

# DISPATCHES FROM STANDING ROCK

Against the Dakota Access Pipeline & its World

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The following texts appeared on various public websites over the past few weeks, during a period of intensified struggle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. We reprint them here as a means of extending the visibility of this ongoing revolt, with which we feel a profound affinity.

-Ill Will Editions  
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[ill-will-editions.tumblr.com](http://ill-will-editions.tumblr.com)  
[illwill@riseup.net](mailto:illwill@riseup.net)

# A CONVERSATION ON THE SACRED STONE CAMP

(Anonymous)<sup>5</sup>



**A NightFall Editor:** *First off, can you tell us a little bit about the Dakota Access Pipeline?*

**Anonymous Participant:** The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), is owned by a Houston, Texas based corporation called Energy Transfer Partners, L.P. which created the subsidiary Dakota Access LLC that is building the pipeline. The DAPL, also known as the Bakken Pipeline, is proposed to transport 450,000 barrels of crude oil per day (which is fracked and highly volatile) from the Bakken fields of North Dakota to Patoka, Illinois. The current route of the DAPL will cross over the Ogallala Aquifer (one of the largest aquifers in the world) and under the Missouri River twice (the longest river in the United States). Dakota Access has systematically failed to consult with tribes and conduct a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

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<sup>5</sup> This interview appeared in *Nightfall, an Agitational Newspaper*, September 2016. Accessible here: <https://nightfall.blackblogs.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/236/2016/06/NIGHTFALL-TWO.pdf>



In early August, Canadian pipeline giant Enbridge announced that, along with Marathon Petroleum, it will make a significant investment in the Bakken Pipeline System, including the controversial Dakota Access pipeline. As part of their statement, Enbridge also noted that, “Upon successful closing of the transaction, Enbridge and Marathon Petroleum plan to terminate their transportation services and joint venture agreements for the Sandpiper Pipeline Project [a crude oil pipeline proposed for northern Minnesota.]”

We know that this influx of resources from Enbridge will only speed up the construction process.

**NF:** *When and how was the Sacred Stone Camp established?*

**AP:** The camp is at the confluence of the Cannon Ball and Missouri Rivers. It is an important location for the Mandan origin story as the place where they came into the world after the great flood. Where the two waters meet, created Inyan Wakhánagapi Othí, spherical Sacred Stones (thus the colonizers’ term ‘Cannon Ball River’), but after the Army Corp of Engineers dredged and flooded the rivers in the 1950s, the flow has changed and Sacred Stones are no longer produced. The camp is surrounded by historic burial grounds, village grounds and Sundance sites that would be directly impacted by this pipeline. The water of the Missouri River is essential to life on the Standing Rock Reservation as well as all of the nations downstream.

On April 1st, 2016, a group of over 200 supporters, led by forty riders on horse, under the Lakota name, “Chante tin’sa kinanzi Po”, which translates as “People, Stand with a Strong Heart!” left Fort Yates for a thirty mile trek to the camp located just north of Cannonball, North Dakota. They setup up tipi’s and a sacred fire. The camp has swelled in the past two months and has had multiple satellite camps across the river on private as well as unceded land on both sides of the river.

**NF:** *What is daily life like in the camp?*

**AP:** Cooking, cleaning, gathering and chopping firewood and hanging out, especially around the camp, sharing food largely defines camp life. There are always families of all generations populating the camp. You can hear the people playing the drum, giving the

camp its own heartbeat. Stories and memories are shared like water. Laughter and life are not uncommon.

The reality of the situation is that the people have been resisting the U.S. Empire and continuing genocide for so long that the drones and military surveillance flying above the camp the whole day becomes almost forgettable; like living next to a waterfall, the sound becomes a part of the landscape. We do counter-surveillance, logging the enemy's movements. We can see all the pipeline construction equipment on the east side of the river.

Everyday there are prayers of resistance offered to the water, earth and ancestors. Without the water of life, the camp and we would die.

**NF:** *How have folks at the camp mobilized to stop the pipeline thus far? Has it been solely a publicity campaign/symbolic protest thus far or have folks directly interfered with construction of the pipeline? Are there discussions about tactics at the camp? Did these change after the Army Corps of Engineers approved the pipeline crossing the river and/or after the arsons attacking DAPL construction sites in Iowa? As I see it, the camp and the arsons are complementary rather than conflicting tactics for stopping the pipeline; is this generally how people feel at the camp or is there a range of opinions on the matter?*

**AP:** Like with any struggle, the people are not homogenous in thought and tactic. Much of the camp's rhetoric is of the "Non-violent Direct Action" type. Lock your arm to this piece of deconstruction equipment and take a picture with a banner for Facebook. But the Warrior Culture that is so rich in Lakota memory seems to counter a lot of the liberal, non-violent, NGO types. Comrades saw what happened in Iowa, heard about the \$1,000,000 in damage and got inspired. I wouldn't say that it was publicly celebrated because the camp's tactic of "Non-violence" is the image they want to perpetuate. Like I said, it is a tactic...not everyone thinks that is what we need to dogmatically stick to. It is one thing to use Non-Violence as a rhetorical device in corporate media to spread your inspirational actions but it is another thing to preach it as your dogma in your private circles and use it to stop material damage to the infrastructure of ecocide. I see the former being invoked much greater than the latter.

**NF:** *How has the camp's location on private land affected its character? I would imagine the fact that it's on private land gives it some protection against police but also means that if folks at the camp did engage in any illegal activities the land owner would be in a vulnerable position with regards to legal repression. Is that a concern? Does the person who owns the land have more say than others about tactics or daily matters at the camp? What does the decision making process look like?*

**AP:** The question of “private land” is especially difficult to address when we factor in Reservations (or what the U.S. Empire originally called and created them for, Prison of War Camps). The reservations are actually Federal Land. This means that local county and state police cannot enter it. A huge reason why Dakota Access (the company) is not building the pipeline thru the rez but literally a couple hundred meters north of it.

When the reservations were created, imperial logic of “borderization” was imposed; meaning, the communal and nomadic lands used for Life were divided by borders: fencing for animal domestication, invisible lines drawn on maps to denote “property” i.e. who owns what, etc. is fundamentally changed people’s relation to land. And this set up the infrastructure / hierarchies for surveillance and policing. The camp exists in a way that resists this imperial imposition. We share food and water without hesitation. We have no leader. We all have knowledge to share and learn from each other. We recognize that the borders we build between ourselves are not “natural” anymore than the flooding in the 1950s by the Army Corps of Engineers was. They do not spread our Wildfire, so we continue to

keep the eternal flame lit. Instead of framing things in colonial terms of “legal/ illegal”, it makes more sense at the camp to think in terms of effectiveness; effectiveness of stopping this genocidal project so the people can reclaim their way of life.

# IT'S ON! A CALL TO OPEN NEW FRONTS IN THE #NODAPL STRUGGLE<sup>1</sup>

(Anonymous)



*To all rebels, rabblers, radicals, and ruckus raisers: It's on!* In the past 24 hours there have been significant escalations in the fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline. In North Dakota despite over 120 people being arrested on Saturday, water protectors launched a major offensive on Sunday, setting up a new encampment directly on the pipeline route, and simultaneously erecting 3 major blockades on surrounding highways to prevent police and workers from accessing the site. From the Sacred Stone Camp:

“This morning, at approximately 8am central, water protectors took back unceded territory affirmed in the 1851 Treaty of Ft. Laramie as sovereign land under the control of the Oceti Sakowin, erecting a frontline camp of several structures and tipis on Dakota Access property, just east of ND state highway 1806. This new established camp is 2.5 miles north of the Cannon

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1 This text first appeared on Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016, on [itsgoingdown.org](http://itsgoingdown.org).



Ball River, directly on the proposed path of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). This site is directly across the road from where DAPL security dogs attacked water protectors on September 3<sup>rd</sup>.”

Meanwhile, in Iowa the Mississippi Stand encampment has shut-down pipeline drilling operations under the Mississippi River for over 24 hours and are currently blocking an access road with an immobilized RV.

These actions come after weeks of sustained disruptions of the pipeline construction in both North Dakota and Iowa, and the historic blossoming of a resistance camp that has seen the greatest gathering of tribes in the US in over 100 years. While thousands of people from across the country and world hold down the largest and longest running autonomous zone seen in the US in decades, resistance grows across the country.

Thousands have taken to the streets in cities large and small. Others have occupied banks, blocked intersections, and redecorated oil company offices. Some have decided to take it a step further. On October 11<sup>th</sup> a group of activists shut down all 5 pipelines carrying tar sands oil into the US from Canada in solidarity with the Standing Rock resistance. *Yes, they literally cut off the flow of oil by shutting off emergency valves that are apparently easily accessible.* A video put out by Submedia.tv shows just how easy it is to do. On top of this, several mainstream media outlets are reporting that over the weekend of Oct 15/16, unknown persons torched several pieces of pipeline equipment in Iowa, resulting in nearly \$2 million in damage. This comes a month after anonymous individuals torched pipeline equipment at three different sites in one night in the same area, resulting in \$1 million in damage.

This is a historic uprising, with incredible public support. It is time to ask ourselves, what are we doing to support, grow, and escalate this struggle for indigenous sovereignty and defense of the land, air and water.

### **Opening New Fronts**

It goes without saying that if you have the means to get out to the Standing Rock occupation, and are ready to commit to the resistance, then by all means get your ass out there. They need as many

committed warriors as they can get who are willing to hold their ground against the highly militarized police force. For those who for whatever reason cannot make the journey to Standing Rock, we still have an important role to play in this uprising.



Just as a small band of committed individuals in Iowa with not nearly the support of the Standing Rock encampment managed to open up a second front that the state and pipeline companies must now contend with, we need to explore ways to open new battle-lines in the fight against DAPL. As water protectors holding down the frontlines at Standing Rock have escalated, we need to escalate our resistance around the country to show those responsible for the pipeline there will be consequences for building this pipeline on stolen land.

### **Disrupt Flows of Capital**

While the marches and rallies in front of banks invested in the pipeline certainly have their place, we need to expand the terrain of resistance to DAPL. We can look to the Black Lives Matter (and to some degree Occupy) movement to see that the blocking of commerce: highways, airports, railways, ports and shopping districts are a far greater threat to the state and the economy than a lockdown at a bank. What those in power fear most is a loss of control of territory and a disruption of the flow of capital, even if for only an hour

or two. It is time to do your research, get a crew together, and *shut shit down*. Shut it down with a crowd of hundreds of people or shut it down with nothing more than a couple friends and some locks and chains. What matters is you shut it down.

### **Create New Spaces of Encounter and Occupation**

The uprising in Standing Rock has electrified thousands upon thousands of people who have, for one reason or another, been sitting on the sidelines until now. Can we create spaces, temporary or permanent, in our communities where these new folks can find each other, learn necessary skills, deepen their analysis, and ultimately take collective action? This could look like calling an open assembly in a park, a weekend action camp, or a permanent encampment at a strategic or symbolic location from which to organize and launch actions. What matters is that we create spaces where we can find each other, and especially make space for new people to get involved and help grow the struggle. If a small group of people in Keokuk, Iowa can build a secondary encampment literally in a ditch between a highway and the Mississippi River to launch regular actions against the pipeline, than surely folks in better resourced cities and regions can do the same. A small group in northwest Florida has already taken this approach with an encampment against the Sabal Trails pipeline. What are you doing?

### **Offer Trainings to People Traveling to Standing Rock**

As has been stated, lots of new folks are diving head first into this struggle without much experience. This is great. Those of us with a little dirt under our fingernails can be a big help by offering trainings to those going to Standing Rock or otherwise looking to get involved in the struggle. Trainings in direct action skills, know your rights, blockades, security culture, action medical, police tactics, mobile affinity group tactics, and what to expect if arrested are all useful knowledge to have for new folks heading to the occupation. There is also clearly a need for education on decolonization and cultural appropriation for folks who do not have experience in working with indigenous communities. A baseline understanding of colonialism, genocide, and not being a cultural vampire for people traveling to Standing Rock can go along way in preventing unnecessary conflicts from arising within the camp.

### **There's Nothing To It but to Do It**

Lets not waste time. The situation on the frontlines is extremely fluid, and it is only a matter of time before another major crackdown happens up in Standing Rock. If you can, get up to the Standing Rock or Mississippi Stand encampments with people, supplies, and a commitment to hold down the occupations. If you can't, get together with your friends and start organizing for action in your community. Now is not the time to be insular and standoffish to anyone who doesn't fit into your concept of a committed comrade. Now is the time to take risks and reach out to others who give damn about this planet and start working together to open up new fronts in this battle, occupy space, and collectively shut this shit down.

Onwards!





# **NOW IS THE TIME**

**1. TRAVEL TO STANDING ROCK NOW**

**2. ORGANIZE SOLIDARITY ACTIONS IN  
YOUR OWN COMMUNITY**

**3. SEND MONETARY SUPPORT**

**NODAPLSOLIDARITY.ORG**

**#NODAPL**

# THE GLOBAL SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN<sup>2</sup>

## Red Warrior Camp



The Red Warrior Camp calls on all People from around the world to take action and join the Global Solidarity Campaign. If you live on this land, breathe the air and drink water, this is your fight too. Our Brothers, Sisters and Protectors are putting their bodies and lives on the line everyday on the frontlines in Standing Rock. First and foremost, we call upon ALL protectors to come stand with us on the frontlines. If you cannot be physically present, you can still take escalated action to stop the pipeline and support our struggle. The projected in service date for the Dakota Access Pipeline is January 1st, 2017. With that date quickly approaching, we are calling for two months of sustained waves of action targeting the Army Corp of Engineers, investors, pipeline companies, security firms and elected officials who are behind this project. We need to hold these institutions, corporations and individuals accountable and put pressure on them to stop this pipeline.

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<sup>2</sup> This call to action first appeared on the Red Warrior Camp Facebook page on October 27, 2016.

These are the ways to join the fight:

1. Organize yourself and/or large groups of people from your community to come to Standing Rock. Contact us at [Organizing@NoDAPLSolidarity.org](mailto:Organizing@NoDAPLSolidarity.org) to discuss details and schedule a time frame.
2. TAKE ACTION IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITIES. Target the Army Corp of Engineers, banks, pipeline companies, corporations and elected officials behind the pipeline. Taking action includes lock-downs at offices, sit-ins, taking up space, rallies, call-in days, divesting from banks, mass mailings and interruptions. Register at [nodaplsolidarity.org](http://nodaplsolidarity.org) to join our network of Global Solidarity.
3. Send monetary support to:  
Official Red Warrior Camp Fund: [www.gofundme.com/red-warriorcamp](http://www.gofundme.com/red-warriorcamp);  
Official Legal Fund: [generosity.com/fundraising/red-warrior-camp-legal-fund-nodapl](http://generosity.com/fundraising/red-warrior-camp-legal-fund-nodapl)

We want people to recognize that this fight is much larger than Standing Rock. When the Dakota Access Pipeline is defeated, the fight is not over. There are communities around the world fighting against the exact same corporations and systems that we currently fight against in Standing Rock. This is about Indigenous rights, Human rights and the rights of Mother Earth being violated for corporations and their profit. This is about a capitalist system that allows for these violations to continue around the World. This is about recognizing that with the energy created at Standing Rock and those organizing at Standing Rock have a responsibility to uplift the shared struggles of ALL Peoples, from all directions of Mother Earth if we wish to pass down a healthy world to future generations.

Additionally, recognizing that we are being charged with illegal activities for simply protecting the water, we are taking back our power and charging the pipeline companies, banks and individuals behind this project with crimes against Humanity and crimes against Mother Earth. The Dakota Access Pipeline is in direct violation of the United Nation's Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peo-

ples, most especially around the right to free and prior informed consent, desecration, redress, militarization, development, treaties and judicial proceedings.

The Dakota Access Pipeline is in direct violation of the United Nation's Declaration of Universal Human Rights, most especially in regards to the right to security of person, the right to not be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

The sacredness and power of the Water is what brought us together. It is what connects us. We cannot lose sight of that.

Please stay active and check out the website [NoDAPLSolidarity.org](http://NoDAPLSolidarity.org) to get involved!

-Red Warrior Camp



# RIOT POLICE RAID SACRED GROUND CAMP<sup>3</sup>

## Red Warrior Camp



On the morning of October 27th 2016, Frontline Camp – Sacred Ground Camp was raided by the militarized police forces. During a 12 hour stand off with over 300 police the camp was bulldozed and over 100 people arrested, including elders, and people in sweat ceremony.

This camp was established in the path of the Dakota Access Pipeline to protect ancestral remains and sacred water, it was a small camp of a few people but after the mass arrests on the October 22, 2016 prayer walk, many people from the Oceti Sakowin encampment occupied the land. This land is Treaty Land from the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, we have every right to occupy this land, and to defend it from further destruction and desecration.

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3 This text first appeared on October 30, 2016, on the site [ancestralpride.org](http://ancestralpride.org)

Energy Transfer Partners and its investors and shareholders feel different, so does the Morton County Sheriffs Department. In an act of unprecedented violence and domestic terrorism against Native peoples and their allies the riot police assaulted and brutalized the People. Corporate Greed and modern western society's obsession with consuming energy has fueled the fires and the racial hatred against Indigenous Peoples world wide. The very fact that the Police are protecting corporate interests speaks for itself, we live in a fascist police state. We live in a time where land, water, and peoples very lives are considered acceptable collateral damage to the CEO's of these corporations, and the silence from the Government proves they agree. The fact that the Obama Administration has not stepped in and stopped these atrocities is reprehensible, but what can we really expect from a Government that has never once treated the Indigenous People with any form of respect or common decency.

Words cannot begin to describe the feelings I had that day. I was working on a project and I heard the call out in the Casino lobby, "the Police are coming they are raiding camp." After many false alarms, since the influx of new protectors at Sacred Ground camp, I headed out to see for myself if this was true. I arrived at the camp at 11:00 am there was many people there and cars, we could see the Riot Police and their machines gearing up to mobilize against the People. The energy was palpable, I could feel what was coming, people were shouting to remain calm, to be brave and to stand firm, others were saying stay behind the white line on the right side of the road and that if we stood there the Riot Police would not harm us. Horses and people were milling around trying to organize themselves and all the while we could see them coming.

What followed was 12 + hours of chaos, it is absolutely stunning, and sadly not surprising to see such an excessive use of force by the Police against the People. In a story that has been continuing for over 500 years we were attacked and brutalized at the hands of the colonizers, we were repeatedly told by the police on a loud speaker: "We do not want to harm you, We do not want to arrest you." Yet they harmed us, they arrested us, and eventually they bulldozed the Sacred Ground before our very eyes.

A blockade was built and set on fire to stop them from coming in and we all watched as people who were scared put it out and then

we watched as all hell broke loose. I watched as they arrested my friend Dan on his birthday in his regalia for standing in Prayer, I watched as they tasered a man for holding his ground. I was shot in the chest and the knee, and still they came. We tried as hard as we could to hold our frontline and to stop them and keep people calm but we were relentlessly forced back. People sang and cried, we helped each other when we were injured, we encouraged each other when we were weakened by battle fatigue. What struck me the most was the amount of force put into protecting OIL over water, and how soulless the riot police looked, how they smirked and laughed at people who they were terrorizing, the mindset of these pigs is so foreign to humanity.

We were tear gassed, maced, concussion grenades, rubber bullets, sound cannon, bean bags, pellet grenades, tazers, snipers in the hills, and of course beaten with batons. I was hit in the chest with a bean bag, and shortly after I took a rubber bullet in the knee, I dearrested myself and helped others from being arrested. I recorded video from the hood of a truck my comrades were locked down to as the police attacked and beat several Warriors, I bore witness to the setting up of a Tipi on the road and watched with my heart in my throat as they tore it down. Yet we held them off as long as we could, we tried our very best to stop them, eventually we were forced to the bridge that is north of Standing Rock Encampment on highway 1806. A fiery blockade was erected and maintained until the morning of October 28th when it was dismantled through pacifism and neo colonialism. Meanwhile as all this was happening on Highway 134 a lone DAPL security guard attacked people holding a blockade in his vehicle, he had an AR15 and he shot to kill, the warriors fought back and managed to take his truck, he ran into the water with his gun and was eventually arrested by the Bureau Of Indian Affairs; his truck was set afire.

At the end of the day, the pipeline is still being built, the people are still standing firm, and all we can do is continue to PRAY and fight back. They are just a few short miles away from the river, and we must remain vigilant and also act proactively to stop the Black Snake and kill it dead. We cannot afford to allow this pipeline to continue, people need to realize that for an effective resistance to succeed we must not allow fear mongering and fear rule us.

On October 28th the hard work of the People and the Warriors to hold a frontline has been dismantled. The holding of the blockade at the bridge on highway 1806 has been taken down, this was negotiated by a group of people from the main camp (no disrespect meant but it's true) with no idea how detrimental to a resistance movement taking the blockade down is. The blockade was a MESSAGE to the WORLD about how we as Indigenous People of this continent are being treated, this fight is about the pipeline and Sacred Water but what it really boils down to is Indigenous Rights and Title and Eminent Domain, Treaty Rights and the violation of our Human Rights! Environmental Racism and Land Theft and the bullshit that white society brought since contact has infected the minds and hearts of our Warriors and Elders, this has to stop.

The old story of divide and conquer has a chance of winning because when it comes down to it scared people are attempting to squash the warrior spirit through pacifism, we understand this fear but we cannot let it rule us. The sincere hope is that these people stop trying to police our own and stand up beside us! Diversity of tactics must be used and also be respected, we have exhausted all the at least we tried things and all that is left to us is to fight. The call out for Warriors was answered, we are here to stop a pipeline, we know the risks and we accept them for what they are, instead of using prayer against your own people, use the prayer to empower the people.

In The Spirit of Crazy Horse,

Xhopakelxhit  
Ancestral Pride  
Red Warrior Camp

#BlackSnakeKillas

# REPORTBACK FROM THE BATTLE FOR SACRED GROUND<sup>4</sup>

(Anonymous)



## Preface

*For months, hundreds of people, including members of nearly a hundred different indigenous peoples, have mobilized to block the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. On October 27, police raiding the Sacred Ground camp encountered stiff resistance. We've just received the following firsthand report from comrades who participated in the defense of the camp. Describing some of the fiercest clashes indigenous and environmental movements in the region have seen in many years, they pose important questions about solidarity struggles.*

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4 This text first appeared on Nov 1, 2016, on Crimethinc.com

## The Battle

When we arrive on Wednesday, October 26, we can't find our contacts, the friends and friends of friends who have been vouched into the secretive Red Warrior camp. Word around the camp is that eviction is imminent for Sacred Ground, the only camp in the direct path of the proposed Dakota Access Pipeline. The tribe claims this land is territory granted to them in the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, and that they were using their own "eminent domain" to take it back when they set up the camp. We decide to set up at Sacred Ground and to figure out how to make ourselves useful in stopping its eviction.

The Sacred Ground camp is located about two miles north of the main camp on highway 1806. The main camp itself is just north of the Standing Rock Reservation, where two more NoDAPL camps, Rosebud and Sacred Stone, are located. Before arriving, we had seen images of barricades blocking Highway 1806 to the north of the Sacred Ground camp.



When we walk to that site, however, we find those barricades have been pushed to the sides of the road, the northernmost one turned into a kind of checkpoint. According to the people at the check-

point, they were ordered to remove the blockade by the camp leaders, who plan on allowing the police to enter and evict the camp. The “camp leaders” are hired Nonviolent Direct Action consultants. They are utilizing a classic strategy of nonviolent civil disobedience: they hope that the images of police evicting people in prayer will win them the sympathy of the public. The people we speak with at the checkpoint are clearly not buying this. But what can they do? Their elders have hired these people to stage-manage the moment. After some conversation with the folks on the barricades and with the “camp leaders,” it is decided that we’ll leave the road open until the police actually arrive, and then we’ll build up the barricades quickly in order to slow their progress. This will hopefully buy time to allow the people who want to get arrested while in prayer to assemble and prepare themselves. For what its worth, this plan was crafted with the approval of the “proper channels.”

As soon as this course of action is proposed, some new organism bursts into life, and thirty people we’ve never met are loading logs and tires and barbed wire onto trucks in the middle of the night. A plan comes together for when and how to start blocking the road. The energy is electric; the possibility of a real physical defense of this strategically decisive camp is in the air and in people’s conversations.

“I don’t know who those ‘leaders’ are,” a Native guy tells us as we throw tires on the side of the road. “They’re not my elders. I came here to defend this camp, and I’m going to do what I have to.” We still don’t know where the fabled Red Warrior folks are, but we feel that we’ve found people we want to support in this battle.

This is the plan: the folks up the hill at the checkpoint are the first line of defense. When the cops come, they will get in the road and begin a prayer ceremony. They inform us they have no intention of moving until they are arrested or worse. While they block the road, it will be our job to build up the next barricade about a quarter mile down the road to buy time for the prayer circle to assemble in the camp. To us, this is not ideal, because it still means that the eviction will go through. But we also feel that we have very little agency in this situation. We’re white. We just showed up. At least we’ll be a part of putting up a fight, we tell ourselves. At least the police won’t just be invited in.

We take shifts all night, trying to decode the flying objects in the sky. Is that a drone or a satellite? Is that the moon behind the clouds? Then why is it moving? Why is that surveillance plane flashing those lights over there? For hours, I have the feeling that we've stepped into some deep historical current, that this moment is connected to every other moment in which people waited to defend barricades against overwhelming adversaries. We joke and tell stories, we snap our attention to any movement on the hillside, we speculate and scheme. We receive new names based on stupid things we do or say. The night is long and cold and at dawn the sun is welcome.

The next morning, we learn that there has been another barricade all along, located on a bridge on Route 134, the only other entrance by which the police can access the Sacred Ground camp since all other entrances go through the Standing Rock reservation. Apparently this is what Red Warrior has been up to, and they have no intention of letting the police through. While that is exciting to hear, we can't understand why the same commitment to physically defend the space is absent here on Highway 1806.

Around midday, a line of police vehicles shows up blaring their sirens—but not on the highway. They are taking the access road beside the pipeline construction, where we have no defenses. People start parking their cars to block the access road and crowds start to gather. Word comes that the police are bringing in armored vehicles on the highway. We run to our posts at the second blockade and begin loading tires into the street. Just then, a truck pulls up and out steps a paid nonviolent consultant who is on his way to negotiate a mass arrest. He gathers the barricade crew in a circle and makes an impassioned plea for us to leave the road clear. "When people see the images of them arresting us and storming our teepees with guns, they will know our struggle is right."

Some people are convinced and begin removing the barbed wire. Our crew has a quick conversation. We aren't convinced by this guy, but we don't want to be the ones to disobey his orders—we don't want to make it easy for the police or media to deploy a narrative about "outside agitators," and we don't want to sabotage the possibility of other anarchists like us participating in this struggle.





We decide we will check in with the Native guys we spent the night on the barricade with. When we ask about their reaction to the speech, we get a blunt response: “Fuck that guy.” Our thoughts exactly.

As we’re building the barricade, our new friends give us one rule: build it up as much as we want, but their elders say no fire. We agree to this. At this point, people are crowded up the hill at the first checkpoint; we begin to load our barricade materials into the street, leaving one lane open to enable our people to make it to the other side before the cops. We watch from a distance as the armored vehicles approach the crowd up ahead.

Then a blue car that had been up near the first checkpoint speeds down the hill toward us. It parks, blocking half the road. A Native woman gets out and stabs her own tires with a knife. A team removes her license plates, and soon another car blocks the other side of the road in similar fashion. The cops are heading toward us, and word spreads that the other barricade is already on fire. People and horses are herded to our side of the blockade. Just then, the paid nonviolence consultant gets on top of one of the cars and attempts to deliver a speech to calm everyone down. He can barely get a word out before a Native kid gets up on the other car and starts chanting: “BLACK SNAKE KILLAZ! BLACK SNAKE KILLAZ!” As the crowd chants this over the guy who just negotiated a care-

fully orchestrated mass arrest with the cops, the barricade is lit and the fight is on. Bottles and stones are thrown at the police vehicles. But this only lasts for a moment before a line of elders and camp security forms to start pushing the combatants back from the barricade. Shouting matches and fistfights break out. There are Native folks of all ages on both sides of the long and disappointing struggle. Those opposing the physical confrontation succeed in pushing us back, enabling the police to form a line around the north side of the camp where the large crowds are gathered.

At this point, a truck is parked in the road with two people locked to the underside. Logs are piled up around the truck and two teepees are erected on either side of it. Some try to hold a line against the police, stretching teepee poles across a dozen people. Others hurl stones and logs at the cops and their vehicles. The chaos is overwhelming. A young warrior on horseback is tazed and falls to the ground. All around us, people are screaming from the effects of pepper spray. Flash-bang grenades are bursting in the air, mingling with rubber bullets and beanbag rounds. The screaming matches continue between those who want to fight back and those who want to be arrested while praying. The cops are already in the camp.

Over a painful hour, we are all pushed south of the only camp that blocked the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. Over a hundred people are arrested, many of them charged with “conspiracy to endanger with fire” regardless of whether they were in any proximity to the flaming barricade. This seems calculated to drain our legal fund, since the bail is set at \$1500 each. Sacred Ground is lost.

### **Riot on the Prairie**

As we ride south, smoke rises from a hill in the east. Some clever folks have taken advantage of the chaos to burn construction equipment. This gesture is greeted with cheers. In the other direction, smoke rises from a truck set aflame on the 134 Bridge. People are running to the top of a hill to the east. There we witness a chase: police in military gear pursuing two warriors on horses, who have apparently rallied a herd of buffalo at the police line back at camp. The cops shoot at the horses while trying to cut them off, as people



scramble to remove a barbed wire fence for the horses to escape. They succeed with seconds to spare; the police ATVs turn back amid our curses.

Another barricade goes up where Route 134 meets Highway 1806. A crowd gathers at that intersection. It's clear that this is the new front. As people are eating and planning their stand, shouts ring out: "STOP THE WHITE TRUCK!" We all run into the road to block a white pickup that is coming from the north. It turns off the road and tries to speed around us. Trucks from our side give chase, and the white truck is eventually rammed off the side of the road. The driver, a DAPL security guard who had pointed a gun at demonstrators up the hill, runs out of the truck carrying an AR-15 rifle. He is chased into a pond where an hour-long standoff ensues. Meanwhile, his truck is looted, driven up the hill, and flipped onto the new barricade. It is set on fire, along with another car donated for the cause.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs police arrive from the south, disarm the DAPL security guard, and arrest him. They leave everyone else untouched and head back south. For us anarchists, this is a

mind-boggling event. We'd heard the BIA police were "in support" of the protests, but we never expected them to treat the movement with such respect. Later, we hear a rumor that they actually turned away State Police from entering the reservation from the south, effectively preventing the police from kettling all of us.

As a cavalcade of armored vehicles and Hummers approach from the north, everyone falls back to a bridge on Highway 1806. This bridge is not on the reservation, but it is the only entrance from the north. Entire tree trunks are unloaded from trucks, constructing a substantial barricade. It includes a twelve-foot-tall solar-powered highway sign, the batteries from which are skillfully expropriated. The barricade catches fire. The police approach and hold a line.

For the following eight hours, America is over. Rocks and Molotov cocktails defend the barricade; a wall of plywood shields deflects rubber bullets and tear gas canisters. The partisans of nonviolence are gone, and the kind of combative energy that could have held Sacred Ground emerges in full force. The fight lasts into the early hours of the morning, when the police fire a large number of smoke grenades and use the cover to withdraw and retreat, leaving two military supply trucks blocking the road north of the bridge. Those trucks too are set on fire, and the battle for the bridge is won.

## **Aftermath**

After some sleep, we arrived at the bridge the next morning to find people holding a line north of the burnt military vehicles. The police and the National Guard were erecting concrete highway barriers about 50 feet north of the line—surrendering Highway 1806 as a functioning road, but also blocking those opposed to the pipeline from driving vehicles back toward the former site of the Sacred Ground camp.

It was just a couple dozen people holding the line with plywood shields; most of them were quite young. News media and other rubberneckers were milling about on the bridge, examining the burnt wreckage from the night before. After a while, an older Native man showed up, stepped out in front of the line, and spoke to us all: "I'm 78 years old. I'm an elder. I'm going to make a deal with the police to get you all off this bridge." Another older Native man, who had

been holding a shield, shouted him down: “I’m 73 years old, and I am also an elder. And I’m saying we fight back! We hold our position!”

Soon camp “security” showed up with orders from their elders to clear the bridge and push us all back. They locked arms and formed a line to force us off the bridge. Tensions grew as those who wanted to hold it, both Native and non-Native, argued with each other. Once again, people who were “on our side,” acting in the name of “the elders,” did the work of the police for them.

“This is what they have always done to us!” the ones trying to hold the bridge told us. “They turn us against one another to pacify us!”

The people clearing us from the bridge didn’t have arguments, just their bodies acting on behalf of “the elders,” ignoring the contradiction that they were clearing elders, among others, from the bridge.

By the end of the day, not only was the bridge cleared, but the camp security had set up a line about a quarter of a mile up the road and wouldn’t let anyone close to it. Tensions are high within the camp, as the partisans of physical resistance to the pipeline clash with those who believe that symbolic arrests will somehow stop it, and those who are solely focused on the historic gathering of Native tribes split by centuries of hostility.

When we return to our camp, we are pulled aside by a Native woman. She explains that she hears there are “agitators” in the camp and she’s going to keep her eye on us. She is convinced that it wasn’t Native folks who were fighting back the day before, but outsiders. A white comrade who has been here for months tells us that he was surrounded and threatened by four Native men, and was only saved by the fact that he knew all their names and could find Native warriors to vouch for him. Other contacts in Red Warrior communicate how delicate the situation is, explaining that the significance of the conversations taking place extends far beyond anything we can grasp as non-Native people. Any action we take autonomously could mess things up for everyone. We feel paralyzed, not knowing how to contribute to the efforts of those with whom we felt such intense affinity the night before.

Late that night, from the top of a hill in Sacred Stone camp, we watch as a two-mile-wide fire burns up the hillside from the main camp in the direction of the construction. We have no idea whether folks on

our side set the fire as a sublime gesture of intimidation, or whether the forces of order have set it to scare people in the camp. We decide to believe the former, because we assume we'll never know the truth.



### **Considerations for Solidarity**

The situation here is delicate. While the battle for Sacred Ground revealed that people involved in this struggle are willing and able to fight outside the restrictions of stage-managed civil disobedience, it is not clear how this could take place now that the strategic position blocking the path of the pipeline has been lost. Further, tensions are so high in the camps that it feels dangerous to reveal oneself as a partisan of the combatant energy expressed on Thursday.

Serious dilemmas confront non-Native anarchists who want to come to support the NoDAPL movement. On the one hand, this is a movement framed around indigenous rights and decolonial struggle. We can understand ourselves as allies or accomplices within this movement; if we assume that role, that means supporting the Native folks whose actions resonate with us while trying not to exacerbate

conflicts within Native communities. While this approach may feel daunting in the current situation, more opportunities for support may open up soon.

On the other hand, this is a struggle against a pipeline and, like struggles everywhere [1], against the police who protect it. From this perspective, everyone who drinks water, understands the threat of climate change, and opposes the police has a stake in participating. From this perspective, carrying out autonomous actions seems justified. However, if we take that route, we should be careful not to ignore the decolonial significance of the movement, and not to burn bridges with indigenous people who might be our comrades in the movements to come.

Moreover, this struggle has received global attention thanks to the work done by people who have been here for months, including indigenous and non-indigenous warriors, some of whom are anarchist comrades. Anyone acting autonomously should consider the impact they will have on the plans and relationships these people have worked so hard to create.

For now, our plan is to inhabit this space, build relationships, and try to make ourselves useful to those who have chosen to struggle to stop this pipeline by means other than the law. We don't want to fully embrace the limitations of the "ally" role, nor do we want to act carelessly without an intimate knowledge of the situation in which we find ourselves, a situation we recognize that others have opened up.

For those who can come, particularly those with relevant skills: come. It is not clear what the next move is, but we will need all the help we can get when it occurs. If you do come, be prepared to spend time learning about the power dynamics at work in this space, and to have less agency than you might want until you have earned people's trust.

For those who cannot come, or who feel they would not be able to act with proper sensitivity to the significance of this moment for indigenous people: now is the time to spread the fight to other locations. We hope to see the whole range of tactics from the anti-police movements of recent years deployed against the infrastruc-

ture of extraction and the flows of capital in general. Actions of all sorts are encouraged, though not all of them will be helpful in this specific location.

This is a strategically crucial struggle in a pivotal moment. As comrades have argued [2] if we don't act fast, we risk ceding the popular idea of resistance to the state to right wing forces that will recuperate our tactics and arguments to serve their own agenda. What has taken hold here in the struggle against the pipeline, and what burst into reality in the hours after the battle for Sacred Ground, has the potential to spread into a much wider resistance to extraction industries and ecocide. Let's make it spread—but let's do so with a sensitivity to the indigenous warriors and anarchist comrades who have thrown their lives into this struggle for months, who have shown the ability to organize and fight that has built the NoDAPL movement to this point.

#### NOTES

1. <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/r/bluefuse/index.html>
2. <http://www.crimethinc.com/texts/r/reaction/>