

Ben Shahn



IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THESE THING,
I MIGHT HAVE LIVE OUT MY LIFE TALK-
ING AT STREET CORNERS TO SCORN-
ING MEN. I MIGHT HAVE DIE, UN-
MARKED, UNKNOWN A FAILURE. NOW
WE ARE NOT A FAILURE. THIS IS OUR
CAREER AND OUR TRIUMPH. NEVER IN
OUR FULL LIFE COULD WE HOPE TO
DO SUCH WORK FOR TOLERANCE, FOR
JUSTICE, FOR MAN'S ONDERSTANDING
OF MAN AS NOW WE DO BY ACCIDENT.
OUR WORDS - OUR LIVES - OUR PAINS
NOTHING! THE TAKING OF OUR LIVES -
LIVES OF A GOOD SHOEMAKER AND A
POOR FISH PEDDLER - ALL! THAT LAST
MOMENT BELONGS TO US - THAT
AGONY IS OUR TRIUMPH.

Sacco and Vanzetti by Ben Shahn.

Portrait by Yousef Karsh.



BEN SHAHN

Ben Shahn on Human Rights

AUGUST SAVAGE
MEMORIAL GALLERY
UNIVERSITY OF
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Ben Shahn is regarded today
as one of the greatest artists
that America has produced.

But more important, he was an artist not content
merely to produce "art for art's sake."

Rather, everything he did as an artist
was connected to the cause
of human understanding
of human dignity
of human rights
in which he so fervently believed
and to which he—
more than any other American artist
of our time—
dedicated himself.

Whenever there was a battle to be fought
he was there—with his pen and brush—
on the front lines;
there, in America's own struggle
to fulfill its golden
but tarnished ideals;
there, helping to unlock its cramped
but ultimately unlimited potential.

He was there
creating an art that spoke:
of brotherhood