

June 6, 2019

Stand up for Indigenous Day!

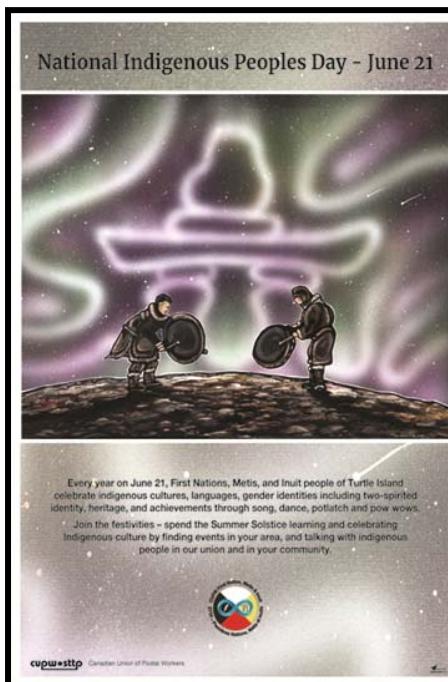
Friday, June 21, is the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, and one where we celebrate the culture and heritage of Canada's first peoples. The rich tapestry of the myriad traditions that make up over 600 Indigenous nations beckons reflection from us all from which we can draw inspiration. For instance, in the Anishnaabe culture, the strawberry, known as the "heart berry", is associated with forgiveness in various oral stories. Summer is, therefore, a time for the heart, when we clear out old energy and make room for new possibilities.

Through Indigenous culture and tradition, we learn of our connection with the natural world, a link that has become fragile and weak, due to our colonial past and present. The Indigenous teach us that our connection with the natural world is a special gift. Walking Wolf, who performed the closing smudging ceremony at CUPW Convention 2019, acknowledged the importance of the flyers, the crawlers, the swimmers and the four-legged ones to our human story. We are all connected. Walking Wolf also alluded to our capacity for creativity.

It is the creative spirit of Tyrone Elliott that brings us this year's poster. A young self-taught artist living in Newfoundland, Tyrone explores northern scenes and Labrador imagery in his work.

Renewing our connection with the earth is one way to unleash the collective creativity necessary to undertake two important tasks. The first task is to speak the truth about the price we exact for living on traditional and

unceded Indigenous land, and only then can we really hope for meaningful reconciliation. A significant part of that price is the death and destruction we have meted on Indigenous peoples most significantly their women, to whom we have turned a blind eye as they were beaten, raped and killed with impunity, now recognized as a Canadian genocide. The second task is to listen and take guidance from Indigenous culture and practice with respect to the preservation of our home, Earth.



Only by disavowing and dismantling capitalism, its upshot, neoliberalism, and our colonial mindset, can we hope to stop the hemorrhaging of the natural resources of our planet, and to significantly reduce our carbon footprint enough to halt almost certain devastation.

We can and must honour the voices of Indigenous sisters, brothers, cousins, elders, comrades, and all our relatives to ensure that we create sufficient space in our work so that CUPW reflects their values and ideals for a better world and a sustainable planet.

Stand with Indigenous this June 21 and every day in order to give future generations a chance.

In solidarity,

Dave Bleakney
2nd National Vice-President

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