

From the Desk of: Rico Newman

4002 Beechwood Road, University Park Md. 20782 |

January 22, 2024

Del. Jazz Lewis

re: Columbus Day

Dear Sir,

I take this time to respond to a request for an opinion justifying the elimination of Columbus Day as a Holiday, with the intention of celebrating that day as "INDIGENOUS DAY" in Maryland.

My statements made here is in an effort toward brevity as this is a topic that can balloon into a seminar.

The most salient fact about this man is that he never set foot on North American soil. His presence and activities where he did make landfall is noted by brutality he wrought upon the Indigenous peoples of the Caribbean that knew no bounds. His greed and perversions as recorded were limitless. This is from documents by the Spanish priest, Bartolome' de Las Casas

Columbus inaugurated what noted demographer Russell Thornton terms the American Indian Holocaust: "an ongoing destruction of Indian communities throughout the Americas by a variety of means stemming from European contact and colonization by introduced disease, including alcoholism, warfare and genocide, geographical removal and relocation, and destruction of ways of life."

During the two year administration of his brothers in "Hispaniola" whom he left in charge, an estimated one half of the Arawak population was killed or many committing suicide after having their hands cut off as punishment for not bringing a required sum of gold ore. Estimates of native men, women and children that perished are estimated from one hundred and twenty-five thousand to one-half million.

This is not a man who should be honored with a day set aside to remember his blundering into an unknown world; a world that his blunder would herald the demise of civilizations and life ways that to this day Indigenous people throughout the Americas strain to recover.

Christopher Columbus deserves to be placed in absentia along with Slavers and others whose statues and memorials are relegated to a historic dust bin.

If needed, references supporting this missive are: Columbus and Other Cannibals and American Discovery of Europe by Dr. Jack D. Forbes; American Indian Holocaust and Survival, Russell Thornton; Four Voyages Sincerely of Christopher Columbus, J.M. Cohen ed.; In Defense of the Indians, Bartolome' de Las Casas.

Thank you for this opportunity,

Sincerely, Rico Newman, Elder; Choptico Band of Piscataway-Conoy Indians