



Tsi Nahò:ten Karihwanákere Nó:nen'k

PRESS RELEASE

Media Inquiries:

Joe Delaronde
Political Press Attaché
450- 632-7500 ext 63251
MCKMedia@mck.ca

Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke

Kahnawà:ke Mohawk
Territory
P.O. Box 720
J0L 1B0

Tel: (450) 632-7500
Fax: (450) 638-5958

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MCK responds to Journal de Montreal's misinformation

For immediate release

Kahnawake – 28, Tsothohrhkó:wa/January 2021) The Mohawk Council of Kahnawà:ke (MCK) is compelled to respond to an opinion piece that appeared in the January 26, 2021 edition of the Journal de Montréal. Written by Joseph Facal and entitled Montréal n'a jamais été un territoire Mohawk ('Montreal was never a Mohawk territory'), the article questions the historic presence of the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) people on the Island of Montreal.

As has occurred in the past with certain media outlets, the writer did not bother to contact the MCK, the Mohawk Nation or any Mohawk and/or Indigenous oral history experts to gain insight to our vast knowledge of the actual history of this region. While we understand that the article in question is an opinion piece, it nonetheless reeks of poor journalism and only succeeds in providing the readers of the newspaper with a false sense of history that is designed, simply, to once again discredit our people and our history. As has been stated thousands of times since contact, the Montreal area has long been Kanien'kehá:ka territory and will remain so, whether certain writers wish to accept that fact or not. We shall not allow this transgression to go unchallenged.

As we have stated in the past, the historic presence of the Mohawk Nation in the St. Lawrence Valley has been under constant attack in some Quebec circles, led notably by supporters of the "Saint Lawrence Iroquois" theory. This version of history arose from non-Indigenous academic circles and is, in essence, a contemporary reversion of the *terra nullius* (no man's land) doctrine that has been used to justify the appropriation of Indigenous lands by European powers.

This opinion piece is a perversion of history and makes every effort to persuade the Quebec population to disassociate itself from the responsibility of the dispossession of our territory, and counters any advancement in reconciliation between our nations.

These types of articles are counterproductive and have detrimental effects on our path forward. The obvious goal is not to provide insight on history but, rather, to taint the Quebec population's understanding of it. This is unacceptable and is, in 2021, a testament to the fact that our shared history is, in fact, the chosen history of a select few.

As a final thought on this matter, we would like to remind Mr. Facal and others that share his opinion that the City of Montreal, itself, has installed the Tree of Peace onto its official flag – commemorating and recognizing the Kanien'kehá:ka as one of the founding peoples of the city. Mayor Valérie Plante has been actively engaged in a Reconciliation strategy with the Kanien'kehá:ka, with some very positive results. These are actions that facilitate an acknowledging and respect of our common and shared history, and should be the standard that is sought.

The Journal de Montréal should be ashamed; and its readers afforded better.