Jackson Gardner
1946-52
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Herewith is a copy of the offer of the Gutzon Borglum bronze to Governor Bradford of Massachusetts and Acting Mayor Byrne of Boston. The delay in making the formal offer has been occasioned by the absence of Governor Bradford on his vacation. He returns to his office tomorrow and I am to telephone the next morning for an appointment for the delegation which will present the offer. The delegation will be composed entirely of Massachusetts residents or those deriving from Massachusetts.

A conversation with Governor Bradford's secretary a few days ago leads me to believe that the Governor wants to accept the offer and is trying to figure out how best he can do so without jeopardizing the backing of certain political elements in the state that are now supporting him.

Albert Einstein, Phil Murray, Dean Wesley A. Sturges of the Yale Law School, Papa Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger of Harvard and Editor Paul U. Kellogg of the Survey are among those who join you in affixing their names to the offer.

Dede and I have about decided not to return to Washington this winter. We think we will rent our Georgetown home and remain here on the Cape till cold weather drives us into a heated apartment in Boston. The Atlantic Monthly people have presented me with a contract to do a book for them which, with a bit more negotiating, I expect to sign. It will deal in considerable measure with Washington figures. When I tell you that Lee Pressman and John L. Lewis will have something more than casual mention in it, you will understand why the Atlantic Monthly folk seem to like my proposed title, "Caesars All."

We hope you continue well and full of the affirmative meeting of life which makes you one of the grandest persons it has been our good fortune to know.

Yours sincerely,

Gardner Jackson

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Hyde Park,
New York.
Offer Addressed Jointly to Governor Robert F. 
Bradford of Massachusetts and Acting Mayor John B. Hynes of Boston.

As a permanent reminder to present and future generations that the cause of justice to individual citizens requires unending vigilance, we offer you an opportunity to establish a memorial to that cause in keeping with the highest traditions of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

We earnestly hope you will set up the memorial on Boston Common or on other property reserved for public purposes where year after year memorials were erected to such heroes of the Commonwealth's traditions as William Lloyd Garrison and Robert Gould Shaw.

The excellent cast-lead of ideas which have enriched our nation, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts throughout its history of important contribution to cultural and industrial progress has in several noted instances taken steps to right the wrongs those in its past have done to its citizens. The Commonwealth's citizenry long ago repudiated the witch burnings at Salem. In recent years its Legislature commissed action officially to expunge from the state records the harassment of Anne Hutchinson from the Commonwealth, an act springing from narrow institutional and doctrinal zeal which enlightened opinion has for generations regarded as a blot upon the name of Massachusetts.

In similar furtherance of such enlightened opinion in this period marking the 50th anniversary of the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti we hope you will do what you can to right the wrong done to these two men and their families. We now, therefore, offer you a large, bronze life-relief of the two Italians by the well-known sculptor, the late Gutson Borglum. The bronze is about 6½ by 4 feet.

Your Governor Bradford, a direct lineal descendant of the first governor of Plymouth Colony, have especial reason to understand the social value of a memorial to the search for justice and opportunity. It was that search which led your ancestors to undertake with resolute courage and great hardships their venture on the shores of Massachusetts Bay.

Our offer is a standing one. We sincerely hope you will accept it at once. Among those who have affixed their names to the offer are representatives of the younger generation some of whom are only now starting upon their life work after their involvement in World War II. The sad heritage of the Sacco-Vanzetti tragedy for these younger men and women whose age precluded their taking part in the struggle to save the two Italians, can be transformed in this 50th year after their execution into an inspiring heritage of hope by you two chief officials of Massachusetts and the City of Boston. This can be accomplished through your recognizing that a memorial to a struggle by people of all classes in all parts of the world to achieve justice for two individuals of humble origin will have social value of enduring significance.
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

In my prior letter to you I failed to make clear that sponsorship of the Sacco-Vanzetti manuscript does not involve acceptance of every word and phrase in it. To obtain such precise acceptance would require a very protracted correspondence back and forth between the group of prospective sponsors. We simply haven't time to do that.

No, sponsorship only means acceptance of the general purposes of the manifesto, its main concepts and emphases. We will preface publication of the list of sponsors with a sentence or two spelling that out explicitly.

I hope this letter reaches you before you have replied to the earlier one. If it doesn't, you may want to modify the reply you have already sent.

The continuing news of the deepening world cleavage certainly makes the need of fearless moral action all the more pressing.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Hyde Park,
N. Y.
MR. GARDNER JACKSON
GOTUIT, MASSACHUSETTS

I WILL GLADLY SIGN MINIFESTO AND LETT

ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

WIRE - Night Letter
Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

You and I have never chanced to talk about the Sacco-Vanzetti case but you may have heard from Felix Frankfurter or Marian that I spent my undivided time for four years a couple of decades and more ago trying to help the Defense Committee arouse public opinion concerning it.

Now some of us who were active at that time feel that positive values can be effectively served by recalling the circumstances of that tragedy and the circumstances now. I discussed this with Felix before leaving Washington and he agreed heartily.

Consequently we have hammered out the enclosed manifesto for the 20th anniversary of the execution of the two Italians, August 23rd. We ask you to read it. You will find in it concepts which have entered into conversations I've had the privilege of having with you -- one in particular was in my mind while I sweated over the typewriter, the one about John L. Lewis when the break between him and your husband was just beginning.

We are now starting to mail around the manifesto to thoughtful and notable persons to get them to append their names to it as sponsors for publication on the anniversary. We naturally thought of you first as heading such a list.

There is nothing in the manifesto, I'm sure, which violates any of the concepts I've heard come from your lips or seen in your column. It has gone through a number of revisions. I've swiped ideas and taken criticism in working it out primarily from John Dos Passos, Lewis Mumford, Aldino Felicani (a superb friend and human being, Vanzetti's closest pal) and Papa Arthur Schlesinger, the American history professor at Harvard who has long been one of my most treasured friends and is, along with Felicani, my most intimate, face-to-face counselor on the anniversary project.

Also enclosed you will find a photograph of the large, bronze bas-relief of the two Italians by Gutzon Borglum (about 6½ by 4 feet weighing around 500 pounds). This bronze has never been shown though the plaster mold from which it was cast was shown at the first anniversary meeting. It has lain buried in a crate in Gutzon's studio at Stamford, Conn., ever since it came from the casting foundry in 1930.

My wife Dode and I stopped at Stamford on the way up here for a visit with Gutzon's spirited and intelligent little widow (he died several years ago, as you'll remember) and to look at the bronze. We're planning to offer it publicly to
Governor Bradford of Massachusetts (a direct lineal offshoot of the governor of the first Bay Colony) for permanent placement on Boston Common.

In anticipating rejection, we'll tell him/the offering letter that we intend to repeat the offer at five-year intervals as long as we live and that our children, and their children if necessary, will continue doing so on the same basis till a governor graces the State House with vision enough to see the value of accepting a memorial to one of the great, world-wide efforts of people in all classes to obtain justice for two individuals of lowly origin. In his enthusiastic response to this plan, Papa Arthur Schlesinger says that it will be the historical process in action.

Naturally we would be deeply gratified if you would consent to join Papa Arthur, Mrs. Borglum and a few of the rest of us in signing the letter to Bradford. That letter, of course, will be submitted to prospective signatories for their approval before it is sent to the Governor. You may think that doing this might in some way detract from your effectiveness in your United Nations and other roles. Though I personally can't see how, I will have sympathetic reactions to a decision on your part not to. Sponsorship of the manifesto is in a different category. That can't possibly compromise your standing, it seems to me, especially in view of the fine list of responsible people we have every prospect of getting to join you in the sponsorship. It will, we expect, be a varied group ranging from labor leaders to corporation lawyers, from playwrights and poets to atomic scientists, and from college presidents and faculty members to artists.

Because I was sunk in so much gloom in Washington during the past seven or eight months I delayed getting at this anniversary project till we have barely enough time to perfect the plans in the way they deserve.

Consequently I'll be deeply grateful for the quickest go-ahead signal you can send me, even a wire collect to me here on Cape Cod if you can react that swiftly after reading this letter.

My wife and daughter Deborah join me in hoping you are well and that you find grounds, even in the intensifying bitterness of world cleavage, for believing the human family will ultimately learn how to live with one another in amity.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Hyde Park, N.Y.

[Signature]

P.S. We'd so love to see you to discuss many things, including Jim Farley's self-assured place in California. If you happen to come to the Cape this summer, please let us know and please plan to stay at least one meal with us. My wife is one of the world's best cooks.

Please give my best to Miss Thompson.
I'm sending along three of these manifestos on the chance you might want to pass them on. We'd of course welcome the names and addresses of any people you might specially want to suggest as prospective sponsors for the manifestos.
THE SACCO-VANZETTI CASE
TWENTY YEARS LATER

Twenty years ago today, in the first few minutes after midnight, a world-wide attempt to save the lives of two men ended in failure. This failure climaxed a prolonged outpouring of words and action by people of all ranks in all lands yearning that justice be given to these two individuals. Rarely in a lifetime do such manifestations occur.

The two men were Italians of humble origin. They were militant fighters for the rights of man and believed in the philosophy of anarchism. They had emigrated to this country in their youth two decades earlier. They became prominent in the group on these shores which held similar beliefs. They were strapped in the electric chair at Charlestown Prison, Boston, Mass., during the first half-hour of August 23rd, 1927 and there paid the final penalty for a crime which most thoughtful opinion long ago came to hold they did not commit. Even the fraction of thoughtful opinion not so convinced was nevertheless sure their trial, lasting seven years, was grossly unfair and sure they had not been proved guilty of the payroll murder with which they were charged.

... the public opinion of the world felt that the execution had taken place less upon the evidence than for the crime of holding extreme opinions.
This conclusion was reached through weighing all aspects of the case, legal and otherwise, and by study of the nature of the two men themselves.

The twenty years from that execution night to the present have brought upon the world mass slaughter and suffering on a scale staggering to human reason. In retrospect we now see that the fate of the good shoemaker and the poor fish peddler was an omen of this world-wide tragedy from which the human family has scarcely yet begun to emerge.

The two Italians were victims of a mob hysteria engendered by people in positions of political, economic and educational power following World War I. In the light of current misery and conflict across the world on this 20th anniversary of their death, we call attention to the circumstances that wove their tragic fate and to the effort of people in all nations, regardless of class, to help them overcome these circumstances. We ask those who may still be alive among these countless thousands as well as other citizens working for improvement in community life, especially in our own prosperous nation, to pause on this anniversary and reaffirm their commitment to the cause of justice to the individual.

The world-wide outgoing of endeavor to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, even though a failure, was a demonstration of man’s concern for his individual neighbors which is fraught with lasting significance. In the present terrible clash of power politics whole populations are more and more treated as mass pawns. The individual citizen in considerable areas of the earth has become little more than a digit in columns of figures with which nations’ leaders conduct their war of nerves and their rivalries in military machines and industrial manpower.

The struggle to save the two Italians has especial meaning for this current decade when the extermination of six million Jews by the Nazis, to say nothing of the other millions, aroused far less passionate feeling for justice than the fate of Sacco and Vanzetti, when executions, family uprootings and lynchings of the vilest order can now take place without awakening hardly a public quiver. The widespread and anguished striving of multitudes to avert the two men’s fate is in itself almost a testimony to the enlightenment and decency of the world less than a generation ago — a condition at that time of moral upsurge by at least a substantial segment of the population which has not been nearly equalled since.

Sacco and Vanzetti and many of those who tried to save them were labeled Communists by much of the country’s press and many of its politicians during the seven years before their execution, and in the ensuing years. The falsity of this identification was, and is, glaring to anyone seeking the facts. The trial judge’s vulgar boast to a Dartmouth College acquaintance after seven motions for a new trial had been denied by that very judge alone — “Did you see what I did to those anarchist bastards!”— ought to have removed every doubt as to the two Italians’ political faith. But it didn’t because editorial licksplatters of various politicians and economic overlords found false labels useful for their purposes.

Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s faith in the sanctity and perfectibility of the individual animated them to a degree considered absurdly and dangerously impractical by most of the organized community in which they had their being. It was obviously the opposite of a belief in all-powerful organization, whether state, religious, industrial or labor, whether capitalist or Marxist, in which the individual becomes an instrument and is not an end.

Watching with unflagging spirit from their prison cells the slow but merciless readying of the electric chair for them, they understood the dilemma by which they were trapped. They often spoke to friends of what Vanzetti called “the speculation on” their case which the Communists were conducting, preferring dead martyrs to live anarchists. They saw the cruel fate devised for their fellow-believers by the Soviet dictatorship. But even had they thought public statements of attack by them on Communist methods would carry influence they feared the possible effect those statements might have, however remote the possibility was. They worried lest they might be distorted and misinterpreted by leaders of the country’s institutions, particularly certain owners and directors of means of communication, to spread still more the fires of fear and hate. They were deeply apprehensive that these fires would consume other individuals merely working for institutional change to further human well-being, who subscribed neither to the anarchist, Fascist, Communist nor any other political, economic or social dogmas.
Their dilemma was like that confronting many humanitarian liberals today. Many of these liberals, in their fight to save Sacco and Vanzetti, had their first experience with Communist methods in the United States with their ruthless profaning of trust in human relationships and their paranoic dependence on the Kremlin for direction. These defenders of the two Italians came to realize quite a while before the execution that the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti had no value at all to the Communists, that the Communists in fact did, as we’ve said, prefer to have the two men executed and thus become martyrs whose names they would find useful in propagating the Communist cause.

Naturally these liberals committed themselves from that point on to an unceasing campaign against Communist methods. They are still so committed and will resist even the most tentative suggestion that concession be made to these methods. At the same time, however, they recognize the danger, as Sacco and Vanzetti did, that anti-Communists in seats of power combating every hint that they should relinquish but the smallest of their prerogatives, can easily resort to distortion and, by quick stages, to outright falsehood, to the “big lie” technique boastingly perfected by Hitler, and finally to violent suppression of freedom for the individual mind, just as all dictators do — in short, to iron curtains of their own. They understand these results satisfy the Communist intention to create confusion and crises in keeping with their tenet of action that salvation is achieved through catastrophe. Events of the past 30 years leave no doubt that this is the tenet by which Communists guide their conduct

Both Sacco and Vanzetti were acutely aware of this. Writing sadly from Charlestown Prison of “the dull, gray masses” in his native land cowed by Mussolini and his big business backers, Vanzetti feared the people in this country might be beaten into similar submission. In visits with friends during their long travail each of them expressed anxiety that the fate being prepared for them might be the first step in establishing a police state in their adopted land whose democratic faith they still saw as the hope of humanity even when the death house door began to open for them. They understood that human evolution had not reached the stage even in the United States at which individuals exercising power over their fellows were willing to allow questioning of that exercise, however insignificant the questioner, without a violent answer.

Consequently, unlike some of their defenders, they were not surprised when a President of Harvard University officiated in preparations for their execution. As they sat undaunted in the electric chair they bequeathed to us and our children an epic story of human aspiration and struggle for justice and happiness. That story has inspired and will continue to inspire playwrights, poets, historians, novelists and artists here and in other lands. Some of Vanzetti’s words have been recorded in many of the anthologies of great utterances in all languages, Sacco’s in a few.

But their bequest includes the imperative that we learn from their fate and the circumstances out of which it came. That is why we join on this 20th anniversary of their electrocution in pledging ourselves, and in urging our fellow-citizens to pledge themselves, to rededication in the unending crusade for justice to individual human beings, not as a goal alone but as a process, the antithesis of Communist, Nazi or other methods of tyranny. That is why we recommit ourselves to fight for bulwarking and extension of democratic methods in both governmental and private organizations, at home and abroad.

The conscious deception and concealment through which Communists take advantage of protection accorded individual citizens by the Bill of Rights in our Constitution make it just as impossible to collaborate in these endeavors with them as with Nazis or Fascists. We know they would instantly abolish those civil rights in the highly improbable event they gained governmental power in the United States. We repeat our awareness that there are other groups and individuals in our community who would do likewise. Not-
withstanding this, no move should be supported to outlaw any groups whose methods we abhor. The best defense against every authoritarian method or tactic aimed to destroy the sanctity of the individual is to maintain and fortify our system of civil rights with all the fidelity under aggravating provocation we can muster as fallible human beings.

* * * *

Our governmental record on protection of civil rights during World War II merits high praise in general. Treatment of the Japanese on our West Coast was the single, major black mark. This record was in sharp contrast to that during and following World War I, disgressed by the Palmer red raids out of which the Sacco-Vanzetti tragedy came. Since V-J Day administrative actions in Washington, despite the Truman loyalty order with its carelessly-drawn and dangerous provisions denying full protection of the Bill of Rights to government workers, have kept at standards that would have prevented a Sacco-Vanzetti case had they prevailed after World War I. Hope that the loyalty provisions may be changed is warranted in the appointment of the President's Advisory Civil Rights Commission.

But in Congress and state legislatures, as well as in Federal and state courts, recent signs justify grave foreboding. Beginning to burn with their political attraction, the flames of hysteria are luring some minds in responsible posts away from the creative light of the Bill of Rights with its promise of opportunity for even the lowest that led Sacco and Vanzetti to forsake their homes in Italy, in the same way hosts of our present citizenry abandoned their homes abroad.

* * * *

We dwell in a world where the intellect has developed science till it can produce all the material needs of the human family—or obliterate that family! We state the obvious in saying this and when we further say that civilization may well not survive unless the problem of relationships between individuals and groups of individuals is solved soon.

Human society cannot escape disintegration if ways are not discovered and applied quickly to channel the lust for power in all men into cultural pursuits which nurture harmonious relationships. That search will fail unless it springs from faith in evolutionary processes and from the corollary recognition that no man-made institutions are sacrosanct — a faith and a recognition which caused Sacco and Vanzetti to embrace the extreme belief that institutions and organizations of any kind stifle and finally, kill the innate goodness in every individual.

Realisation of this threat that society might destroy itself through interminable struggle was strong within the two Italians as they watched themselves become sacrificial offerings on the altar of power tended by a President of Harvard University, a President of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a Governor of Massachusetts, various Massachusetts judges and numerous persons elsewhere worshipping at the altar. Though lacking any formal education, their understanding on this score was nonetheless as real as that of H. G. Wells, Romain Rolland, John Galsworthy, Benedetto Croce, George Branting, Stefan Zweig, William Allen White, Senator Borah or any of the other noted writers, philosophers and public figures who tried to help save them.

* * * *

In one of his last letters Vanzetti wrote: “What I wish more than all else in this last hour of agony is that our case and our fate may be understood in their real being and serve as a tremendous lesson to the forces of freedom so that our suffering and death will not have been in vain.”

* * * *

Out of concern for the social welfare of this and other nations a committee of leading lawyers raised funds to have published and distributed the seven-year record of the Sacco-Vanzetti case in the courts and before Governor Fuller and the Lowell Committee. Its five massive volumes were placed in law school and other libraries for all to study who work for abolition of man’s inhumanity to man. The committee consisted of the late Elihu Root, the late Newton D. Baker, the late Bernard Flexner, Raymond B. Fosdick, John W. Davis, Charles C. Burlingham, Emory R. Buckner, Charles P. Howland, Victor Morawetz, Charles Nagel. We recommend on this 20th anniversary of the two Italians’ execution that a reissued study of this record be made.

We think such a study considered in the context of the times will reveal the whole range and fear-breeding interplay of social forces, the warping of men’s minds, the racial hatreds that soon thereafter were played upon and propagated by Hitler in his drive for world conquest. We think it will show why, between two wars in which lives were taken by men’s own design in mass numbers numbing to sensibilities, so many people of all kinds everywhere rallied in the attempt to save the lives of the two humble Italians.
It will explain why on this particular day we call upon thoughtful citizens the world over to reunite their minds and emotions in battle against every influence seeking to subvert what must be society's sole principle in working out organizational changes. That principle is the development of every individual to the limit of his capacities.

* * * * *

Only through bold thought and action fired by that principle will each individual have the chance to attain productive part in decisions shaping his environment, and will another war and other Sacco-Vanzetti tragedies be avoided. Only by that course will we succeed in channeling to cultural preoccupations the lust for power that has perverted man's mind to cruelty and injustice over the centuries. Only so will we be able to design and apply plans in our economic affairs whereby each individual can resume his pursuit of happiness and fulfill his creative spirit.

Ideals of this sort, articulated in untutored eloquence by the two Italians in statements and letters from prison and court, were, according to their wardens and other friends during their seven years behind bars, the never-resting aims of Sacco and Vanzetti.