

# In Defense of Columbus and the Principle of Scientific Discovery

The October 7 Manhattan Project Dialog featured a special live video presentation from Italy by Liliana Gorini, chairwoman of Lyndon LaRouche's Italian organization Movisol. [Extensive discussion](#) followed the presentation.

Before her address, Ms. Gorini showed a 1978 RAI video excerpt from Verdi's opera *Simon Boccanegra*, the aria "Plebe, patrizi, popolo!" with Piero Cappuccilli in the title role, Mirelli Freni, and Nicola Ghiaurov. The aria plays a central role in her thorough-composition—which follows Dennis Speed's introduction—but it cannot be shown on the Internet.



A portrait said to be of Christopher Columbus, by Sebastiano del Piombo.

**Dennis Speed:** On behalf of the LaRouche Political Action Committee, I want to welcome everybody to today's meeting. This is a bit of an unusual meeting, and I think people who've been with us for the last several weeks are aware of the campaign we've been involved in, which will now become focused on the matter of Christopher Columbus for approximately the next two weeks. But the campaign we're involved in is actually not that.

The campaign is one that people have heard about quite a bit in the last week. If you were with us then, you heard Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the founder of the Schiller Institute, describe that campaign. Over the next six weeks, the President of the United States is going to be tested on his way to China. Last year there was another form of a test with respect to China. What we are looking at in the United States is an attempt to stop the completion of a great project that was begun over 500 years ago.

When the American Revolution is spoken of by most people, it's never actually discussed, because it's discussed as a set of events they believe occurred between the years of 1776 and 1783. That's not actually where the American Revolution comes from; that's not where the concept of the United States comes from. It comes from something much earlier, which was being discussed in embryo before 1439. In 1439 there was a meeting referred to as the Council of Florence, which was organized by Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa. Cusa, who is a close friend of the Schiller Institute, and particularly of Helga Zepp-LaRouche, organized that council as a way of trying

to reunify the Church of the time and to fight against the corruption within the Church at that time. Cusa wrote a document on that occasion, in that period, called *De Docta Ignorantia* (On Learned Ignorance). That document, if you look at particularly its first part, seems to be some sort of treatise on geometry. But, in fact, Cusa would have argued, it is not. And it wasn't. It was a treatise about a form of breakthrough that Cusa had made, which was the most important intellectual breakthrough since the time of Plato. The breakthrough recorded in that document changed all of civilization—not Western Civilization—it changed the entire world. And its connection to America is virtually unknown.

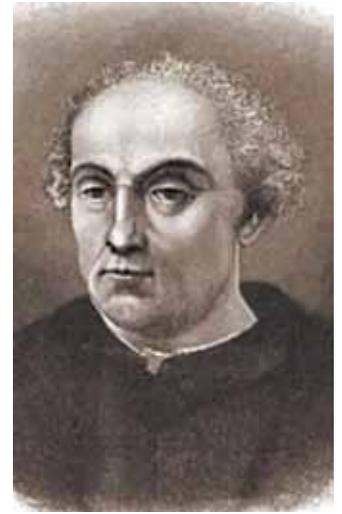
Well, before that document was written, there was a group of people speaking together, who were friends: Nicholas of Cusa [1401-1464], his friend, Paolo To-



Filippo Brunelleschi  
(1377-1446)



Nicholas of Cusa  
(1401-1464)



Paolo Toscanelli  
(1397-1482)

scanelli [1397-1482], and a very important individual by the name of Filippo Brunelleschi [1377-1446]. Brunelleschi is best known in history for his creation of the Brunelleschi dome [which crowns the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence], which is a miracle, not merely of architecture, but of human thought. His so-called geometry teacher was Paolo Toscanelli, who was Nicholas of Cusa's closest friend. And particularly between the period of approximately 1425 and 1436, Toscanelli, Cusa, and Brunelleschi, collaborated. There were others involved, but these were the three central figures who created a revolution in astronomy, and human thought in general. But in Europe, in particular, they gave birth to what people like to refer to as the Italian Renaissance—but what they fail to recognize is its nature. They like to refer to the artifacts; they like the paintings and they like the sculpture, they like the this and the that, but the task—that they don't know about. Now Liliana knows that a lot better than I do, and she's going to say a lot to you about that task.

But I want to say something about it, because the issue of Columbus is intimately connected to the present attack on the President of the United States—*intimately connected*. Some of you know we are in the process of exposing this attack, because the issue of President Trump's visit to China is the *same* as the Columbian expeditions. There is a possibility for the world to be unified, without war, and for there to be a collabo-

ration among the United States, Russia, China, India, and many other nations, on something that's referred to often as the New Silk Road. Now the Silk Road was well known back in the period of the,— well it was not only known, it was used in the 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, and it actually predates that time.

The "Columbus project" was an attempt to connect the world by going west instead of east, partially because Cusa and his collaborators wanted to get away from the corruption of the banking houses of the Bardi and Peruzzi, and other banking houses that had been associated with both Genoa and Venice. They were going to go west instead of going east. Cusa's concern, particularly in the period after 1453, was that Europe itself could no longer sustain European civilization. Europe itself had become so corrupt that it was necessary to marry the best products of European civilization with the best products of the East. They recognized in the Chinese a superior civilization, not superior to themselves, but one they could actually dialogue with, because of the extraordinary capabilities that China had already demonstrated in navigation, the art of printing, astronomy, and other fields, of which they were very aware.

This mission is what we now see President Trump being placed in a position to secure, in his dialog with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. But because people have no idea about what the American Revolution is, they are unaware that this is the actual topic of Presi-

dent Trump’s trips to China, and so forth. So we see Secretary of State Rex Tillerson being attacked, we see other kinds of things going on. And people think this is about something else. You know, Tillerson called Trump a moron, and then Trump talked about Tillerson’s mother, and this is the championship wrestling view of history, which the American is supposed to go with. And of course, then we have to reference the attack by Robert Mueller on President Trump. You all know we’ve put out our own dossier on this: “Robert Mueller is an Amoral Legal Assassin: He Will Do His Job If You Let

Him.” And we’re right now involved in a campaign to get this out in mass distribution all over the United States, precisely to neutralize and, in fact, take down Mueller of the FBI, who’s somebody we’re very familiar with because of our own circumstances, and the harassment and the incarceration of Lyndon LaRouche in the 1980s. Robert Mueller was involved in that.

**Who Is Doing This?**

What are we fighting? Because it was said, people fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the forces of darkness and wickedness in high places. And some people like to call that “the Deep State,” but we don’t call it “the Deep State.” We call it “the Shallow British empire.” We give it a name. The same people who tried to suppress the history of Florence. If you talk to guides, if you go to Florence, the guides who speak English often speak it with a British accent. That’s because of the occupation by the British at a certain time of a part of Italy.

That goes far afield from what we have to talk about here, but the relevant element is this. In 1982, a top secret letter was sent from the British government to the FBI, and that letter involved us. Now that letter is still classified. We still don’t know what it says. But the FBI then responded to that British Intelligence letter and said that we would like to reiterate our conclusion that despite many of the “harassment” activities of the NCLC (that was the name of LaRouche’s organization



*Signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.*

Painting by John Trumbull

at that time) and his publications such as the *EIR*—for which I am a very proud writer to this day—there is no direct evidence that the Soviets are directing or funding LaRouche or his organization. It is entirely plausible, however—the FBI said—that the Soviets have developed or may be developing sources within this organization who are in a position to interject Soviet-inspired views into NCLC activities and publications. Now this is 1982.

I just want you know that what is being done to President Trump right now around the so-called “Russia hack” is this same thing that was being done against us in 1982. The Steele dossier of, I believe, 15 memos from Christopher Steele—which they are now going to be forced to defend, and it’s going to be very difficult to defend the indefensible—begins with a memo that is all about the “Russia hack” and as those of you who’ve been at our meetings recently know, it’s been definitively proven by Ray McGovern, and William Binney formerly of the NSA, that there is no possibility that the Russians hacked the Democratic National Committee. But there is a very distinct possibility—in fact, a necessity—that there was a leak. And so the issue and the problem that Mr. Mueller has, and the people he works for have—the British imperial interests—is that we’re onto them.

And we’re onto them not merely in terms of some little intelligence thing and something happening to Trump, and a file, and responding to CNN, and all that

stuff, which people do because they've been trained to deal with a news cycle and react to a news cycle. We don't do that. We go to the principle of universal history. We talk about the idea that Schiller talked about of universal history. We realize that history, real history, is made in the realm of the greatest ideas, and the conflict around the greatest ideas that were born in civilization.

And if you want to find that, in the most dense and encapsulated form, you go to the Italian Renaissance and the dialogue among Brunelleschi, Cusa, and Toscanelli, which founded the United States. Now it didn't found the United States particularly in its specific political form, but Nicholas of Cusa also wrote another work, a dialog called *Concordantia Catholica* (On Universal Concord), which you should get. It is in a book of translations we did of Nicholas of Cusa's writings and is available out at the book table. Will Wertz did the translations and you should get it. The idea of the consent of the governed is first put forward by Cusa in this dialog. That is to say, one of the crucial elements of the Declaration of Independence, and the idea of the United States itself, is first put forth by Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa in the course of this dialog, and the mission of Columbus, which Columbus inherited, which you're going to hear all about, was actually a mission which comes from the greatest minds of that time, and echoed down through the centuries to create what the United States became.

That is what is being attacked by attacking Columbus, by attacking Columbus Day, and by attacking the people who are defending it. For many years Liliana Gorini has been at the very center of these discussions and discussions that we've had with the Vatican over decades. It was mentioned already, in the case of our music work, in particular on the proper tuning question. She was the one who found the letter from Giuseppe Verdi that not only corroborated, but just stated the truth on the issue of proper tuning, and so she is the person that is best qualified to lead the campaign that she is leading, and that we have joined, and it is my distinct honor to present her. She is the Chairwoman of the Movisol movement, the movement of Lyndon LaRouche

in Italy, and we're really very, very happy to have her with us today.

**Liliana Gorini:** Thank you, Dennis. And thanks a lot for inviting me to this meeting.

I'm very happy that I can address your activists and supporters, for this very important campaign in defense of Christopher Columbus [c.1451-1506], and I'm very happy that today, President Trump again proclaimed Columbus Day, on Monday, Oct. 9. This is a very important thing to do, and for us Italians who are very proud of having discovered America, and for the Italian-American community in the United States, it is a very, very important step.

I chose the aria which you heard in the beginning of this meeting, with my friend Piero Cappuccilli, who was also a close friend of Lyndon and Helga LaRouche. We met with him very often, before and after the conference in Milan at the Casa Verdi in 1988; he was one of the best, or maybe *the* best Verdi baritone in the world.

So whenever I hear this aria and *concertato* scene from *Simon Boccanegra*, I am moved. And I was moved again today. Because it expresses what Dennis was saying about the grand project of Columbus, of Toscanelli, and of the Italian Renaissance, which is the discovery of new continents, the discovery of new worlds. And since Europe was in the

hands of the oligarchy, as it is today, that meant finding a new continent, a new world that would be truly humanistic, and that's what Columbus founded in America. And we are very grateful to Columbus for discovering America.

This mission was expressed in a letter by Petrarca [1304-1374] to the doges of Genoa and Venice, calling on them to stop their fraternal wars and seek peace through discovery of the oceans. And that's why I chose this aria, which was picked up in Verdi's opera. Francesco Maria Piave wrote the libretto explicitly referencing Petrarca's letter, and you can see it in this scene—it's wonderful when Cappuccilli says, "While the broad reign of the oceans ecstatically invites you. . ." (*Mentre v'invita estatico / Il regno ampio dei mari. . .*)



Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)  
(1304-1374)

“You fight each other,” he says. “And I am calling instead for peace.” (*Io vo gridando: Pace! Io vo gridando: Amor!*).

So it is essentially the concept from Petrarca, through Toscanelli, through Columbus, up to Verdi—the concept is that they were calling for the New Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road—the Belt and Road—as we are today.

And as Lyndon LaRouche often says, “time also works backwards.” Our actions influence the present, the future, but also the past. We can say that our campaign in defense of the Renaissance and of Columbus, and our campaign for the New Silk Road and for peace through development, is also a way to influence these great thinkers of the Renaissance. They will be thankful to us for this campaign. That is exactly—as Dennis was saying—this is why they attack Columbus! This has nothing to do with native Americans, this has nothing to do with the Latin American countries. It has to do with the hatred of the British for the Italian Renaissance and this grand project of peace and cooperation—exactly as Dennis was saying.

In 1992 I participated, and actually helped to organize in Rome, at the Vatican, at the Pontifical Urbaniana University, a conference of the Schiller Institute on Columbus, which was addressed also by Cardinal Silvio Oddi, a member of the Roman Curia, who thanked the Schiller Institute for this initiative, as he said, “aimed at reviving the Christian and scientific roots of the great Columbus discovery.” Helga Zepp-LaRouche was the main speaker at this conference, and she completely dismantled the “black legend.” She proved that all these stories about Columbus being a murderer of natives are untrue; they are accusing Columbus and the evangelizers of destroying a pre-existing culture, but it was proven by experts that the population density, as a matter of fact, increased in Mexico and other Latin American countries, and proven particularly by Alexander von Humboldt, who made voyages of discovery himself in these countries, reporting in the 19th Century that, thanks to the technological improvements introduced by the Spanish colonization, the population density increased. So these black legend stories are all lies.

These “antifa” killers who are going on Monday to attempt what they call “Deface Columbus Day,” can be compared to ISIS and to the terrorists, because that’s exactly what they are doing. ISIS destroyed monuments in Palmyra, and the best monuments of ancient cultures in Iraq and Syria, and they *hate* beauty—ex-

actly like the British. They hate beauty. That’s why they do it. They cannot stand history, culture, and beauty, and that’s why they’re doing this.

### Why Columbus Sailed

And we should say it. Let’s not be defensive about all these accusations against Columbus as the great exterminator. Let’s be clear: They are attacking the tradition of the Renaissance of Italy, and they are attacking the very concept of creativity and beauty.

As Dennis was saying, Toscanelli, Columbus, and also Fernão Martins, the canon of the Lisbon Cathedral, were working together, on the idea that oceans be used as waterways between the continents, including China. The letter that Will Wertz found recently, from Toscanelli to Father Martins in 1433 [*EIR* Oct. 6, 2017, p. 28] proves it: There were discussions at that time with scholars of China, which went back to Marco Polo’s voyages of discovery to China, and enlarged the idea of the first Silk Road to become more, a greater project of discovery, with the Far East being looked to for exchange of goods and ideas.

This was the plan. To understand Columbus, you have to understand that he was a product of the Renaissance, of the Council of Florence, and of the ancient works of great cartographers such as Strabo [d. 23 AD] and Ptolemy [100-168 AD], who were translated. The Toscanelli maps as you know were given to Columbus. He sailed four times; the first three times, he didn’t find it—he had a lot of problems. But finally, finally he found the Americas. What he did at that time, represented what NASA is doing today. At that time, it was the exploration of the oceans; today, it is space exploration, which, as you know, we are promoting. What he did has to be seen from this standpoint.

He was a contemporary of Leonardo da Vinci [1452-1519], who is also attacked by the British. I emphasized this in my “Open Letter to President Trump in Defense of Columbus,” when I wrote, Who will be next? Shall we tear down Leonardo’s statue in front of La Scala, which is testimony to his having been not only a great painter and engineer, but also the founder of *bel canto*? And this is proven: Besides the letter of Verdi, I discovered in Sforza castle, Castello Sforzesco in Milan, reports about Leonardo’s treatise of Leonardo *De Voce* (in Latin), *On the Voice*, which was “scattered,” as they say, by the British in the *Codex Atlanticus*, in order not to keep it together as a book, as a single treatise.

And Leonardo himself was arrested. He wrote a



Statue of Leonardo da Vinci in Milan, Italy. Sculpture by Pietro Magni (1817-1877).

letter saying, “they understand each word I say to the contrary.” He was arrested because he studied anatomy, he studied corpses, in order to examine the vocal cords, and he was studying the propagation of the voice, comparing it to the propagation of light and water waves. That’s how he found that the voice which is well-placed, *impostata*, can reach out a great distance, while the voice which is not well-placed, not *impostata*, “is like a thousand flies,” he wrote; a thousand flies, he said, cannot make enough noise to be heard, while a well-placed voice can.

So the British did not like this treatise; they scattered it so nobody could really read it; there are some reports about it in a book by Emanuel Winternitz about Leonardo on music [*Leonardo da Vinci as a Musician*, 1982], but as in many other cases of Italian Renaissance men, the British try to destroy the very idea of creativity

and of the Renaissance man. The British Museum and the Congress for Cultural Freedom have always fought against this tradition and this heritage, which is very important to all of us Italians. It is a very important reference point, particularly in a crisis: When there was the earthquake, recently, or the flooding in Italy, people were of course saving themselves; but then they immediately thought about saving the monuments, the churches, and the important documents of the Renaissance that were hit by the earthquake.

So we have a mobilization of the Schiller Institute, which I am glad to hear is getting a lot of results. Particularly, I very much like the letter sent around to Italian-American associations by Carmela Altamura, whom I see there in the audience, in which she said, “I believe that along with Columbus, all of us are being attacked. We believe that these attacks against Columbus represent a regressive movement back to the Dark Ages. This has to be stopped!” I fully share her view. It has to be stopped. Thank you, Carmela, for sharing your letter and my letter to all of these associations—I understand 400 of them—which for sure will have a very important effect. It has already.

Another result of our campaign is that on Oct. 12, in New York, the Italian-American Chamber of Commerce, with its President Alberto Milani, and the *Premio Eccellenza*, the Italian Excellence Award, with its President George Lombardi, will have another press conference of the committee they formed called “Hands Off Columbus Committee” (*Comitato Giu le Mani da Colombo*). I like this name, and it was the headline of my editorial, “*Giu le Mani da Colombo!*”—Hands off Columbus!

As I said at the beginning with this aria of Cappuccilli, Italy contributed to the discovery of America, partly because of its situation—we have long coastlines, so it’s clear that we are a bridge towards the oceans, and towards the Mediterranean, and more than that; but we are also the cradle of *bel canto*. And as Elliot and Dennis were saying, we had a campaign in Italy for the Verdi tuning, which goes back to 1988, when we had the first conference on the Verdi scientific tuning in the Casa Verdi, where Verdi is buried. At this conference, Cappuccilli, the same baritone you heard in the beginning, made the first demonstrations of the two tunings, with two pianos: One was tuned to A-444, which is the normal tuning here in Italy, and the other one A-432. He sang two arias of Verdi. The people



Roberto Irsuti

Baritone Piero Cappuccilli, singing a Verdi aria during a Sept. 9, 1988 conference at Casa Verdi recital hall in Milan.

could easily hear the difference. I think you heard the tape of it recently at your meeting.

This campaign had the endorsement of 2,000 famous singers, including Renata Tebaldi, who also attended the conference; Mirella Freni, who was in the video, you saw her singing in the *concertato* of *Simon Boccanegra*; and many others—Montserrat Caballé, Joan Sutherland, many, many great singers endorsed this campaign.

Actually, my father, who was a professor at the Milan Conservatory, and I, found this letter from Verdi in Milan, just as I returned from Virginia. We were singing the Mozart *Requiem* in Virginia, and I remember that Lyn came to the rehearsals in the barn, and said, “Do what you want—put scotch tape, put something on the bassoons, but get them down to this tuning. Because otherwise the voices and the meaning of the music will be destroyed.” And I was very happy when I came back to Milan, to see that Verdi fully confirmed what La-Rouche was saying—as very often was the case. He would say something, which people did not understand, and then it turned out that he was completely right.

And the other campaign which we have in Italy presently, and which we share with you in America—and I’m very glad that we have this cooperation between Milan and Manhattan—is the campaign for Glass-Steagall. Some of you are involved in this too. We have recently had a breakthrough, because an activ-

ist of ours has collected 125 signatures of members of Parliament, state legislators, and regional councilmen, for a personal letter to President Trump—this time not on Columbus, but on his election promise to reinstate the Glass-Steagall Act. And they wrote to him—I actually wrote the letter myself, but it is now signed by all these people, including me—saying, “You want to make America great again: If you reinstate Glass-Steagall, you will not only make America great again, but Europe will also profit from this,” which is not unimportant. It is im-

portant to make America great again, but it will also solve the crisis we have in Europe.

You have heard about the banking crisis in Italy; two retired men committed suicide because they lost all their savings as a result of the bail-in by the European Union. You know what the European Central Bank is doing. It is just printing money and printing money continuously, in order to save these speculations, this toxic waste—European Central Bank President Mario Draghi himself comes from Goldman Sachs. None of this money is going to the real economy.

So for many people in Europe, and particularly in Italy, France, Spain, and Greece, which have been hit particularly hard by the austerity measures of the European Union, this is a very, very important issue. That’s why we had so much support, and so many people signed the letter. We plan to send a delegation of these 125 signers to Washington, to Congress, to bring the letter there; and in this way, push Congress to finally, finally, bring the issue of Glass-Steagall onto the floor and vote for it. This would be a very important accomplishment.

I emphasize, as in the case of Columbus, this would be an accomplishment reached between Italy and America: Let’s have this cooperation, and let’s continue this exchange of ideas, about the Renaissance, about creativity, about the economy, because in this way, we can win! Thank you. [Applause.]