

## Above and Beyond Two Deaths

Karel Čapek  
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In spite of petitions and protests from the entire world, in spite of the imploring clamor of thousands of people, the two were executed, two whose guilt was not so clearly proven that we cannot fear legal murder. The verdict was found formally correct through all levels of appeal in American courts; all protests against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti were rejected, because it is said that no one, either there or abroad, has the formal right to intervene in the legal proceedings of the United States. It is true: the world may be horrified at the verdict in Massachusetts, but it has no formal right to plead that two possibly innocent people not be murdered. If there is anything about this monstrous trial worthy of future remembrance, it is this conflict between what is legally correct and what is morally wrong. The world, which saw countless thousands fall on the battlefields of war, shuddered at the death of two. Something magnificent has occurred before our eyes: we have witnessed the conscience of the world agonizing over two human lives. Thousands of Chinese perished this year in an earthquake; but the soul of the world was shaken more by these two deaths, for the world's sense of moral justice is stronger than its crust. Perhaps these two were executed innocently; we hope they were not executed in vain. We believe that the deaths of Sacco and Vanzetti will stay with us long enough to intensify this unified international conscience and to influence evolution and humanization in legal proceedings, not only in the state of Massachusetts. We did not have the right to prevent legal murder; all that is left to us, then, is the right to prevent in all possible ways it ever happening again.

Translated by Norma Comrada

comrada@uoregon.edu