

Events and Victims

Bartolomeo Vanzetti

Editor: Jon Curley

This work by Bartolomeo Vanzetti, edited and with a detailed introduction by Jon Curley, features a never-before-published short story by this famous anarchist and victim of legal persecution, xenophobia, and condemnation for his radical politics. That fact that Vanzetti, an Italian immigrant, learned to write in English while jailed for a capital crime is remarkable enough. What is even more astonishing is that he chose to use his new language skills to write creatively, inventing a parable about worker exploitation and environmental disaster that is as relevant today as it was almost one hundred years ago when this prisoner took up his pen. "Events and Victims" allows Vanzetti a new literary and historical voice, an important document that narrates the very injustice that its author suffered and fought. In a time of assault on immigrants, dissidents, radicals, and the environment, "Events and Victims" is as timely as ever.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND EDITOR

Bartolomeo Vanzetti was born in 1888 in Villafalletto, Italy. As an immigrant anarchist, he was at the center of one of the most notorious legal cases of the twentieth century, along with Nicola Sacco, that highlighted American anti-immigrant and anti-radical sentiment during the Red Scare. He was executed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on August 23, 1927.

Jon Curley is a poet and teacher. His poetry collections include *Hybrid Moments* (2015) and *Scorch Marks* (2017). He also wrote *Poets and Partitions: Confronting Communal Identities in Northern Ireland* (2011) and coedited *The Poetry and Poetics of Michael Heller: A Nomad Memory* (2015). He teaches in the Humanities Department of the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Curley is originally from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, where Vanzetti's legal persecution began.

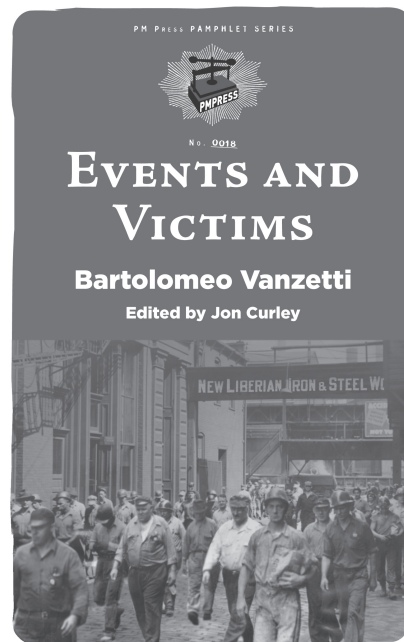
ACCOLADES

"To encounter Vanzetti's 'Events and Victims'—written in the 1920s while awaiting his own execution—is to return to that world of man vs. machine, to witness yet another wave of humanity uprooted from its commons and forced to live against the infernal clamor of mechanized death. Lovingly edited and introduced by Jon Curley, this reclamation from the archive is yet another reminder of just how far we have gone in the name of progress, and just how high the cost is."

—Ammiel Alcalay, author of *Memories of Our Future*

"A mordant critique of modern industrial life told through the story of a workplace accident, an accident that is in fact the logical outcome of social and economic imperatives. Blind aspirational faith in the New Liberian Dream of individual gain leads laborers in a dye factory to grow ill from chemical exposure, while the young foreman confronts the calamitous solitude of crass ambition. Even the skeptics are unable to escape the demands of the new social order. Awaiting his own execution, Vanzetti takes aim at the burgeoning military industrial complex, environmental degradation, xenophobia fueled by global labor migration, stultifying popular culture, compromised press, and greed of industrial oligarchs in this unexpectedly timely short story."

—Judith Halasz, author of *The Bohemian Ethos: Questioning Work and Making a Scene on the Lower East Side*



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