



UPDATE

Italic Institute of America
“Italian Pride on a Classical Foundation”

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www.italic.org



Six Months and Counting

by John Mancini, Executive Director

Clearly, our community struggles to preserve what past generations bequeath us. Columbus Day is among them, as is *La Casa Italiana* at Columbia University. I won't recount the now eleven year effort to place an Italian American on the Board of that \$15 million institution. Our latest initiative, an appeal to the Italian government has turned into a sad display of insulting behavior.

Our community created *La Casa* in 1927 and the Italian government bought it in 1990 to house the Italian Academy. The 1990 Charter created a Board of 12 “guarantors,” six chosen by Italy, six by Columbia.

Two attempts by us to include an Italian American among the six Italian board members got us a run-around and now the silent treatment from Italian Ambassador Varricchio - six months worth!

The major organizations have joined this effort and three of their leaders have actually spoken to either the ambassador or the NY Consul General to follow up our united appeal of February. We have nominated two distinguished Italian American academics in the past two years. We are now informed- verbally - that the Italian government has relinquished its right under the Italian Academy Charter to appoint its six Board members.

If this is true, it is an amazing revelation. I personally met with the NY Consul General twice and was never told this. To get to the bottom of this, we have sent a new letter to Ambassador Varricchio, written by my brother Dennis who is an Italian citizen, requesting written confirmation from the ambassador that this is true. Will the ambassador ignore an Italian citizen like he ignores Italian Americans? Why the silence? Why the cavalier treatment?

That we must go through these machinations with our ancestral homeland over an academic institute created by our community is a sad commentary.

Studies in Nonsense

It doesn't help our cause at *La Casa Italiana* when Italian diplomats witness the total nonsense that passes for academic studies at some of our cultural centers. In the past we have reported to you about Italian American professors at local universities hosting seminars on such subjects as the alleged Mafia assassination of JFK, or honor killing in Sicily, or the Guido subculture. Recently, the Calandra Institute at the City University of New York held an art exhibit entitled *Goombarooch Resigned*, displaying the works of a local “goombah.”

It is also true that nearly all these university Italian centers in Metro NY either refuse to defend Columbus Day or have sided with the opposition. What exactly is their reason for being? Why do they undermine our efforts?

In the case of the Italian Academy at *La Casa Italiana*, it has gone multicultural under ethnic Jewish leadership. To laud its shift, it has published the book *Holocaust Studies at the Italian Academy 2008-2016*. It has awarded fellowships to graduates from Nigeria, Japan, Australia, Turkey and the Balkans who have use of *La Casa* while Italian American students at

Columbia are shut out. *Una cosa pazza!*



A rare photo of our national “think tank” meeting on Long Island. (l-r) Bob Masullo (CA), Bill Dal Cerro (IL) and John Mancini (NY). A realistic assessment of our diminishing heritage, the causes and remedies were discussed. Resolved: we need youth in the bullpen.

Interesting Progress Elsewhere

Some positive developments include the recent victory by Italian Americans in Cleveland fending off Indigenous Peoples Day in that city. In New Orleans, the Sons of Italy has obtained an official apology from that city for the 1891 slaughter of eleven innocent Italian immigrants.

We also believe that the attacks on “White Privilege” and the anti-Euro tone by political candidates may bring more Euro-Americans to our side on the Columbus Day issue. We'll see.

Speaking of which, our associate Ken Borelli of California sent us a excerpt from *American Archeology Magazine* documenting indigenous human sacrifice of women in Illinois, before Columbus. Last year a 6th grade teacher in that state goaded her impressionable students to lobby a legislator to reject Columbus Day in favor of Indigenous Peoples Day. Perhaps a class trip to the site will put things in perspective.