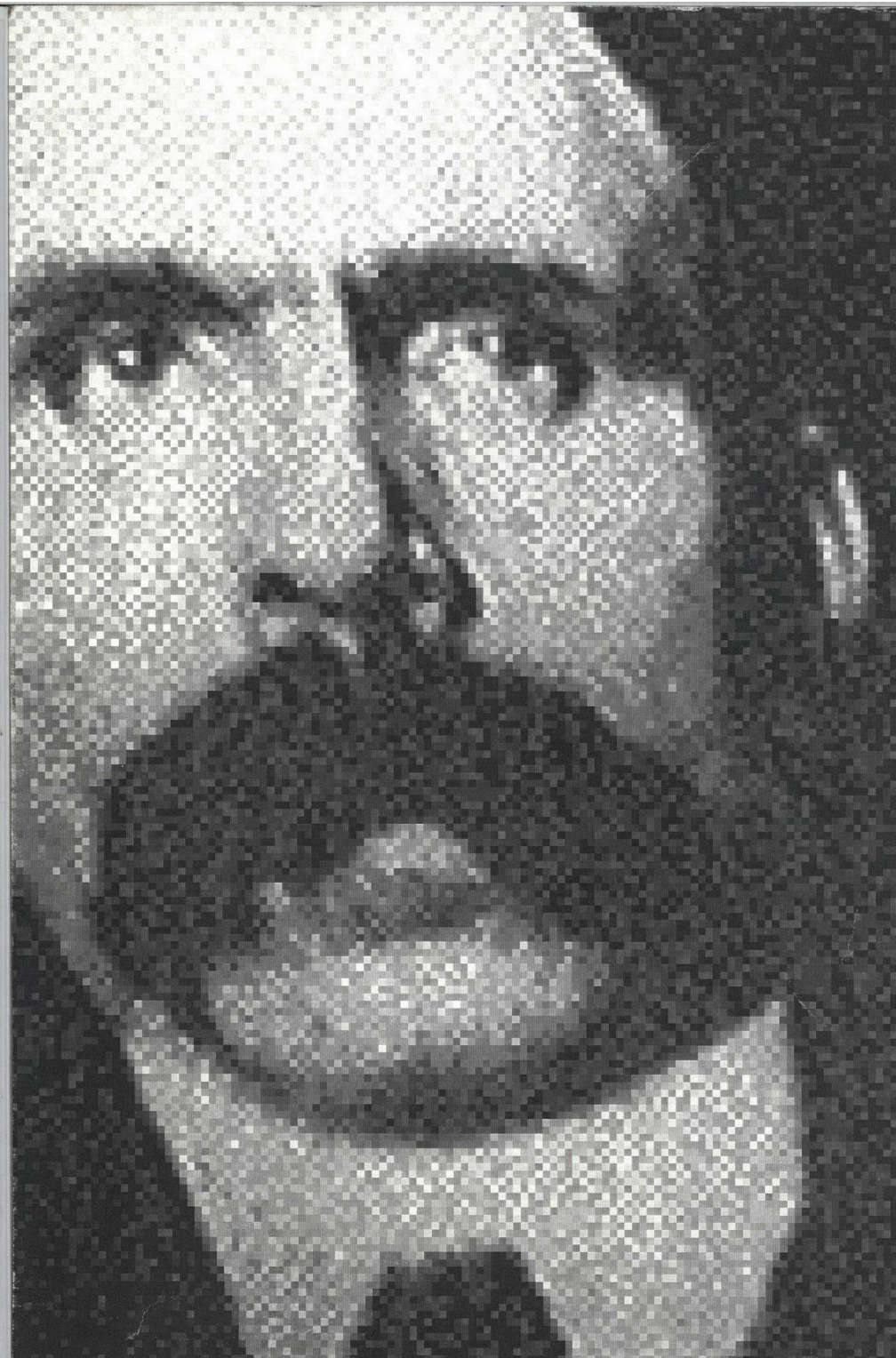




Sacco & Vanzetti

and the American Experience

**A Community Dialogue
at Yale University**

Monday, October 13, 1997

1:30 – 4:30 pm

Yale Law School

Room 127

127 Wall Street

New Haven, Connecticut

Welcome:

Dean Anthony T. Kronman

Opening Comments:

John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor, New Haven

Rosa DeLauro, U.S. House of Representatives

1:30 pm

The Legal and Historical Setting of the Trial

Moderator:

Robert W. Gordon, Yale Law School

Neil Thomas Proto, Esq., Verner, Liipfert,
Bernhard, McPherson and Hand

David M. Rabban, University of Texas School of Law

3:00 pm

**The Literary and Cultural Echoes
of the Controversy**

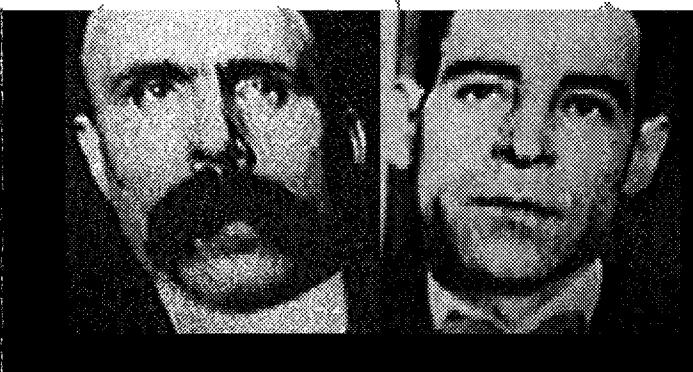
Moderator:

Professor Jean-Christophe Agnew, Yale University

Professor Daniel Aaron, Harvard University

Richard Gambino, Queens College

Sacco & Vanzetti and the American Experience



ON AUGUST 23, 1927, seventy years ago, two Italian immigrants — Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco — were executed in Charlestown State Prison in Massachusetts. They had been convicted in 1921 of having committed a robbery and murdering a shoe company paymaster in South Braintree. To Harvard Professor and later Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, the conviction was the result of “the systematic exploitation of the defendant’s alien blood, their imperfect knowledge of English, and their unpopular social views. The District Attorney had invoked against them a riot of political passion and patriotic sentiment; and the trial judge connived — one had almost written, cooperated — in the process.”

Men and women of literature, science and philosophy — George Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells, John Dos Passos, Bertram Russell, Upton Sinclair, Madame Curie, Albert Einstein, Alfred Dreyfus and Anatole France — pleaded for America not to execute Sacco and Vanzetti. Massive protests against the execution occurred in London, Paris, Cairo, Brussels, Athens, Delhi, Buenos Aires, Sydney, Chicago, San Francisco and New York.

In New Haven, hundreds crowded into the Fraternal Hall on Elm Street and others waited in silence on street corners for final news of their death. Throughout the seven years of appeals and reviews, Italian-Americans gave precious dollars and volunteered untold hours to the Defense Committee. Many of these same people were among the 200,000 mourners who lined the streets of Boston’s North End during the long funeral procession. To historian Arthur Schlesinger, only two events have had a comparable impact on the public mind: the assault on Pearl Harbor and the sudden death of President Roosevelt.

THE SYMPOSIUM WILL EXPLORE the historical and legal setting within which the case arose, the lives of both men, the art, poetry, plays and music inspired by these two Italian-Americans, the contentious dispute over their guilt or innocence which continues to this day, and the enduring effects the controversy has had on Italian-Americans, who were dismayed by the unfairness and prejudice of a judicial system in the nation they sought to embrace and within which they now had to raise their children.

Welcome.

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Opening C

John Des

Mayor of N

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House of R

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Robert W. Gordon

Fred A. Johnston Professor of Law and History
Yale University

Neil Thomas Proto

Verner, Lipfert, Bernhard, McPherson and Hand
Adjunct Professor in Public Policy, Georgetown University

David M. Rabban

Thomas Shelton Maxey Professor, University of Texas
School of Law

3:00 pm

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Professor of American Studies and Professor of History
Yale University

Daniel Aaron

Professor Emeritus of English, Harvard University

Richard Gambino

Professor of History and Italian Studies, Queens College