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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 68, No. 1 (Mar., 1996), pp. 31-62

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](http://www.uchicago.edu)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2124332>

Accessed: 18/07/2012 14:05

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Mussolini, Sacco-Vanzetti, and the Anarchists: The Transatlantic Context

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In *The Big Money* (1936), John Dos Passos reminds us that for left-wing militants the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti on August 23, 1927, defined the political discourse of the age by polarizing society into “two nations”:¹ on one side of the great divide stood the popular, progressive social elements that had fought to save the two anarchists from the electric chair; on the other side were arrayed the reactionary forces that sustained the capitalist order, from American nativism to Italian Fascism. Vanzetti, who anxiously followed the rise of Benito Mussolini’s Fascist movement from his prison cell, had arrived at the same conclusion, believing that the judge who condemned him and Sacco wore the American face of the conservative interests propped up by the Italian dictator. The choice, Vanzetti believed, was “either fascismo, or revolution.”²

Mussolini did not see Sacco and Vanzetti in these stark ideological terms. As the duce of Fascism and as dictator of Italy, reasons of state shaped his policies toward the case. Moreover, even as the leader of a radical right movement engaged in a bloody war against the left, he admired the anarchists, whom he believed were morally and politically superior to socialists and communists. As late as 1934, he continued to speak of Sacco and Vanzetti in a way that suggests personal sympathies for them and for anarchism, attitudes unrecognized by historians who emphasize his unremitting crusade against the left. The two Italian anarchists had been innocent, he protested indignantly to

¹ John Dos Passos, *The Big Money*, vol. 3 of the trilogy *U.S.A.*, as quoted in John P. Diggins, *The Rise and Fall of the American Left* (New York and London, 1992), p. 143. On Dos Passos’s involvement in the Sacco-Vanzetti case see John D. Baker, “Italian Anarchism and the American Dream—the View of John Dos Passos,” in *Italian American Radicalism: Old World Origins and New World Developments*, ed. Rudolf J. Vecoli (Staten Island, N.Y., 1972), pp. 30–39; and Louis Joughin and Edmund M. Morgan, *The Legacy of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York, 1948), pp. 438–44. In 1927 Dos Passos wrote *Facing the Chair: Story of the Americanization of Two Foreignborn Workmen* for the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee.

² Vanzetti to Alice Stone Blackwell, September 15, 1924, in Marion Denman Frankfurter and Gardner Jackson, eds., *The Letters of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York, 1930), p. 128.

a friend, but the Fascists in America “did not lift a finger . . . to save Sacco and Vanzetti. The socialist ranks among the emigrants, anarchist and maximalist, did much more.”³

Mussolini remained proudly attached to the memory of his own radical past, and his reactions to the Sacco-Vanzetti case can be best understood in that context. Although his intellectual formation was largely the product of Marxism and revolutionary syndicalism, Mussolini was also influenced by anarchist ideas; the anti-Fascist historian Gaetano Salvemini thought he was more an anarchist than a socialist.⁴ His father, Alessandro Mussolini, had been a member of Bakunin’s anarchist International in Italy in the 1870s and had admired both Carlo Cafiero and Andrea Costa, two of its principal chieftains. During his youthful exile in Switzerland he had known Carlo Tresca and other radicals, and he maintained a lifelong respect for the anarchist leader Errico Malatesta.⁵ Mussolini also knew his anarchist literature, including the works of the German individualist anarchist Max Stirner and the Russian anarchist communist Peter Kropotkin. He even translated anarchist works from French

³ Mussolini is quoted by Yvon De Begnac, *Taccuini Mussoliniani*, ed. Francesco Perfetti (Bologna, 1990), pp. 612, 413.

⁴ Gaetano Salvemini, *The Origins of Fascism in Italy*, ed. Roberto Vivarelli (New York, 1973), p. 70, and *The Fascist Dictatorship in Italy* (New York, 1927), pp. 10–11. See also Enzo Santarelli, *La revisione del marxismo in Italia: Studi di critica storica*, 2d ed. (Milan, 1977), p. 263. On the sources of Mussolini’s intellectual development, see Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario* (Turin, 1965); Enzo Santarelli, “Socialismo rivoluzionario e ‘mussolinismo’ alla vigilia del primo conflitto mondiale,” in his *Origini del Fascismo* (Urbino, 1963), pp. 13–88; Sergio Romano, “Sorel e Mussolini,” *Storia Contemporanea* 15 (February 1984): 123–31; Zeev Sternhell, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution*, trans. David Maisel (Princeton, N.J., 1994), pp. 195–232; David Roberts, *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism* (Manchester, 1979); A. J. Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1979). Italian revolutionary syndicalism should be distinguished from anarco-syndicalism: the former, which arose as an effort to revise Marxism, had a profound influence on Mussolini’s thought and provided early Fascism with some of its leading figures, including Edmondo Rossoni, Alceste De Ambris, and Angelo O. Olivetti; the latter, however, arose out of the Bakuninist tradition and was led by anarchists, such as Armando Borghi, who worked for anarchist goals through the syndicalist movement. For the anarchist view of the philosophical and tactical differences among various currents of Italian syndicalism, see Armando Borghi, *Mezzo secolo di anarchia (1898–1945)* (Naples, 1954), pp. 87–96.

⁵ De Begnac, *Taccuini*, pp. 7–19; Nunzio Pernicone, “Carlo Tresca: Life and Death of a Revolutionary,” in *Italian Americans: The Search for a Usable Past*, ed. Richard N. Juliani and Philip V. Cannistraro (New York, 1989), p. 217; Dorothy Gallagher, *All the Right Enemies: The Life and Murder of Carlo Tresca* (New Brunswick, N.J., and London, 1988), p. 22; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, pp. 5–8, 40; Gaudens Megaro, *Mussolini in the Making* (Boston and New York, 1938), p. 102; Gherardo Bozzetti, *Mussolini direttore dell’ “Avanti!”* (Milan, 1979), p. 130, n. 16.

into Italian, including two of Kropotkin's major books, *Paroles d'un révolté* and *La grande révolution, 1789–1793*.⁶

Nor was the Sacco-Vanzetti case the first instance in which Mussolini reacted to political repression in the United States. As a young radical, he had bitterly attacked the capitalists of the United States because of the execution of the anarchist “martyrs” of the Haymarket affair of 1886–87. When reformist socialist Filippo Turati accused Gaetano Bresci, the anarchist who left Paterson, New Jersey, in 1900 to assassinate King Umberto I, of being insane, Mussolini defended Bresci as a hero—and blandly described tyrannicide as “the occupational hazard of being a king.”⁷ Later, as a socialist editor in the Romagna, he again railed against the “violent and brutal” bourgeoisie that dominated the United States, where two Italian Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) leaders, Joseph Ettor and Arturo Giovannitti, faced murder charges resulting from the Lawrence textile strike of 1912. Mussolini had then tried to rally Italian workers as part of an international protest in support of the two labor activists, much as anarchists would do later for Sacco and Vanzetti.⁸

Sacco and Vanzetti's defenders dismissed the notion that Mussolini tried to save the two anarchists, and some have even argued that he secretly encouraged American officials to prosecute them. In 1927 the anarchist Raffaele Schiavina charged that, in spite of his public statements, Mussolini told U.S. authorities privately that execution would be fully justified. In the 1950s, Howard Fast, in his novel *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*,

⁶ Edoardo Susmel and Duilio Susmel, eds., *Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini*, 37 vols. (Florence, 1951–63), 2:274; 3:136, 141, 148, 286; 4:195 (hereafter cited as *OO*); De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, p. 169; Megaro, p. 319; Henri Arvon, “L'actualité de la pensée de Max Stirner,” in *Anarchici e anarchia nel mondo contemporaneo* (Turin, 1971), p. 286. Mussolini's translations of Kropotkin's works were for Luigi Bertoni's Swiss anarchist publication, *Réveil*. In 1909 he translated the preface of Élisée Reclus's *La Terre* for *Il Popolo*.

⁷ Mussolini's references to Bresci are in *OO*, 3:148, 286; and 4:165. Mussolini's remark on royal assassination was a paraphrase of Umberto I's own comment on avoiding the murder attempt by Pietro Acciarito in 1897.

⁸ Mussolini's articles about Ettor and Giovannitti are in *OO*, 4:146, 180–81, 239–41, 251. See also Megaro, pp. 201–9; Clay C. Burton, “Italian-American Relations and the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti,” in Vecoli, ed., p. 66; Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton, N.J., 1991), p. 26. Mussolini's attitudes toward the United States during his socialist days were typical of those expressed in the newspapers of the Italian left. See Rudolph J. Vecoli, “‘Free Country’: The American Republic Viewed by the Italian Left, 1880–1920,” in *In the Shadow of Liberty: Immigrants, Workers, and Citizens in the American Republic, 1880–1920*, ed. Marianne Debouzy (Paris, 1988), pp. 35–56; and Arnaldo Testi, “L'immagine degli Stati Uniti nella stampa socialista italiana (1886–1914),” in *Italia e America dal settecento all'età dell'imperialismo*, ed. Giorgio Spini et al. (Padova, 1976), pp. 313–50. Nicola Sacco had worked on behalf of Ettor and Giovannitti's defense in 1912.

perpetuated this picture of a cynical Mussolini playing a double game. Sacco's grandson Spencer believes that Mussolini told President Coolidge that he did not want Sacco and Vanzetti returned to Italy.⁹ Recalled one Italian-American, "If there had been another government in Italy at the time, Sacco and Vanzetti would not have died, but Mussolini washed his hands like Pilate."¹⁰

Scholarly opinion holds that Mussolini was "complaisant and uninterested" in Sacco and Vanzetti's fate and "made no representation" on their behalf.¹¹ But without access to recently released Italian records, scholars could not have been aware of the full scope of Mussolini's activities or of his real attitudes toward the case. The impression persists that the dictator made only one perfunctory effort to help Sacco and Vanzetti,¹² in the form of a private communication to American ambassador Henry P. Fletcher written shortly before the execution. In what Mussolini described as a letter "of an absolutely confidential nature," he urged Fletcher to prevail upon Governor Alvan T. Fuller of Massachusetts to commute the death sentence, arguing that clemency would reveal the difference between Bolshevism and American methods and would avoid creating two leftist martyrs.¹³

⁹ Raffaele Schiavina, *Sacco e Vanzetti: Cause e fini di un delitto di Stato* (Paris, 1927), p. 108; Howard Fast, *The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York, 1953), pp. 93–100; interview between Paul Avrich and Spencer Sacco, January 8, 1987. See also "Come Mussolini si è dis . . . interessato del caso Sacco e Vanzetti," *Il Nuovo Mondo* (New York) (August 12, 1927).

¹⁰ Quoted in Salvatore J. La Gumina, *The Immigrants Speak: Italian-Americans Tell Their Story* (Staten Island, N.Y., 1979), p. 29.

¹¹ Burton, p. 67; Megaro, p. 209; Ronald Creagh, *Sacco et Vanzetti* (Paris, 1984), p. 190.

¹² John P. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View from America* (Princeton, N.J., 1972), p. 270; Claudia Damiani, *Mussolini e gli Stati Uniti, 1922–1935* (Bologna, 1980), p. 277; remarks by Luisa Cetti, in *Sacco-Vanzetti: Developments and Reconsiderations—1979* (Boston, 1982), pp. 98–99; M. Sylvers, "Sacco, Nicola e Vanzetti, Bartolomeo," in *Il movimento operaio italiano: Dizionario biografico*, ed. Franco Andreucci and Tommaso Detti, 5 vols. (Rome, 1978), 4:439–40. Gian Giacomo Migone, *Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo: Alle origini dell'egemonia americana in Italia* (Milan, 1980); and David F. Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy, 1922–1940* (Chapel Hill, N.C., and London, 1988), do not discuss the case.

¹³ Mussolini to Fletcher, July 24, 1927, and Fletcher's reply, dated July 25, in the Henry P. Fletcher Papers, General Correspondence, Container 13, Library of Congress; see also Fletcher to State Department, July 24, 1927, containing a translation, in State Department Decimal File, 1910–29 (hereafter RG 59), 311.6521 Sa 1/556, National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NA); an undated draft of the letter, with minor changes in Mussolini's hand, is in Servizio Affari Privati (hereafter SAP), 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, Archivio Storico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome (hereafter ASMAE). Renzo De Felice published the entire text in "Alcuni temi per la storia dell'emigrazione italiana," *Affari Sociali Internazionali* 1 (September 1973): 7–8, having located a copy in *Archivio di Gabinetto, 1922–1929*, pacco 142, ASMAE. Francis Russell published portions of the letter in his *Tragedy in Dedham: The Story*

Neither the partisan nor the scholarly view is correct. Italian involvement in the Sacco-Vanzetti case began in 1920, but it consisted largely of reluctant gestures by a Liberal government that had long shown deep-rooted hostility toward anarchism.¹⁴ In the two years before Mussolini took office in October 1922, none of the Liberal prime ministers issued a formal protest against the treatment accorded Sacco and Vanzetti, nor did they appeal privately to American authorities. Yet although Mussolini's repression of the anarchists at home after he came to power represented continuity with Liberal policy, he actually did more than his predecessors to assist Sacco and Vanzetti.¹⁵ During the struggle for power between 1919 and 1922, while his Blackshirts battered the socialists in the streets, Mussolini simultaneously extolled anarchist revolutionary fervor and publicly favored the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti. As prime minister, he reluctantly tempered his support for the defendants so as not to antagonize American sensibilities. But behind Mussolini the diplomat lurked a onetime revolutionary who harbored an instinctive solidarity with two anarchists trapped in the judicial machinery of a "plutocratic" state he had once violently excoriated and continued to detest.¹⁶

On both sides of the Atlantic in 1919–20, a climate of right-wing reaction prevailed, a climate marked by political violence and widespread social unrest in which Italian anarchists were the targets of much of the repression. In the

of the Sacco-Vanzetti Case (London, 1963), pp. 380–81; it is mentioned in Joughin and Morgan (n. 1 above), p. 278; Creagh, pp. 223–24; David Felix, *Protest: Sacco-Vanzetti and the Intellectuals* (Bloomington, Ind., and London, 1965), pp. 230–31; and Luigi Botta, *Sacco e Vanzetti: Giustiziata la verità* (Cavallermaggiore, 1978), p. 111.

¹⁴ Since the 1870s, Liberal Italy had regularly persecuted the anarchists, employing the full administrative, judicial, and military power of the state against them. See Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864–1892* (Princeton, N.J., 1993); Carl Levy, "Italian Anarchism, 1870–1926," in *For Anarchism: History, Theory, and Practice*, ed. David Goodway (London and New York, 1989), pp. 25–35; Richard Bach Jensen, "The Italian and Spanish Governments and the Repression of Anarchist Terrorism, 1890–1914" (paper presented at the meeting of the American Historical Association, Chicago, December 1991), and "Italy's Peculiar Institution: Internal Police Exile, 1861–1914," in *Essays in European History*, ed. June K. Burton (Lanham, Pa., New York, and London, 1989), pp. 99–114.

¹⁵ There is no adequate treatment of anarchism during the Fascist period. For a general overview, see *Un trentennio di attività anarchica (1914–1945)* (Cesena, 1953); Enzo Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico in Italia*, 2d ed. (Milan, 1973), pp. 192–96; Adriana Dadà, *L'anarchismo in Italia: Fra movimento e partito: Storia e documenti dell'anarchismo italiano* (Milan, 1984), pp. 80–101.

¹⁶ Mussolini's long-standing animosity for American capitalism reemerged during the period of the Italian Social Republic, 1943–45, when his speeches returned repeatedly to the theme of "American plutocracy." See, e.g., his "Rapporto agli ufficiali della divisione Littorio" (July 18, 1944), p. 104; "Roosevelt e le talpe chieche" (January 16, 1944), pp. 296–98; "La democrazia dalle pance piene" (May 4, 1944), pp. 355–58; and "Nel gioco delle democrazie" (October 1, 1944), p. 410, all in *OO* (n. 6 above), vol. 31. See also De Begnac, *Taccuini* (n. 3 above), p. 612.

United States, the Italian community included Carlo Tresca and Luigi Galleani—as well as followers of Galleani such as Sacco and Vanzetti—among the ranks of foreign-born anarchists.¹⁷ But Italian-American anarchism was already caught in the last stages of a cycle of government suppression that had begun with the American entry into World War I in April 1917, when federal agents cracked down on radical groups in a mounting wave of repression. The Red Scare in America reached its height in the Palmer Raids of 1919 and the deportation of alien subversives. In Italy, the period 1919–20—known as the “red biennium”—also witnessed a rising tide of left-wing radicalism that climaxed in the “Occupation of the Factories.” The Liberal government stood by while Mussolini’s newly formed Blackshirt squads launched a bloody war against “subversives” and then replied with a police crackdown against the anarchists.¹⁸

Galleani and his chief disciple, Schiavina, were deported from the United States along with seven others, arriving back in Italy in July 1919, four months after Mussolini had founded the Fascist movement.¹⁹ But they maintained close contact with their American comrades and in January 1920, using money collected in the United States, they revived in Turin *Cronaca Sovversiva*, the anarchist paper that had been suppressed in New England.²⁰ That September, in the heat of his tirades against the socialists, Mussolini invoked Galleani as a radical of high principle who could testify to his charge that maximalist

¹⁷ On Galleani’s influence in the United States see Nunzio Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani and Italian Anarchist Terrorism in the United States,” *Studi Emigrazione* 30 (September 1993): 469–88.

¹⁸ Avrich (n. 8 above), p. 135; Edward Holton James, “The Story of Mario Buda before the Jury of the World,” typescript, dated February 21, 1928 (copy from the Harvard Law School Library provided to the author by Paul Avrich), p. 3. On the Red Scare in the United States see esp. Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919–1920* (Minneapolis, 1955); William Preston, Jr., *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903–1933* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); and Julian F. Jaffe, *Crusade against Radicalism: New York during the Red Scare, 1914–1924* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1972). On the revolutionary situation and anarchism in postwar Italy see Vincenzo Mantovani, *Mazurka blu: La strage del Diana* (Milan, 1979), pp. 41–68; Dadà, pp. 68–70; Giuseppe Maione, *Il biennio rosso: Autonomia e spontaneità operaia nel 1919–1920* (Bologna, 1975); Paolo Spriano, *L’occupazione delle fabbriche, Settembre 1920* (Turin, 1964); Albert S. Lindemann, *The “Red Years”: European Socialism vs. Bolshevism, 1919–1921* (Berkeley, 1974); Giorgio Petracchi, “La crisi del dopoguerra e la scissione socialista,” in *Lezioni di Storia del partito socialista italiano, 1892–1976*, ed. Stefano Caretti, Z. Ciuffoletti, and M. Degli Innocenti (Florence, 1977), pp. 133–70.

¹⁹ The early Fascist movement attracted a number of former anarchists, including Massimo Rocca, Mario Gioda, Edmondo Mazzucato, and Edoardo Malusardi.

²⁰ Report by Franklin Mott Gunther, counselor to U.S. embassy in Rome, October 1921, *Casellario Politico Centrale*, f. “Galleani, Luigi,” Archivio Centrale dello Stato (hereafter ACS); Ugo Fedeli, *Luigi Galleani: Quarant’anni di lotte rivoluzionarie, 1891–1931* (Forlì, 1956), p. 163; Avrich, p. 208; *Un trentennio*, p. 27.

socialist Giacinto M. Serrati had, while serving as editor of the New York-based *Il Proletario* in 1902–3, betrayed the subversive code by informing police authorities of Galleani's whereabouts. By reopening the old polemic, Mussolini hoped to further divide the left and gain anarchist support in his struggle against the socialists.²¹

In December 1919 Errico Malatesta returned to Italy from his exile in London. Mussolini immediately saw Malatesta as introducing a new, vital element into the revolutionary possibilities of the moment: "From 1892 to 1918, Italian anarchism was an almost insignificant element in politics. Today, no longer. Today Malatesta is the star that obscures all the leaders of the Socialist Party. His influence on the Italian working masses is extremely powerful."²²

Malatesta soon launched a major anarchist daily in Milan, *Umanità Nova*, and Galleani's followers in New England, including Sacco and Vanzetti, raised funds to buy a linotype machine for the paper. Mussolini began to contrast his respect for the anarchists, based on their willingness to act while others only talked and on their personal courage, with what he described as the do-nothing rhetoric of the socialists. "We are always ready," proclaimed Mussolini, "to admire men who are willing to die for a faith they believe in selflessly."²³

Mussolini's admiration for the anarchists was sometimes reciprocated, especially by young anarchists who saw him as a vigorous leader in sharp

²¹ Mussolini, "Inchiodato alla gogna!" (September 5, 1919), *OO*, 13:337; see also "Una dichiarazione di anarchici milanesi" (September 2, 1919), in *ibid.*, pp. 420–21. Mussolini was referring to an incident in 1902–3, when Serrati, then editor of *Il Proletario* of New York, publicly exposed Galleani's pseudonym and in so doing allowed the police to arrest Galleani in Barre, Vermont. In 1915, when Mussolini was expelled from the Italian Socialist Party, he had resurrected the incident; see *OO*, 7:160–62, 164, 168–69, 177–79, 183–84, 471. On the Galleani-Serrati polemic, see esp. Luigi Galleani, *Metodi della lotta socialista* (Sora, 1972); and Fedeli, pp. 119–31, 161–62.

²² "Nel vicolo cieco" (April 23, 1920), in *OO*, 14:419–20; Giuseppe Mariani, *Memorie di un ex-terrorista* (Turin, 1953), p. 29. "One can disagree," Mussolini wrote in July with regard to Peter Kropotkin, "with the ideas of the great and irreproachable apostle of anarchism; but his honesty, his probity, his clarity of thought, and his faith are beyond question." See Mussolini, "La fine di una illusione" (July 16, 1920), *OO*, 15:98. Mussolini's assessment of the renewed importance of anarchism was shared by socialist Anna Kuliscioff. See Paolo Finzi, *La nota persona: Errico Malatesta in Italia (Dicembre 1919/Luglio 1920)* (Ragusa, 1990), pp. 119–20; Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico*, pp. 185–92; Levy, pp. 63–64.

²³ "E. Malatesta a Genova ospite di Giulietti," *Il Popolo d'Italia* (December 27, 1919), quoted in Finzi, p. 68; see also Mantovani, pp. 142–59; and De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario* (n. 4 above), p. 579, n. 1. Malatesta did not welcome Mussolini's praise. Borghi (n. 4 above), pp. 203–4. Carlo Tresca also raised money for *Umanità Nova*. See "Appello ai compagni del Nord America," *Il Martello* (November 15, 1920). The money for *Umanità Nova* was, however, eventually turned over instead to the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee.

contrast to the socialist politicians they too ridiculed.²⁴ For a time in 1920 Mussolini courted the anarchists so assiduously that some speculated that he was about to join the movement. Uncertain of his own ideological direction, he could even exclaim, “For we who are the dying vestiges of individualism there is nothing left . . . but the religion—by now absurd but always comforting—of *Anarchy!*”²⁵ When the government tried to cut off the supply of printing paper to Malatesta’s *Umanità Nova*, Mussolini offered him stock from his own *Popolo d’Italia*, but the offer was refused.²⁶

As Malatesta pushed for a united revolutionary front with socialists and republicans, Mussolini became convinced of the growing political importance of anarchism. In order to prevent this leftist alliance, Mussolini tried to drive the wedge between the socialists and anarchists deeper.²⁷ He grew more concerned over news of a possible alliance of anarchists and socialists with the poet-soldier Gabriele D’Annunzio, whose legionnaires had occupied the city of Fiume in September 1919. Alarmed that this unlikely combination might seize power, Mussolini exposed the secret discussions in his own newspaper.²⁸

The long ordeal of Sacco and Vanzetti began amidst continued anarchist violence and government repression on both sides of the Atlantic. The two men were arrested on May 5, 1920, on suspicion of having participated in the murders that accompanied a robbery at a shoe factory in South Braintree, Massachusetts. In June, while Vanzetti was being tried on charges of having taken part in a separate holdup in Bridgewater, an anarchist-inspired insurrection broke out among military units in Ancona, where the disorder threatened to spread until the movement was crushed.²⁹ News of Vanzetti’s

²⁴ Eno Mecheri, *Chi ha tradito?* (Milan, 1947), pp. 33–34.

²⁵ Cited in Emilio Gentile, *Le origini dell’ideologia fascista* (Rome-Bari, 1975), p. 188, n. 28; see also Mussolini, “Note politiche,” (April 20, 1920), in *OO*, 14:413; and Max Nomad, *Rebels and Renegades* (New York, 1932), pp. 271–72, 286.

²⁶ *Un trentennio* (n. 15 above), p. 25; William Young and David E. Kaiser, *Postmortem: New Evidence in the Case of Sacco and Vanzetti* (Amherst, Mass., 1985), p. 137; Finzi, pp. 44, 47; Borghi, p. 210.

²⁷ Mussolini, “Il lamento del pastore” (July 22, 1920), in *OO* (n. 6 above), 15:105–7; and “L’ora del fascismo!” (August 21, 1920), in *ibid.*, pp. 152–54.

²⁸ On the question of a united revolutionary front, see Finzi, pp. 129–34, 139; Mantovani (n. 18 above), pp. 88, 98–99; Roberto Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra in Italia e l’avvento del fascismo (1918–1922)* (Naples, 1967), pp. 437–43, and *Storia delle origini del fascismo* (Bologna, 1991), pp. 515–27; De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, pp. 553–54. Finzi (pp. 145–48) rejects the notion that Malatesta was interested in collaborating with D’Annunzio, while De Felice (*Mussolini il rivoluzionario*, p. 554) and Vivarelli (*Storia*, p. 521) argue that he approved the idea.

²⁹ Enzo Santarelli, *Storia del movimento e del regime fascista*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1967), 1:190–91; *Un trentennio*, pp. 31–36.

conviction on the Bridgewater charge first appeared in Italy in the pages of *Cronaca Sovversiva*.³⁰

Sacco and Vanzetti were both indicted for the South Braintree murders on September 11. In retaliation, Mario Buda, one of their Galleanisti comrades—he described the two as “the best friends I had in America”—struck back at the American authorities. Buda was responsible for the explosion that blasted Wall Street on September 16, and after escaping the police dragnet he left the United States and made his way back to Italy.³¹ Within weeks of his return, a violent engagement took place between police and anarchists in Bologna, followed by a bomb explosion in Milan. These incidents led the Liberal government to arrest some eighty anarchists, including Malatesta, and later Galleani and Schiavina. *Cronaca Sovversiva* was shut down, never to reappear. Schiavina fled to Paris and eventually went back clandestinely to the United States, where he edited the Galleanista paper *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* (New York).³² With the mass arrests and the subsequent collapse of the Occupation of the Factories in early October, Mussolini was moved to speculate that even the anarchists had begun to lose their hold on the workers. And while he claimed to take no pleasure in seeing the aged Malatesta in jail, he expressed satisfaction that “the arrest of the *duce* of Italian anarchism has not greatly moved the proletariat.”³³

The Italian public first learned of the Sacco-Vanzetti case while the two anarchists awaited trial in Massachusetts and Malatesta languished in a Milanese jail without formal charges. After contacting prominent Italian radicals, Fred Moore, Sacco and Vanzetti's attorney, sent the young left-wing journalist Eugene Lyons to Italy to stir up public opinion.³⁴ From their prison

³⁰ Avrigh (n. 8 above), p. 245, n. 4; the notice appeared in the August 7, 1920, issue. See also Italian consul in Boston to Italian embassy in Washington, D.C., July 30, 1920, in *Ambasciata di Washington, 1920–1923*, “Sacco-Vanzetti,” Pos. VIII-4 (hereafter *Ambasciata*, followed by file name), f. “Sacco e Vanzetti,” ASMAE. In April, Malatesta had spoken at a rally in Milan protesting against the political reaction in the United States.

³¹ Avrigh, pp. 204–6; Buda is quoted in James (n. 18 above), p. 4. Buda remained in contact with his anarchist comrades in the United States, including Sacco, who wrote to him through mutual friends. See Sacco to Giovanni Poggi, July 13, 1925, and prefect report dated September 21, 1925, in *Casellario Politico Centrale*, f. 59729, “Sacco, Nicola,” ACS; and Ministero dell'Interno (hereafter MI), 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS.

³² *Un trentennio*, pp. 46–48, 57; Avrigh, pp. 213–14.

³³ *OO*, 15:152–54, 272–73, and (quote) 288.

³⁴ Fred Moore to Francesco Saverio Merlino, October 26, 1920, Aldino Felicani Collection (hereafter AFC), 4A/Fred H. Moore Papers/Correspondence (hereafter 4A), Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Boston Public Library; Moore to embassy, February 15, 1921, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE. Eugene Lyons was the pen name of Morris Gebelow.

cells in Massachusetts Sacco and Vanzetti kept abreast of events in Italy, Vanzetti expressing his belief that “my comrades in Italy will not deny me their support.”³⁵

Lyons arrived in November with letters of introduction for socialist leaders, including Leone Mucci, a deputy from Sacco’s hometown in Puglia, and Francesco Saverio Merlino, an attorney who had once been a leading figure in the anarchist movement before becoming an independent socialist. Merlino, then preparing to defend Malatesta in court, agreed to serve as the Sacco-Vanzetti defense attorney in Italy.³⁶ Lyons also met with Sacco’s brother Sabino, a reformist socialist whom Lyons described as “a mighty fine fellow and devoted with all his heart to Nicola.”³⁷ Lyons placed articles about the case in leftist newspapers and helped to set up an Italian organization to coordinate efforts with the Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee just formed in Boston by anarchist Aldino Felicani—who, incidentally, had met Mussolini in jail in 1911 when both were serving time for protesting against the Italo-Libyan war. “I have little doubt,” Lyons reported, “but that a nationwide agitation for the two boys is in the making.”³⁸ To Sacco and Vanzetti he sent word that “their friends in Italy, particularly those who were in America, are interested and speak of them in high terms.” In December, Mucci and Michele Maitilasso, another deputy from Puglia, raised the issue on the floor of parliament, charging that Italians in the United States were being persecuted for their political beliefs.³⁹

³⁵ Vanzetti to his father, October 1, 1920, in Bartolomeo Vanzetti, *Non piangete la mia morte: Lettere ai familiari*, ed. Cesare Pillon and Vincenzina Vanzetti (Rome, 1962), p. 64.

³⁶ Mucci had lived in the United States and had worked for Moore in defending Ettore and Giovannitti in 1912. Moore to Musatti, November 30, 1920, and Lyons to Moore, November 26, 1920, AFC/4A; police chief of Rome to director general of public security, April 15, 1921, in MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS; Michele Pistillo, “Mucci, Leone,” 3:606–7, and Gian Mario Bravo, “Merlino, F. S.,” 3:429–38, both in Andreucci and Detti, eds. (n. 12 above). Elia Musatti also assisted Lyons.

³⁷ Sabino Sacco had accompanied Nicola to the United States in 1908 but returned to Italy a year and a half later. During World War I, he deliberately damaged his eyes in order to escape military service, for which he was imprisoned. He was elected to the communal council twice (1914 and 1920) on the socialist ticket. See the documents in *Casellario Politico Centrale*, f. 59728, “Sacco, Sabino,” ACS; Avrich, pp. 10–13, 22.

³⁸ Lyons to Moore, December 10, 1920, AFC/4A; Marco Saluzzo di Paesana to embassy, December 3, 1920, and Ferrante to embassy, December 4, 1920, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti,” ASMAE.

³⁹ On Lyons’s activities in Italy and the parliamentary discussion, see Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (New York, 1937), p. 22; Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, *The Rebel Girl: An Autobiography: My Life (1906–1926)* (New York, 1973), pp. 311–12; Avrich, p. 26; Russell (n. 13 above), p. 112; Felix (n. 13 above), p. 108; Sylvers (n. 12

The Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee intensified its publicity campaign in 1921, sending letters and a leaflet to Italy detailing the “frame-up” and stressing that the two men were being condemned because they were anarchists. The committee solicited contributions and asked friendly Italian newspapers to publish the leaflet.⁴⁰ In the Romagna, Mario Buda organized rallies and Malatesta’s *Umanità Nova* published articles about the trial.⁴¹

In the midst of these activities, Mussolini continued to demonstrate his ambivalent attitudes toward the anarchists. On March 22, an anarchist named Biagio Masi was delegated by comrades in Piombino to kill Mussolini, whose Blackshirt squads were responsible for a mounting wave of bloody reaction. Instead of carrying out the deed, however, Masi confessed his mission to Mussolini, who placed the young man under his protection.⁴² The very next day, Mussolini denounced the government for having kept Malatesta in prison without a trial for more than five months. With the anarchist movement in disarray following the arrests, Mussolini felt secure enough to call for Malatesta’s provisional release, arguing that “a Malatesta danger does not exist.”⁴³

above), p. 440; Burton (n. 8 above), p. 68; *Atti Parlamentari, Discussioni, Camera dei Deputati*, December 16, 1920, pp. 6670–71; Joughin and Morgan (n. 1 above), p. 201. The Italian ambassador in Washington assisted Moore in obtaining a postponement of the trial in order to secure depositions from witnesses in Italy. Prime minister’s secretary to ministry of foreign affairs, December 19, 1920, and attached memo dated January 27, 1921, *Affari Politici*, Stati Uniti, 1920, b. 1594, ASMAE; Ferrante to embassy, January 1, 1921; Moore to embassy, February 15, 1921; Rolandi-Ricci to Ferrante, February 16, 1921; embassy memorandum to State Department, February 16, 1921; State Department memorandum, February 19, 1921; and State Department to embassy, March 2, 1921, all in *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE; Bainbridge Colby to Channing H. Cox, February 18, 1921, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa 1/3, NA; and Cox to Colby, February 21, 1921, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa 1/2, NA; Lyons to Moore, December 30, 1920, AFC/4A; Vanzetti to his father, n.d. (but fall 1920), and January 30, 1921, in Vanzetti, *Non piangete*, pp. 66, 69.

⁴⁰ Copies of the letters and leaflet, “Giustizia Americana—Il Caso Sacco-Vanzetti,” are in MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS; Lyons to Moore, April 4, 1921, AFC/4A. Although contributions were collected in Rome by the anarchist Temistocle Monticelli, who headed the defense committee there, money continued to be sent to Italy to help finance the campaign. See Irving A. Priest to Aldino Felicani, September 22, 1925, 7A/Aldino Felicani Papers/Correspondence (hereafter 7A), AFC.

⁴¹ Avrigh (n. 8 above), p. 208; James (n. 18 above).

⁴² “L’attentato organizzato contro Mussolini” (March 24, 1921), in *OO* (n. 6 above), 16:216–18. Mantovani (n. 18 above), pp. 474–77, casts doubt on Mussolini’s version of the Masi episode.

⁴³ “Il caso Malatesta” (March 23, 1921), in *OO, Appendici*, 7 vols. (Rome, 1978–81), 1:252–53; Renzo De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1966–68), 1:51, n. 3.

But as Mussolini penned these lines, anarchists became the center of a storm of controversy when Milan was rocked by a powerful explosion at the Teatro Diana. The blast killed twenty-one people and injured 172. Three young anarchists had planted the bomb in protest against the government's treatment of Malatesta and his comrades, who had begun a hunger strike in prison.⁴⁴ Feeling the pressure of the tremendous outcry that arose against the anarchists, both among the middle classes and among the hard-liners within his own Fascist movement, Mussolini reversed his previously indulgent stance and sprang to the defense of the established order. Fascist squads destroyed the editorial offices of *Umanità Nova* as well as of the Socialist Party's *Avanti!* and attacked the syndicalist headquarters of the *Unione Sindacale Milanese*. Denouncing the "barbaric" act, Mussolini blustered that innocent blood demanded "vengeance."⁴⁵

In the reaction that followed the Diana bombing, Italian authorities expelled Eugene Lyons with the tacit approval of the American embassy. Lyons left Italy on May 25, just as the Sacco-Vanzetti trial opened in Boston.⁴⁶

Italian consul Agostino Ferrante, concerned that Sacco and Vanzetti's anarchist beliefs would hurt their case, insisted on portraying them simply as criminal defendants, and when he visited them in prison before the trial began he urged them to avoid appearing "subversive" in court. Ferrante also seems to have gone to Judge Thayer's home in Worcester to explain the Italian government's position, which he later described to a reporter this way: "The Italian authorities are deeply interested in the case of Sacco and Vanzetti, and this trial will be closely followed by them. They have complete confidence that the trial will be conducted solely as a criminal proceeding, without reference to the political or social beliefs of anyone involved."⁴⁷ Ambassador

⁴⁴ Mussolini's *Il Popolo d'Italia* had supported the purpose of Malatesta's hunger strike, which was to force the government to bring his case to trial. Mantovani, p. 388.

⁴⁵ "L'orrenda strage anarchica d'ieri sera al Teatro Diana a Milano" (March 24, 1921), in *OO*, 16:214–15; Mussolini's other reactions are in *ibid.*, pp. 219–28; Giulietti to Mussolini, March 25, 1921, in De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista*, 1:51–52, n. 3. On the Diana incident see Mantovani; *L'attentato al Diana: Processo agli anarchici nell'assise di Milano* (Rome, 1973); *Un trentennio* (n. 15 above), p. 53; Santarelli, *Storia del movimento* (n. 29 above), 1:59–60; Mariani (n. 22 above). The three men responsible for the bombing were Mariani, Ettore Aguggini, and Giuseppe Boldrini.

⁴⁶ Director of public security to police chief of Rome, March 25, 1921; police chief to director of public security, April 15, 1921; director of public security to police chief, April 19, 1921; and questura to director of public security, May 28, 1921, all in *MI*, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS.

⁴⁷ Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, May 4, 1921; Rolandi Ricci to Ferrante, May 31, 1921; Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, June 1, 1921, all in *Ambasciata*, f. "Sacco e Vanzetti—1921," ASMAE. Ferrante's statement is in Herbert B. Ehrmann, *The Case That Will Not Die: Commonwealth vs. Sacco and Vanzetti* (Boston, 1969), pp. 461–62. When

Vittorio Rolandi Ricci assured Italians in Boston privately that his government would do everything it could to help the accused.⁴⁸

On July 15—the same day that Malatesta was found innocent and released from prison—Ferrante reported the guilty verdict to his embassy, along with his own opinion that Thayer had been prejudiced.⁴⁹ The defense committee immediately sent telegrams to Rome, and within weeks communist and socialist deputies raised the issue again in parliament. Taking a different approach, socialist Alberto Malatesta asked the government what it proposed to do for “the protection of émigrants.” The General Confederation of Labor telegraphed to President Warren G. Harding protesting the proceedings. In response, the government of Prime Minister Ivanoe Bonomi ordered Rolandi Ricci to “take every possible step toward the [American] government to secure a pardon for our nationals Sacco and Vanzetti,” but it then decided to wait until the appeals process was concluded before making a formal request for a pardon. From Villafalletto in northern Italy, Vanzetti’s father sent a personal appeal to Bonomi but received no response.⁵⁰

Errico Malatesta, now editing *Umanità Nova* in Rome, called on Italian workers “to make their voices heard loudly in every way possible.”⁵¹ At first he had argued that Sacco and Vanzetti had been found guilty because they were anarchists, but then he recognized that a more effective tactic would be to project them as Italian emigrants who were mistreated by foreign governments. “As anarchists they are devoted but modest militants. . . . But in

Judge Thayer saw the statement, he claimed that the consul had assured him that the Italian government “had no interest in this case.” In light of Thayer’s avowed hatred for Sacco and Vanzetti, it is likely that he willfully misinterpreted Ferrante’s remarks.

⁴⁸ Merlinio had told Eugene Lyons that Rolandi Ricci was a personal friend, so the ambassador may have been sympathetic toward the case from the beginning. Lyons to Moore, December 30, 1920, AFC/4A.

⁴⁹ Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, July 15, 1921, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE; Joughin and Morgan (n. 1 above), p. 227; Max Schachtman, *Sacco and Vanzetti, Labor’s Martyrs* (New York, 1927), pp. 34–35.

⁵⁰ *Atti Parlamentari, Discussioni, Camera dei Deputati*, July 30, 1921, pp. 961–62; “Appunti per S.E. il Presidente del Consiglio,” July 31, 1921, Serie “B,” b. 1810, f. 212425/1921, ASMAE; telegram to Harding, August 6, 1921, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1, NA; della Torretta to Rolandi Ricci, August 1, 1921, and Rolandi Ricci to della Torretta, August 11, 1921, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE. The liberal deputy Paolo Falletti, from Vanzetti’s hometown, also sponsored a motion passed by the provincial council of Cuneo on behalf of Vanzetti. See prefect of Cuneo to ministry of interior, August 14, 1921, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS; and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, *Autobiografia e lettere inedite*, ed. Alberto Gedda (Florence, 1977), p. 84; petition dated August 5, 1921, in Botta (n. 13 above), pp. 83–84.

⁵¹ Errico Malatesta, “Per due innocenti,” *Umanità Nova* (October 1, 1921), now in his *Scritti*, 3 vols. (Geneva-Brussels, 1934–36), 1:245.

addition to being anarchists, they are also Italians: they belong to a rejected and despised people who can be murdered without concern. Will the patriots of Italy allow that?"⁵²

Unlike Sacco, who seemed resigned to his fate, Vanzetti was optimistic about the impact of the Italian protests. "The Italian workers," he wrote to his sister, "have our lives and our liberty in their hands because they have the power to make tyrants across the ocean tremble. . . . Even the government of Italy will be forced by the pressure of public opinion to intervene seriously."⁵³ In Italy, anarchists joined with socialists, communists, syndicalists, and republicans in protest meetings, the first of which took place in Rome and Bergamo in late September, and in Milan and Bologna on October 2.⁵⁴ Over the next three weeks, rallies were coordinated in more than sixty cities. The Liberal government, worried over the strength of public sentiment, refused to issue permits for the use of public facilities, confiscated leaflets, prevented organizers from marching, and ordered prefects to protect American consulates and citizens against possible anarchist violence.⁵⁵

A second, smaller wave of demonstrations took place in January 1922, while protests were also held in a dozen countries in Europe and Latin America and bombs were planted in Paris, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, and Marseilles.⁵⁶ Telegrams demanding justice for Sacco and Vanzetti from local

⁵² Errico Malatesta, "Gli italiani all'estero," *Umanità Nova* (October 6, 1921), in his *Scritti*, 1:249–52; and the following (page numbers refer to *Scritti*): "Il ministro della Torretta contro Sacco e Vanzetti," *Umanità Nova* (October 7, 1921), 1:254–56; "Grido di dolore e di vergogna," *Umanità Nova* (October 11, 1921), 1:258–59; "Libertà, giustizia, umanità," *Umanità Nova* (October 13, 1921), 1:259–61; the entire issue of October 16, 1921; and "Il dovere dello stato," *Umanità Nova* (October 19, 1921), 1:261–63.

⁵³ Vanzetti to Luigia Vanzetti, September 4, 1921, and the same but no date (October ?), in Vanzetti, *Non piangete* (n. 35 above), pp. 74–76.

⁵⁴ Prefect of Rome to director of public security, September 20 and September 22, 1921; prefect of Milan to same, September 29, 1921; prefect of Bergamo to same, September 29, 1921; prefect of Bologna to same, October 2, 1921, all in MI, 1922, f. "Pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS. See also *New York Times* (October 4, 1921); and Russell (n. 13 above), pp. 216–17.

⁵⁵ Ministry of Interior to prefects, October 14, 1921, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS; *Un trentennio* (n. 15 above), pp. 58–59; see the numerous prefect reports in MI, 1922, Cat. C-2, f. "Pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS. The Italian committee for Sacco and Vanzetti, which met in Rome under the auspices of *Umanità Nova*, also asked for a general strike. See questura of Rome to director general of public security, December 29, 1921, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS. American Ambassador Richard Washburn Child, in *A Diplomat Looks at Europe* (New York, 1925), p. 163, saw the Italian government's unwillingness to confront the United States over the case as a sign of the weakness that led to the Fascist seizure of power.

⁵⁶ "Sacco-Vanzetti Case," n.d., in RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1, NA.

worker organizations flooded the American embassy, some containing threats of violence. In Rome, the *Arditi del Popolo*—an armed leftist group dedicated to fighting the Fascists—declared that it would kill all American diplomats in Italy should Sacco and Vanzetti be executed.⁵⁷

But although most of the Italian demonstrations were peaceful, they had the effect of inflaming the already raw tensions between Fascists and radicals. For two years, the level of Fascist violence had risen steadily. By the spring of 1921 Lyons had found that the “guerilla war” waged by the Fascists was making agitation in favor of Sacco and Vanzetti difficult, and Malatesta had begun to write with concern about the “civil war” that was ripping apart Italian society.⁵⁸ Mussolini found it increasingly difficult to control his Blackshirt squads in the provinces, where they were beating and killing socialists, anarchists, and other radicals without distinction. In many instances, therefore, the Sacco-Vanzetti rallies became occasions for confrontation between left-wing activists and local Blackshirts: while anarchists and socialists combined attacks against Fascism with speeches on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, Fascist squads counterdemonstrated, organized marches, and threatened violence. In Massa-Carrara, an anarchist stronghold, organizers at first agreed to let the secretary of the local Fascio speak but then refused him entry, and in Pavia both sides took part in a public debate. More often than not, police had to keep the two factions apart in order to prevent bloodshed.⁵⁹

The tensions between Sacco and Vanzetti’s radical supporters and Mussolini’s Blackshirts was complicated by the fact that the Fascist movement had been undergoing an ideological transformation from its original left-wing program to the more rightist orientation of the provincial *squadristi*. Indeed, the Blackshirts had already forced Mussolini to abandon the truce with the socialists he had signed in August 1921. Despite the attitudes of his more intransigent followers, however, the Sacco-Vanzetti case reminded Mussolini

⁵⁷ The texts of the telegrams to the U.S. embassy, October 1921, and the prefect of Forlì to ministry of interior, January 20, 1922, are in MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS; Child to Department of State, October 13, 1921, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1/12, NA.

⁵⁸ Lyons to Moore, March 29, 1921, AFC/4A; see the following articles by Malatesta in *Umanità Nova*, reproduced in his *Scritti*: “Guerra civile” (September 8, 1921), 1:214–17; “Sulla guerra civile” (September 14, 1921), 1:223–26; “Giuseppe di Vagno assassinato” (September 28, 1921), 1:240–42; “Il partito fascista” (November 23, 1921), 1:293–94; “Il fascismo e la legalità” (March 14, 1922), 1:325–27; see also *Un trentennio*, pp. 57, 63.

⁵⁹ This paragraph is based on the hundreds of prefect reports for October 1921 in MI, 1922, Cat. C-2, f. “Pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS. See also *Un trentennio*, pp. 61–63. Confrontations with Fascists took place in Genoa, Turin, Milan, Bologna, Ancona, Livorno, Rome, Naples, Benevento, Catania, and Agrigento. For events in Massa-Carrara and Pavia, see prefect reports of October 16, 1921, and January 13, 1922.

of the Ettor-Giovannitti affair that had so stirred his radical imagination a decade earlier. Nor could his instinct for propaganda fail to recognize that in the plight of “the good shoemaker and the poor fish peddler” facing the electric chair, the left—and especially the anarchists—had found an energizing symbol around which to rally their forces and influence public opinion. Personal inclinations therefore combined with political instincts to persuade Mussolini to take a public stand in favor of Sacco and Vanzetti.

It was Malatesta who, having appropriated Sacco and Vanzetti’s Italian nationality in the campaign to save them, showed Mussolini the way out of his dilemma. At a meeting in Milan on October 31, Mussolini presented the following motion: “The Central Committee of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* . . . while in no way intending to associate itself with the demonstrations staged by those extremist elements, enemies of Fascism, who exploit the situation to increase their demagogic propaganda, formally invites the minister of foreign affairs to be vigilant and to take action to prevent these suspects and innocent men from being condemned—as has happened before—merely because they belong to the Italian race and the Italian nation.”⁶⁰ The program of the newly created Fascist National Party, adopted the following month, contained a provision calling for “protection of Italians living abroad.”⁶¹

While Mussolini now supported Sacco and Vanzetti, the Liberal government continued to try to quiet the protests in Italy, ostensibly to prevent anti-American sentiments from hurting the chances of a favorable appeal.⁶² Behind the scenes the foreign ministry cooperated with Moore in securing a postponement of a deportation order for Frank Lopez, a defense witness who worked for the defense committee. From Rome came the order that “at the

⁶⁰ *OO* (n. 6 above), 17:203; Giorgio A. Chiurco, *Storia della rivoluzione fascista*, 5 vols. (Florence, 1929), 3:563; Damiani (n. 12 above), p. 297. Some months later, Mussolini seized the initiative again by lashing out at the socialist and anarchist refusal to protest the trial of some fifty revolutionary socialists about to take place in Communist Russia. “Do your hearts beat,” he asked cynically, “only for Sacco and Vanzetti?” See “C’è una reazione . . .” (March 19, 1922), in *OO*, 18:108.

⁶¹ De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista* (n. 43 above), 1:758. On the creation of the Fascist National Party see De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista*, 1:172–91; and Emilio Gentile, *Storia del Partito Fascista, 1919–1922: Movimento e Milizia* (Rome-Bari, 1989), pp. 314–86. In contrasting the new Fascist program with the ideas of Fascism’s enemies, Mussolini could not resist one more nod to Malatesta, “saint and prophet, a coherent phenomenon that one can admire.” “Il programma fascista,” in *OO*, 17:217.

⁶² Minister of Interior to prefects, October 16, 1921; and Valvassori Peroni to director general of public security, October 19, 1921, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS.

opportune moment nothing must be overlooked in obtaining clemency.”⁶³ But when a socialist deputy protested the expulsion of Lyons and the government’s failure to help Sacco and Vanzetti, Rome responded that the radicalization of the case had worked against the defendants, and that Lyons had been “invited” to leave Italy because of his subversive activities. Ambassador Rolandi Ricci underscored the government’s position, reporting a growing sense of American irritation over the foreign protests. When Judge Thayer eventually denied the first defense motion, Ferrante blamed the “deplorable agitation.”⁶⁴

Toward the end of 1921, the defense committee issued a public criticism of the Italian government for the first time, and Vanzetti became convinced that Rome was working against their interests. Some members of the defense committee advised Moore to cut off all contact with Italian authorities, and when Felicani insisted that a formal diplomatic protest be lodged in Washington and Rome, Ferrante told him that was impossible.⁶⁵ In March, after Mucci raised further questions in parliament, Ferrante asked Moore to try to stop his criticisms of the American legal system. Nevertheless, as Sacco and Vanzetti awaited the outcome of appeals and motions, Ferrante acted on his own initiative to aid the defense by soothing public opinion in Boston.⁶⁶

⁶³ Moore to Ferrante, January 18, 1921, AFC/4A; Ferrante to embassy, October 26, 1921, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE; Rolandi Ricci to ministry of foreign affairs, November 11, 1921, ASMAE, Serie “B,” b. 1810, f. 212425/1921; Russell, p. 113; and Joughin and Morgan (n. 1 above), p. 225. Both note that “somehow” Lopez managed to avoid deportation; Valvassori Peroni to Rolandi Ricci, October 27, 1921, and della Torretta to Rolandi Ricci, October 29, 1921, *Ambasciata*, f. “Sacco e Vanzetti—1921,” ASMAE. Lopez was finally deported to his native Spain in 1925 but smuggled himself back into the United States, where he lived out his life, dying in the 1960s.

⁶⁴ Prime minister’s secretary to foreign ministry, November 24, 1921, “Interpellanza N. 90 [by deputy Michele Maitilasso],” November 18, 1921, and Rolandi Ricci to ministry of foreign affairs, November 29, 1921, Serie “B,” b. 1810, f. 212425/1921, ASMAE; Valvassori Peroni to director general of public security, November 24, 1921, and director general to Valvassori Peroni, November 28, 1921, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. “Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS.

⁶⁵ The committee’s criticism appeared in its publication *L’Agitazione*. See Ferrante to embassy, October 13, 1921, and December 27, 1921, Serie “B,” b. 1810, f. 212425/1921, ASMAE; Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, January 25, 1922, *Ambasciata*, f. “1922,” ASMAE; Vanzetti to his sister, April 4, 1922, in his *Non piangete* (n. 35 above), p. 79; Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, February 2, 1922, Serie “B,” b. 1810, f. 212425/1922, ASMAE. The anarchist Erasmo Abate, one of the founders of the Arditi del Popolo, wrote that “the Italian government, while doing nothing for Sacco and Vanzetti, tries hard to stop the agitation in their favor.” See “Il proletariato d’Italia per Sacco e Vanzetti,” *Il Martello* (May 20, 1922).

⁶⁶ Ferrante to Rolandi Ricci, March 22, 1922, and April 6, 1922; Rolandi Ricci to Ferrante, March 23, 1922; and Peter F. Tague to Rolandi Ricci, June 7 and 9, 1922,

To counter Sacco and Vanzetti's radical profile, Rolandi Ricci began to employ the same nationalist strategy adopted by Mussolini, declaring in a speech in Philadelphia that he was responsible for acting as "guardian of the Italian colonies in the United States," implying thereby that such protection was needed. But while the statement drew sharp criticism from the American press and an apology from Rome, the ambassador assured his superiors that he would continue to assist Sacco and Vanzetti "for the dignity of the good Italian name." *La Notizia*, the Boston newspaper for which Aldino Felicani worked, quoted him as saying that the conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti had as much to do with their being Italian as with their being anarchists.⁶⁷

Mussolini was concerned that Rolandi Ricci's Philadelphia remarks had damaged relations with Washington, and when he became prime minister on October 29, 1922, he appointed a new ambassador, Prince Gelasio Caetani. Mussolini had actually made clear his desire for friendship with Washington even before he assumed power.⁶⁸ The day he arrived in Rome to form his government, he told foreign journalists that war debts and immigration policy were the two main issues in Italian-American relations, and he wrote to Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes of his desire for close economic cooperation between the two countries. Over the next several years the new premier sought to lift restrictions on Italian immigration imposed by the Immigration Act of 1921 and to secure American loans.⁶⁹

In the first years of his government, Mussolini's treatment of the anarchist movement was distinguished from that of the previous government only by the violence of the Blackshirts. On October 29, 1922, while small bands of anarchists fought to keep the *squadristi* from occupying Rome, in Piazza

Ambasciata, f. "1922," ASMAE; for approval and denial of funds see Fulco Tosti to Ferrante, August 6, 1922; and Carlo Schanzer to Rolandi Ricci, October 21, 1922, Serie "B," b. 1810, f. 212425/1922, ASMAE; on Mucci in parliament, *Atti parlamentari, Discussioni, Camera dei Deputati*, March 20, 1922, pp. 4–7, "Interrogazione N. 119," Serie "B," b. 1810, f. 212425/1922, ASMAE; transcript of parliamentary debate for same date in AFC/4A; and "Il Caso Sacco-Vanzetti alla Camera," *La Notizia* (May 12, 1922); "Raps Italian Radicals on Sacco and Vanzetti," unidentified newspaper clipping, *Ambasciata*, f. "1922," ASMAE.

⁶⁷ Rolandi Ricci to Valvassori Peroni, January 19, 1922, *Ambasciata*, f. "1922," ASMAE; and Serie "B," b. 1810, f. 212425/1922, ASMAE; Schmitz (n. 12 above), p. 57; "L'ambasciatore italiano ed i condannati di Dedham," *La Notizia* (January 20, 1922).

⁶⁸ A week before—probably October 23—Mussolini had visited Ambassador Child at the embassy in Rome.

⁶⁹ Damiani, pp. 12–19; Schmitz, pp. 46–57; Monte S. Finkelstein, "The Johnson Act, Mussolini and Fascist Emigration Policy: 1921–1930," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 8 (Fall 1988): 38–55; Migone, *Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo* (n. 12 above), pp. 99–199; Mussolini to Caetani, January 12, 1923, in *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Settima Serie, 16 vols. (Rome, 1952), 1:231.

Cavour Fascists mounted a picture of Malatesta on bayonets and burned it. The following night, Blackshirts broke into the offices of *Umanità Nova* and partially wrecked the presses, a task completed later in a second assault. Malatesta managed to put out two additional issues of the paper, both of which contained blistering attacks on Mussolini, before it was closed down permanently.⁷⁰ Malatesta himself was not personally harmed but with his paper gone he had now, at the age of sixty-nine, to make a living once again by working as an electrical mechanic; for the rest of his life he remained under constant police surveillance.⁷¹

Hardly was Mussolini in office when the Sacco-Vanzetti case forced itself on his attention. On December 4, Vanzetti's sister, Luigia, addressed a petition to him. "It is true," she wrote, "that as the accused are subversives they cannot have your sympathy, but we believe that justice must be practiced above all ideas and all parties." At the same time, one of the three McAnarney brothers assisting Fred Moore went to Rome to ask Mussolini's government for help. Ambassador Caetani was ordered to approach both federal and Massachusetts officials "in favor of our fellow countrymen." But in view of recent proposals to restrict immigration further, Caetani advised Mussolini not to make a major point of contention out of Sacco and Vanzetti, who were hardly the kind of Italians that American officials wanted in their country.⁷²

Mussolini's coming to power divided the Italian immigrant community in the United States. Italian-American Fascists were as politically reactionary as their counterparts in Italy. Agostino De Biasi, who founded the first *Fascio* in the United States as early as 1921, used his journal, *Il Carroccio* (New York), to attack immigrant "subversives" as brutally as did the American authorities and carried only brief factual notices about the case. Domenico Trombetta, himself a former anarchist, followed suit in his *Grido della Stirpe* (New York).⁷³

⁷⁰ *Un trentennio* (n. 15 above), p. 76; Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico* (n. 15 above), pp. 192–93; Fabbri, "Prefazione," in Malatesta's *Scritti* (n. 51 above), 1:26–27. Malatesta's last articles on Mussolini were "Mussolini al potere" (November 25, 1922), 1:198–200; "La situazione," 1:204–6; and "*Umanità Nova* occupata," 1:209–10, both December 2, 1922, and all in *Scritti*.

⁷¹ Fabbri, pp. 10–11.

⁷² Vassallo to Caetani, December 23, 1922; and Caetani to Ferrante, December 28, 1922, *Ambasciata*, f. "1923," ASMAE. The documents do not make clear which of the McAnarney brothers had made the request.

⁷³ Luigi Quintiliano, "Sentite De Biasi!" *Il Martello* (August 4, 1923); Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism* (n. 12 above), pp. 111–12; *Il Carroccio* (July 1921), p. 110, and (May 1927), p. 576; see also Cetti, in *Sacco-Vanzetti: Developments and Reconsiderations* (n. 12 above), p. 98; and Grazia Dore, *La democrazia italiana e l'emigrazione in America* (Brescia, 1964), pp. 342–46, 361–68; Anna Maria Martellone, *Una Little Italy nell'Atene d'America* (Naples, 1973), pp. 434–35.

But while the leftist papers pounded away at the Fascists, only the anarchist *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* and *Il Martello* stood unflinchingly by Sacco and Vanzetti. The mainstream Italian-language press took the more cautious position of New York's *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, the largest-circulation Italian paper, which condemned Sacco and Vanzetti's political ideas but expressed solidarity for fellow Italians falsely accused. The rise of nationalist sentiment among Italian-Americans in the 1920s, fueled by Fascist propaganda, encouraged many immigrants to rally behind Sacco and Vanzetti while simultaneously exalting Mussolini.⁷⁴

One exception occurred on March 4, 1923, at a Sacco-Vanzetti rally in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where someone in the audience shouted "Down with Italy, down with Fascism!" A fight then erupted between Fascists and anti-Fascists, during which the head of the local Italian veterans' organization was wounded.⁷⁵ As in Italy, violent clashes between Fascists and Sacco-Vanzetti activists in the United States worried Mussolini, for they raised American fears of Fascism and threatened to disrupt the good rapport he hoped to establish with Washington. When Caetani urged Mussolini to bring the American *Fasci* under centralized control from Rome, Mussolini went further by assuring the United States that he would close down all the *Fasci* in North America rather than damage relations between the two countries.⁷⁶

Helping to make the Sacco-Vanzetti case an Italian rather than an ideological issue for Mussolini was Italian journalist Luigi Barzini. In December 1922, Barzini, who had not yet declared himself a Fascist, had founded an Italian daily in New York, *Il Corriere d'America*. In March 1923, Barzini threw the paper behind the defense, noting that "whatever ideas Sacco and Vanzetti have are unimportant." He urged the creation of an Italian-American "united front" and persuaded state senator Salvatore Cotillo and

⁷⁴ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, pp. 81–86, 112–19; Giuseppe Fiori, *L'anarchico Schirru condannato a morte per l'intenzione di uccidere Mussolini* (Milan, 1983), pp. 62–63, 77; Cetti, in *Sacco-Vanzetti: Developments and Reconsiderations*, p. 97; Dore, pp. 362–63, 368; Vanzetti to Alice Stone Blackwell, June 13, 1926, in Frankfurter and Jackson, eds. (n. 2 above), pp. 202–3; Enzo Santarelli, "I fasci italiani all'estero," in his *Ricerche sul fascismo* (Urbino, 1971), p. 115.

⁷⁵ Ferrante to Caetani, March 5, 6, 7, 1923; and report by consular official in Lawrence, March 5, 1923, in *Ambasciata*, f. "1923," ASMAE; *Un trentennio*, p. 151.

⁷⁶ Mussolini to Caetani, April 10, 1923, *Documenti diplomatici italiani*, 1:498; Giorgio Rumi, *Alle origini della politica estera fascista (1918–1923)* (Bari, 1968), pp. 243–45; Alan Cassels, *Mussolini's Early Diplomacy* (Princeton, N.J., 1970), pp. 196–98; Migone, *Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo*, pp. 353–54, and "Il regime fascista e le comunità italo-americane: La missione di Gelasio Caetani (1922–1925)," in his *Problemi di storia nei rapporti tra Italia e Stati Uniti* (Turin, 1971), pp. 25–41; Damiani (n. 12 above), pp. 66–67.

Congressman Fiorello La Guardia to help the defense.⁷⁷ Barzini then accused the defense committee of being interested only in subversive propaganda, and he formed a committee of his own—the Comitato Pro Sacco-Vanzetti—run by a group of conservative Italian-American *prominenti*. Giovanni Di Silvestro, one of the Comitato's vice presidents and a former socialist turned Fascist, brought the membership of the Sons of Italy behind the defense. These efforts by conservative Italian-Americans even prompted support from Carlo Barsotti, publisher of *Il Progresso*.⁷⁸

Word soon reached Italy that Sacco, after going on a hunger strike and attempting suicide, was confined to the Bridgewater State Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Deputies Mucci and Costantino Lazzari responded to this news by presenting Mussolini with a harshly worded parliamentary question demanding to know what he had done to help “our fellow countrymen Vanzetti and Sacco.” Mussolini wired immediately to Washington for an update on the case and was told that, if the defense motions were turned down, there would be an appeal to the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. “Then there would remain,” Caetani noted, “the possibility of asking the governor of the state for a pardon.”⁷⁹

That fall Caetani made two direct efforts to influence the case. The ambassador sent Senator Henry Cabot Lodge a “personal” request that he use

⁷⁷ Luigi Barzini, “Il ‘Corriere d’America’ per Sacco e Vanzetti,” *Il Corriere d’America* (June 11, 1923); Fred Moore, “Per Sacco e Vanzetti,” *Il Corriere d’America* (June 13, 1923); Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, *News Service* (June 12, 1923); Moore to Barzini, June 11, 1923; Moore to Thompson, June 11, 1923; and Cotillo to Moore, June 16, 1923, all in AFC/4A. Vanzetti thanked Barzini for his support with the words, “*Il Corriere d’America*, by defending us defends the rights and the dignity of the people of Italy.” See Quintiliano.

⁷⁸ The Comitato's president was Giuseppe Vitelli of the Italian Chamber of Commerce of New York; its other vice president was Dr. John W. Perilli of the Italian Hospital of New York; Pasquale L. Simonelli of the Italian Savings Bank of New York was its treasurer. The Comitato held a benefit at the Manhattan Opera House in December that was attended by Carlo Tresca, Luigi Antonini, and Arturo Giovannitti. See Vitelli to embassy, November 24, 1923; and report of June 25, 1923, in *Ambasciata*, f. “1923,” ASMAE; Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee, *News Service* (January 6, 1924). See also Martellone, p. 438; Defense Committee to Barsotti, July 2, 1923, AFC/2A (Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee). Somehow, Barzini learned and made public the fact that Mussolini had been seeking the assistance of federal authorities for Sacco and Vanzetti. See “L’intervento del governo italiano nel caso Sacco-Vanzetti,” *La Notizia* (March 16, 1923); Ferrante to Caetani, March 16, 1923, *Ambasciata*, f. “1923,” ASMAE.

⁷⁹ “Interpellanza dell’On. Mucci (Lazzari),” May 26, 1923; Mussolini to Caetani, May 26, 1923; and Caetani to Mussolini, May 30, 1923, all in SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1923, ASMAE.

his influence with Massachusetts officials on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti. Lodge refused. The next month, Caetani went to the White House; but Coolidge, in a thinly veiled allusion to Thayer, lectured the ambassador on the impropriety of suggesting that Massachusetts judges were biased. Caetani cautioned Mussolini that Coolidge gave him “to understand that any action by the embassy [in the case] would not be viewed favorably.” In any event, Caetani would not have taken either step had he thought Mussolini would object.⁸⁰

When Mussolini answered the parliamentary question in December, he took Mucci and Lazzari to task for not having posed it “in those respectful terms that should be used for a friendly nation such as the United States of America.” Failing to mention Caetani’s contacts with either Lodge or Coolidge, Mussolini explained that the federal government had no power over state courts, and that any move by Italy in the case would be considered an unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of the United States. He assured parliament, however, that the government would help Sacco and Vanzetti with actions that were “compatible with international usage and [would] be helpful . . . to our fellow countrymen.” He also warned against further demonstrations.⁸¹

For the next two years, public attention died down as the case entered a prolonged phase of legal maneuvers in the Massachusetts courts. These efforts culminated in October 1924 in Judge Thayer’s denial of all defense motions and his infamous remark, “Did you see what I did with those anarchistic bastards the other day?” Anxious to know whether the moment had come to ask the governor to grant a pardon, Mussolini telegraphed Washington to learn whether the case would go to the state supreme court.⁸² The legal defense, now headed by William G. Thompson, took the case to the Supreme Judicial Court, which did not rule until the spring of 1926.

The same period saw Mussolini faced with major preoccupations at home. The murder of socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti in the summer of 1924 shook the Fascist regime, leading Mussolini to declare a dictatorship and unleash a new wave of Blackshirt violence against his opposition. The Fascist reign of terror was vividly described to the defense committee by a friend of

⁸⁰ “Per Sacco e Vanzetti,” *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* (June 14, 1923); Ferrante to Caetani, June 14, 1923; Grella to Caetani, September 27, 1923; Caetani to Lodge, September 28, 1923; Lodge to Caetani, September 29, 1923; and Caetani to Mussolini, October 12, 1923, all in *Ambasciata*, f. “1923,” ASMAE.

⁸¹ Mussolini to Caetani, December 1, 1923; and “Interpellanza dell’On. Mucci (Lazzari),” May 26, 1923, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1923, ASMAE.

⁸² Mussolini to Ferrante, October 3, 1924, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1924, ASMAE.

Felicani living in Italy. In November 1925, after the regime was stabilized, finance minister Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata went to the United States to arrange settlement of Italian war debts and to discuss private loans from American banks. Concerned not to offend American sensibilities, Volpi advised Mussolini, as Caetani had done earlier, to control the Fascists in the United States and abandon efforts to help Sacco and Vanzetti. In January the J. P. Morgan Company announced a \$100 million loan to Italy.⁸³

The case came back into public focus on May 12, 1926, when the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts denied the defense's appeal. Taking the high ground, Vanzetti wrote to Malatesta that he "not be pained for us: no comrade should fear for our fate; continue the sacred struggle for a truer justice, for liberty. We will know how to face our destiny." In Italy, Sacco and Vanzetti's anarchist comrades joined forces once again with socialists, communists, and republicans in another round of protests, now seeking to obtain signatures on petitions to be sent to the American embassy asking for a new trial. Malatesta, who most likely drafted the petition, suggested that the ambassador not view the request as either a political statement or "an offense against the dignity of the nation you represent," but simply as an act of solidarity with the legal defense in Massachusetts. Nevertheless, when the communist paper *L'Unità* published appeals for signatures on the petitions, the police confiscated the issue, no doubt in response to American ambassador Henry P. Fletcher's complaints about these activities.⁸⁴

Although Mussolini tightened his grip on the anarchists in 1926, meetings and protests continued throughout the summer. In defiance of the new repression, Malatesta published a portion of Vanzetti's letter in *Pensiero e Volontà*, a new bimonthly first issued in January 1924. However, the police confiscated the issue before it could be released, along with copies of the petitions. Fascist agents searched Malatesta's apartment and seized both Vanzetti's letter and a bust of Matteotti. Thereafter Malatesta remained virtually under house arrest. The police also began periodic searches of the

⁸³ Oreste Bianchi to Felicani, June 1, 1924, AFC/7A (Aldino Felicani Papers—Correspondence); on the Morgan loans see Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism* (n. 12 above), pp. 151–56; Schmitz (n. 12 above), pp. 85–110; Migone, *Gli Stati Uniti e il fascismo* (n. 12 above), pp. 116–99. Mussolini's comments are in De Begnac, *Taccuini* (n. 3 above), pp. 376, 518.

⁸⁴ Malatesta, "Sacco e Vanzetti" (June 1, 1926), in his *Scritti* (n. 51 above), 3:236–37; *Un trentennio* (n. 15 above), p. 87; prefect of Rome to ministry of interior, June 10, 1926, along with copy of the petition, and prefect of Milan to director general of public security, June 10, 1926, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS; "Agitazione pro Sacco e Vanzetti," *L'Unità* (June 10, 1926). Fletcher to secretary of state, June 21, 1926; and Fletcher's statement to the Italian press dated June 23, 1926, both in RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1/270, NA.

Vanzetti family home in Villafalletto, and in Torremaggiore Sacco's brother Sabino was placed under surveillance.⁸⁵

Upon learning that the Supreme Judicial Court had turned down the appeal, Giacomo De Martino (who had replaced Caetani as ambassador to Washington in January 1925) advised Mussolini that the radicals had so prejudiced American opinion against Sacco and Vanzetti that even a request for a pardon would probably be denied. But Mussolini, pressured by still another deputy and the renewal of protests in Italy, wired back, "let me know if you think it possible to take steps to obtain a pardon for the condemned."⁸⁶ De Martino spoke with a State Department official about the matter but was told that it was outside federal jurisdiction. De Martino added that although Massachusetts authorities seemed determined not to give in to pressure from radicals, he could speak privately with members of the U.S. Supreme Court if the case were appealed to them. Dino Grandi, undersecretary at the foreign ministry, scrawled across the ambassador's report, "Telegraph De Martino to take steps in Boston." Mussolini added his own instructions, authorizing De Martino to contact U.S. Supreme Court justices if the case went before the federal bench.⁸⁷

But while Mussolini was fully prepared to intervene on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, action by the Italian government was now strongly discouraged by defense attorney William Thompson, who feared a reaction from American officials. From Boston, Ferrante reiterated the bleak outlook, citing the "rigid, inflexible character" of Governor Fuller of Massachusetts. In a long meeting on June 26, Thompson told Ferrante that no request should be made for a pardon until all legal avenues had been exhausted. When Ferrante asked

⁸⁵ Malatesta, "Sacco e Vanzetti"; Fabbri (n. 70 above), p. 17; Malatesta to Giuseppe Tosca, June 12, 1926, in Rosaria Bertolucci, ed., *Errico Malatesta, Epistolario: Lettere edite e inedite 1873-1932* (Avenza, 1984), p. 215; Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, *Justice Crucified: The Story of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York, 1977), p. x; Cetti, in *Sacco-Vanzetti* (n. 12 above), p. 99. Since the Fascist seizure of power Sabino Sacco had abandoned his socialist political activity and become an admirer of Mussolini. The police dropped him from their subversive list in 1932, and he then requested membership in the Fascist Party. See the documents in Casellario Politico Centrale, f. 59728, "Sacco, Sabino," ACS; Creagh (n. 11 above), pp. 17-18.

⁸⁶ De Martino to Mussolini, May 19, 1926, and Mussolini to De Martino, June 10, 1926, SAP, 1902-1937, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE. The deputy was Ruggero Grieco, a communist from Puglia, who in October 1927, after going into exile, was condemned to seventeen years in prison for conspiracy against the government. See Aptyalia Esposito, "Grieco, Ruggero," in Andreucci and Detti, eds. (n. 12 above), 2:586-93.

⁸⁷ De Martino to foreign ministry, June 12 and June 19, 1926; Mussolini to De Martino, June 20, 1926, SAP, 1902-37, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE. In view of the new appeal, Grandi postponed all further responses to parliamentary questions on the case.

whether an Italian approach to federal justices would be useful should the case go to the Supreme Court, Thompson warned adamantly against any such effort.

Nevertheless, De Martino seemed anxious for concrete action and advised Mussolini that he was prepared to act in concert with the defense should the need arise for last-minute maneuvers. The next month, while vacationing in Italy, De Martino told a reporter for *L'Impero* that he had been working on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti because they were Italians and because they were innocent. A career diplomat, De Martino would never have made such a statement except by calculation, knowing full well that his remarks would be monitored by the U.S. embassy in Rome.⁸⁸

Before De Martino returned to Washington, an article in the Paris edition of the *Herald Tribune* announced that Sacco and Vanzetti were to be executed in two days. Mussolini seemed worried until the Washington embassy assured him that the story was untrue, and Grandi rushed a correction to all prefects in order to forestall radical protests.⁸⁹ As the date for Thayer's ruling on a defense motion approached, De Martino had one of his deputies speak with assistant secretary of state Joseph Grew. Grew was told that, although the Italian government respected the principle of judicial independence, Rome wished to underscore the importance that the case held for Italians, many of whom had long assumed the innocence of the defendants.⁹⁰

Twice during the last months of 1926, anarchists tried to assassinate Mussolini, who responded by intensifying the campaign against them and virtually crushing the movement.⁹¹ He also instituted new mechanisms for repression, including the Special Tribunal for the Defense of the State and the

⁸⁸ Ferrante to De Martino, June 24 and 26, 1926; and De Martino to Grandi, July 10, 1926, SAP, 1902-37, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE. Grandi showed the reports from De Martino and Ferrante to Mussolini; De Martino's remarks were printed in the July 21, 1926, issue of *L'Impero*, and reported to the State Department by the embassy in a memorandum of July 23, 1926, in RG 59, 865.00/1558, NA, as cited by Burton (n. 8 above), pp. 73-74. See also Botta (n. 13 above), p. 99.

⁸⁹ Mussolini to De Martino, July 21, Rogers to foreign ministry, July 22, 1926, SAP, 1902-37, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE; Fletcher to State Department, July 22, 1926; W. R. Castle, Jr., to governor's office, Boston, July 22, 1926, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1/275, NA; Federzoni to prefects, July 21, 1926; and Grandi to Federzoni, July 24, 1926, MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS.

⁹⁰ De Martino to ministry of foreign affairs, September 11, 1926, SAP, 1902-37, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE; and document file note regarding memorandum by Grew, September 3, 1926, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa1/311, NA.

⁹¹ On September 11, 1926, Gino Lucetti, who had returned to Italy from France for the purpose, flung a bomb at Mussolini; on October 31, Anteo Zamboni was killed after an attempt to shoot Mussolini; see De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista* (n. 43 above), 2:202-8, and *Mussolini il duce*, 2 vols. (Turin, 1974-81), 1:86n., and 122; *Un trentennio*, p. 88; Santarelli, *Il socialismo anarchico* (n. 15 above), p. 193.

reinstatement of the death penalty for assassination attempts against the king or the head of government.⁹² Yet Mussolini still persisted in trying to help Sacco and Vanzetti.

In October, news that Thayer had denied the defense motion was reported in the semi-official newspapers *Il Popolo di Roma* and *Il Giornale d'Italia*, sparking new protests on both sides of the Atlantic. Radicals in Italy were now under severe restrictions, but in the United States a massive rally was organized in November at New York's Madison Square Garden by the communist Sacco-Vanzetti Emergency Committee. Speakers included Norman Thomas and Arthur Garfield Hays; *La Guardia* sent a telegram of endorsement but did not attend.⁹³

As 1927 opened, the pace of events intensified. In January, Thompson appealed the case once again to the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. April, however, brought another defeat; on the ninth Thayer sentenced Sacco and Vanzetti to death by electrocution, the original execution date of July 10 eventually being moved to August 23. While cries of outrage arose again throughout Europe, Ferrante and De Martino now believed that the only hope lay with President Coolidge, who might be able to influence Fuller to grant a pardon. De Martino suggested that he meet with Coolidge for this purpose, and Mussolini telegraphed on April 9, "by all means approach the president of the United States on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti."⁹⁴

Meanwhile the defense committee—which Ferrante described to Mussolini for the first time as being full of "ardent anti-Fascists"⁹⁵—asked Fuller to form a special advisory committee to look into the conduct of the trial. On June 1, after Vanzetti sent the governor a petition for clemency, the so-called Lowell Committee was appointed. Ferrante grew more optimistic, especially when the governor invited him to a private meeting to discuss the case on July 20. At the end of an hour and a half, Ferrante left Fuller with the thought that Sacco and Vanzetti had surely suffered enough during seven years of imprisonment.⁹⁶

⁹² Charles F. Delzell, *Mussolini's Enemies: The Italian Anti-Fascist Opposition* (Princeton, N.J., 1961), pp. 37–41; De Felice, *Mussolini il fascista*, 2:210–16; Alberto Aquirone, *L'organizzazione dello stato totalitario* (Bologna, 1965), pp. 97–110.

⁹³ Aide memoire by U.S. embassy, October 27, 1926, SAP, 1902–1937, b. 9, f. 10837/1926, ASMAE; prefect reports in MI, 1926, Cat. C-2, f. "Agitazioni pro Sacco e Vanzetti," ACS; Arthur Mann, *La Guardia: A Fighter against His Times, 1882–1933* (Philadelphia and New York, 1959), p. 259; Schachtman (n. 49 above), pp. 47, 52.

⁹⁴ Ferrante to foreign ministry, April 6, 1927; De Martino to foreign ministry, April 7 and 8, 1927; De Martino to Mussolini, April 8, 1927; and Mussolini to De Martino, April 9, 1927, all in SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

⁹⁵ Ferrante to foreign ministry, April 11, 1927, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

⁹⁶ Ferrante to foreign ministry, July 20, 1927, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

Later that same day Ferrante appeared, at the request of the defense counsel, before the Lowell Committee, where he made an “eloquent, if unofficial, plea on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti.” After his testimony, Ferrante invited the governor’s secretary, Herman MacDonald, to lunch, a move that had Thompson and fellow attorney Herbert Ehrmann wondering whether the consul intended to convey to Fuller a secret message from Mussolini, but apparently they were unaware of the meeting earlier that day.⁹⁷ In fact, news of Ferrante’s meeting with Fuller encouraged Mussolini, who on July 23 wired instructions that his personal views should be conveyed to the governor:

My opinion is that the governor could commute the sentence and release our nationals from the terrible circumstance in which they have languished for so many years. While I do not believe that clemency would mean a victory for the subversives, it is certain that the execution of Sacco-Vanzetti would provide the pretext for a vast and continuous subversive agitation throughout the world. The Fascist government, which is strongly authoritarian and does not give quarter to the bolsheviks, very often employs clemency in individual cases. The governor of Massachusetts should not lose the opportunity for a humanitarian act whose repercussions would be especially positive in Italy.

The governor, Ferrante reported to Mussolini, “refrained from making any comment.”⁹⁸

Without waiting for a reply either from Fuller or from his earlier telegram to De Martino, Mussolini had already drafted his letter of July 24 to Ambassador Fletcher.⁹⁹ Stressing that his plea was “strictly personal,” Mussolini authorized Fletcher to make use of it in any way that he thought best. Fletcher, whose private diary speaks of Mussolini as a man “whom I like and admire very much,” immediately sent a translation of the letter to Secretary of State Frank Kellogg, and the following morning wired Kellogg for instructions as to a response. Kellogg’s answer was stiff: Fletcher was to make only a “personal and entirely informal, oral communication” stating that “the subject matter is one over which the Federal Government has no jurisdiction or control.” The prime minister’s letter was forwarded to Boston.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ehrmann (n. 47 above), pp. 463–64.

⁹⁸ Mussolini to Ferrante, July 23, 1927; and Ferrante to foreign ministry, July 28, 1927, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

⁹⁹ See n. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Fletcher diary, entry for January 1, 1926, Henry P. Fletcher Papers, box 1, folder “Diary (1915, 1925–26),” Library of Congress; Fletcher to Kellogg, July 24, 1927, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa 1/556, NA; Fletcher to Kellogg, July 25, 1927; and Kellogg to Fletcher, July 25, 1927, 311.6521 Sa1/557; Fletcher to Kellogg, July 26, 1927; Kellogg to Fuller, July 27, 1927; and Herman A. MacDonald to Kellogg, July 29, 1927, 311.6521 Sa 1/560.

As the date for the executions approached, the defense filed further motions and appeals in the Massachusetts courts and a number of writs before justices of the U.S. Supreme Court. In early August, after the Lowell Committee issued its findings, Fuller refused to grant clemency. De Martino detailed for Mussolini the “decisively negative atmosphere” he encountered in the White House and the State Department, reporting that Undersecretary Grew had insisted that the threat of radical agitation could not be allowed to influence the U.S. government. Assistant Secretary of State Castle told De Martino that there was no question of Sacco and Vanzetti’s guilt and that the defense counsel had stirred up demonstrations abroad in order to secure financial contributions for their legal fees. In a subsequent talk, Castle argued that the government could not possibly give in to “mob rule” and to the pressure orchestrated from “Moscow.” De Martino concluded that there was no hope in “such an irreducibly hostile ambience. Everything possible has been done.” In Boston, Ferrante spoke with Fuller’s secretary and other “highly placed persons,” making it clear that Mussolini would be willing to appeal personally to the governor, but “everyone advised me in no uncertain terms against any further action, which could not fail to encounter a categorical refusal.”¹⁰¹

Although the efforts of Mussolini and his representatives had been made discreetly, the press detected signs of activity. On August 5, Michele Sacco sent Mussolini a moving appeal to help save his son. Mussolini published the letter in his official newspaper along with his reply. “For some time,” he explained, “I have occupied myself assiduously with the situation of Sacco and Vanzetti” and have “done everything possible compatible with international law to save them from execution.” Unaware of Mussolini’s behind-the-scenes actions, on August 9 a desperate defense committee cabled its own disguised plea to Mussolini: “As head of the Italian nation we address to you an appeal from the depths of our hearts in behalf of our two countrymen. A word from you will do more than that of anyone else to prevent the completion of this tragic injustice and the consequent upsetting of international relations.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ De Martino to Mussolini, August 5 and 10, 1927; and Ferrante to foreign ministry, August 10, 1927, all in SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE. De Martino also went to New York to speak with someone he described as “a person in high finance personally close to the President of the United States who has shown himself a friend of Italy.” This could have been Thomas W. Lamont of the House of Morgan, who had been instrumental in the Italian loans. De Martino to Mussolini, August 12, 1927, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

¹⁰² Michele Sacco to Mussolini, August 5, 1927, MI, 1927, Cat. C-2, “Pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS; Michele Sacco’s letter and Mussolini’s reply are in *OO* (n. 6 above), 23:321–22; see also “Father of Sacco Appeals to Duce,” *New York Times* (August 10, 1927); Joughin and Morgan (n. 1 above), p. 291; and Yvon De Begnac, *Palazzo Venezia: Storia di un regime* (Rome, 1950), p. 493. The defense committee’s telegram to Mussolini, dated August 9, 1927, was undoubtedly written by Felicani but was signed “La Notizia” and is in AFC/7C (Aldino Felicani Papers–Correspondence).

In Italy the underground anarchist and communist movements reacted to these events by distributing leaflets attacking the “complicity” of the Fascist regime with “American capitalism” and blaming Mussolini for not registering a formal protest with the U.S. government. Letters, newspaper articles, songs, and other propaganda materials were smuggled into Italy by anarchist comrades in the United States, although much of this material was confiscated by the police. In large industrial cities like Turin and small rural villages, printed handbills and handwritten leaflets were distributed calling for “Death to Governor Fuller,” and one handbill purportedly quoted a letter from Vanzetti to Mexican anarchists saying, “I am convinced that any other man at the head of the Italian state would be enough to save us.”¹⁰³

Until now, the Italian press, kept under tight control by Mussolini, had been carefully restrained in its reporting of the case. But in a deliberate effort by Mussolini to pressure the Americans, major newspapers began to express what Eugene Lyons called “a curiously muffled excitement.” *Il Popolo d’Italia* even sent a reporter to Torremaggiore, where he interviewed Sacco’s father and brother Sabino and found the village “confident that Mussolini and the Fascist Government would do all possible to save the condemned men.” *La Stampa* of Turin published a favorable interview with a childhood friend of Vanzetti and, while visiting Vanzetti’s home in Vallafalchetto and Sacco’s family in Torremaggiore, the American anti-Fascist journalist Gertrude Winslow found that “we need have no fear of Fascism as far as our errand was concerned—all factions were one in their sympathy for the two condemned Italians.” While *Il Giornale d’Italia* printed a statement by Giuseppe Andrower, who had testified that he had seen Sacco in the Italian consulate in Boston on the day he was supposed to have taken part in the South Braintree crime, *La Tribuna* did an interview with Count Ignazio Thaon di Revel, head of the Fascist League of North America. Di Revel asserted that while Fascists were ready to fight to the death against the political ideas of Sacco and Vanzetti, he too had appealed to Governor Fuller. Statements of support also appeared in *Il Tevere* and *Il Messaggero*. In the United States, an unnamed source revealed to the *New York Times* that Mussolini had written a personal letter on behalf of the defendants, but the embassy “denied emphatically” that it had been instructed to make a formal protest against the execution.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Arturo Bocchini to prefects, August 13, 1927, and the material and prefect reports in MI, 1927, Cat. C-2, “Pro Sacco e Vanzetti,” ACS, esp. the leaflets “Salviamo Sacco e Vanzetti!” “Lavoratori Milanesi!” “Operai,” “Confederazione Generale del Lavoro,” “Lavoratori!” “Al popolo italiano perchè sappia ed agisca,” and “I sette anni d’orribile agonia di Sacco e Vanzetti.”

¹⁰⁴ Eugene Lyons, *The Life and Death of Sacco and Vanzetti* (New York, 1927), pp. 176–77; John F. Martin to Kellogg, August 24, 1927, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa 1/841, NA; Vanzetti, *Autobiografia e lettere inedite* (n. 50 above), pp. 119–20; Gertrude L. Winslow, “A Glance at Fascism,” *Lantern* (March–April 1928), pp. 21–22; Joughin

These efforts, together with last-minute legal moves, were to no avail. On August 21, ten thousand protestors gathered in New York's Union Square, while in Boston crowds were dispersed by the police. On August 22, as Fuller refused to stay the execution, the Italian ambassador had a last meeting with Kellogg. De Martino asked the secretary of state about the latest developments and whether the case possibly came within the jurisdiction of the U.S. Supreme Court. When he again raised the specter of radical agitation, Kellogg replied blandly, "if they had not been members of an anarchist group, they would have been hung years ago." Shortly past midnight, Ferrante wired Mussolini, "Execution took place few moments ago."¹⁰⁵

In Rome, people stood in stunned silence outside newspaper offices,¹⁰⁶ which were now permitted to editorialize about the case and criticize the United States. Some papers attributed "Fuller's crime" to the mechanistic, antihumanistic nature of American civilization¹⁰⁷ and underscored the irony of a Fascist government trying to save the lives of two anarchists.¹⁰⁸ A few blamed the executions on the radical protests,¹⁰⁹ but only the intransigent Roberto Farinacci's *Il Regime Fascista* thought the two anarchists deserved their fate.¹¹⁰

Mussolini's personal reaction to the executions is unknown, but Arnaldo Mussolini, editor of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, spoke for his brother when he attacked the "inflexible" American government, contrasting it with the Italian system that had allowed Violet Gibson—the Anglo-Irish woman who had tried to kill Mussolini—to return to her own country.¹¹¹

and Morgan, pp. 290–91; "Family of Sacco Sure He's Innocent," and "Mussolini Wrote to the State Department Personal Plea on Behalf of Condemned Men," both in *New York Times* (August 11, 1927).

¹⁰⁵ "Conversation with the Italian Ambassador," August 23, 1927, RG 59, 311.6521 Sa 1/747, NA; Ferrante to Ministry for foreign affairs, August 22, 1927, SAP, 1902–37, b. 9, f. 10837/1927, ASMAE.

¹⁰⁶ Eugene Lyons, *Vita e morte di Sacco e Vanzetti* (Ragusa, 1966), p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ "Fuller il 'puritano,'" *L'Impero* (August 24, 1927); "Senza nobiltà," *Il Lavoro d'Italia* (August 24, 1927). Mussolini seems to have harbored a similar view about American "conservatism" to the end. See "La democrazia dalle pance piene" (May 4, 1944), in *OO*, 31:357.

¹⁰⁸ "Constatazioni," *Il Messaggero* (August 24, 1927); "Il dramma di Boston nel giudizio del mondo," *Il Corriere della Sera* (August 25, 1927).

¹⁰⁹ "Il vero volto dell'agitazione per Sacco e Vanzetti," *La Tribuna* (August 26, 1927); "Bassifondi messianici," *Il Giornale d'Italia* (August 30, 1927).

¹¹⁰ "A Farinacci," *L'Impero* (August 27, 1927). On the reaction of the Fascist press, see also "Il fascismo e il caso Sacco e Vanzetti," *Il Nuovo Mondo* (New York), (August 6, 1927).

¹¹¹ "L'esempio dell'Italia," *Il Popolo d'Italia* (Rome) (August 24, 1927), and the Milan edition of August 25, 1927. See also Michael Musmanno, *After Twelve Years* (New York and London, 1939), p. 333. Malatesta was stunned by the execution. From

Political calculation and diplomatic tact had caused Mussolini to vary the intensity of his public support for Sacco and Vanzetti. Between 1920 and 1922, he saw their plight as a useful weapon in his struggle against the socialists and the communists, and when he saw the potential for making them a nationalist symbol, he appropriated their cause. After coming into office, he believed that support for Sacco and Vanzetti would help to bind Italian-American loyalties to the Fascist regime, which claimed to act as the protector of Italian emigrants abroad.¹¹² Yet once in power, Mussolini felt unable to act as decisively as he wished because the case could potentially hinder efforts to establish good relations with the United States and hurt chances for American loans and a more favorable immigration policy.¹¹³ A more strident approach, he feared, would elicit the ire of U.S. authorities, including Governor Fuller, whose presidential aspirations had come to his attention.¹¹⁴ Even the anarchists recognized his delicate position,¹¹⁵ and Mussolini himself was embittered by his dilemma.¹¹⁶

But *raison d'état* alone does not explain why Mussolini, even while cracking down on the anarchists at home, strained his ideological credibility as a Fascist and put his prestige at risk by making personal appeals on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti. The evidence also suggests that a lingering, if perverse, nostalgia for what he identified as his own youthful anarchist impulses remained imbedded in his psyche. His propensity for violence and direct action, along with his inclination to see himself as a rebel who lived in defiance of bourgeois morality, led him to feel a spiritual kinship with the anarchists.¹¹⁷ The anti-Fascist writer Giuseppe A. Borgese explained Mussolini this way: "He said . . . that every anarchist is a dictator who failed. His road

his closely watched apartment in Rome, he wrote to a friend, "I was convinced that Sacco and Vanzetti, if not freed, would at least not be killed; the blow has struck me terribly." See Malatesta to Virgilia D'Andrea, September 1927, in *Errico Malatesta, Epistolario* (n. 85 above), p. 259.

¹¹² De Felice, "Alcuni temi per la storia dell'emigrazione italiana" (n. 13 above), p. 7.

¹¹³ Burton (n. 8 above), p. 68.

¹¹⁴ When the journalist Edward H. Jones interviewed Mussolini in 1928, Mussolini asked him, "Do you think that Fuller will be the next president of the United States?" See Creighton Hill, "Alvan T. Fuller—Failure," *Lantern* (July–August 1928), pp. 7–8; and "Ciò che narra un americano che visitò Mussolini per il caso Sacco e Vanzetti," *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* (August 1, 1928).

¹¹⁵ Schiavina (n. 9 above), p. 108.

¹¹⁶ "I am no longer," Mussolini exclaimed in 1934, "the head of government who, between 1925 and 1927, had to limit himself to asking for the salvation of Sacco and Vanzetti. I no longer have American creditors who impose their will. Now I have my hands free." De Begnac, *Taccuini* (n. 3 above), p. 376.

¹¹⁷ Gentile, *Le origini dell'ideologia fascista* (n. 25 above), pp. 2–6, 133, 136.

to greatness consisted in making, of the anarchist who failed in him, the dictator who won.”¹¹⁸ As a true anarchist, Malatesta—who never thought of Mussolini as a genuine revolutionary—saw the matter differently. “It’s the same old story,” he said, “of the brigand who becomes the policeman!”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Giuseppe A. Borgese, *Goliath: The March of Fascism* (New York, 1938), p. 192.

¹¹⁹ Errico Malatesta, “Mussolini al potere,” *Umanità Nova* (November 25, 1922), in his *Scritti* (n. 51 above), 2:198 (quote); De Felice, *Mussolini il rivoluzionario* (n. 4 above), p. 173, n. 4.