

THE NEWSLETTER N° ZERO OF THE PERMANENT CARAVAN. PRESENTATION AND PLATFORM

Introduction and brief story of the project:

The permanent caravan is basically a living space, an action project and a place to develop various autonomies. It's a long-term collective structure based on non-permanence and changing participants. It will travel and stop from place to place. It should allow individuals to live as nomads for a certain period of time, while keeping on being involved in their usual living spaces and their local projects.

For the moment, the permanent caravan is mostly being created inside Sans-titre ("No-title"), a French-speaking network of groups and individuals ("groupiduals" for the rest of the text). These groupiduals are very diverse: some are involved in squats and urban autonomous spaces, such as "les Marmottes" from Amiens, "l'Espace Autogéré des Tanneries" from Dijon, "l'Ekluserie" from Rennes, "l'Observatorio" from Toulouse, or "la Charade" from Grenoble. Some other groupiduals develop rural projects such as "Longo Mai". Some of them are quite settled for the moment, some already spend a part of their lives travelling around. Most of them participate, create and struggle among militant collectives on an everyday life basis. Some of them live in communities, others are more partially involved in such groups. The caravan intends to be used by people of diverse ages, appearances, of diverse militant cultures, of diverse opinions and living choices...

THE DESIRE TO CREATE THE PERMANENT CARAVAN WAS PARTIALLY BORN AFTER FORMER CARAVANS AND FORMER NOMADISMS

- the intercontinental caravan, in 1999, who led 500 people from India and other countries into Europe, to diffuse their struggle against food-processing industries
- the anticapitalist caravan, who set up public debates, street theater and local actions, during the international mobilization against the I.M.F and World Bank summit in Prague
- the repeated travels among intersquat networks and actions, among sans-titre or among People's Global Action network

There are of course a few political bases we all agree on, in which the project is deeply rooted. we should keep on precisising these bases in the future newsletters.

Here are some of those political bases:

- to lead offensive actions against every structures of domination: capitalist, state, patriarchal and techno-scientist domination...
- to work on the fact that all of us have integrated those mechanisms of oppression and domination, that our relationships to others are merchandized. To try as much as we can to split with those alienating attitudes and change our interpersonal relationships. To root our militant choices in our everyday lives
- to promote concrete and direct action, disobedience and distorsion...
- to bring up criticism to passive claims, to citizenship or to lobbying
- to contribute to creation and interconnection of various tools and autonomy towards authorities: energetic, eating, cultural and affective autonomy,...The idea is to take back and collectivise



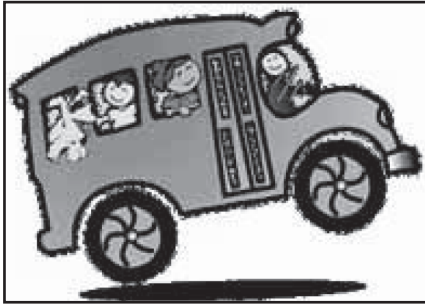
spaces, ressources and time

- to set up debates, information networks and reflection over several different themes: from consumption to social control, from masculinity to feminist or queer struggle, from self-construction to self organization, from food processing industry to farmers struggle. to debate on science, ethics, industrial society or also the concept of "nature"
- to promote the idea that social change, radical or not, is a complex process sometimes very slow. to work so that social change can be, as much as possible, fulfilling, playful and joyful, so that it may encourage self-confidence, autonomy, as well as collective involvement
- to promote and experiment different lifestyles considered dangerous and repressed: communal and collectivism, nomadism, free prices
- to get out sometimes of activism and urgency to open ourselves to other time perceptions
- to try to stop considering ourselves too seriously and to show self-derision
- to react seriously towards sexist, racist and homophobic behaviors and towards physical, verbal and sexual aggressions

Platform

The following text is here to present the objectives, activities and the ways of proceeding of the caravan. In any collective project tending to self-management and horizontality, it is primordial to present a clear and formal account of the ways of proceeding and to have it explained to everyone.

Especially if, like in the case of this caravan, these explanations should continually be taught to new people. These principles are, for the moment, the result of the repeated reunions within Sans-titre meetings. These meetings are of course constantly evolving and should be continually revised.



Travelling ways and appearance of the caravan: between tetris and russian dolls...

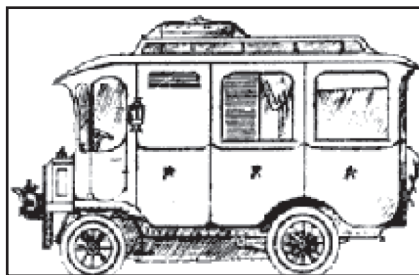
It will, of course, be very beautiful, like a big subversive and coloured circus, a squat on wheels, an itinerant farm or an anticapitalist maze. Later, we hope it will be composed with tractors and caravans. In the beginning and because of driving license problems, we will start with two or three big vans, escorted by bicycles and other collective cycling vehicles. At each stop, the caravan will unfold and open up with a collective kitchen, a sleeping for the caravaners, an office and workshop space, its infoshop, freezone, projection space, domes and tents... The rythm of the caravan and bicycles on the road should be slow, very slow. The engines should be transformed to escape petrol. We are working on it...

Activities of the caravane:

We have determined a certain number of permanent activities that we wish could be possible whoever may be present on the caravan. There are also non-permanent activities that corresponds to specific envies of certain participants and so depend on their presence or absence on the caravan at a certain moment. Some reference people working on the realization of these different activities can be contacted.

Permanent activites:

Expression and creation workshop -street happenings about the presentation of the caravan and about its struggles - popular food and bakery - infoshops and infocenter of alternative medias - expositions about the different friendly places to the caravan - video projections and video library - knowledge exchanges about self-sufficient activities (energy, self-construction, autonomous eating and healing,...) as well as the collective ways of organizations and self-management - direct



action workshops - freezone and second hand - creation of a newsletter - practical encyclopedia - seed library (encouragement to autonomous farming) - alternative pharmacy and herbalist - wall newspapers - setting up of debate spaces - handicraft workshops (mecnics - plumbing - electricity - brickwork- sewing).

Other ideas of non-permanent activities::

Photo workshops - choral of distorted songs and revolutionnary popsongs - history of capitalism and social struggle - chill-out - yoga - relaxation - stretching - accupuncture - urban decorations - militant climbing...

Why and how to spend time in places?

- To discover, live together, make new friends, experience fun adventures.- To discover everyday management, collective ways of organization and different places and networks...

- To share knowledge and abilities.

- To propose our own activities or to become integrated for a while, into local activities.



-To continue building and installing the caravan.

- To realize one of the hundred projects the local collective has always dreamed of doing but has never had the possibility to do, because of missing time, equipment, people,...

Balance in the exchange...

We would like to transmit a list of what we can do and explain through the newsletter what has been realized at each stop of the caravan. Of course we are not proposing commercial services. We would like to be as much as possible on an egalitarian basis in the exchange with the collectives who receive us, hoping that there may be a mutual preparation and interest.

We wish in this sense that the welcoming groupiduals may, if possible, inform us in advance of their abilities, desires and needs.

Formalism and passion - About the sustle link between hard preparation and vivid spontaneity..

We wish to propose at each stop:

- some events decided in advance and that may be publicly announced as such

- events decided and organized spontaneously and more hastely if the caravaners and the people who received us wish to create something together

The events decided in advance will be rather scheduled in the middle of the stay, so that the caravan can settle in, meet people and get them involved in these events. This way, it is possible for us, according to how the adventures on the road turn out, to arrive later or to leave earlier. The big workshops are typical activities that need a lot of prior organisation.

The caravan is tending to stop in extremely various places

rural projects - villages - action camps - squats - permanent autonomous zones- friends places - unknown people's places - places not yet existing that we may help to create - the beach...

Getting out of the ghetto

The caravan will stop in places that do not label themselves precisely around a political or to stop one day or two in villages, just long enough for a happening, a debate, a workshop or a popular meal. Some people could announce in advance the arrival of the caravan and start creating prior contacts.

Getting out of the tribble

If we are not extremely vigilant, arriving somewhere as a collective can send out an image of "tribble", impress and intimidate the people that we visit and build up barriers to communication. We don't want to take refuge in a comfortable "caravan group" but we want to involve ourselves as fast as possible with the people living there and with their everyday activities, as well as to involve the people living there, if it is possible, with the various activities of the caravan.

Non-specialisation and involvement

There will be reference people at each stop for the various aspects of the caravan. The purpose is that these people relay each other in order to avoid, as much as possible, that one same person would become a reference for too many projects and would become too indispensable for a certain aspect of the caravan. A process of continual knowledge exchange will take place so that every caravaner may master the different abilities linked to the permanent activities and the mechanical, legal and medical abilities generally useful to the good functioning of such a project. Of course these processes are here to fight against specialisation on which are based the social and salaried relationships in the capitalist society and notably the dependance relationships that it brings. Nevertheless, we reject total spontaneity, and demand certain intermediate forms of specialization and of task delegation:

- to allow ourselves to deepen and to let ourselves go to our one day or lifelong passions
- because having clear referents can help us to find ourselves in our internal functioning and especially for the external people, and to make participation easier- because it can be quite calming



Little and big spaces

To start with, the caravan is a bunch of people who pop into your life and need the necessary place to rest on. From this point of view, it could be difficult for some relatively small collectives to see their number double for one, two or three weeks... Some urban places, disposing of limited space, should not be therefore excluded from the caravan's route. In this way, it is primordial that the caravan should dispose of enough autonomy (domes, tents, collective kitchen) and should be able to find solutions to settle down in these different situations.

Following the caravan, even without being beside it...

We would like to be able to send regularly our newsletter to the caravan contacts, and to make it possible for the people in the places where we stopped to come to the caravan meetings and to participate in them. We also plan to make a big party each year and to create an e-mail address and a P.O. box where the groupiduals may contact us permanently.

and responsabilising to chose to take care of something precise during a certain period of time, knowing that we may do something totally different the day or the week after. This possibility of specialisation clearly doesn't concern either the housekeeping, either cooking, or taking care of a bad situation...

In particular, there will be some referent people concerning tools, or complex, fragile or dangerous equipment. These tools and equipment will be, at least in the beginning, a mix of collective possessions of the caravan and momentary loans from different groupiduals.

Coordination and preparation of the caravan route...

-The caravan coordination group

They are the people who participate in the caravan at this moment as well as all the groupiduals who feel involved in the projects, bring infos, help at a stopover, participate in meetings... So this is a list of links in perpetual evolution.

The preparation groups

This is a changing group of people getting involved in the preparation of a few stopovers of the caravan during a two month period. Two months is the usual length of a typical caravan route. Of course, it must be people who plan to participate in the caravan for a certain time during those two months. They will take previous contacts with the receiving places, prepare the necessary logistic for the route, contact friends to know if they are interested in being present on the course, make sure that there will always be the minimum amount of people necessary during the two months, prepare eventual specific activities to this route.

Then they will present their two month route projects to the permanent caravan meeting where it is discussed and decided. After that, other people can prepare an other route.

Each caravan route lasting approximately two months, we will have a caravan/Sans-titre meeting at a stopover situated in the middle of the route after a month. It will be the right moment to talk about this route and to present the next one. The next route will begin a month after the meeting and will last again two months, with a meeting at the half way and so on. These meetings will be opened to everyone who wants to take part in the permanent caravan. Discussions and decisions will be horizontal, egalitarian and by consensus.

The caravan meetings should always take place in a different spot. The caravan is actually created inside Sans-titre and, in the beginning, its meetings will be mixed with the Sans-titre meetings, even if it means becoming emancipated at a given moment, along with the evolution of the two projects.

This model, as machiavelic as it may seem, is of course experimental and will, without a doubt, evolve when it will be used. As for the decisions to take between two meetings, the people with the caravan at the moment will do their best.

Non-permanence and participation in the caravan...

We can imagine that the caravan will count 10/20/30 people travelling together and arriving somewhere. Therefore, we need a certain number of reliable people for the different stopovers on one route. But we also want to integrate new caravaners more or less spontaneously during the route.

People decide themselves how much time they want to stay with the caravan. There isn't any minimal or maximal length, we just want to keep in mind a spirit of non-permanence and be able to discuss it if needed. We also want to avoid that someone may excessively appropriate something (things or tasks) and create a split between the "elders" of the caravan and the others.

The number of stopovers in a route and the

time spent at each one of them will be totally different according to the spot, the desire to stay longer or to do shorter stopovers...

The maximum length for a stopover will logically be two months.

Autonomy, life project and financing...

The caravan would like to be financially self-managed and not depend on any insitutional or commercial subsidy. We want the everyday needs of the caravaners to be taken in charge as much as possible by the caravan facilities when they are accompanying it. But we will not either try getting into any rentability, profit or salary logics. A collective fund for the management of the caravaner's needs and projects. This collective fund may be filled by different meals, gigs, donations and other benefit initiatives.



When are we leaving?

According to the evolution of the workshop and the gathering of the necessary equipment, we hope to test the structure by this autumn and to definitively get ourselves going next spring... We will try !

To stop one day or two in villages, just long enough for a happening, a debate, a workshop or a popular meal. Some people could announce in advance the arrival of the caravan and start creating prior contacts.

Call to subscription and equipement support...

The project at it's actual point, and even with our certain propensity for recycling, salvage, self-constructing and collective and re-distributed harvests, actually still needs quite a lot of money to start the caravan...

We are talking about the necessary money to buy the vehicles, some tools and equipment that we need for the activities, to do some info about the project...

Since we don't want any subsidies or sponsors, we count on the solidarity of anybody who may be enthusiastic about the project and wishes that it may be realized as soon as possible. In this sense, it is possible to send a cheque to: "accueil de la caravane" and send it to caravane permanente / les tanneries 17 bvd de chicago / 21000 Dijon / france

Gigs, compilation tapes/CDs, benefit meals here and there, would be welcome. Be sure that in return, we will keep you clearly informed about the project's evolution.

We are also looking for video-projection, construction, kitchen, witchdoctor, climbing, mechanics, cycling vehicules, caravans, vans and tractors equipment...

If you have anything of this matter to restore, give, lend...contact us.

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