



**ITALIAN / CAPE VERDEAN HISTORY CONFERENCE ON THE 550  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERIES OF ANTONIO DE NOLI.  
GENOA – SERRA RICCÒ, ITALY**

**Editorial**

By Marcel Balla

On Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of June, I was invited to the city of Serra Riccò (Genoa), to give a talk on the importance of Antonio de Noli (the first Cape Verdean) in world history, along with Professor Marcello Ferrada de Noli, President of the Antonio de Noli Academic Society. The Society also participated in the organization of the event together with the Cape Verdean Embassy to Italy (Ambassador Dr. J. Eduardo Barbosa) and the office of the *Assessore Culturale* of Serra Riccò Municipality. The event was hosted by the mayor Dr. Andrea Tomaso Torre.

It was also the occasion for the family reunion of the descendants of the De Noli family which has a large population of 95 members in the area of Serra Ricco and its several *frazione*, among them *Valleregia* (the ancient site of the De Noli). The conference was held at the city hall conference room in Serra Riccò to an international audience which included the consulates of Ukraine and Costa Rica in addition to the Cape Verdean Ambassador and several other dignitaries. The crowd was larger than expected and we had a standing room only audience. The national anthems of both Italy and Cabo Verde were played with the national flags waving on the computer screen.

The introduction for the conference was given by the mayor Dr. Torre and he was followed by the Culture Assessor, Dr. Tomaso Richini. Professor Noli had traveled to Genoa from Stockholm, Sweden and the CV Ambassador traveled several hours from Rome and of course I traveled from Portugal. We were also entertained by two fabulous singers (tenor and soprano) who were accompanied by a pianist. The Cape Verdean Ambassador was so moved by their extraordinary

talent that he suggested that it might be a good idea to invite them to perform in Cabo Verde.

Professor Noli spoke about the heritage of Antonio de Noli and Cabo Verde which included the genealogy of the Noli family tree. He also displayed some important research documents and manuscripts that helped to confirm the importance of Antonio de Noli in history. For my part, I explained the important role that the Genoese nobleman Antonio de Noli played in world history and how it impacts the world we live in today. I also tried to stress the importance of getting support from the local Noli family descendants in order to promote their history which was far too important to ignore any longer after being buried for 550 years. Fortunately, immediately after my talk, the Culture Assessor; Dr. Richini, who is a very dynamic person; immediately stated very emphatically that the local school district would insure that the teaching of this history would become part of the curriculum in his district in the near future and that he would try to encourage other districts to do the same. The audience responded with a tremendous round of applause to this announcement. The Culture Assessor then introduced The Cape Verdean Ambassador Dr. Barbosa to close out the conference.

The Ambassador gave a powerful and enthusiastic talk about the need for cooperation between our two communities (Italy and Cabo Verde) and that he would work to support the establishment of a sister city program between Italy and Cabo Verde so that we could better understand our common heritage. He also stated that it was in Cabo Verde where “globalization” began more than 500 years ago.

At the end of the conference we were invited by the descendants of the De Noli family to a sumptuous dinner in a beautiful restaurant which sits on a hill top about three miles outside the city. It was a great Italian dinner and the people were truly fantastic in displaying their enthusiasm for the evening as several people toasted the dinner with a variety of speeches to commemorate the event. I must admit that it was an incredible emotional experience being in a room with descendants of our first Cape Verdean ancestors for the first time in 550 years of our history. Yes, we are making progress, one step at a time. In fact I may have to return to Italy for another similar conference in September.

Of course, it would be nice to have everything recorded on a CD, but unfortunately there are no promotional funds available at this time for these projects and besides the whole event was conducted in the Italian language so any videos/CD's etc. would require translations which would only increase the cost of production. Perhaps for the next such conference a news team from CVN could attend the conference and film the entire event with the assistance of a translator.

Note: 1. It is important that the Cape Verdean people understand the meaning of this conference. **This is the first time in history that the current day Cape Verdeans met the descendants of the first Cape Verdean family after 550 years of history.** This is the only country in the world that can do this. It is also living proof that the Cape Verdeans and Portuguese are the pioneers of the New World discoveries and at this conference we have seen that the Genoese also played a leading role in this history. We are the oldest New World civilization in America and yet we are still not recognized by the Federal Government, but we are making progress. This conference was made possible because Cabo Verde is an independent country today, so we should keep that in mind when we commemorate 35 years of independence and 550 years since the discovery of Cabo Verde this year.

Note: 2 I just received a letter from the Culture Assessor, Dr. Richini, dated 29 June 2010, who informed me that he will keep me updated on the initiatives being put forward to get the schools involved in the teaching of the history of Antonio de Noli (and CV) (M. G. Balla-July 2010)