American Indians have rights to land

To the Editor:

Regarding the letter by Steve Fernandez '86 ("Indian giving: treatment for hypocrisies," April 4) I strongly agree that "Americans" must open their eyes to apartheid right here.

The land that the Hopis and Navahos must leave is the Big Mountain area. Big Mountain is the female mountain. The female mountain is extremely important to the Navajo since they are matrilineal. It is the archer, mother and creator of life.

Their sacred beliefs, I would expect to be protected by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). When I called the BIA last week I realized just what the BIA stood for. I asked for the Public Law 93-531. The man on the phone told me that the removal was to settle a land dispute between the Indians. When I cited the corporate interests in mineral rights, he told me of the Navajo propaganda. When I attempted to question him further he hung up on me. It becomes clear to me who the BIA stands to protect.

The BIA refuses to recognize the traditional Hopi and Navajo Elders. How could the BIA protect the Indians' rights if it refuses to even recognize their culture? There is of course no Indian on the BIA. The BIA did not stop companies such as Kerr-McGee from providing uranyl tailings for the Indians to use as building material, according to a 1973 Environmental Protection Agency report. Back in the 1960s they ignored the Indians' reports of being attached by poisonous gas until some white Arizonians complained. In addition, killing an Indian in this area is not seen as a serious crime. Clearly the reason for Public Law 93-531 is not to "settle a dispute" between Indians. The true reason is the uranium and coal.

Money is the law and takes precedence over justice. But the Hopi and Navajo live by a different credo; they live by the Great Spirit. Who has the power to deny them the right to live by their beliefs? The BIA refuses to recognize the Indians, to use as building materials the uranium and lode that they consider the very essence of their existence.

I urge students to consider the following points:

1. The DOE will hold a public meeting tonight on the issue. It will be in the auditorium of the State House in Boston.

2. The man on the phone told me that Bush's environmental protection is for the sake of all life, both present and future.

I urge students to be present and to open their eyes to apartheid right here.

Sally Wendel C.'87

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To the Editor:

On January 16, 1986, the Department of Energy (DOE) released its site evaluation report for the Crystalline Repository Project. This report recommends 12 granite bodies in the northeastern United States for further study concerning the feasibility of their use as high-level nuclear waste dumps.

These 12 potentially acceptable sites were selected by computer from 235 sites in 17 states on the basis of census counts and existing ecological patterns. Following a formal 90-day comment period, the DOE will release the final Area Recommendations Report and begin, with the US Geological Survey, detailed studies of the proposed site areas.

My purpose is to persuade as many students as possible to take advantage of the formal comment period and write to the DOE concerning this project. I have studied the Area Recommendations Report for the three proposed sites in the northeastern region (one in New Hampshire and two in Maine) and have found fault in all of them.

Two are near heavily populated areas (and major usable aquifers) and are close to the safe drinking water of city and suburbs. The third site includes portions of the reservation land of the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot Indian nations. The Sebago Lake site, in southeastern Maine, has a very heavy touristic population (not considered in the computer survey) and is near to or includes state lands and wildlife preserves. In addition, it is located only five kilometers from the White Mountain National Forest.

The New Hampshire site seems at best unclean in a state that has no commercial nuclear installations and has made every attempt to prevent the operation of the Seabrook plant.

The DOE office in Boston has been very helpful in providing me with this information. I urge you to consider the following points and write to the DOE before April 15:

1. Finding one or two dump sites is not difficult. The real issue is whether we can store an arbitrarily large amount of waste and does not validate the continued production of large amounts of hazardous material in our power plants and defense related projects.

2. Attempts to deposit waste on a geologic dump site is not just a safe dumping of waste containing radioactive isotopes which will persist for tens of thousands of years.

3. The DOE in Boston can be reached at 223-2352. To write, the address is Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management, Crystal Repository Project, 8000 South Cass Avenue, Argonne, Illinois 60439.

The DOE will hold a public meeting tonight on the issue. It will be in the Gardner Auditorium at the State House in Boston.

Karl Debellisoph '87

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