

## Caravans

Submitted by lambert on Thu, 08/25/2011 - 10:14am

The Mad As Hell Doctors did caravans for single payer [1]. And now there are two separate caravans against the Keystone XL "tar sands" pipeline [2]:

Over fifty concerned citizens gathered for a press conference at Cultiva's Café in Lincoln for a meeting of two caravans on their way through America to take action in Washington D.C. The event was organized by Bold Nebraska, a politically mixed grass roots organization who've had several members arrested at the White House on August 22nd participating in the Tar Sands Action. The meeting brought the Stop the Pipeline tour together with the No Tar Sands Caravan.

The Stop the Pipeline caravan is carrying five land owners galvanized in opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline that, if approved by Obama, would cross their lands and threaten their crops, wells, and families. The Stop the Pipeline caravan is following the length of the proposed Keystone XL Pipeline before heading into Washington on August 30 to stand in solidarity with everyone who has risked arrest in the two-week long act of civil disobedience.

Representatives from both caravans gathered in front of concerned citizens and the media. Ben Gotschall began the session. "I'm a rancher from the Sand Hills. This pipeline threatens my home and my family's way of life. We hear TransCanada trying to simplify this into environmentalists versus oil or obstructionists versus jobs and it's not that simple. What I've seen in travelling the country is that there are so many people opposed to this project for so many reasons that to me it's obvious that this pipeline is not in the best interests of this country."

Two, three, many caravans. However, what I'm concerned with is the more narrow, media-critique-ish issue that there's no way to properly classify this form of non-violent protest and persuasion using Gene Sharp's 198 Categories [3]; the closest category looks like "motorcade" [42] [4] or "march" [38] [5]. Neither are really appropriate; they miss the "extended touring" aspect.

Like the now collapsed Soviet Union, the United States is a multi-lingual, multi-national federation of continental and imperial scale, ruled by a sclerotic security state\*. Most of Sharp's categories seem more appropriate to urban or local protests; they're perfect for the squares in cities around the Mediterranean, or for actions in Birmingham or Manhattan. But the categories seem to miss the continental scale that American protest requires. (We might think of this as "the opening of the second American frontier"). The categories also miss the Orwellian and claustrophobic nature of our famously free press which, again on the continental scale, chokes off communications

between protesting "siloes." Methods of non-violent protest and persuasion on the continental scale also require communications facilities -- for example, the intertubes -- which again are not captured by Sharp's categories: The closest seems to be [#180 [6]], "Alternative communication systems," but that is not precise enough. It's as if we have to go to the imperial center to know ourselves. But we should be able to communicate peer to peer, around and below the center.

So, an interesting result.

NOTE \* I'm wondering if there were similar non-violent efforts during the collapse of the Soviet Union (beyond the intelligentia like Sakharov and Bonner). That would produce one metric for a distinction between the strengths of our respective civil societies.



No votes yet

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#### Links

[1] <http://madashelldoctors.com/oregon-tour-2011/>

[2] <http://www.tarsandsaction.org/no-tar-sands-caravan-meets-stop-the-pipeline-tour-in-nebraska/>

[3] <http://www.correntewire.com/nv>

[4] <http://correntewire.com/nv%23nv42>

[5] <http://correntewire.com/nv%23nv38>

[6] <http://correntewire.com/nv%23nv180>