for our garden, it takes a poet of first magnitude to worthy speak of it, so beautiful, unspeakably beautiful it is. . . . We have fig trees, cherry trees, apple trees, pear trees, apricot trees, plum trees, peach trees, rhubarb shrubs, and three hedges of grapes in it—two lines of black and one line of white grapes. We plant one-third of it with potatoes, and make enough potatoes for the year round, even sell some sacks of them. Another 1/3 is planted with corn, also of it we produce more than we need yearly. The other 1/3 is planted

with vegetables: onions, garlic, red and yellow peppers, carrots, spinach, cabbages, rhubarbs, anicettes, tomatoes, parsly, lettuce, asparagus, cucumbers, etc. We sell all these things and fruits also.

And the singing birds there: black merles of the golden beak, and ever more golden throat; the golden orioles, and the chaffinches; the unmatched nightingales, the nightingales over-all. Yet, I think that the wonder of the garden's wonders is the banks of its paths. Hundreds of grass leaves of wild flowers witness there the almighty genius of the universal architect—reflecting the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, all of its lights and colors. The forget-me-nots are nations there, and nations are the wild daisies. The blue, scented violets thrive well, the capel Venere are luxurious, the primtimes are at the vanguard. And the blue-blossoms erect themselves soberly dark blue toward the light blue sky, like breasts, turgid mother's breasts. And the white and the red clover and all the other scented, sky bestowed and beloved wild flowers of which I do not know the names.

You ought to see the king wasps, big velvety, lucid, ravishing forcefully on these flowers' calices, and the virtuous honey-bees—the wasp, the white, the yellow, the forget-me-nots, the hedge's butterflies and the variated armies of several genuses of grass eaters, the red conconcinas, the meadows gri-gri. Each of your step would arise from the ground a rainbow cloud of these creatures, with a multiphoned vibration of wings. Well, I have told you something about my native place. . . .

*November 3, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR COMRADE DEBS:<sup>1</sup>

Your letter of the 7th of October from the Lindlake Sanitarium reached me lately, when our unforgettable Gene was already very sick. Alas! of what I have to speak. I would have given my life to save him. I would have written to you during the agony of our Beloved and after His departure, but when I am sorry, I cannot talk; so forgive me my long delay. I ask this of you and of all your and His household. They killed Him because He was too good. And it is a long time since I realized that we would have lost Him quite soon.

To you and his household, I cannot find words worth enough to condol Him.

*November 12, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letter of yesterday, mindful and heartfelt, as all of your letters, has reached me this very evening, with the enclosed letter from your niece. . . .

I hope I will not be entirely unworthy of him [Debs] in writing the memorial. It would (the work) certainly be original. A doomed man, saluting a great man, as an honorary citizen of his dreamed utopia—centuries ahead of our age. For this is the truth, Debs is not great to our time; he is great, will be great

<sup>1</sup> Theodore Debs, brother of Eugene V. Debs, living at Terre Haute, Ind.

in the future superior ages. The compliments that the capitalist scribbles are paying to him, after having bit-tered and shortened his saint life, because he is now out from under their feet, which have abused him—virtu-alizing, memorializing, naturalizing his real nature, the greatness of his heart and of his mind, and his doctrine, just as the mercenary, prostitute scribbles of all the ages have done of each great death. This is one of the greater of the many great crimes of in-humanity; to deprive the race of the real Genius of each great doctrine so to turn it in instrument of re-gression.

It is now customary to speak of objectiveness—as of a great thing. Relatively understood, it is a good thing, absolutely it is trash. A human being can per-ceive, understand, judge from and with his being and he can only be objective according to the very nature of his being, in respect to each and all the questions and the problems of life. Nothing is worse than a false belief of self-goodness or greatness. It is that which permitted Nero to kill his mother without re-morse. . . . The convinced of the most bad belief may wrong everything and everyone, convinced to be objective.

Therefore, I will only try to be just and honest to each of my topics—this is the only possible and real objectiveness. Yet, if I will treat anything in a wrong erroneous way, by ignorance, I will be unjust and un-honest, *che fatto*, in spite of all my good will. The truth, then, is what matters. But in this regard too,

alas to one who is too sure of possessing it, especially if more than relatively absolutely. . . .

Returning to the more good Man that I ever met, I must confess to have read very little of his own. And to me, few pages of a man tell more than a voluminous biography. The letters of Lincoln, for example, put me in war with almost all the biographic writings which I read of him. Another great difficulty for my text is that I am a European, while our Debs is an American. It is hard for me to truly understand you Americans, in many respects. This, of course, is reciprocal, it means just what it says, and you are prayed to forgive my open sincerity. I believe you can, and I pray you to inform me if our Beloved was deist or gnostic, or atheist. Also, if you please, the dates of the killings of the Presidents Cleveland and McKinley, and what was Debs' attitude toward those historical events.

I feel of a great responsibility in writing of the Man who has loved me more than my own father and whom I love with the heart of a son and disciple.

Was Debs involved in Pettibone's Trial for the murder, or more rightly the execution of a Governor of Illinois? Or was he only the bravest defender of those defended?

Well, I have gathered all the material and now, your information and the material which you have so goodly thought to provide me, will surely enable me to speak with cognition and cause—and love's fire is in me. If only the stars would be propitious!



As for the case, what you told me was certainly good, but we are beaten beyond remission. . . .

I rebel to the conception of an omniscient god, infinitely good and just, omnipotent, who foresees everything, who could make the human good and good-behaving, whereas he let them do bad and afterward punishes them. But history has a nemesis which does not forgive. . . .

To be sure the American people's attitude toward the case is turning better—though a little too late. I am glad that the honesty and exactness of the Defense Committee is recognized.

November 18, 1926. Boston

DEAR MR. LEARY, JR.:<sup>1</sup>

Your letter of the later Oct., 26, has reached me at proper time and, though it is an answer, I feel obliged to answer, if for nothing else to assure you that I understand and appreciate the great good that your own work and that of the *New York World* are doing to Sacco and I. I also wish to tell you that I agree that your way and Mr. Thompson's ways are the ways more apt to bring some good results—given that the U.S.'s Workers are as they are and the European conditions, desperate. So, you easily understand my appreciation for your earnest advice of conduct.

<sup>1</sup> John J. Leary, Jr., of the reportorial staff of the *New York World*. Mr. Leary had spent several weeks in New England investigating the Sacco-Vanzetti case and preparing a series of articles on it for *The World* shortly before Vanzetti wrote this letter.

I may or may not keep to it—but not because I do not recognize its sensibility. It would be because I do not care any longer of what may happen to me, and choose daring and defeat; a vanquished man, but a formidable shadow.

You alluded to my friends' impatience and to their lost of confidence in Mr. Thompson. I was surprised because I had never heard of such things before. I presume that you have took it from the *Boston Advertiser*, for I have been informed that it published some thing of that sort. You know that it and the *Boston American* are sadic toward us. . . .

All of us realize that no better man than Mr. Thompson could have been choised as our defender. Our pessimism is related solely to the sistem.

In the hope of having dissipated a confusion, I beg you to excuse my prolixity.

November 25, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND ABBOTT:<sup>1</sup>

Your letter of November 23rd reached me yesterday evening. . . .

You said, dear Abbott, that the Russian Revolution "has dethroned one class to put another in charge." I don't believe, in fact I am positive, that that was not done in Russia—that it is impossible to be done either in Russia or elsewhere. In Russia, this happened: The Czarism was destroyed by a revolution; part of

<sup>1</sup> Leonard Abbott of New York, an anarchist friend of Sacco and Vanzetti.

the owners were expropriated; a party took the power, stopped the continuation of expropriation and appropriated to itself that part of the social wealth which had already been expropriated by the people. From that moment the revolution began its regression and a few leaders of a small party became the only and real rulers of Russia. They were immediately compelled to form a national army, and build a policy worse than the Czars' one; to uphold a new church, not better than the old one; and, given the conditions, to be more reactionary and tyrannic than the dethroned autocracy itself. Moreover, to hold their power and stop the natural evolving of the revolution, the few leaders of the small party, now in the government, were compelled to take in their service the officials of the Czar army and police, the bureaucrat, the bourgeois, and to repress and suppress all the people, workers and revolutionist who disagree with them.

So that it is now experimentally, historically proved what the "damn fool anarchist" are saying from a half a century at least: The proletariat cannot become a ruling class; it can dethrone the actual ruler and place its leaders in their place, but in so doing the revolution would be in vain and the workers exploited and oppressed as before, if not worse.

In fact, the outcome of the Russian Revolution, under the Bolsheviki Leaders' dictatorship, is an increased perfected exploitation of the proletariat, reached, achieved through the great and scientific industry. All boiled down, the actual crisis of the world is due to the industrial competition of the great-

est nations and to the fevering development of the minor or retrograded nations, plus the fact that their rent of each of them become daily insufficient to the daily increasing social parasitism and the rampant development of new needs that our civilization (?) determine in each individual.

So that the ruling, owning classes of each and of all the nations find themselves compelled to a more extensive and intensive exploitation of the masses and to a more firm oppression of them. Hence, the fascism and the bolshevism compelled to the same policy, same means—though their opposite aims—and damned to same results. It is so perceivable that it seems idle to say that both of them are not only utterly unable to eliminate the social evils, but that they make them worse and lead to destruction and death. Yet, in spite of all our boasting and pretension of intelligence, radicalism, masternism, understanding, culture, etc., how few understand this palpable truth slapping all of us on both cheeks. . . .

I may be rough, but I am convinced of truism when I say that most of the self-styled radical are more superficial than many ridiculated or dispised backward people. And Proudhon's words "The Socialist have sinned more than anybody else of this craziness more crazy than all the crazinesses that they have all the pretense of curing," ring very often to my minds' ears. Proudhon was right, abused, ridiculated. I dare to say that even the anarchist have scorned at his stern truth. But the historical events, from his time to this

miserable Thanksgiving Day, have proven his assertions—revindicated his genius.

You say you cannot any longer take as seriously as you once did, the discussion on libertarian and socialogic theories. Well, not even I; for never as now have I been convinced of the veridicity of my beliefs and of the necessity of their realization; action, then, not verbosity, is what I am enthusiastic for. Are we alone despised, hated, doomed? Ah! to see the world to doom itself in dooming us; to see the enemy more wretched than us—deprived even of the inner morals prides, to see the rightness of our ideal confirmed by the negative results of the enemy's triumph, is as sweet as nectar to us, doomed, because it proves to us that we die for the right while our enemies die of our wrong; that we die as men, they as degenerates; and that if the world and mankind is worthy of a laugh, we, the vanquished, not our enemy, the victor, can die with a laugh—and what if that is not so? If that is not so, then everything is testifying that our defeats are victories and the enemy's victories, vanquishments.

This almost bakouninian letter—in quantity, not in quality—may seem to be wholly assertional, not documented. I believe that volumes would be required to documentate my assertion or to develop my premises. Volumes have been written on the touched subjects—and you know them better than I.

And so, excusing my prolixity, with unbroken mind, steadfast will, and glad heart, I salute you, friend Abbott.

P.S. I too believe in “our release.” Fuller boasts himself, making the liberals believe, to be a liberal. . . . Beside to be a liberal, some liberals know Fuller as an independent man, willing to the right thing as he sees it (which is as the Massachusetts reactionary plutocrats see it) and so, that he will do justice. See the *Success Magazine* of December. But, as the whole bunch is mighty but not almighty, let us hope and over all, will. *Salve!*

*December 11, 1926. Charlestown Prison*

MY DEAR FRIEND [MRS. MAUDE PETTYJOHN]:

Our I—— B—— has told me that I will receive a letter from you. . . . I was pleased with the news, for it is quite a long time that I have heard from you, and I eagerly expected the letter, because I like your writing. Finally, I received it some days ago, and now I am trying to answer it.

Yes, trying . . .! for there is much understanding in your beautiful letter, strong beliefs, and hints to things so vast and deep, that I do not know anything about, not even how to begin my reasoning, before which however, I wish to thank you for the goodness of your letter and the pleasure that it brought to me—to us all.

Exactly talking, I am not busy in writing, but in trying to write. For, the prisoner's spell is telling its story also on me, and how so! It seems to be increasing my understanding and diminishing my power of expression. In fact, it is an experience alright; but



an experience that undermines the life straight to its sources and centers so that as long as consciousness and memory are not yet weakened, you can realize something—but, as to express oneself at one's best, one has to be at one's best, while after such experiences one is no longer at his best; he can no longer express himself at the best of his power. These are the reasons why I am busy trying to write and writing very little at all. Oftentimes my mind is ravishing; oftentimes, it is blank. More often I cannot express my thoughts. Oftentimes, I manœuvre hard to write down what I wish, then, reading it, I perceive that it does not say what I mean and I tear the writings in many little pieces. Many times, I feel lazy, indolent, malignant and cynic; asking myself what is the use to write and if it pays its troubles. If I still write it is to gratify myself, when I feel to write. At least, it seems to me.

The crux of this inner drama is not only about expression—it is that I doubt my own thoughts, my opinions, my feeling, my sentiments, beliefs and ideals. I am sure of nothing, I know nothing. When I think of a thing and try to understand it, I see that in the time, in the place, and in the matter that thing is, both before and after, related to so many other things that I, following its relations, both backward and forward, see it disappear in the ocean of the unknown, and myself lost in it. It is easy to create a universal system, to human minds; that is why we are blessed by so many of universal systems, while no one knows what a bed buck is. The sense of relativity and of measure is a progress on the sense of the absolute and infinite,

for the former is a capacity of discernment, the second a mental abstraction, a symbol of the "abroad" of our senses and relative knowledge.

To be sure, I am not in any better support with the words, opinions, beliefs and ideas of others than I am with my own ones. I believe to have been [born] with the faculties of acquiring ideas, forming opinions, learning words, and express myself—but not with opinions, ideas and words already in me. Believing this, I must also believe that all my actual ideas, opinions, beliefs and words came to me from some other persons. Yet . . . only that part of their saying that satisfies my ego. But, even in this, I am not entirely free, for, to be the best that I could be now, I should have been, before my very conception, conscientious, intelligent, a power more capable and intelligent than the one I am now, so to begin my beginning in the best of the ways, and to impart continually to my evolving self only truths and normalcy. Evidently, it must not have been so, for I have not the least recollection of such a feast! Whereas, I am but too well aware, alas! to have begun as a miser to have inherited all the misery of the earth and of the race, called atavism—to have been taken to church when I was wholly unconscious and irresponsible, to have been spiritually raped by the priests, when I was wholly unable to defend myself, to have been intellectually warped and poisoned by the State school, when I was unable to discriminate—to have grown within a humanity so stupid, ignorant, vile, coward, arrogant, self-conceited, brutal, greedy, ferocious and filthy and falsely proud

and humble, that the best of my essence was choked in myself, or, what is still worse, distorted and aberrated. To my parents, to my mother especially, I owe not only my life that she gave me by birth and cares, but all that is good in me. Yet, even my parents, in spite of their love and good-will, they teach me many wrong ideas, false principles, and a false divinity. It is by a rinnovation of [my] own previous self, through a self reaction, an inner tragedy which costed me the bleeding of my heart's blood, that I re-began and became what I am now. I brought it to myself and ever more to many humble persons and children who gave me fragments of truth and to the genius of the race. Thus I reached the present stage of my being.

All what I have said may induce you to believe that I am a so-called "Determinist." I am not so, though I believe in the existence of a "together of things" which we pass through and which influence is a "concomittant" factor of our individuality. That "together" is made of two different orders of things, namely; of the things of nature above the human-will and power, and the things which result from the human behaviors and their worksome matters. But that is not "all," for each of us differ from the others, though many spoke of conception, maternity, atavism, etc. Well, those things too are subject to changes and conditions that alter them,—still determinism. But, why are we? Why are we as we are? Why chances make differences? Here the "determinism" spring from something else—from the unknown. If we follow it, it ultimately opens in the unknown again.

To believe that hope, faith, optimism, confidence, are good to the individual, is part of the race wisdom; an historical experience. So we all are most grateful and appreciative of your motherly incitation to them.

Yet, life, happiness, health and goodness depend from things which are what and as they are, and not what and as we believe or hope them to be. So that wrong faith, absurd hope, unfounded optimism and confidence are or may be fatal or at least very deleterious to the individual, in spite of their real help to him as animators. For they mislead us and when we face evil, cannot help us.

I believe better, to try and look the reality straight in its face, eyes into eyes. The question is not to shift from barren reality by any dreams or auto-suggestion. It is: 1st—Not to let ourselves be overwhelmed by the adversity, scared by black prospects, but face them as bravely as possible. 2nd—Try to fight them with all our force. To destroy bad realities, to create good ones, lo! that makes gods out of men and women.

It is for such reason that I indict all the new and all religions. They dope the people so to eternate slavery, inequality, exploitations, crimes, vices and death. The new religions are not better than the old ones for this. . . . By these criterion I came to understand the phylosophy of "free will" and that of "determinism." According to the latter, none is guilty. The former is more wrong and deleterious than the latter, and it explains the mercilessness of the law, the dishonesty of the State, the ferocity monstrous of the churches, and the immorality of the pure moralists. The latter,

too, has its weakness and bad consequences. It tends to weaken the human will, to incline its believers to an idle fatalism, to self-indulgence and irresponsibility in a way, for if things cannot be otherwise than how they are, or go otherwise than how they go, if we are what external factors determine, you can see the consequence of such thinking. As for me, I believe to a certain extent in both, as limited and changeable phenomenon, interdependent, and dependant from some higher phenomenon. So, I have no ultimate word on them and I remain a *Voluntarist*.

You are right—maybe it would be a rest to me, not to think of the case. But the case is turning badly. The enemies are determined to burn us as soon as possible, and therefore, I am compelled to write of it, while I can. You know that I am a revolutionist; dreaming, willing a Polygenesis of life. My own story serves my purpose, points to my goal magnificently. That is why I am in spiritual travail. . . .

M—— M—— is a dear little soul. A farmer girl too. . . . Her letters are bliss to me. Now, she may be sad for me, for she wrote me about religion. . . . The dear thing asked them to pray for me, to send her prayers to me and one for me. She sent it to me. I answered as kindly as possible, that I do not believe in it, but that I respect her belief, and appreciate her intention. Maybe, I told her, it is good to me, do it if you wish, but I don't believe. She must be sad for it for it is quite a long time since I have heard from her. . . .

I see that B—— L—— is quite a scorner and a pes-

simist. Well, the world will never have enough scorn-ers. Pessimism itself, in a way, is good. Darrow said, "If you are not worse than your fathers, if you have progressed a little, you shall acquit these negroes." And the jury acquitted them. Had they thought their fathers to be holy, in spite of slavery, they would not have acquitted the Negroes.

Thayer and Katzmann always appealed to the jury pretence of superiority and goodness to induce them to convict us.

Of course, the saints have a better way; but the saints are few. . . .

I too, would be with your son, in the farm, through woods, on hills and mountains. I love farming more than any others works and nature over all. But I do dislike hunting, not as a sport, but for its killing. Bears must be damaging and dangerous if people are allowed to hunt them freely. Don't you think so?

Your place must be very similar to my native place. Can you see from your home, mountain peaks eternally covered by snow? If so, your place is like mine. . . .

December 19, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE DONOVAN:

With the fierce music of the cold and strong wind blowing through this bright morning, I am thinking how good it was of you to pay me a visit during this cold wave. As I told you to be expecting, Mr. Thompson came yesterday afternoon and brought me several weeklies from Europe and South America, and many



letters. *The Authorized Life of Eugene Debs and What His Neighbors say of Him.* (Debs) So that I have much to read and much to write presently. . . .

You deserve indeed a better letter than this poor one that I am so willingly writing. Well, I am going to give you a tableau of our daily life routine. (1) At six o'clock in the morning, the wing's bells rings once: we can "get off" and light the pipe even before to begin to dress up. From 6 to 7, we can what we like in our room. (2) 7 A.M., a second ring; we must be ready to go and have breakfast at the kitchen window, and return to our room. From 7 to 8, we can do what we like in our room. (3) 8 A.M., a third ring; now we must have our room clean and orderly and be ready to leave it. One wing after another (the occupant) goes in line to empty the bucket at the dump situated against the wall that faces the freight yard. From there we line again, two by two this time, and go to the shops. (4) 11:45 A.M., a second whistle tells us to leave the shop, line in the yard side-walk, then go to the kitchen, take our dinner, and carry it to our room. (5) There we must stand at the door, clinging one of its bars, until the officer counts us and locks our doors. From then until 1 o'clock we are freely locked in our rooms. (6) At one o'clock another ring. The room must be in order, we go to the shops, as always, in line. (7) 3:20 P.M., a whistle tells us that the days work is finished; we are already dressed for the "yard," we go to the shop front, there to talk or play for a while. (8) 3:35 P.M., a whistle tells us to go to the yard—the general signal is given

by the yard bell, in which talking, playing and joking is allowed. (9) 4:10 P.M., the yard bell rings; we line, go to the kitchen, take our supper, and go to our room. After that our doors are locked, we can eat, or not, and until nine o'clock we can dispose of our time to smoke, write, read and walk, think, swear, and so on. We have evening schools, voluntary, not obligatory. Some prisoners go two or three evenings a week; some others don't go. It lasts an hour and a half. (10) 8:55 P.M., the last ring of the day—the lights go off, we must be in bed. This is our daily routine. The "yard" time is changed several times during the year, according to the length of the solar. In the summer time, we stay longer in the yard; though we quit working later than in the winter. Now, about the Lord's day. At six o'clock the first ring; at seven, the breakfast, then we can go to the first Catholic service, then to the second, Protestant service, or we can stay in our room. The last service ends after 11 o'clock, more or less after according to the length of the two priests' bunk, and everybody goes to the yard, from which we return to the kitchen and our rooms, at 11:45 A.M. In the afternoon, we have either the Christian nor Scientist service, except one Sunday a month in which we have Methodist services. We have also Hebrew services.

As you see the only thing of which the State does not economize on us, is "religious dope"—and the State is skumly wise. As a rule, we have a show or a movie every other Sunday. . . .

December 21, 1926. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. EVANS:

This evening returning to my cell I found a little package on my little table: a glance to its address and I see your handwriting and realize a Christmas present from you. I like the necktie and more the beautiful *Emerson's Essays*.

Well, I will look less badly with the necktie on, and I will again delight myself at the lecture of Emerson's *Politics, Nature, and New England Reformers*, so exquisitely anarchist. In the latter, we can see poor Emerson sweats the proverbial seven shirts to dissipate the prejudices, mental fog, ignorance, and bigotry of people that pose as Saviour, and against their dreadful unconsciousness.

Yes, yes, you have sent me a great present, dear Mrs. Evans; I am glad and appreciative of it and I thank you very much.

Of course I wish you a happy Christmas and New Years—because they are days and I would be able to make each day an happy day for you.

I hope you are well and I wish you all that is good in life.

December 28, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND [MISS MARY DONOVAN]:

Just a few words in answer to your nice Christmas card and the good wishes thereby expressed. It reached me in due time and was most welcomed and appreciated.

I hope that everything goes with you, that you might

have passed the Yuletide at home and that all of yours are well.

I received many letters and cards this Christmas, but I realize that many of my good friends, most of them have just thought and wish good to me, and acted in my behalf, but not written. . . .

I would wish you a Happy New Year, but it seems idle to me, for I wish you that every day, not merely the first of the year, as the last fools do.

Mark Twain has said that "The only useful holiday that we have is April Fool, for it reminds us of what we are the other days of the year." Christmas, whereas, is a cheating holiday, for we pretend to be good then, which, when not a bad illusion is rank hypocrisy—holy mackerel (is mackerel spelled correctly?)—I am sure of "holy," though I was a fish peddler. . . .

December 28, 1926. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND MRS. JACK:

Your two beautiful cards, that of your little home and that of my home's flowers, hills, and summits are here, to the gladness of my eyes and of my heart.

Thank you for the news of Nick, Rosi and the children, I am always pleased to hear of them and of you all. Poor Nick, and poor Rosi, their cross is heavy indeed. Even the children suffer.

But we must be brave, brave, brave. I am well and facing life fearlessly. . . .

I hope you are well, and I send you all the good wishes for the new year at the door. . . .

## CHAPTER IV

IN January, 1927, final arguments on the Madeiros motion were made before the Supreme Court. On April 4, the Court again sustained Judge Thayer.

All legal steps for a new trial having failed, the men were brought again into court to receive sentence. Vanzetti was transferred from Charlestown prison to Dedham on April 9, and led into the court-room with Sacco.

On this occasion, when they were asked by the Court the conventional question whether they had anything to say before receiving sentence, Vanzetti spoke for three-quarters of an hour with an eloquence that stirred the court-room. In the midst of Judge Thayer's pronouncement, he interrupted to ask permission to add some remarks he had forgotten, but this permission was denied.

The ensuing three weeks were devoted to preparation of a petition to the Governor. Vanzetti joined Sacco in refusing to sign anything that might be interpreted as a request for pardon or mercy. Instead, with Mr. Thompson's help, he wrote his own petition, setting forth his and Sacco's anarchist views and summarizing the chief points of the case for the defense. Sacco remained steadfast in his refusal to sign any

petition. It was therefore presented to the Governor, on May 3, with Vanzetti's signature alone.

The Governor immediately began his own investigation of the case. Petitions from all over the country, urging a thorough review of the case, were by this time beginning to pour in upon him. On June 1, the Governor announced the appointment of an advisory investigating committee composed of President Lowell of Harvard, President Stratton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Judge Grant, a former Probate Court judge.

During these weeks (after the petition was presented), Vanzetti viewed proceedings with a composure that drew comment from all who visited him. He redoubled his letter-writing, continued to read incessantly, and played an Italian bowling game with Sacco, in the daily hour allowed them together in the prison courtyard.

*January 10, 1927. Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I believe that I have answered to your good wishing card of Christmas. This year I received many presents and a lot of correspondence and money for Christmas and New Years. After, I received *The Life of Debs* and later, *Essays on Revolt* by Jack London. . . .

For the last six Christmases we have had moving pictures and a good dinner, after which we remained locked in our cells 'til the next morning. That was