

Happy National Aboriginal Day!

A commentary by Teyowisonte (Thomas Deer)
teyowisonte@hotmail.com

In case you didn't realize, the title should be read aloud in a very sarcastic tone. On June 21, it was National Aboriginal Day; one of Canada's various attempts at clearing its guilty conscious by the order of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Actually, I would have never realized what day it was if it weren't for a certain correspondent from CBC contacting me to find out how I felt that day because of Canada's day of native recognition. To this I answered, "I don't really care about National Aboriginal day". She was somewhat shocked by my response but in time understood my reasoning.

In 1996, Canada's Royal Commission on Aboriginal People published its report outlining various recommendations of atonement for indigenous populations. Among these recommendations, it was felt that a day should be set aside one day out of the year to honor and recognize native people and the contributions to Canada.

Although native people should be honored and respected, one day out of the year is never going to make up for Canada's history oppression and tyranny.

In many indigenous communities, including Kahnawake, there have been many so-called advancements in their quality of living and material culture. Indeed, the Government of Canada believes that through such advancements, the fighting spirit of indigenous people will gradually be appeased by the intoxication of comfort. The late Karoniaktajeh once used the phrase, "comfort comes as a friend and departs as the master." This concept is the basis of the Canada's strategy against indigenous people, as they intend to make its native population so comfortable that they would never attempt to jeopardize this condition. Of course this comfort combined with a climate of dependence, whether it be financial or otherwise, is a dangerous combination to resist. It is at this stage of the game where they begin to gradually impose dangerous legislation that chip away at the inherent rights and claims of indigenous people, as they well know that resistance will be minimal; enter the First Nations Governance Act.

What must be realized by Canada is that no amount of material possession will satisfy our thirst for freedom and liberty; qualities that require the recognition of true indigenous sovereignty.

It seems the next wave of indigenous resistance will deal with the new "Indian Act"