

PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Psychologists for Social Responsibility Stands with the Standing Rock Sioux

Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR) is an organization devoted to anchoring the profession of psychology more firmly in the principles and practice of socially responsible human values. These values include social justice, peace, and working towards an environmentally sustainable and humane future for a global civilization.

Grassroots movements that consciously resist the thoughtless and conscienceless top-down exercise of power are among the most important vehicles for bringing these values into material reality. The movement growing at Standing Rock, ND, led by the Standing Rock Sioux, clearly embodies the values we stand for as an organization. We therefore affirm our solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux, and our opposition to the Dakota Access Pipeline and all that it represents.

As brief background, in July, the Army Corps of Engineers gave approval for Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners to build a thousand-mile pipeline from North Dakota to Illinois. This Bakken or Dakota Access Pipeline would funnel fracked crude oil across the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers and other sources of drinking water. Among those directly affected are the Lakota Sioux of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in North and South Dakota, very near the proposed pipeline.

The Standing Rock Sioux have mounted a campaign of nonviolent civil resistance, uniting more than 200 Indigenous Nations and thousands of supporters worldwide. The Army Corps has called for a temporary halt to pipeline construction in the section closest to Sioux land while reviewing whether there were irregularities in the approval process, but Energy Transfer Partners continues construction elsewhere, and so the protests continue.

We believe the Standing Rock movement embodies five dimensions of struggle: protection of the ecological resources on which our collective human future depends; racial justice and resistance to colonialism and white supremacy; solidarity-based resistance to oppression by wealthy and powerful companies and institutions; resistance to violent and militaristic responses to peaceful protest; and freedom of speech, association, and the press. A commitment to even just the first dimension of struggle is sufficient reason to oppose the Dakota Access pipeline. The intersection of all five makes such opposition essential.

Beyond this statement of solidarity, we hope to engage movement leaders and participants in order to learn what distinctive role psychologists — whether clinical, social, community, developmental, ecological or otherwise — might play in advancing this important intersectional movement and others like it in the U.S. and around the world.

The actions of the Standing Rock Sioux offer an inspiring model for everyone who wants a sustainable human future — as well as an end to racial injustice, political-economic oppression, militarization, and abridgement of basic human freedoms. PsySR extends its appreciation and support to the Standing Rock Sioux and their allies for their courageous efforts.

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