

Now, I will begin to expose my divergent conviction upon your opinions. I have read the Bible and recognize some merits, but I believe wholly irrational to base upon it our works and hopes. I not only disagree from the global view and criterions of your letters, but it seems to me that they are self-contradictory, and that many natural and social phenomena are entirely left apart by you,—also incomplete and wrong.

This is why I decided not to enter into a discussion before these explanatory words, and the answer of the following questions: Are you contrary or in favor of the Anarchistic view and aim?—of a real physical equality in ownership, in rights and duties among the human beings? Did you mean to possess, relatively and humanly speaking, the whole truth and reason? If it would that humans should be compelled to the violence either for justice or for injustice, then would you approve those who would use the violence against the violence that compel them to be unjust and violent? Did you ever study Kropotkin, Reclus, Bakunin, Proudhon, or Tolstoy and compare their doctrines with those of liberals or authoritative Socialists?

[Unfinished]

Summer, 1923. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. EVANS:

Few days ago I received your two gladining post-

cards, the more beauty of which told me of your intention to send me some shells. So I waited to have received them before to answer at your good words and better deeds.

I look more at your post cards, specially to that of the surf. Its colors glad my eyes and give me a sense of freshness. I will tack it on the wall of my room. That day I received four others post-cards; three of them are photographies of the farm of our Comrade Hillsmith. An Mapple wood; an old sleigh and strong man that take care of the farm; and two white horses attached to a sledge upon which is fixed a big barrel for the mapple syrup. The fourth one is not less original but much more rare to be seen: A Russian farm, under a tree the family eating the dinner, not at a table but upon the grass; a nice scene!

You said that you would like to have me help you to work in the garden. I would like to do it. I am not an expert gardener—but I think that you are so; and would it be possible, you would know what a worker I am, and what a garden I will plant and work out under your advice joined to some of my critersims. You would also know what a lighted heart the rough Bartolomeo has. In spite of all, I often feel yet as a child. I like to sing, to play and to foolish. But indeed, the water is rough now. Maibe, thanks to all the good ones, among whom you are prominent, we will reach the shore someday.

Summer, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

I have so many things that I would like to tell you. I would like to tell you of me, of Italy, of my family, comrades, and so forth for hundred and more pages. But I send you the more high and warmest sentiments. I hope that you are well, that the Ocean, the Sun, the great out of door, are giving to you all their treasures, so much and well merited.

Gratefully your friend forever,

BARTOLOMEO

August 26, 1923. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR FRIEND:¹

Your "special delivery" of yesterday noon has reached me the same evening, at the usual hour of mail distribution. . . .

Very well, I will read and give my opinion of *Mind in the Making*.² Thanks for this too.

No style is more agreeable to me than the simplest one. For this I love Reclus and Malatesta, and was delighted of the first volume of William James. (I have not read the second volume of James' psychology.) . . .

As I told you, I received five of my papers. Three

¹ Mrs. Virginia MacMechan of Sharon, Mass., who gave Vanzetti English instruction during much of the first six years of his imprisonment.

² *The Mind in the Making*, by James Harvey Robinson.

are of our "Assembly of the Refractory"¹ printed in New York, weekly. One is a special number; that of a manifesto in form of a journal, issued in behalf of the Italian Political Prisoner, and the fifth is *The Defense* printed in Paris, by our comrades in defense of Nick and me. From yesterday noon to early this morning, I read them all. Just imagine what it would be, for a man confined in a miasmatic, muddy swamp, to feel at once his chains loose and freely walk toward the summits, to dive in the first stream of living waters, and then proceed, surrounded and deluged by sun and winds, height and height, and drink at the alpine springs and reach the highest summit, and from there dominate the immense vista of lands, waters and sky. The same it was for me the lecture of these papers. Oh, friend, the anarchism is as beauty as a woman for me, perhaps even more since it include all the rest and me and her. Calm, serene, honest, natural, viril, muddy and celestial at once, austere, heroic, fearless, fatal, generous and implacable—all these and more it is. . . .

September 6, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND [VIRGINIA MACMECHAN]:

Osanna! Yes, it seem a long time since I have received letters from a friend of whose friendship I am sure and sorry for his silence. But now that I am regretting for the cause of it—I am content that you have done just what I like you to do in such circumstances.

¹ *L'Adunata dei Refrattari*.

A player of golf and of tennis, friend of mine! It is as a reconciliation of the *diavolo* with the holy water! Indeed, I never thought such a thing possible—but it is. *Pazienza*. Few years ago, when I fancy this world as a colleges of rascality, I used to look upon such players with the most stern and terrible of my glances. But now, [that I] experience the divine candor of their world, well now, I look upon them in a different position.

Do you know that I never lose the joy of that vagabond freedom of working and living in the open. There was a guitar too, and many pipes, and when I was tired of disperated effort to sing as a tenor, I used to indulge in those minor echos which, in case of waltzes run as follows,—um pa pa—um pa pa, and so on. Well, fulishness apart, that was life, and then I learned something that cannot be learned in the school.

So thank you very much for the vision that your description revives in my mind. The need of divagation is, I believe a natural need—which may not be subrogated by the work—viceversa it is invigorated by the work. All of your letters make me think what unnatural, irrational and foolish life mankind is living today, and how little the many who presume to be at the vanguard understand this fact.

When you were here the last time, I was just over one of the most fierce organic reaction against disintegration.

Did you read *My Prisons*¹ by Silvio Pellico? If you

¹ *Le Mie Prigioni*.

read it, you know what he passed through. Such physical suffering happen, less or more, to every one, accordingly with his constitution and environments. That is what sure those who survive. . . .

October 3, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MRS. JACK:¹

Few days ago Nick and I have received a big basket of beautiful and savorous peaches from you; and another basket last evening.

I remember to have received other fruit from you during the first trial. Nick told me of your goodness toward us—(and not he alone.)

I was also told, last Spring, by a good friend, the beauty of your fruit orchard in bloom. And now I enjoy what those flowers have ripened; and it is indeed providential since our appetite is not very sharp—and the prison food not very good.

These fruits also remember to me the home's garden. At the time I lived there this kind of peaches was very little known. I remember when my father planted the first tree of this kind, in my garden. I tasted few of its fruit before to left my native place. So, if you will consider that these, your fruits, give me life, remember me the most loved place—and prove to me (in this black hour, second only, in sorrow, to that of my mother's death) the sympathy and friendship of you—you may realize, in a way—how I appre-

¹ Mrs. Cerise Jack of Sharon, Mass., who gave Sacco English lessons in the winter of 1923-24.

ciate your present. But you have sent to many. I still have some of the first basket (though I must confess to have gave some of them to some unfortunate youths.)

So, while I pray you to not send any more fruit to me, I also pray you to accept my hearty thanks, wishes and regards.

October 4, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MR. THOMSOMP:¹

I cannot help but write these few words to express you my gratitude and admiration for the your masterly battle in behalf of my life and of my liberty (which I love more than the life itself). I have refrained from attest publicly my sentiments because of my actual condiction, and the difference between you and me, of social condiction. In spite of all I would have congratulated you, yesterday evening, were not because I was indignant by the villain conducts of the Court's guards toward a very respectable lady,—generous friend of us.

Today, one brother of a Bostonian lawyer has told me: "My brother said that Mr. Thomsomp is perhaps the most able lawyer of Boston to present a case to the Supreme Court."

I feel positive that if we have knew you from the

¹ Mr. William G. Thompson of the Boston Bar who became counsel on March 8, 1923, for the special purpose of arguing motions for a new trial based upon exposures which came to light after the verdict, affecting the misconduct of some of the jurors. He, joined later by Mr. Herbert B. Ehrmann, took over the entire legal defense of the two men on November 25, 1924.

beginning of this shame, at this time we would have been fred.

I beg you, Mr. Thomsomp, to excuse my poor English, and accept my gratitude.

October 15, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR FRIEND [VIRGINIA MACMECHAN]:

I will as soon as possible write again, and more extensively to you. I will try to make more clear and spontaneous those two periods. Meanwhile, I beg you to reconstruct them as you see more fit.

This evening I have received an answer letter from E. Debs, plus some writings and his picture. There is a beautiful fragment of his speech on "Liberty." I am touched by, and shamedly glad for his words and unmerited praises.

Now, I must tell you the two principle causes of my pedantic style. One is my not at all blessing ignorance of the genius and of the dictionary of your language. The other is that we, Italians, have an old phraseology . . . which did not pass through similar historic events of our nation. Beside that, words of Latin and of Greek origin are familiar to my native language, while I ignore almost all those words of Nordic origin which form the most of your language. Some men here are surprised of my understanding of the "big words" and of my ignorance of the common ones.

But I will do my best to learn this language, and your teaching is providential. I will learn it and you

will see the gradual changing and improvement of my style. And if it even will happen, that I will find the good time to write a novel—it would be a paean. . . .

Of course the style of Voltaire is wonderful as his condition. I will never reach it. But anyhow, his style is that of a man that strike an old injustice. That of Marat was the style of a man that strike the old, the present, and all possible injustice. And the style of Marat I should prefer were I not determined to have one of mine own. As for the living man, I believe that Galleani is the strongest writer—I knew a little the best editors of several nations—they are gnomes when compared to him. This is not wholly a result of faculties, but also the consequence of the “better cause which make the better ones.”

Now let me thank you for your visit, and accept my hearty wishes and regards.

Congratulations to your mother, to you, to Romolo, to the maid, and why not? to myself—since I feel better and better.

November 12, 1923. Dedham Jail

DEAR MRS. JACK:

The hearing¹ is over and, before to go back at Charlestown I wish to thank you for your presence at the court room, because I attribute a great value to it, in our behalf, and also, because I was glad.

Please give my regards to Mr. Jack.

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

Fall, 1923. Charlestown Prison

COMRADE PETTYJOHN:¹

. . . . I appreciate everything that is done in behalf of the Russian People and Revolution. But surely, Anna Louise Strong is wrong if she believes in the progress of that revolution. The bolshevik government is giving up to the international capitalism, all Russia's natural resources, land, mine, forests, fishery, wells. The Russian workers shall work for the State and the foreign Company. It is disinherited by the revolution of its means of life. Surely the returning of the capitalistic system and the filtration of the foreign capital has brought to Russia a transitory, apparent emilioration, but it shall be paid at usury. Yet, the revolution has done and is doing, even in its failure, a great deal of good to this poor world, nor are the Bolsheviks guilty for all its evils. To be sure. But to speak of such an event in a letter, is almost tantalizing. It cannot be well done. Just for an example: the cooperatives. In a capitalist nation, the workers' cooperatives—with socialistic and revolutionary spirit and aims, are to be looked on, and helped as an embryo of a new world. But in Russia, now that she is returning by the joined forces of other governments and of the international capital, how can the cooperative deeds and spirits compete, overwhelm such preponderant forces, and become a preponderant historical factor? Kropotkin has intended to organize and revive the Russian Co-operatives at the beginning

¹ Maude Pettyjohn of Dayton, Wash.

of the revolution when it was possible to mold them in higher manifestations, but he was forbidden by the government.

I received a letter from our K—— D—— about a month ago. Yes, she has had a sorrowful life, and now is alone, poor, and not in good health. It seems as if god solace himself in torturing the better and good creatures. As far as I can see, if there is such a thing as "the god's justice," it is not better than the men's justice. My heart rebels and bleeds at such things as these. . . .

I see that you are really and deeply convinced in re-birth and in all of such doctrines. It may be true, and you have all the right of your beliefs, which may sooth and console the anguish of this poor life of ours. I only know that I do not know, that I cannot believe any of the many religious beliefs which came under my mind's eyes. Yet, I am a great mystic and I can't get along without any faith. I can laugh to all the evil, worship all the good, accept whatever destiny the imponderable shall impose upon me. Yet, using all my capacities and will for what might seem to be right. . . .

Winter, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

When the hour given for a visit is past I feel to have more to say than at the beginning of it, and so it happen that I think always a long time upon what was left to be said.

Undoubtedly the great sources of Russian Revolution troubles are of extern origin; others of natural origin by which man's power is overwhelmed; but some must be in the nature of all those human acts which constitute a Revolution. I fear, I am rather almost sure that a great sabotage is practiced against the new order. Now, the only way to be victorious is to eliminate the cause which determined any hostile deed against the revolution. The confidence of the [Russian] people in a violent punishment [against the rest of the world], operated by a new constitutional force, is such a folly that lead to an abyss; and the best result of a revolution, I mean that mental and moral improvement that every real worthy revolution should operate over the people, will so be destroyed.

But many things one could say about this subject, and besides, the work of the critic is always the easy one: so I return on the old subject "Morals." Man call moral everything that is favorable to conservation of life, to happiness of the individual, as well of the race, and these things are virtues and justice. For this reason, I cannot believe in those philosophers, who speaking of morals, tell me about a categoric order, a revelation, an abstract principle, and so on.

For me, the moral sense come from the strongest instincts of every living being. I mean the instincts of conservation and happiness, which as soon as the intelligence come, generates a third instinct, the love of the race. As soon as any intelligent creatures begin a social life they are compelled to social duties: hence the notion of what is just and what is unjust, of what

is good and what is evil. So, we can say that morals, as well as everything else made by man, has the purpose of conservation and happiness. That is why he who said that the fundamental nature of morals do not change, was right, and that is the reason why men breaks a moral relation to anythings or person as soon he stops believeing in their goodness and justice. And this is why every new idea that mark a progress has in itself a superior moral.

What Kropotkin said in his Anarchist Moral: "Do to others what you would wish that the others should do to you, in the same circumstances," can be the basis of the morals. Of course, many comrades had criticised him, but my little I, believe him very near to the reason. Nothing new in this, save a little modification which not only command to not do unjust things, but command also to do good. And this is progress. Every normal persons can be in accord.

The trouble and the differences begin when the moral values of our present institutions, of our social contract, of our customs are put in discussion. And more complications arise when we treat of details of the life, of the relativeness and absoluteness of it, because we all are individual, and, what is more important, determined creatures leaded in life by an influence of our personal life, amid a perpetual conflict between the mind and the heart.

But we have instincts that lead us, and intelligence that serves them, and after all, a nature fundamentally equal. Those things would be enough if man would not be susceptible of degeneration, as soon as he left

his natural way of life. Here we face a gigantic problem; not a letter but a book will be necessary to resolve or better to prospect it.

Before concluding, I put to myself a question, and answer to it. What is the good, and what is the evil? Till now from the greatest luminaries to the last dagoes wandering over the land, the idea is "All what help me is the good, all the rest is the evil." It is as Gorki said about the moral of the savage, and it run as follows: "If I steal the wife of my neighbor that is the good; if my neighbor steals my wife that is the evil." To be exact there are many and enough of moral principles abstractly true, but they are vitiated by their application.

The anarchist go ahead and says: All what is help to me without hurt the others is good; all what help the others without hurting me is good also, all the rest is evil. He look for his liberty in the liberty of all, for his happiness in the happiness of all, for his welfare in the universal welfare. I am with him.

Well, I perceive I have been very incomplete and inexact in my words, but, there are no pretention in them. They arise out of the intention of reveal my thought and exercising in English language. I begun to read the bible!

Winter, 1923. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

In my opinion the umane afflictions caused by umane faults are due, not so much for lack of morals sense,

but to use wrong application of it. The sentiment of justice too can become a source of injustice when wrong.

The crusades for example, were possible by the exploitation of religious sentiment and love of freedom proper to individuals and collectivities. Most of the unble tools of the "Inquisition" believed to be fair with their victims because by thus torturing the bodies they will save the souls of them.

Still today the unble justify punishment as necessary to check crimes. Indeed some so-called educated confess such belief, but not in good faith. This subject seem to be endless and tempt me to write something about it.

Your idea of the government is the one of every good people believing in it. I am for free towns administered directly by their citizens.

After reading many critics of government, the writings of Spencer, Stirner, Kropotkin, Reclu, Bovio and others, I wish very much to read the critics of the state made by the ancient Chinese, Greek and Roman philosopher. But after much reflection I tend to believe that the critics of the ancient must not differ much from those of the modern.

Last evening I read a chapter of the *Psychology* [by William James]. I perceive at once to deal with a really great one. He speak with simplicity as Reclu and others did. I will learn a good deal from this lecture. I feel the fever of knowledge in me.

Mr. A. Brisbane always trouble me. Several months ago I read in a book of physical culture, that to sit

down is an unhealthy habit and that the more one stand the better he feel. I like to feel well and consequently I took the advice. But today Mr. A. Brisbane tell me that the more we lay down the better it is. So I do not know now what I have to do for my good health. Till now I used to read on my feet, more often leaning like an elephant against the wall; from now I will maibe sit down. Of course, the best way to prevent diseases and troubles to a man is kill him while he feel well.

Winter, 1923. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR FRIEND MRS. EVANS:

Yesterday I wrote practically all the day long and finished the novel.¹ My other teacher, Mrs. V. M. M., has criticise a little my "pedantic way of writing." I told her that it is not due to pretentions of any sort, but simply and purely by my "blessing ignorance of the English language." Now I wish to finish a treatise on "Syndicates and Syndicalism," in Italian and before the hearing. I have obtained the promotion to work in the yard, and already feel much better.

This evening I have received a letter from our great sublime E. Debs. I am touched by his goodness and greatness. Proud, even if little ashamed of his friendship, appreciation and praises.

I am feeling better and better, and I wish and hope that this letter will find you in the best of conditions.

¹ *Events and Victims*, a story by Vanzetti of his experiences in a munitions factory at Springfield, Mass., before this country entered the war.

December 2, 1923. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR BRINIS:

It is quite a long time that I wish to write to you, but many little contrary things has till now frustrated my intention. So, I hope you will forgive to me the long silence. I have received your letters and, lately, the two post-cards, very nice and appreciated.

I am glad to be able to tell you that I have reported a good impression of the last hearing, especially of Mr. Thompson and Mr. Hamilton. Mr. Thompson is a quick and penetrating intelligence, a tongue wonderful. With few words he was able to destroy the elaborated sophistry, the mixing and twisting to make a truth seem a lie, or a lie seem a truth, of Mr. Katzmann [and] of his worth successor, Mr. Williams. At least I have had the moral satisfaction to see my framers unmasked, called liars—as they are. As soon as I saw Messrs. Thompson and Hill at work and the difference between them and the others, I realized of the principal reason of our condemnation. Mr. Katzmann, helped by Thayer, may always when he please, in a case of such nature, deceit twelve good men of Norfolk's or Plymouth's County and induce them to find guilty an innocent,—if in his defense [the latter] does not have men who do not fear and are able to analyze and reveal to the jury the lies and the inconsistency of the prosecutors. Would we have had Mr. Thompson at the first trial, we would have been in the open long ago. And I hope that, no matter how this

farce may end, that this bitter experience will not have been in vain.

Mr. Hamilton¹ seems to be a competent theenic. He discovered that one State's picture was little more smaller than the others—and that another set of pictures was taken with the light extremely at the one side, so that the black and narrow shadow at the opposite side was very liable to be taken for a scratch. Mr. Hamilton is sure of his affirmations and measurements, and he told us strong words of confidence and of victory.

But with all this, Mr. Thayer can use indiscreetly his discretionary power and answer as he likes. Therefore, excessive optimism would not be a wise thing—after the conduct of this man during the two trials.

I dislike to vilify human being and would be more than glad, happy, if he, by a just act, would compel me to change my opinion—but there is no reasons till now.

I am very well and strong. I work outside, read, write and study as always, and sing too.

I also saw and spoke with many friends; am confident and determined to win.

So my dears, be of good cheer and strong heart—I love the courageous—those who know to banish the black and sorrowful thought. To know my friends and my loved ones brave—is the sweetest to my soul.

Give my hearty regards to all my friend and their

¹ Albert H. Hamilton of Auburn, N. Y., gun expert for the defense.

family—to the Plymouth folks. Kisses to the little ones, and a train of good thought to all of you.

With great heart, yours,

January 7, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your first letter of 1924 brought me proudness and gladness. Thank you and good health and victory to you for all the 1924 and many others years, that you deserve life and its goodness, and we need you.

When you speak of Mazzini, you spark with life. I am glad that he happened to be born where I was born. Nature knows not the artificial bounderies and divisions made up by the stupidity and greedness of mankind to afflict herself. Nature bestows her gifts freely to her creature. Even in genius the people are equivalent. But the humble are kept ignorant of other people's virtues and poisoned with absurd conceivness of themselves, by those who speculate in patriotism. We children of the heart, citizens and members of all the countries and of the Race—ought to toil in order to illuminate the humble of the unity of the Race. The bounderies shall fall. . . .

I am very grateful to you for the beautiful post card. I never get tired looking at it. It reminds me of my native place. The old shepherd's white hair reminds me of my grand-father. He was just like this man. And everytime I look upon this scene, my heart is gladdened. . . .

January 24, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Your letter of the 19th reached me at proper time. Lately I received a copy of our dear Friend Evans' pamphlets in the rear of which I have read your comment on Sacco and Vanzetti, and thank you very much for it. Each word of the narration is the truth. It sounds bitter because it is bitter, and we must be heroic with the truth, the only Liberator. I forget if I wrote in the narration that I remember a time in which the bosses used to spit upon the feet of the work-seekers. Then it was necessary to present ones self with unbuttoned shirts, because they wanted to see what one was like, they wanted to see the hair on the chest of the worker, and good for me that I am a Latin with haired chest. They used to say: "You are too small—you are too old." . . . Otherwise all false, that is the way thing grow worse instead of growing better. The fools are told by the deceiver that fire destroys—Fire purifies and represents life—it does not destroy.

I am writing a letter to Judge Thayer. The first part of it dealing with the first trial, is ready, both in English and in Italian languages. It is written for the world. The second part will deal with the Dedham trial. It will sound greasy and sacrilegious because it voices the truth, which to be such must be wholly and not fractional. But I do not care, because I disdain the greasiness of the wisdom and the profanity of the official sacredness which have cursed the passed centuries and are dooming mankind. If there is still life

and little of good in it, both exist in spite of the so-called wisdom and sacredness. And I do not fear the consequences of my utterances. I am in their hands, let them crucify me, if it fitted them. It is in these conditions that I am now that I like to take my ground and assume my responsibilities—no matter how dreadful.

Each period of my letter is an axe or a mace when not a wedge—but always the truth. It seems to be my destiny to wrestle continually against the wrong, the errs, the unjust, the half truths more fatal than a whole false.

Once, a dear Friend, anarco-syndicalist, wrote me a letter on anarchy and syndicalism. Hence my essays in epistolar form on *Syndicate and Syndicalism*. Seven letters on the topic are already written and published. Two or three letters will be written to close the argument. My friend was shaken, his heart teared by the truth—but he wrote to me “you are deep on such matters—write, write, I dream of your idea and when you will come out we will beat one another.” And my comrade also said “Write, write, in spite of all what was said, the syndicalist have not yet said what they are and many who call themselves anarchists, do not know what anarchy means.” But believe me Comrade Blackwell, it is love that moves my lips—that makes me speak.

Lenin has passed away. I am convinced that unintentionally he has ruined the Russian Revolution. He has imprisoned and killed many of my comrades. And yet, he has suffered much, toiled heroically for what

he believed to be the good and the truth and I felt my eyes filled with tears in reading of his passing and his funeral.

And to the prostitute scribes of the capitalist system, who are twisting and falsifying facts and truths, and throwing the mud of their miserable souls on the fresh grave of my great adversary—I roar with a mute gesture all my disgust and contempt.

Now I close because I wish to write to my sister this evening.

February 27, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Yours of the 23rd has reached me. You are right. Neither do I expect any good from that letter to the judge. I have never expected, nor do I expect anything from him, other than some ten thousand volts divided in few times; some meters of cheap board and 4x7x8 feet hole in the ground.

No matter how much sympathy I try to bestow upon him, or with how much understanding I try to judge his actions; I only and alone can see him a self-conceited narrow-minded little tyrant, believing himself to be just, and believing his utterly unjust and unnecessary social office to be a necessity and a good. He is a bigot, and therefore, cruel. At the time of our arrest and trials, his peers were seeing red all around, and he saw red more than his peers.

He was ready to kill us even before the trials, for he deadly hates the subversive, and he believed to have become judge of the State Supreme Court by eliminat-

ing us via Law. For he knows that the servants of Capital were always remunerated by the Bosses for a crucifixion of some rebel or lover.

I do not know if his conduct during the trial was determined by his preconceptions, hate and ignorance, or if he consciously murdered us by details of bad faith, double playing, simulation, etc. I know that he did it. I know that even now he does not want to give us another trial though he could not deny it. And this is why he delays so much to give the answer. . . .

And if I am wrong, if according to his own standard, he is fair; if he wishes to be just, ('til now he is very unjust) then he could be hurt by my letter, but also enlightened. And if he would not forgive the crude defence of a man extremely wronged, then, not even a sparrow would I submit to him as arbiter.

An almost centennial struggle against every form of exploitation, oppression and fraud, taught us that "the wolf eats him who makes himself a sheep."

I am not sure, but I believe, that there are no pamphlets in Italian language, which treat with detail the case. This is the second reason of my letter and the 3rd reason is, my wish to say what no one else can say—silence would be cowardness—and treat the case accordingly to my own criterions. This may hurt me, but will help the Cause. Otherwise, if it means a life sentence, I prefer to be burnt away once and for all, and I also know that those in height, upon the back and the heads of the slaves, are against me. . . .

There is no spirit of sacrifice in this deed. I simply realize to be in merciless hands, and do my utmost

to say to my enemy that he is wrong. In a way that helps the cause. The great one, not the small. My only hope remains in the solidarity of friends and comrades and of the workers. After having spent \$200,000, we are still at the beginning. The work of the lawyers are useless before the law.

It has helped only because they brought the fact to the conscience and consciousness of the People. That is why Nick and I were not yet roasted. Authority, Power, and Privilege would not last a day upon the face of the earth, were it not because those who possess them, and those who prostitute their arms to their defence do suppress, repress, mercilessly and inescapable every efforts of liberations of each and all the rebels.

I abhor useless violence. I would my blood to prevent the sheading of blood, but neither the abyss nor the earth, nor the heavens, have a law which condemns the self-defense. Not every woman has sacrificed to bring forth one more rufian, idiot, or coward to the world. There are yet some men. And if tragedy is compelled to us, who knows; who knows if to speak now is not my duty?

The champion of life and of the liberty should not yield before the death. The struggle for the liberty, between the oppressor and the oppressed, shall continue beyond the life, beyond the graves. I know what they have done and are doing to me and to thousands of others, rebels and lovers. And I know that they are and will always be ready to do against us. I know the millions of youth that they slandered, the virgins that

they have torn in the breast; the millions of wives that they have widowed; the millions of bastards that they let to miasma of the gutter, or grown to the fratricide. I know the old fathers and mothers whom they killed by breaking their hearts; and all the children that they starved and are starving to death; and the hospitals and the crazy-houses filled of their victims, and the little criminals, victims, irresponsible and semi-compelled to crime that they mercilessly executed or entombed alive. They have never had pity for our children, our women, our dear, poor old fathers and mothers—and they never will have it.

The sorrow of their victims torture me in blood and spirit. As for me, I would forgive them, but I could not, for I would be a traitor of the race. Until not a man will be exploited or oppressed by another man, we will never bend the banner of freedom.

Are they not ready to do with other comrades what they are doing to us? Are they not more willing than ever to squeeze out the worker's blood for more gold? Are they not preparing a greater war?

I will ask for revenge—I will tell that I will die gladly by the hands of the hanger after having known to have been vindicated. I mean "eye for an eye, ear for an ear," and even more, since to win it is necessary that 100 enemies fall to each of us.

The only vengeance which could placate me is the realization of freedom, the great deliverance which would beneficiate all my friends as well as all my enemies: All. But till that, the struggle goes on, til we are breath to breath with the enemy fighting with

short arms, till then, to fight is our duty, our right, our necessity. For, one of the two. Either we must go on and win, or we must ask for an armistice. And who will grant it to us? Since the enemy has no scruples nor pity, to ask pity of him is to encourage him to slander our fellows, to try to grant to him the immunity for his crimes against us; it would be as a matricide.

The more I live, the more I suffer, the more I learn, the more I am inclined to forgive, to be generous, and that the violence as such does not resolve the problem of life. And the more I love and learn that "the right of all to violence does not go together with the liberty, but that it begins when the liberty ends." The slave has the right and duty to arise against his master. My supreme aim, that of the Anarchist is, "the complete elimination of violence from the rapports (relations)."

To be possible, we must have freedom and justice. Now we have the opposite of them, because through errors and consequent aberrations, men have risen as tyrants, deceiters and exploiters of other men, believing to gain their personal, familiar and cast welfare by such deed. Through both tyranny and servitude, we have lost our capacity of liberty and we are making life evermore miserable, operating our own ante-struction.

Since "only the liberty, or the struggle for liberty, may be school of liberty" and since mine is but self and racial defence, why should not I use the truth to defend myself? It is supremely sweet to me—my consciousness of superiority, of righteousness, to know

that I can judge and that the future shall bow to me, the doomed, and curse my judges.

Well, I have said many things which I sincerely believe to be so. But there are surely some mistake! Who possesses the absolute, or even the absolute-relative truth? So your point of view may be right, and I also realized that you spoke exclusively for my own good.

Wisdom is not only comprehension, but also many other faculties together; among which discrimination and sense of measure are prominent. I will try to be wise! ! ! ! ! I will think it over and over again.

This month I have had no visits, a little mail, and waited in vain for Mr. Moore and company, Mrs. Evans and Mrs. V. MacMechan. . . .

Altogether, sometime, in my solitude, I think that the world is gradually forgetting this son of it, entombed alive. But, I will bear my cross. There are those who will never forget me. . . .

P.S. I began to study arithmetic, and I find that my mind works in the same way. A Mathematic mind then? I asked it since I wonder that during 36 years no one else had perceived it, and the one who did it, fear to [do] me wrong.

May 4, 1924. Charlestown Prison

MY DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Thank you for your congratulation. I will try to deserve them ever more; have also communicated

them to my teacher. And thanks for the [picture of the] Niagara Falls—and for your faith in the human destiny.

The Falls brings into my cell a glance of the immense awe of Nature, and an echo of its idiom into my soul; and your faith feeds my faith—now that life's oil is far from my lamp. . . .

June 1, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I beg your pardon for having delayed so much to write to you.

I have read the Magazine about Mexico; there are so many things that I wish to tell you. But, I cannot do it well now, because I am tired, and I would not have sufficient time, because it is late and I have two other letters to write. But soon, I will write you a long letter.

Most probably, I will begin to fast tomorrow, in order to have the definite answer of the judge, as soon as possible.¹ I want you to not suffer for this thing. I have the reason; I considered this thoughtfully. I can fast without suffering, and I assure you that I am serene and master of my mind.

In the next letter I will tell you the reasons of this

¹ Vanzetti was distraught by the delay in Judge Thayer's decision on the first five supplementary motions for a new trial which had been argued the preceding fall and early winter. Judge Thayer rendered his decision on these motions on October 1, 1924.

act. I am quite well, and hope and wish the same of you, your Cousin, and all the good ones.

June 3, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

Since I have now a little time, I will write and try to say something, at least, out of the much that I think of, and would like to tell you about many things. As always, I will be a grumbler.

I have read the most important articles on "Mexico," and read them with all the earnestness, attention, and analitic faculty that I possess. I liked the writings written by the Mexican, and disliked those written by the American; and though I know very little about Mexico, I have learned very much from the lecture of these writings; yet the little that I knew and know, suffices to make me aware that the story is not really how they tell it. The major sincerity and nearness to the truth about the topic—*The Real Emancipation of the Mexican People* of the Mexican authors are the reason why I prefer them to the American ones. The publication is a communist propaganda for the 'communists' aim to capture the power and to gain the sympathy of the American more open-minded people to their cause in Mexico. . . .

This distortion does not educate the people; does not [make] for character or consciousness. It only serves to prompt bloody sacrifice to fall from one tyranny to another. . . .

The communists want power, and this explains all: the ruin of the revolution. But, returning to Mexico and the *Survey Graphic*, all in all I am optimistic. The mankind is such a thing that turns to good many bad intentions and deeds of its members and to bad, many good deeds. And surely the magazine contains good faith, good will, and parts of truth; it assured me of a momentous good thing. Through its tragic travail, the Mexican is gaining self-reliance, and acquiring self-sufficientness. For I left that people which I love so much, with a doubt that was a thorn to my heart.¹ I was saying, Mexico must depend upon the United States, so a real emancipation of these people will not be possible until the actual American regime will have been burnt to ashes; and this is a hard job, because the United States is the stronghold, as they will be the last asylum and the final grave-yard of the Capitalism. Poor Mexicans.

But now, I have learnt that Mexico is becoming self-efficient. Not for the merit of the revolutionists alone, as they believe, nor for the Providence, Obregon Government, as the social bugs want others to believe—No! Mexico is becoming so, because its nature permits it—because it is the goal towards which individuals and collectivities always strived, and more than for anything else. . . .

[Unfinished]

¹ Vanzetti was in Mexico in 1917 and 1918 to avoid the draft.

July 20, 1924. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR FRIEND MRS. C. C. JACK:

I pray of you to be strong, and bravely resist to sorrow. Weighing the unpleasing incident—one can clearly see that it shall not be offensive, because it is determined by misfortune and not by ingratitude or advers feelings, sentiments, or thoughts.¹ And, oh, how worth of sympathy and forgiveness the poor Nick is, even in his horrors. The imprisonment is for a lover an inefable martirdoom—therefore one must excuse, and also understand that certain acts or words—in such case—means and reveal just the opposite of what seems to be. I hope that with the coming of a cooler atmosphere, Nick will feel much better, and retake his good attitude toward you and those who deserve so well it.

No, his believes are wrong but justified by an appearance of a strange situation—and momentary results—and yet he is undoubtably beneficiated by the love of his friends—no matter if it seems that he does not feels and perceive it.

Of the case I prefer not speak, for, though much of good I could say of it—I am tired and disgusted. But I want to win, Soldier of Liberty, I will win or die.

P.S. Dear Friend, He that humiliate himself, exalt himself. In a way I appreciate your sentiments—but who of the two shall be more grateful and apprecia-

¹ Sacco refused to see Mrs. Jack when she went to visit him. He was temporarily hostile to all his "philanthropist friends." Later he apologized to them.

tive? he who have always received? or you who have always given? Who of the two is worthier? To have lived in material comfort is a punishment in itself because it weaken—but it is not a demerit to one who never abused of it; indeed it is written that you have not tresspass—yourself prove it. While to be of the rich and for freedom is the greatest of the merits for he who possess wealth and, if he wish, license. Honor to you—while so many disinherited are slaves of themselves, blacguards of the priviledge and tyranny—you are for freedom.

Let me say that we must not protest against the wretched regime to which we are compelled: we must destroy it. Destroy, annihilate its evils—to give back to latent life its atoms—for new manifestations. . . .

September 15, 1924. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

About two weeks ago I have sent you a letter and till now, no answer came. I am a little anxious for your silence, because it may signify that you are not well. But, I hope with all my heart that you are well.

I think that Moore has left the Defense, but I am not sure of it.¹ If so, it may be better for us, but I lost the opportunity to deliver and receive correspondences. A painful loss, which deprives me of the only

¹ Fred H. Moore, counsel for the two men at the Dedham trial, officially withdrew from their defense on November 8, 1924. The disagreement between him and the Defense Committee had been brewing some time before Vanzetti wrote this letter.

life manifestation of which I was not yet deprived. I do not know the least simplest thing about the case, save the babblers, which count nothing.

I am tired, tired, tired: I ask if to live like now, for love of life, is not, rather than wisdom or heroism, mere cowardness. And in my conscience, has ripened the moral sanction to die and to kill for freedom. I am ready, and I may be mistaken, but most probably I will not die as a rabbit or a worm.

My heart is the tabernacle in which my mother, and she was brave, lives. If a good hour will strike me, I will tell you of her. Not now, it is impossible now.

Italy is weeping tears of blood, bleeding her best blood. The fascista's crimes, especially their crime against Matteotti alive and Matteotti dead, have precipitated the events—the historical Nemesis. . . .

Please let me speak of Italy of which destiny I may be more interested than my own. . . . Grossly speaking, Italy is split in two parts: fascismo and anti-fascismo. But the situation, the reality is far more complicated than it appears.

The "opposition" is composed of the Liberals, Democratic, Demo-socialist, the three differing Socialist Parties, the Republican, the Communist and the Anarchist, and the Popular (Catholic party).

The Fascismo has on his side the Pope, the King, the financier, industrial and Rural Capitalism.

Now, the liberals who have helped the formation of the fascism are swinging. The Democrats are steadily against the fascismo; the republicans are also swinging, and the Anarchist are firm; but the reformist are ready

to betray again if Mussolini would be so gentlemanly to cut with them the power-pie.

But there is more and worse: the socialist are feared by the liberals, the democrats and the republican, while they fear the communist who fear them and the liberal, the democrat, and the anarchist. And the Anarchist distrust all the others.

Let us look at the other side: The king dislikes the pope, and the pope, the king. But a common danger makes them allied. The king who has the army and officialdom faithful to him, dislikes the fascismo and Mussolini, but he must stick with them or end in the Rome's main sewer. Mussolini and the most intelligent head bandits would like to get peace, and ask the venal adversary to partake of the Power's pie—but the dreadful condition of the people, the daily violence of the fascisti-thugs do not consent any normalization, and Mussolini is practically black-mailed and slave of the Capitalists who he has black-mailed and enslaved, and of the scum of his own band, to which he must obey or be stabbed. That Mussolini shall be killed is fatal, but most probably killed by his friends than by his enemy. Historical nemesis cynical as he deserves.

What about the Italian People; the great masses in the fields, the navy, the shops and the studios?

The lower are the best. The unpolitical masses who make life possible, are naturally well gifted, relatively good, purely good in all that survives in them of primordial. But they are dwarfed, brutalized, corrupted, cowardized by thousands of years of slavery,

servilism, bestial toiling, sordity, poverty, unspeakable suffering, ignorance, and worse of all, by honors. But in spite of all this shame, horror and disgrace, they are the only ones who look to the stars and not the mud. Nor are they guilty. Guilty is the church, the monarchy, the capitalism, the militarism, the Burocrasy, and the yellow, pink, red, scarlet bad shepherds, demagogues and politician.

The political proletariat is very heterogeneous: Mazzinian, demo-social, socialist, communist and anarchist.

Mazzinian and anarchist are the best blood, and they are surely superior to the gray masses—unconscious and idealess—but they are few. The others have been too domesticated by their leaders—“plenty of eat, little of work,” belly of mine become a hub; safety first, gradual conquest, historical fatalism, and fascista blackjack over all.

Besides that they look for power, are much servilized and “*imborghesiti*.” Yet, they have fought heroical battles, and would be capable of great acts, were the worms so good to eat the leaders alive. Gigi Damiani has raffaelistically painted these truths in his *The Problem of Liberty*.

Thus Italy's condition is equivocal, comic, but over all, tragic. And no worthy son of a good mother can look at it without sorrow, aggravation and anguish. There is death and even worse than death, all round. The task is titanic, the mean men are gnomes and dwarfed.

How will be the future? It will be tears of blood, crimes, degeneration, diseases, insanity and death—

or the life and its liberation reached through a terrific lavacrus of blood, through aspiration, heroic sacrifice, and fire. This is the truth. Hard even to look upon.

Republicans, democrats and socialists have a program. The re-establishment of the constitutional grants: freedom of press, speech, and association; annulation of the past election and new election; the abolition of the fascista Militia.

The communists are for “the power to themselves,” the name don't matter. And they are playing Don Quixottes.

You will surely admit that we, poor, hated, dispised, wronged, exacrated anarchist have a hard job to get a straight way (straight to our criterion) among such an entanglement.

People in general are not yet capable of liberty, others are contrary to it, so that it would be impossible to establish general anarchist order after the fascismo vanquishment. On the other hand there are places whose population is almost totally anarchist. Also the first necessity is to crush the fascismo now, and it is a work that requires the cooperation of all the parties contrary to the fascismo.

[Unfinished]

November 13, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I have in the *La Notizia* that you are going to speak somewhere in Boston, at a meeting in Sacco's and my behalf.

What a labor, what troubles and cares of the few to advocate a case of which the great masses care but little or nothing, and the powerful detest, to finance a useless work of civil thieves. When I think of it, of all what has happened and of how the present is and I am, I dispise the words. And this silence is a thing which cannot be said.

I always remember my promise to you of a writing on "incoherence" still to be fulfilled.

It is, that beside to have little time at my disposition, I seldom feel that way, or in that mood, which consent one to express a little of himself. When one is killed, or is dying little by little, as I, the happy moment of self-expression becomes always less and more weak, so that even if there is time enough one can do nothing, of what is only possible to do quickly, in a slow manner. Yet, sometime I will try it.

I am going to school now, and reading many newspapers and few books. Also, I feel quite well and strong, only that my native me is dreary for what it is becoming. I have cut down trees with a sense of sympathy for them, and almost a sort of remorse; while now thinking of my axe, a lust seizes me to get a mad delight and exaltation by using them on the necks and trunks of the men-eaters; on the necks of those who seem to have the evil in their head and on the trunks of those who seem to have the evil in their breast.

It is good for them if they succeed to loosen me, splitted and crushed in flesh and in spirit—a shadow of

a man, a human rag—and still better to them if they will turn me out well nailed amongst six cheap planks.

Yet, I am still well and strong enough, going to school, reading many journals and some books, writing a little for the case, and for the great cause, and planning how to destroy a world.

I know that our comrades are fighting, laboring, preparing, and that different days are near at hand. *The Thought and Will* and *Faith* are simply sublime—Malatesta is a saint.

. . . . Thus while hope is still alive in me, desperation is growing powerful, and it is good, as sane hate is good. They are providential. And since I reached a good point I will stop at it, temporarily. Hoping to find you well, I send you my regards and good wishes, to your cousin also.

November 30, 1924. *Charlestown Prison*

DEAR COMRADE BLACKWELL:

I have received both your letters, one of Nov. 22nd and the other I received at the same day, November 25th.

Thank you for your participation and your description of the meeting. I read something about it in the *La Notizia*, but it is from you that I learned of our dear Eugene Debs' message, and brave Larkin's cablegram. I am glad and proud of it for Debs and Larkin are estimated very dearly by me. Two of the really good and brave are they among the many of this side of the barricade. . . .

I do not know, but I heard several times of Miss Donovan—how many good souls are working in our behalf and suffering for our pains and sorrows who we do not know. Human nature is good. I would assert it even I burned a hundred times, or chained for hundred lives.

Thank you, dear comrade Blackwell, for the nice post card. Your letter has made my Thanksgiving day a little better than it would have been without your messages. And your friendship makes each of my days a little better—it daily gives me sincerity and joy and life.

I beg of you to have care of yourself and to do all what the oculist prescribes to you. We and our race need you, and you have to preserve your faculties and gift for the common welfare and little of happiness.

Now I am busy. Yesterday, I finished the first of a series of articles (three) and I hope to write the other two, tomorrow. After, I will finish my letters on "Syndicate and Syndicalism." I am really ashamed of my long delay. After I will write a series of articles on "In Defense of the Revolution" a topic very much discussed now. For this reason, I am going to close my letter, but with a promise. I will write to you of my mother at the first good hour.

December, 1924. Charlestown Prison

DEAR MRS. EVANS:

For the water in liquid state, freedom is, to flow from a relative up to a relative down; or vice versa

when the water is in vapor state. For the fire, freedom is, to expand and to arise. In short, freedom is, for each and all the things of the universe, *to follow their natural tendencies*—and to fulfill their own virtues, qualities and capacities.

This,—and not at all an abstraction, nor an abstract right which enable someone to say of a man, dead for want of food, that he has not die of starvation, but for not having exercised his right and his freedom to eat—is my idea of liberty.

Please, permit me to prove you the trueness of this true conception of freedom by applying it to Nick and myself. Am I without a lover? Yes, but I would like to have a lover. Have I not, by nature, the instinct, the faculties and, therefore, the right of love? Of course yes, but it would be better if not, for having them but not the freedom to realize them, it all become an excruciable laughing stock.

Has Nick a wife? Yes, and a good one; but not being free, he must either thinks that she is consoling herself with somebody else, or that she is suffering the unspeakable agony of a loving woman compelled to mourn a living lover.

Have I no children? Well—I would like to have or to generate some children. Have Nick some children—yes, and what his heart experiences when he thinks of them—is a thing known by him alone.

O the blessing green of the wilderness and of the open land—O the blue vastness of the oceans—the fragrances of the flowers and the sweetness of the fruits—The sky reflecting lakes—the singing torrents

—the telling brooks—O the valleys, the hills—the awful Alps! O the mistic dawn—the roses of the aurora, the glory of the moon—O the sunset—the twilight—O the supreme extasies and mystery of the starry night, heavenly creature of the eternity.

Yes, Yes, all this is real actuality but not to us, not to us chained—and just and simply because we, being chained, have not the freedom to use our natural faculty of locomotion to carry us from our cells to the open horizon—under the sun at daytime—under the visible stars at night.

CHAPTER II

BY almost uninterrupted application of mind, Vanzetti had withstood the first four years of prison routine and the delays and disappointments incident to Judge Thayer's denial of the first six motions for a new trial.

Early in 1925, however, his resistance temporarily sagged. Persistent digestive disturbances indicated that he might be suffering from stomach ulcers, and it was thought that this organic trouble explained the excitability which characterized his conduct at this time. He was accordingly taken off work in the prison tailor shop, and placed in the prison hospital for observation. After several weeks, he was removed from the hospital to the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminal Insane. Here he stayed four months, regaining his health completely, after which he was returned to Charlestown, this time to work in the paint shop.

During this year there were no days in court for him or Sacco. Towards the close of 1924, Mr. William G. Thompson, later joined by Mr. Herbert B. Ehrmann, superseded Mr. Fred H. Moore and the other counsel for the men. Vanzetti was profoundly pleased with this change, and waited out the year 1925 in relative patience while the necessary steps were being taken to carry his case to the Supreme Court.