

Proclamation by Gov. Michael S. Dukakis of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti Memorial Day

By His Excellency , MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS , Governor
A P R O C L A M A T I O N

WHEREAS: A half century ago next month, Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were executed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts after being indicted, tried, and found guilty of murdering Alessandro Berardelli and Frederick A. Parmenter; and

WHEREAS: Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian immigrants who lived and worked in Massachusetts while openly professing their beliefs in the doctrines of anarchism; and

WHEREAS: The atmosphere of their trial and appeals was permeated by prejudice against foreigners and hostility toward unorthodox political views; and

WHEREAS: The conduct of many of the officials involved in the case shed serious doubt on their willingness and ability to conduct the prosecution and trial of Sacco and Vanzetti fairly and impartially; and

WHEREAS: The limited scope of appellate review then in effect did not allow a new trial to be ordered based on the prejudicial effect of the proceedings as a whole; and

WHEREAS: This situation was later rectified as a direct result of their case by the adoption of Chapter 341 of the Acts of 1939, which permitted the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court to order a new trial not merely because the verdict was contrary to the law, but also if it was against the weight of the evidence, contradicted by newly discovered evidence, or "for any other reason that justice may require"; and

WHEREAS: The people of Massachusetts today take pride in the strength and vitality of their governmental institutions, particularly in the high quality of their legal system; and

WHEREAS: They recognize that all human institutions are imperfect, that the possibility of injustice is ever-present, and that the acknowledgement of fault, combined with a resolve to do better, are signs of strength in a free society; and

WHEREAS: The trial and execution of Sacco and Vanzetti should serve to remind all civilized people of the constant need to guard against our susceptibility to prejudice, our intolerance of unorthodox ideas, and our failure to defend the rights of persons who are looked upon as strangers in our midst; and

WHEREAS: Simple decency and compassion, as well as respect for truth and an enduring commitment to our nation's highest ideals, require that the fate of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti be-pondered by all who cherish tolerance, justice and human understanding; and

WHEREAS: Tuesday, August 23, 1977, will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the execution of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Michael S. Dukakis, Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by virtue of the authority conferred upon me as Supreme Executive Magistrate by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and by all other authority vested in me, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, August 23, 1977, "NICOLA SACCO AND BARTOLOMEO VANZETTI MEMORIAL DAY"; and declare, further, that any stigma and disgrace should be forever removed from the names of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, from the names of their families and descendants, and so, from the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and I hereby call upon all the people of Massachusetts to pause in their daily endeavors to reflect upon these tragic events, and draw from their historic lessons the resolve to prevent the forces of intolerance, fear, and hatred from ever again uniting to overcome rationality, wisdom, and fairness to which our legal system aspires.

Given at the Executive Chamber in Boston, this nineteenth day of July in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy-seven and of the independence of the United States of America the two hundred and first.

By His Excellency the Governor MICHAEL S. DUKAKIS
PAUL GUZZI, Secretary of the Commonwealth

GOD SAVE THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS