



## ROBERT FELIX PETRONE, ESQUIRE

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June 17, 2020

Re: **Christopher Columbus: The First Civil Rights Activist of the Americas**

To all who stand with me in the fight for civil rights:

On the eve of Juneteenth, a day celebrating civil rights, which are human rights, I send this open letter to remind all moral and enlightened human beings that we are dutybound to fight the continued perpetration of hate and ignorance caused by the suppression of facts, truth and civil discourse. The information from the primary historical sources, not from revisionist historians, must be expressed to avoid the *damnatio memoriae* of the first civil rights activist of the Americas, Christopher Columbus, who:

1. consistently and persistently advocated for granting the indigenes of the West Indies full rights, privileges and protections as Spanish citizens;
2. sailed the Caribbean archipelago from island to island on his Second Voyage rescuing Tainos from capture and enslavement by the flesh-eating Carib and Canib tribes, thus saving indigenous lives in the first “underground railroad” of the Americas;
3. actively fought the violence of the imperialist expansion of the Crown of Spain, at times going as far as to interpose his body between the swords of conquistadors and resistant indigenes;
4. explicitly countered the conquistadors’ demeaning characterizations of the indigenes by informing the crown that the Tainos were “intelligent,” “trustworthy,” “beautiful” and the makings of “good Christians”;
5. prohibited enslavement, promoted peace and refused to enforce the Spanish feudal *encomienda* system upon the indigenes because he believed the mistreatment of them violated the Commandments and Scriptures of the Judeo-Christian tradition that he held in such reverence;
6. intervened always as a pacifying force against the greedy and entitled Spanish nobles who defied his governance and indulged in mutual hostilities with the indigenes by acting as mediator and peacemaker between the Spanish settlers and the indigenes;
7. maintained peace, good relations and mutual benefit with the Caribbean indigenes he encountered, the overwhelming majority of whom considered him a good friend and a welcome newcomer, including his best friend in the New World, Taino Chieftain Guacanagarí, whose son, Guaikan, Columbus adopted when another tribe killed Guacanagarí in a tribe war;
8. provided testimony to the court of Spain resulting in the deposing of Francisco de Bobadilla, the real perpetrator of the atrocities in the West Indies that are incorrectly attributed to Columbus by revisionists;

9. spent the entirety of his fourth voyage working to depose Bobadilla's successor, Nicolás Ovando, including facing down Ovando in Ovando's own court, later having Ovando removed from office as well;
10. successfully petitioned the widowed King of Spain to enact the first civil rights legislation of the Americas, explicitly prohibiting the Spanish settlers from enslaving or otherwise mistreating the indigenes;
11. inspired Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, Protector of the Indians, to petition the crown of Spain (successfully) to fund the formation of an order of Dominican friars who stationed themselves in the West Indies and enforced the civil rights legislation that Columbus got passed, forcing the Spanish nobles to end their mistreatment and slavery of the indigenes once and for all; and
12. initiated more than five hundred years of cultural, economic, and political relations between the Old World and the New, commencing a perpetual exchange of science, technology, law, commerce, art, music, literature, and people, benefiting and enriching the globe from pole to pole.

The false narrative to the contrary, relied upon in error by Columbus-detractors, was first published by Francisco de Bobadilla (mentioned in item 8, above) in an attempt (which proved successful) to unseat Columbus from and usurp from him the office of governor of the West Indies. Columbus categorically defeated all of Bobadilla's libelous claims in a court of law with the same evidence and testimony that resulted in the subsequent unseating of Bobadilla from the viceroyalty of the West Indies that he claimed for himself. Bobadilla's libel was relegated to the trash bin of history for 500 years, until pseudo-historian Howard Zinn resurrected Bobadilla's debunked writings, relying on them as "newly discovered" data for his polemic *The People's History of the United States*. The primary sources, however, including *Historia de las Indias (History of the Indies)*, written by the mouthpiece of the indigenes, Friar Bartolomé de las Casas, contemporaneously with the settlement of the West Indies and in his capacity as the official Protector of the Indians, prove Bobadilla's and Zinn's writings to be false.

The campaign of misinformation perpetrated the media and educational institutions suppresses the primary sources. Indeed libraries and courts are largely closed during the current global pandemic, creating an obstacle to research and due process. Let us stand together in the spirit of Juneteenth to fight the suppression of facts, truth and civil discourse to restore and preserve Christopher Columbus's monuments in recognition of the greatest hero of the 15th and 16th Centuries and the first civil rights activist of the Western Hemisphere. His statues must stand as an eternal testament to the civil rights of all people.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Felix Petrone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Robert Felix Petrone