

New for 2016

WHAT IS HAPPENING AT STANDING ROCK?

When people are talking about “Standing Rock” or #noDAPL these days they’re talking about the largest convergence of native people on this continent in over 100 years. It’s an inspiring call to action.

The reason for it, though, is grim: the Energy Transfer Partners is trying to build the Dakota Access Oil Pipeline, which was originally going to go thru Bismarck North Dakota, a 90% white town. That community rejected it because of the risk of leaks, so Enbridge decided to reroute the pipeline through the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, under the Missouri River. Since April 2016, native leaders and allies have been camped out there trying to stop construction of the pipeline. There’s been a lot of police brutality, with elders praying getting attacked with rubber bullets and people arrested en mass at prayer.

The struggle at Standing Rock is against environmental degradation and colonialism. The people of Standing Rock, like native people all over the US, have specific legal rights under treaties with the US Government. Just because the government routinely breaks those treaties does not make them any less the law.

It’s really important not to reduce it to an environmental issue alone. But it is that too: a fight to protect the water source of millions of people from oil leaks and to prevent growth in the fossil fuel industry.

Enbridge has demonstrated a total disrespect for native sovereignty and basic dignity. They already knowingly bulldozed a burial site, used attack dogs and pepper spray against peaceful protestors and tried to push the pipeline through without permits from the Army Corps of Engineers. The state and private security forces have used excessive force against peaceful protestors, elders praying getting attacked with rubber bullets, people at prayer being arrested en mass. In late October, militarized law enforcement moved in with tanks and riot gear against the water protectors. Thousands of peaceful protectors have been arrested.

HOW DOES STANDING ROCK RELATE TO PALESTINE?

Standing Rock and the Palestinian Freedom struggle are both about indigenous people fighting for sovereignty over land and resources. The Palestinian BDS National Committee (BNC), the largest coalition in Palestinian civil society that leads the global BDS movement, sent a message of solidarity to the sovereign Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, saying

“From Palestine to Standing Rock, we shall stand united against colonialism, corporate criminality and for our inalienable right to freedom, justice and equality.”

The ideas of “A land without a people for a people without land” and Manifest Destiny are mirror images of each other.

SOME OTHER IDEAS:

- This might be a conversation you can have without making connections to Israel/Palestine directly - maybe people at your dinner table don't have the same emotional connection to the North Dakota National Guard as they do to the IDF. without selling out what you think about Palestine you can get specific about Standing Rock and build some common understanding that might help your conversations about Palestine go better next time.
- There's also a piece of this that's about religious freedom, which might be a good way in for some people. Until 1978 it was illegal to practice native religions publically, and that's what a lot of the water protectors' parents survived. It's only recently become possible to publically acknowledge sacred sites and practice religious observance publically. So the intensity of what this further desecration represents is particularly egregious and heinous.
- On the environmental side of things, it might be helpful to bring up that this is about the barest of minimums we need to fight climate change: to not expand the fossil fuel industry. That's a pretty low common denominator to aim for - but also one we clearly haven't built a shared societal value around yet!
- This is winnable. Delaying the pipeline in this case works in our favor - some strategists say that people in Standing Rock and their allies can actually bankrupt the project by causes delays that make it economically unfeasible, as much as by winning a court or administrative protection. This is also part of the logic of BDS - when governments won't take the steps needed to protect basic rights, we can make it economically impossible for them not to change course.

FURTHER STANDING ROCK RESOURCES:

STANDING ROCK SYLLABUS:

<https://nycstandswithstandingrock.wordpress.com/standingrocksyllabus/>

RESOURCE PACKET

<http://www.standingrocksolidaritynetwork.org/resource-packet.html>

CONVERSATION GUIDE ABOUT TALKING ABOUT #NODAPL FROM A NATIVE PERSPECTIVE

<https://transformativespaces.org/2016/10/27/how-to-talk-about-nodapl-a-native-perspective/>

Thanks to Miriam Grossman and Jessica Rosenberg for contributing to this guide.

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