

After 10 days, return to  
UPTON SINCLAIR,  
Box 3022 Station B,  
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA.



*John Boardman*  
~~Tithe Mrs. Boardman~~  
~~Los Angeles~~  
Calif.  
*78 Kingsgate Garden Apts*  
*Stanford University*  
*Calif.*



UPTON SINCLAIR

STATION A  
PASADENA, CALIFORNIA

August 29, 1929.

John Beardsley  
610 Rowan Bldg.,  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear John:

I will write you a few notes about the matter concerning which we were talking last night.

When I went to Boston the last time in October 1928 I was completely naive about the Sacco-Vanzetti case, having accepted the defense propaganda entirely. But I very quickly began to sense something wrong in the situation. There was an air of mystery about the Boston anarchists, and I saw they had something to conceal. Then in Sacco's cross examination *in the record* I detected what seemed to be a slip in his alibi. I began asking catch questions, and ultimately I got the admission from one of the leading defense witnesses that his testimony had been framed. I got a virtual admission of the same thing from another witness. It became certain to me that Sacco at least had been concerned in the dynamitings which had occurred in New England just after the war, and I supposed that this was what was being hidden from me. I remained of the opinion that both men had been unquestionably innocent of the crime of which they were accused. Their trial had manifestly not been a fair one, and on that basis I was prepared to defend their right to a new trial. That was my state of mind at the time that I agreed with The Bookman for the serial publication of "Boston".

But on my way to Denver, where I had arranged by telegraph to meet Fred Moore, I turned the matter over in my own mind, and doubts began to assail me. Alone in a hotel room with Fred I begged him to tell me the full truth. His reply was, "First tell me what you have got." I decided to take a chance at the worst, and I told him that I knew that the men were not merely terrorists, but that they were guilty of the holdup. His reply was, "Since you have got the whole story there is no use my holding anything back," and he then told me that the men were guilty, and he told me in every detail how he had framed a set of alibis for them. He said that there were quite a group of terrorist anarchists who had been supporting the movement by various kinds of pay-roll holdups, and that all the practises were well known to Carlo Tresca and Gurley Flynn.

This naturally sent me into a panic. I telegraphed Seward Collins of The Bookman saying that I could not write the book, and I cabled half a dozen translators and publishers abroad canceling arrangements which I made for serial publication. But on my way to Los Angeles I thought the matter over,

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and I realized certain facts about Fred Moore. I had heard that he was using drugs. I knew that he had parted from the defense committee after the bitterest of quarrels. Sacco in a letter had addressed him as, "your ~~inflammable~~ enemy." Moore admitted to me that the men, themselves, had never admitted their guilt to him; and I began to wonder whether his present attitude and conclusions might not be the result of his broodings on his wrongs. The first thing I did when I got to Los Angeles was to see Lola Moore, Fred's former wife, who had divorced him. She had been all through the four or five years of the case with him, and she expressed the greatest surprise, when I told her of Fred's conclusion, saying that he had most positively not been of that opinion when he had dropped the case and left Boston.

I faced the most difficult ethical problem of my life at this point. I had come to Boston with the announcement that I was going to write the truth about the case. If I had dropped the project it would have been universally said and believed that it was because I had decided the men were guilty. I had, of course, no first hand knowledge of their guilt, but I did have first hand knowledge of the framing of testimony. I decided that I would write the story on the basis of telling exactly what I knew. I would portray all sides, and show all the different groups and individuals telling what they knew and what they believed. I would take my stand on the point that the men have not been proved guilty, and that their trial had not been fair. That was all that the law required in order to prevent the execution, and it was all that my thesis required.

I put the problem up to Floyd Dell who happened to come out here, and he read the chapters which I had so far completed, and said that what I was doing was exactly correct. Of course, word spread among the committee in Boston what I was doing, and they flew into a panic, and I had a long string of horrified and indignant letters and telegrams. They strenuously denied that there had ever been any perjury in the case-- which, of course, I knew to be perfectly absurd. They also denied that Sacco had ever been a terrorist-- though on this point I was finally able to back Gardner Jackson down. I saw him in New York before the book went to press, and we went all over various scenes line by line, and argued for hours. Gardner admitted that I was all right about Sacco, but he claimed that I was doing Vanzetti an injustice, ~~but~~ Charles Boni had listened to our discussion. I asked him his opinion, and he said that Gardner had admitted everything that I was claiming, and a little more. Vanzetti as a pacifist was a perfect absurdity, because I talked with a Socialist whom he had chased with a revolver, and young Brini told me of having witnessed a similar scene as a child in his home.

The rumors of Sacco's guilt were very general in the

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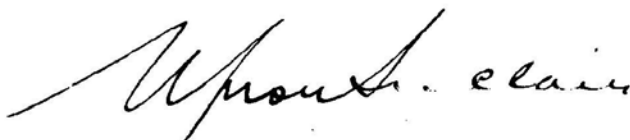
Italian colonies in Boston, and there is no possible question that these rumors, brought to Thayer and Fuller and Lowell in a thousand forms by the police, were the real reason for the execution. When I was in New York last fall I made another effort to satisfy my own mind about the problem. I asked Roger Baldwin, who is, himself, an anarchist, and knows the whole crowd. He told me there was no possible doubt of the guilt of Sacco and Vanzetti, and that the militant anarchists had financed themselves that way for years, both here and abroad. They never took the money for themselves, but only for the movement, and this constituted them idealists and heroes from the point of view of extreme class war theories.

I then took this proposition to Robert Minor, who was an anarchist up to the time of the Russian revolution, and who knows the whole movement. Bob said that he had heard these rumors from the beginning, and had investigated them carefully, and was convinced that they were not true about Sacco and Vanzetti. He says he has never known a class war case of this sort in which there were not similar rumors, and people who will tell you all about it from the "inside." Sometimes they are started by police agents and sometimes by a certain type of weak minded person who takes a pleasure in having the real inside story about a sensational mystery.

So you see that in the end I don't really know any more about the thing than I did in the beginning, and can only take my stand as I did in "Boston", upon the thesis that men should not be executed upon anybody's rumors.

This letter is for yourself alone. Stick it away in your safe, and some time in the far distant future the world may know the real truth about the matter. I am here trying to make plain my own part in the story, and the basis of my seemingly contradictory moods and decisions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Upton Sinclair". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "Upton Sinclair".