*When Sacco and Vanzetti were arrested for murder and robbery in Braintree, Massachusetts, many observers believed the men were convicted because of their radical political views and Italian immigrant backgrounds. What does this excerpt from Vanzetti’s last statement to the jury reveal about the trial?*

Yes. What I say is that I am innocent, not only of the Braintree crime, but also of the Bridgewater crime. That I am not only innocent of these two crimes, but in all my life I have never stole and I have never killed and I have never spilled blood. That is what I want to say. And it is not all…

Everybody who knows these two arms knows very well that I did not need to go in between the street and kill a man to take the money. I can live with my two arms and live well. But beside that, I can live even without work with my arm for other people. I have had plenty of chance to live independently and to live what the world conceives to be a higher life than not to gain our bread with the sweat of our brow…

Well, I want to reach a little point farther, and it is this- that not only have I not been trying to steal in Bridgewater, not only have I not been in Braintree to steal and kill and have never steal or kill or spilt blood in all my life, not only have I struggled hard against crimes, but I have refused myself the commodity of glory in life, the pride of life of a good position because in my consideration it is not right to exploit man…

Now, I should say that I am not only innocent of all of these things, not only have I never committed a real crime in my life, though some sins, but not crimes- not only have I struggled all my life to eliminate crimes that the official law and the official moral condemns, but also the crime that the official moral and the official law sanctions and sanctifies- the exploitation and the oppression of the man by the man, and if there is a reason why I am here as a guilty man, if there is a reason why you in a few minutes can doom me, it is this reason and none else.

I beg your pardon. There is the more good man I have ever cast my eyes upon since I lived, a man that will last and will grow always near and more dear to the people, so long as admiration for goodness and sacrifice will last. I mean Eugene Debs…He know, and not only he but every man of understanding in the world, not only this but in other countries, men that we have provided a certain amount of the record of the times, they all stick with us, the flower of mankind of Europe, the better writers, the greatest thinkers, of Europe, have pleaded in our favor. The people of foreign nations have pleaded in our favor.

Is it possible that only a few on the jury, only two or three men, who would condemn their mothers for worldly honor and for earthly fortune; is it possible that they are wrong against what the world, the whole world has say it is wrong and that I know it is wrong? If there is one that I should know it, if it is right or if it is wrong, it is I and this man. You see it is seven years that we are in jail. What we have suffered during these years no human tongue can say, and yet you see me before you, not trembling, you see me looking you in your eyes straight, not blushing, not changing color, not ashamed or in fear…

We have proved that there could not have been another Judge on the face of the Earth more prejudiced and more cruel than you have been against us. We have proved that. Still they refuse the new trial. We know, and you know in your heart, that you have been against us from the very beginning, before you see us. Before you see us you already know that we are radicals, that we were underdogs, that we were the enemy of the institution that you can believe in good faith in their goodness- I don’t want to condemn that- and that is was easy on the time of the first trial to get a verdict of guiltiness.

We know that you have spoke yourself and have spoke your hostility against us, and your despisement against us with friends on the train, at the University Club, of Boston, on the Golf Club of Worcester, Massachusetts. I am sure that if the people who know all what you say against us would have the civil courage to take the stand, maybe your Honor- I am sorry to say this because you are an old man, and I have an old father- but maybe you would be beside us in good justice at this time.

When you sentenced me at the Plymouth trial you say, to the best part of my memory, of my good faith, that crimes were in accordance with my principle- something of that sort- and you take off one charge, if I remember it exactly, from the jury. The jury was so violent against me that they found me guilty of both charges, because there were only two…

We were tried during a time that has now passed into history. I mean by that, a time when there was hysteria of resentment and hate against the people of our principles, against the foreigner, against slackers, and it seems to me- rather, I am positive that both you and Mr. Katzmann has done all what it were in your power in order to work out, in order to agitate still the passion of the juror, the prejudice of the juror, against us…

Well, I have already say that I am not only not guilty of these crimes, but I never commit a crime in my life,-I have never spilt blood, and I have fought against the crime, and I have fought and I have sacrificed myself even to eliminate the crimes that the law and the church legitimate and sanctify.

This is what I say: I would not wish to a dog or a snake, to the most low and misfortunate creature on the earth- I would not wish to any of them what I have had to suffer for things for which I am not guilty of. I am suffering because I am a radical and indeed I am a radical; I have suffered because I am an Italian and indeed I am an Italian; I have suffered more for my family and for my beloved than for myself; but I am so convinced to be right that you could execute me two times, and if I could be reborn two other times, I would live again to do what I have done already. I have finished. Thank you.