

# AGENCY AGAINST PIPELINES

*When something like the Sacred Stone camp, or a large demonstration, or potentially even a new project of exploitation presents itself, we can get together with people that we know and trust and discuss ways to respond. From these groups we can engage in a critical manner with others in the struggle while building our capacity to act in our own groups. We can bring the energy of groups rather than passive spectators to anything that may be happening. Sometimes the best support that one can give is creating new fronts for the enemy to defend, and participants for them to be weary of.*

*Lud*

robotic, emotionless martyrs but that we might want to practice a little bit more courage than we've been showing.

*"Anti-oppression, civil rights, and decolonization struggles clearly reveal that if resistance is even slightly effective, the people who struggle are in danger. The choice is not between danger and safety, but between the uncertain dangers of revolt and the certainty of continued violence, deprivation, and death."*

– Escalating Identity, "Who Is Oakland"

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*wreckpublication.wordpress.com*

relationships such as within families where it can be far more difficult and in fact impossible for some to turn in a subversive direction. However there are a variety of relationships that many of us allow to stagnate, often due to social insecurity, which have infinite potential to threaten the powers that threaten us all. We must be in search of deeper affinities with those around us. This can come from supporting each other emotionally, but all too often this is separated from challenging internal power dynamics, social mores and ideologies which prevent us from being strong together. Being hip, cool, popular, self-righteous, intentionally nerdy, or wallowing in your insecurity will only get you so far, and will do little to build relationships of trust. Challenge your friends to fight and to keep on fighting, support them in their fights, and remind them if they are leaving a city or wherever a struggle is happening that they can try to find other ways to keep up the fight.

• **Get outside your comfort zone** (calling you on your cop-out) – We all have our comfort zones, and these zones are ever changing. Those of us who have been around for even a short period of time know what to expect from a workshop or panel discussion. Try forming your own ideas and reading revolutionary writings from a lot of perspectives. Beyond that, try applying the lessons you learn from books or through word of mouth to things happening on the ground and try finding others in a similar place with the intention of turning ideas into action – self-organized action. Don't wait for others to rally you to some cause, waiting is as addictive as crack, break the habit. Also, I feel there is a disgusting level of infantilization, victimization and self-righteous posturing swirling around social movements and scenes these days. We all have our boogeymen as well as legitimate grievances with others. But all too often we use these as an easy-out for disengagement with the principles and tensions we claim to hold dear. There is also a vast difference between being unsafe and uncomfortable. Life is full of both discomfort and danger. The western political morality of guaranteed rights and free speech that seems to have seeped into everyone's brains has meant that "decolonization" has become associated only with "speaking out", and rebellion against a social order that was founded upon genocide is somehow expected to be "safe". This does not mean that I expect us all to be

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*by Llud*

**T**HE TWIN INSTITUTIONS OF CAPITALISM AND THE STATE are two of the most insanely destructive projects that human beings have ever devised. At present, climate change is becoming more and more obvious to the average person and the misery of capitalism is ever deepening. Resources that the capitalist system uses to stay afloat are drying up, and it is now forced to go into the shale rock and sand for these energy resources. In so called "British Columbia," we are seeing pipelines and refinery plants being pushed forward as a last ditch effort to keep the system running at it's smooth pace in spite of economic and environmental catastrophe.

The resistance to these pipelines has been multi-form but also quite limited considering the vastness of the problem that must be tackled. We have seen non-violent civil disobedience play out on Burnaby Mountain in response to the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion, which served as little more than a media spectacle. We have seen Secwepemc rebels take a more disruptive approach at the gatherings of CEO's and others with business interests related to pipeline infrastructure. Up north, we have seen traditional indigenous clan structures distance themselves from government band council structures, as a way to encourage their people to reclaim their culture and lands. All these among many others.

The Unist'ot'en clan of the Wet'suwet'en people have a camp that is blocking multiple pipelines. At present the camp is in a public discourse dispute with pipeline construction contractors and the RCMP. The pigs and corporations appear to be setting up the case for an injunction of the land defense camp with the argument that they are disrupting the work that surveyors need to do. The camp is responding with the legal argument that they are enacting their traditional jurisdiction on their lands which they have never ceded to colonial and capitalist control. It is also significant that the camp is at a strategic pinch point of a bridge that crosses a river (Wedzin Kwah).

The legacy of the 1990 Oka rebellion looms large in the minds of many as what can happen when indigenous people refuse to allow the state to walk over them. In recent history we have the inspiring resistance of the Mik'maq people and their warriors who defended their territories against fracking throughout 2013. Both these examples used violent self defense, disruption of the economy, local community involvement and the Mik'maq struggle used some sabotage. The most important difference of all between these struggles and the Unist'ot'en camp is the lack of a larger involvement of their own people from nearby communities. The camp has instead preferred a strategy of parachuting activists in from other places. This is not to put down our comrades but to point out to all who do not seem to recognize it, that different strategies will have different outcomes, just as different indigenous peoples have different social dynamics at play.

Modern day resistance movements have a tendency to romanticize struggles that they see as the most legitimate. In so called "Canada" this usually takes the form of support or "indigenous solidarity" to the initiatives of indigenous people. On the west coast a great deal of energy has been put into support for the Unist'ot'en camp. The best way that many have been able to respond to the tense situation up north is fundraising for legal defense and infrastructure at the camp, as well as trying to get "bodies" up there for "arrestability" in case of an attempted removal by police. These attempts, while understandable, will not stop the pipelines. The struggle must be diffuse, but instead we have all thrown our eggs in one basket with the unrealistic expectation that someone will stop the pipelines for us. We have done a disservice to our indigenous comrades by placing the brunt of action against pipelines on their shoulders. Anarchists

are also guilty of this, but we are not alone in exhibiting this problematic dynamic. Often the justification for such a position is that of "taking leadership". A tragic lack of clarity as to what exactly "leadership" means has left many hands tied, and the "safest" way to continue is seen as renouncing one's agency.

Those of us that acknowledge that the current context of capitalist exploitation will deepen the misery of most of us, must find more creative ways to relate to struggle. Queers, poc's, anarchists, trans people, students, all the many others, and all of our wider networks that do not easily fit into only one or even any of these categories must struggle on our own terms.

There are an infinite variety of ways in which we can begin to do this, here are a few possible examples:

- **Expand the terrain of struggle** – When something like the Burnaby Mountain camp, or a large demonstration, or potentially even a new project of exploitation presents itself, we can get together with people that we know and trust and discuss ways to respond. From these groups we can engage in a critical manner with others in the struggle while building our capacity to act in our own groups (potentially in coordination with others). We can bring the energy of groups rather than passive spectators to anything that may be happening. Sometimes the best support that one can give is creating new fronts for the enemy to defend, and participants for them to be weary of.
- **Practice autonomy** – It is all well and good not to want to overstep ones boundaries when it may be limiting to others. Contrary to what many believe though, the best way to limit others can actually be to follow along passively. Again, with small or large groups of trusted comrades, various actions can be taken which will build our experience, and analysis through that experience will do a great deal more than just "shutting up". It can be a great learning experience or it can be a complete waste of time to listen to others in a social movement. A practice of autonomy as groups or individuals means setting our own standards and thereby strengthening another's as long as we have a common trajectory.
- **Build and challenge your relationships** – Many of us exist within social scenes and many of us have diffuse networks of people with some kind of common interest. There are many