



# SOCIALIST PARTY OF MICHIGAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## November 2023

## Workers of Michigan Unite!

### Water is Life!

### No Pipelines on Native Lands and the Mackinac Straits!

As this edition goes to print, the Michigan Public Services Commission has approved the construction of a new oil pipeline tunnel across the Mackinac Straits at the behest of Canadian fossil fuel corporation, Enbridge. Following a similar approval from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), Enbridge is waiting on the green light from the Army Corps of Engineers, scheduled for 2026, to plant an ecological time bomb in the Great Lakes.

This pipeline proposal is only the latest in Enbridge's infamous history of wreaking environmental havoc; the corporation was directly responsible a few years ago for one of the largest inland oil spills in history. A break in one of their pipelines caused nearly one million gallons of oil to contaminate the Kalamazoo River. The contaminants and the subsequent half-baked clean-up effort from Enbridge resulted in years of environmental devastation, up to and including the death of local wildlife and severe illness in Michigan residents living along the river.

Enbridge's ongoing commitment to endangering our state for profit also speaks to the long legacy of colonialism and disrespect towards indigenous sovereignty in both the United States and the state of Michigan. According to the Bay Mills Indian Community\*:

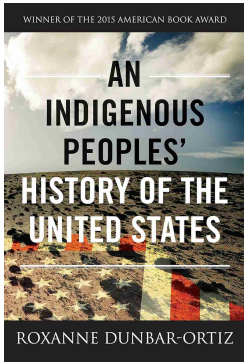
*"The Anishinaabe people of Bay Mills say life as we know it today began in the Straits of Mackinac. They consider the waters where Lake Huron and Lake Erie meet a sacred space. The area remains integral to daily practice of cultural lifeways and is full of historic and archaeological sites. From time immemorial to today, communities, local businesses, and tribal members depend on the abundant fish and wildlife in the Straits of Mackinac. Commercial and subsistence fishing and hunting continue to provide economic survival for the majority of tribal members.*

*In the 1950s, without tribal consultation nor seeking public input, the State of Michigan granted Enbridge a lease and permission to build the original Line 5 dual pipeline in spite of the risk of oil spills in the Great Lakes. "*

Two of the state's leading politicians, Governor Gretchen Whitmer and Attorney General Dana Nessel, have both made moves in the past to prevent the construction of a new Line 5 pipeline. Yet despite their efforts, we are here. While we cannot predict the future on how those efforts will pan out, we should be prepared for the inevitable, given the reality of the capitalist, colonial state we live in that has continuously favored profit over the environment and human life. The working people of Michigan must be ready to take direct action to protect our waters. We cannot depend on liberal politicians who are, at the end of the day, loyal to capital.

\*<https://narf.org/cases/enbridges-line-5-pipeline/>

## Radical Recommendations



*An Indigenous People's History of the United States*  
by Roxanne Dunbar- Ortiz

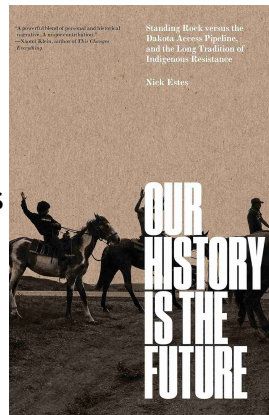
Since its publication in 2014 Ortiz's book has become indispensable for organizers, historians, and teachers seeking the truth on how the

U.S. Colonial project was experienced by Native people. The book brilliantly sketches the experience of indigenous people staring at the receiving end of 'Manifest Destiny,' and how those violent and racist pathologies endure into the current age via U.S. Imperialism and capitalism. From [Beacon Press](#).\*

### *Our History is The Future*

By Nick Estes

Opening with a first-hand account of the brutal arrest of peaceful water-protectors at the Bismarck Mall in 2016, Estes' book chronicles the struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline at Standing Rock and draws on their knowledge as a historian to sketch out its connection to earlier indigenous struggles from the Indian Wars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the American Indian Movement, to current challenges against the U.S. Government on the world stage.



At a time when the climate crisis is escalating and companies like Enbridge are responding by continuing the legacy of colonialism via fossil fuel infrastructure in the Mackinac Straits, Estes' book is essential reading for any Michigander looking for inspiration from the indigenous legacy of anti-capitalist, anti-colonial resistance. From [Verso Books](#).\*\*

## Congratulations to the PIO Union at Western Michigan University!

After many months of active organizing the Professional Instructors Organization at WMU has secured concessions from the University, including a 20.5% pay increase next fall, bonuses for the current semester, and a pay increase coming in the Spring.

Much like their counter-parts at the University of Michigan, who were struggling for similar demands earlier this year, WMU has refused to pay their instructors a living wage. Simultaneously they have granted an exorbitant pay increase to WMU president Edward Montgomery and built a new multi-million dollar student center.

Congratulations to the WMU- PIO, and a sincere thank you from the Socialist Party of Michigan for showing what the power of organized labor can accomplish.

## Events and Announcements

-Socialist Party USA are having several upcoming meetings of their national working groups.

-People of Color Commission Meeting  
Sunday December 10, 2023

5:30pm Central time

For more info contact the commission at [socialists.of.color@gmail.com](mailto:socialists.of.color@gmail.com)

-Anti-War Working Group Meeting  
Monday December 11, 2023

8:30 pm ET/ 5:30 pm ET

Contact us at Socialist Party of Michigan if you would like to participate. You can find us on Facebook or e-mail us at [spmi@spmichigan.org](mailto:spmi@spmichigan.org).

-Kalamazoo Non-Violent Opponents of War are holding weekly vigils in front of the Federal Building at the corner of Park St. and W Michigan Ave Sundays at 11:30AM. Recent and current vigils are focusing on the genocide in Gaza.

\*<https://www.beacon.org/An-Indigenous-Peoples-History-of-the-United-States-P2023.aspx>

\*\*<https://www.versobooks.com/products/600-our-history-is-the-future>