

WE ARE WATER

WATER IS LIFE | LIFE IS SACRED

EVERYTHING WAS POSSESSED OF PERSONALITY, ONLY DIFFERING FROM US IN FORM. KNOWLEDGE WAS INHERENT IN ALL THINGS. THE WORLD WAS A LIBRARY AND ITS BOOKS WERE THE STONES, LEAVES, GRASS, BROOKS, AND THE BIRDS AND ANIMALS THAT SHARED, ALIKE WITH US, THE STORMS AND BLESSINGS OF EARTH. WE LEARNED TO DO WHAT ONLY THE STUDENT OF NATURE LEARNS, AND THAT WAS TO FEEL BEAUTY. WE NEVER RAILED AT THE STORMS, THE FURIOUS WINDS, AND THE BITING FROSTS AND SNOWS, TO DO SO INTENSIFIED HUMAN FUTILITY. SO WHATEVER CAME WE ADJUSTED OURSELVES, BY MORE EFFORT AND ENERGY IF NECESSARY, BUT WITHOUT COMPLAINT. - CHIEF STANDING BEAR, OGLALA LAKOTA (SIOUX)

DEFEND THE SACRED

WE ARE NOT PROTESTORS. WE ARE PROTECTORS. WE ARE PEACEFULLY DEFENDING OUR LAND AND OUR WAY OF LIFE. WE INVITE YOU TO STAND WITH US IN DEFIANCE OF THE BLACK SNAKE.

YASIN AND HIS GROUP CAMPED BESIDE A TEEPEE, WHERE A 48-YEAR-OLD STANDING ROCK LAKOTA CALLED UNPA NUNPA RESIDES. HIS DAUGHTER WAS ONE OF THE FIRST TO CLIMB THE PROPERTY FENCE IN DEFENSE OF THE BURIAL GROUNDS THE BULLDOZERS. "WE WERE PROUD TO PARTICIPATE IN THOSE ACTIONS," HE SAID.

"I'M NOT HERE FOR SPIRITUAL REASONS," SAID UNPA NUNPA, WHO HAS RESIDED AT THE CAMP FOR TWO MOON CYCLES — THE EASIEST WAY TO KEEP TRACK OF TIME WHEN DAYS BLUR INTO WEEKS, HE SAID. IN SPITE OF AN INCURABLE LIVER DISEASE, FOR WHICH HE STOPPED TAKING HIS MEDICATION MONTHS AGO, UNPA NUNPA SAID HE IS COMMITTED TO THE CAUSE. "I'M HERE TO DEFEND LAKOTA TREATY RIGHTS AND TO PROTECT OUR WATER. THIS IS MY HOME, NOW," HE SAID.

"FOR 48 YEARS, I'VE LIVED UNDER THIS SYSTEM, AND I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE," HE SAID. "THIS IS A CHANCE FOR US TO EXPRESS OUR FEELINGS ABOUT LIVING UNDERNEATH THIS SYSTEM."

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