

Why the WWF hates Leonardo da Vinci

by Mark Burdman

During the first days of November 1982, this correspondent had the distinction of having Britain's Lord Weidenfeld angrily terminate a telephone call following an exchange on the subject of Leonardo da Vinci.

His Lordship, an intimate friend of Henry Kissinger and magnate of the Weidenfeld and Nicolson publishing empire, had been caught by *EIR* in the act of conspiring with Kissinger and others in a financial scam involving land speculation in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Already furious at *EIR*, Weidenfeld became more and more cantankerous, and suddenly began accusing the associates of Lyndon LaRouche of "hubris," of claiming to be able to describe and change the laws of the universe. Suddenly, Weidenfeld sputtered, "And you people probably think you can explain why Leonardo da Vinci painted 'The Last Supper!'" When this correspondent responded, that indeed we could do just that, the phone was suddenly slammed down.

This anecdote came to mind when a close adviser to Prince Philip, who is helping organize the Sept. 22-29 week of World Wildlife Fund events in Assisi, Italy, told a caller on Aug. 15 that the WWF's main historical enemy is Leonardo, whose drawings and ideas had largely catalyzed the "industrialization matrix" of the past 500 years of Western civilization.

Said the aide: "The main problem we face derives from those elements of the Renaissance that attempted to bring about the elevation of man. You see this in Leonardo da Vinci and in the Christianity of Erasmus. The view here is that man is the paradigm of the universe. It is most clear in the drawings of Leonardo; that idea is what the drawings are trying to depict."

The aide to Prince Philip complained, during the course of the discussion, that the "anthropocentric" ideas of Leonardo and the Renaissance, the idea that "humanity is the end purpose of creation," had reached its highest point of political-cultural expression in the early colonization of North America and the creation and development of the United States.

Coincidence or not, on the same date, Aug. 15, the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit* celebrated the life of British artist-cartoonist Ralph Idris Steadman, who has devoted his life to mocking the reputation and work of Leonardo da Vinci! *Die Zeit* is a trend-setting journal for the Hamburg-based liberal

establishment, which associates itself very closely with the British liberal establishment. Its publisher, Countess Marion von Dönhoff, is a bitter enemy of *EIR* founder Lyndon H. LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche, who are perceived to be the leading representatives today of the ideas of the Renaissance and the American Revolution which the Countess so abhors.

The *Die Zeit* feature opens with a photograph of Steadman dressed as the Statue of Liberty, and posturing like a homosexual or transvestite. Behind him is a mock-image of "The Last Supper" of Leonardo, with all the figures, including Jesus Christ, looking ugly and dark.

Steadman, who has drawn cartoons for the counterculture's *Rolling Stone* magazine and for Britain's *Private Eye* journal has written a mock autobiography called, "I, Leonardo," which is now being translated into German. *Die Zeit* reports that Steadman has traveled all over Italy, seeing historical sites where Leonardo worked. Steadman is also composing a rock-opera about Leonardo, played by rock star Rod Stewart!

Why Leonardo?

From the wrong side of history, the aide to Prince Philip is absolutely correct: Leonardo did base the republican tradition on the scientific conception that humanity is the "paradigm" of God's creation, that man, in his capacity for self-perfection, can approximate, ever more closely, the divine. That is, indeed, expressed in his drawings. Leonardo's entire life's work is a celebration of man's ability to master, perfect, and change the laws of the universe. This was expressed through drawings, paintings, scientific inventions, infrastructure projects, new forms of weaponry to defend cities, and so on.

Studying Leonardo, and mastering for oneself his worldview, itself uplifts the soul. For the Lord Weidenfelds and Prince Philips of this world, that activity is an abomination.

To destroy republicanism, one must destroy Leonardo. Historically, that has taken one of two forms: convey an idea of Leonardo as a mad artist, a kook who produced his works irrationally, or—which is, at root, the same thing—depict him as a leader of a cult of symbolism and magic, as the early Rosicrucians did, or as is done in the book, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*.

One individual responsible for keeping this campaign against Leonardo alive in modern times, is Sigmund Freud. Purporting to analyze Leonardo's dreams, Freud concluded that Leonardo had to have been a homosexual, and, in general, conveys the image of creativity itself as a special ethereal ooze coming from queers!

During the 1920s and 1930s, Mussolini's advisers waged a crusade against Leonardo and the Renaissance, as the traditions that must be eradicated were the fascist project to succeed.

That is the concern of Prince Philip today.