

# Choke points: mapping an anticapitalist counter-logistics in California –

## Degenerate Communism



While it is indisputably within the sphere of production that the value-form is created and the obfuscation of social relations under capital begins, perhaps the notion that it is within sphere of circulation that the value-form can begin to be destroyed necessitates more tactical experiments explicitly targeting this realm in the US context of struggles.

*“It should be obvious by now that logistics is capital’s own project of cognitive mapping. [...] We might imagine, then, a logistics against logistics, a counter-logistics which employs the conceptual and technical equipment of the industry in order to identify and exploit bottlenecks, to give our blockaders a sense of where they stand within the flows of capital.”*

– J. Bernes, “Logistics, Counterlogistics, and the Communist Prospect”[i]

*“California occupies an economically strategic position in our State, the Nation and the world. All modes of freight transportation – trucking, shipping, air cargo, and freight rail – are critical to this success.”*

– Caltrans[ii]

The post-Occupy stagnation of class struggle within the US context is becoming increasingly typified, in this period of ever deepening crisis, by a rather simplistic dual nature. The more radical milieus that emerged in the midst of Occupy, those that precipitated the emergence of a political non-subject, the refusal to enter into an articulable “political” discourse, the intentional lack of “political” demands, etc. have retreated into a period of convalescence, through which

hopefully will emerge more critical self-reflection and evaluation of the post-Occupy landscape. On the other hand, the more traditional leftist elements within Occupy, those that felt the need to frame their struggles in purely positive prefigurations (e.g. direct democracy advocates, certain political reforms, calling for political and economic accountability, a tempering of capital – not its abolition) have ushered in a series of reactionary forays back into a politics which grotesquely repeats old narratives of identity politics and/or single-issue reform. That this bifurcated nature of the current antagonism aligned against capital presently exists in the North American context, should come as no surprise since this binary was inherent in the generalized functioning of Occupy from its inception. There was a clear rift between what seemed like metaphysical sets of qualities and temperaments, which concretely manifested as very different sets of politics and/or antipolitics. Reductively (admittedly problematic), this split, this Janus of Occupy, could be interpreted as a series of contradictions that effectively formed into the limits of that struggle: prefiguration vs. abolition, prescriptive language vs. refusal of discourse, affirmative politics vs. negative antipolitics, and perhaps most contentiously, as Zuccotti Park vs. Oscar Grant Plaza.

The claim that Occupy ushered in questions of class and wealth into the forefront of the American popular consciousness is not enough, for it presupposes that counter-ideological consciousness-raising is in and of itself revolutionary. In the current crisis, the restructuring of globalized speculative capitalism in this age of neoliberal austerity, the raising of revolutionary consciousness seems inherently redundant. False consciousness is a meaningless concept now, as most proletarians (our understanding of the term broadly being all those excluded from the means of production, not only those that sell their labor-power) will recognize something fundamentally wrong with the social, economic, and political relations under the capitalist mode of production, yet even with this understanding we cannot extricate ourselves from our roles in the maintenance and reproduction of these relations by our counter-ideological will alone. This is one of the fundamental ironies about the current crisis; we viscerally feel the weight of capital's increasing exploitation and can identify it as such, yet we still have not been able to overcome our implication in its prolongation and reproduction.

In the context of Occupy, consciousness-raising stopped at merely calling attention to the widening income gap in the United States. It couldn't move from superficial condemnations of wealth inequality to cogently theorizing disruptions to the production of surplus-value and the accumulation of capital, let alone the abolition of the value-form in its entirety. This is not surprising, given the dissolution of all pretense towards class identity, the decline of American manufacture and the transition into pure post-Fordism, the rise of service work and immaterial labor, the rise of indentured servitude via the debt relation, increasingly precarious labor, and of course the persistent ideological conception of capitalism as the end of history with no alternative. Faced with these relatively deterministic qualifiers, it would simply be idealistic revisionism to impart a much more radical reading of Occupy's potential than there actually was. That said we are concerned with taking from Occupy's demise the fragmentary remains of certain tactics in their stillborn form. While they failed to become extensively generalized both within the moment and the immediate aftermath of Occupy (hence aborting their ability to become communising measures), the tactics we are choosing to excise and examine from that context are those that seem, theoretically of course, to possess a certain dormant potentiality. Admittedly, this process is purely speculative, as in any tactical translation from one unique moment with its own exigencies to another moment not yet manifested can only be one of

conjecture (prefiguration encounters limits, theory informed by praxis supersedes them). This essay is merely a set of interrelated questions-without-answers about the potential to disrupt the valorization of capital in the present post-Occupy US context. If they are to be answered at all, the answers are only to be found in our generalized direct confrontation against capital and its abolition, in the immediate process of the production of communism itself.

### **The Theoretical Logic of the Disruption of the Circulation of Capital**

*“From the 1970s on, one of capital’s responses to the reproduction crisis has been to shift its focus from the sites of production to the (non)sites of circulation. Once the introduction of labor-saving technology into the production of goods no longer generated substantial profits, firms focused on speeding up and more cheaply circulating both commodity capital (in the case of the shipping, wholesaling and retailing industries) and money capital (in the case of banking).”*  
– Bay of Rage, “Blockading the Port is Only the First of Many Last Resorts” [iii]

The historical legacy left by the defeat of the worker’s movement and dissolution of proletarian identity aside, the following alone radically necessitate a reevaluation of the sphere of production as a viable site of contestation within the context of US struggles: 1) the growth of low-skill service sector employment, 2) the decline of traditional goods-producing and manufacturing labor, 3) the exponential rise of precarious forms of labor (an aggregate of all the Bureau of Labor Statistics categories such as “long-term unemployed,” “involuntary part-time workers,” “persons marginally attached to the labor force,” and “discouraged workers”) and 4) the diffusion of immaterial labor. We are then left with following proposition: While it is indisputably within the sphere of production that the value-form is created and the obfuscation of social relations under capital begins, perhaps the notion that it is within sphere of circulation that the value-form can begin to be destroyed necessitates more tactical experiments explicitly targeting this realm in the US context of struggles.

These experiments must necessarily have a temporal dimension to their tangible application, for the power of any blockage, reduction, or delay in the inherent flow of the circulation of capital derives from its ability to disrupt and sustain periods of non-exchange. In Chapter 14 of *Capital Vol. II* Marx differentiates between two stages of “the time of circulation”: “the time of selling” and “the buying time.” We are presently only concerned with former of the two. The “time of selling” is privileged as “the most decisive” and Marx identifies this stage as “the period during which capital exists in the state of commodity-capital. The time of circulation, and hence the period of turnover in general, are long or short depending on the relative length of this selling time. An additional outlay of capital may become necessary as a result of expenses of storage, etc.” [iv] While the emergence of production developments such as demand flow technology, just-in-time production, demand-driven manufacturing, make-to-order production, logistics automation, and mixed-model production have assuaged the risk conventionally assumed in the relationship between sales forecasting and production by virtually eliminating inventory overhead, these are still capitalist stratagems that have yet to be generalized in global production.

The temporal nature of any experiments attempting to disrupt the circulation of capital (specifically here in the form of “commodity-capital”) should aim to exacerbate the length of the time of circulation and general period of turnover to an unsustainable amount of concrete time

between production and consumption. This tactical maneuvering finds its potential power precisely in the logic of a sustained blockage of any “additional outlay of capital” that will be deployed to address the ruptures in the temporal chains of circulation. Thus, as the general strike is temporally articulated as a “widespread time of non-production,” the generalized disruptions in circulation proposed here are temporally articulated as a “widespread time of non-circulation.” The limits of struggle within the spheres of reproduction and circulation are precisely that they often do not generalize to the sphere of production. The error that derives from this simple iteration of capitalist relations (the privileging of productive labor within the context of class struggles) is that struggle must necessarily start at the level of productive labor. The Italian autonomists challenged this idea by arguing that individuals squarely within the sphere of reproduction of the proletariat class were still producers, albeit indirectly, of surplus-value. Our insistence that the sphere of circulation is the preeminent site of contestation in the first zones of capitalist accumulation during this period of austerity and precarity, acknowledges such struggles as a means to disrupt the productive sphere by applying pressure to circulation logistics.

It of course can be argued that focusing on the sphere of circulation is nothing new, given the precedents one can examine in US labor history such as the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 or the 1894 Pullman Strike. Or perhaps even within California’s own specific labor history one can find examples in the eighty-three day long 1934 West Coast Waterfront Strike precipitated by the four-day long San Francisco General Strike – the former ultimately resulting in the unionization of all West Coast seaports. As production and circulation, labor and consumption, cannot be viewed in isolation from one another we do nonetheless concede that it is labor which drives circulation – simply stated, commodities do not move themselves. Yet contemporary tactical questions regarding circulation in the first zones of capitalist accumulation must necessarily come to terms with the fact that the labor involved in circulation has been significantly reduced by logistics automation and technological development. The sheer amount of variable capital involved in earlier forms of “proto-logistics” has given way to an industry comprised almost exclusively of incredible amounts of constant capital. Because of this, the questions now posed must be those that explore the ways in which individuals removed from the direct labor (a more expansive rendering of the proletariat) that facilitates commodities-circulation can in fact disrupt such capital flows.

Production only maintains its primacy in its purely abstracted connotation, as the site in which the value-form emerges – nothing more. Thus, disrupting circulation is merely a one-step-removed means to attack the construction and constitution of value itself.[v] With the theoretical target proposed as such, the tactical questions are subsequently formed as: What can these disruptions through delay, extension, or outright rupture, concretely appear as? Where is such intervention viable, given the rhizomatic nature of the hypermediated networks of circulation in both the global and domestic capitalist context? Proposing an answer, one of hopefully many more to be theorized through enacted self-reflexive experimentation, takes us back to our initial desire to excavate the corpse of Occupy for a set of tactics and techniques.

Much has already been written on Occupy Oakland’s attempts to engage with and surpass the limits imposed by capital’s reproduction[vii], and while we concur with such readings, for the immediate purpose of this essay we are only concerned with exploring the tactics that targeted the circulation of capital (whether or not the intent of such actions were explicitly framed as

such). In such previous analyses it has been rightly asserted that, “production won’t be able to be the centre that it used to be, but only as a part of a whole,”[vii] and that whole of the capitalist mode of production is constituted precisely by the interaction (re: relation) between the productive and reproductive spheres. We simply wish to make more explicit the role of circulation in facilitating the relation between the production of value and capital’s inexorable reproduction and the subsequent reproduction of all the social relations and categories inherent to the capitalist mode of production. For the purposes of this analysis of the viability of disruptive experiments in the sphere of circulation, the tactic, or perhaps more appropriately, the set of tactics that we wish to explore further (explicitly framed in the context of Occupy Oakland) stem primarily from the port shutdown.

## **The Port Shutdown**

The shutting down of the Port of Oakland on November 2nd and December 12th both represented significant tactical experiments in the disruption of the circulation of capital (in the form of commodity-capital). What complicates these actions is their seemingly defensive nature in the immediate historical unfolding of Occupy Oakland.

The second, smaller blockade on December 12th was ostensibly done in solidarity with the Longview ILWU in their unarguably defensive stance to legitimate their collective-bargaining authority with the introduction of a transoceanic EGT grain terminal that would have employed non-ILWU longshoremen. The defensive nature of this blockade was never intended to be a protracted assault on the reproduction of capital, rather it was a purely an act of survival indicative of the moving contraction of capitalist relations – namely the contradictory need to secure one’s means of reproduction (crystalized in the wage-form and exchanged for simple subsistence commodities) as being precisely that, which upon the selling of one’s labor-power, reproduces capital and the extraction of surplus-value itself. Upon the signing of the February 2012 collective bargaining agreement between the Longview ILWU and EGT, a quote from ILWU President Robert McEllrath made explicit the purely defensive nature of the Longview struggle: “The men and women of the ILWU have crafted hundreds of collective bargaining agreements over the past several decades that have made many companies profitable while also providing family wage jobs for communities like Longview. This agreement between EGT and the ILWU was crafted with the goals of safety, productivity, good jobs for the community, and stability for the grain industry in mind.” That said, the fact that the inherent purpose of this second port blockade in Oakland and all along the West Coast was purely defensive in nature, is irrelevant to our task at hand – the analysis of the tactical manifestation of the blockade in its pure materiality.

The first, much larger (both in terms of participants and “ideological” resonance) blockade of the port on November 2nd was an explicit reaction to the police raid and destruction of the encampment at Oscar Grant Plaza. While we cannot deny the significance of the reaction to the police destruction of the encampment in constituting the initial planning around the tactic of blockading the Port of Oakland, the danger in such a passive reading lies in discrediting the actual material context – namely, if only for a brief period, the circulation of capital in one specific capacity (commodity-capital via the port) was disrupted. Herein lies the fundamental limit to the struggle in that particular moment, one that Occupy Oakland was ultimately unable to

overcome. The encampment, by its very nature as a plaza occupation, possessed within itself limits that appeared as the parameters to its tactical form. The disruptions to the sphere of circulation caused by the encampment's presence were marginal at best (e.g. certain businesses in the immediate vicinity of OGP noticed a decrease in sales, had to close early on certain occasions, etc.), but for the most part the tactic of plaza occupation was largely concerned with experiments aimed at diminishing the role of capital in the proletariat's reproduction[viii].

When the police forcibly repressed these reproductive experiments on October 25th, the struggle then attempted to disrupt circulation by means of the port blockade. Given the context of that particular moment of struggle, we contradictorily claim: in arguing that the port shutdown on November 2nd could not have happened without the initial repressive police measures, one must also acknowledge that for many participants of the Nov. 2nd blockade the shutdown was therefore a reprisal for the destruction/eviction of the encampment on October 25th. We feel this is worth noting, because this moralistic/ideological reaction hindered the ability of the material tactic of the blockade to become protracted, dynamically sustained, and generalized as an overcoming of the limits encountered by the occupation of the plaza. Nonetheless, the blockades of the Port of Oakland materialized within the flow of history – and that fact alone is enough to warrant the exploration of the tactic of the port blockade as a legitimate avenue of attack against the circulation of capital in current struggles.

### **The Material Logic of the Disruption of the Circulation of Capital**

*“The national economy could lose as much as \$2.5 billion a day and disrupt thousands of jobs if labor talks between longshore workers and their employers force a shutdown of West Coast seaports, according to a new study released Thursday [6/26/14]. The 17-page report[ix], generated by economists at the Interindustry Forecasting Project at the University of Maryland, asserts that a five-day work stoppage could lower the national GDP by \$1.9 billion a day and disrupt 73,000 jobs, while a 20-day shutdown could lower the GDP by \$2.5 billion a day and disrupt 405,000 jobs.”*

*– Long Beach Press Telegram, “National Economy Could Suffer from Shutdown of West Coast Ports, According to Study”[x]*

Hierarchizing the flows of commodities according to direct volume throughput we will explore the following options for freight transport in what we view as their ranked order by importance to the overall infrastructure of the circulation of commodity-capital: seaports, railway lines, freight truck routes, intermodal rail yards, and air cargo warehouses. We argue that the overall infrastructure and logistics of commodity-capital circulation depends on a reading of postmodernist society precisely as network society. As Manuel Castells writes: “...because the network society is based on networks, and communication networks transcend boundaries, the network society is global, it is based on global networks. So, it is pervasive throughout the planet, its logic transforms extends to every country in the planet, as it is diffused by the power embedded in global networks of capital, goods, labor, communication, information, science, and technology.”[xi] The danger of such expansive readings of networks, or even the propensity to speak about networks in purely qualitative terms, is that they often tend towards abstraction.

In our use of the term network we wish to reiterate, as Eugene Thacker states in his foreword to Alexander R. Galloway's *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* that "the first point is that networks are not metaphors. [...] The concept of 'protocol' is thus meant to demonstrate the nonmetaphorical quality of networks. Or, put in another way, the concept of protocol shows the predilection for general discussion of networks in terms of general tropes. Networks are not tropes for notions of 'interconnection.' They are material technologies, sites of variable practices, actions, and movements"[xii]. When we speak of the networks through which capital in its commodity-form circulates, we are aiming to speak about the networks and the high-traffic nodes within them precisely in this material manner. Our use of the term network also does not assume a flattening into equivalence, or a pure horizontalist reading of the materiality of circulation flow. We also do not mean to assert that capital's networks and global supply chains are inherently static in their composition, for they are flexible and perpetually in the process of reconfiguration – a fact ever more indicative of this current period of capital's globalized restructuring.

Our use of the term "high-traffic nodes" is both an attempt to argue for the existence of actual material sites, similar to vertices in graph theory, of high intersections or throughput of value in the commodity-capital form. We argue that "high-traffic nodes" are simply that, spatial, physical, topographical points of super-intersection where many lines of circulatory flow converge. In this post-industrial age we feel it is pointless, if not impossible, to identify originating or terminal points in the networks of circulation precisely because the divisions between the traditional spheres of production, reproduction, circulation, and consumption have become virtually indistinguishable in the current phase of capitalist development. For as Research & Destroy claim: "It is no doubt true that the spheres of circulation and reproduction depend upon the sphere of production and productive labor; however, the converse is also true. Production can be halted from beyond, by proletarians who are not productive labourers, through an interruption of the circulation upon which production depends. [...] If the commodities (raw materials, half-finished goods, finished goods) and bodies which capital needs don't arrive at the factory, the warehouse, or the retail outlet, then all labour and all production of value stops."[xiii] Focusing our analysis on circulation is not to say that it exists independent from production and consumption, but rather that all such spheres are inherent to the forms of the others.

In our tactical evaluation of the current landscape of material commodity circulation in the United States, disruption can occur either at these points of convergence, these "high-traffic nodes" through which many lines (flows) of high quantities of value converge, enter, and exit, or along "high-traffic lines." The term "high-traffic lines," similar to edges in graph theory, are simply the singular lines connecting "high-traffic nodes" through which high quantities of value pass (high-value throughput).

To ground our distinction between "high-traffic nodes" and "high-traffic lines" in material examples we present the following:

1. We consider The Port of Los Angeles to be a high-traffic node in the network of commodity-capital circulation. The Port of Los Angeles is one of the most important high-traffic nodes in North American commodities circulation precisely because of infrastructure statistics like these: "In 2010, the Port's cargo terminals handled an impressive 7.8 million TEUs (twenty-foot

equivalent units). Home to the nation's largest on-dock rail assets, the Port of Los Angeles provides the highest frequency of intermodal access to 14 major freight hubs across the United States.”[xiv] Because of the staggering volume and value throughput (\$285.4 billion in 2013)[xv] of the Port of Los Angeles, we hold it to be of the utmost importance to circulation infrastructure in the United States – it is thus hierarchized as such, in a preeminent logistical position, privileged above other American seaports, intermodal rail yards, railway lines, freight truck warehouses, etc.

2. Many high-traffic lines converge at, enter, and exit the Port of Los Angeles (shipping routes, rail lines, freight truck routes, etc). The sea transport corridors used by the Yang Ming Marine Transport Corporation from Taiwan to the Port of Los Angeles could be considered individual high-traffic lines within the network of commodities circulation. Likewise the specific rail routes from the Port of Los Angeles's Maersk On-Dock Rail Yard (intermodal facility) to the Commerce Eastern, Sheila, Hobart BNSF rail yards in Commerce, CA can also be considered high-traffic lines while the aforementioned intermodal rail yards in Commerce can be considered high-traffic nodes. The high-volume BNSF Southern Transcon main rail line from the Port of Los Angeles by way of San Bernardino and exiting California in the town of Needles can also be considered a high-traffic line connecting many high-traffic nodes in the Midwest to the San Pedro Bay Ports.

Thus, central to our understanding of this distinction between high-traffic nodes and high-traffic lines within our theorization of the network(s) of material commodities circulation in the United States, is the fact that high-traffic nodes are localized physical sites while high-traffic lines are logistical routes, often spanning hundreds or thousands of miles, on which commodity-capital traverses and circulates. High-traffic nodes can be physically massive like the Port of Los Angeles with its 7,500 acres and 270 berths, or smaller like the Oakland International Gateway (OIG) Intermodal Facility operated by BNSF. High-traffic lines can be assessed in either their localized spatial fragments (i.e. the BNSF Gateway subdivision can be viewed in tactical segments) or in terms of their historical and organizational continuity (e.g. the Southern Transcon's official designation as a rail line stretches almost 2,000 miles from San Bernardino, CA to Chillicothe, IL). Each form, high-traffic nodes and high-traffic lines, possesses both tactical strengths and weakness as sites for potential disruption, which will be expanded upon in the subsequent sections. Each high-traffic node has a corresponding high-traffic line (e.g. intermodal rail yards = high-traffic node, while railway lines = high-traffic line). For the purposes of this essay, we have chosen to focus solely on seaports/megaports, railway lines, intermodal rail yards, freight truck routes, intermodal rail yards and air cargo warehouses.

Our choice to not analyze shipping routes (sea transport corridors), freight truck warehouses, and air cargo flight routes is intentional. We do not believe in the current context of struggles that disrupting shipping routes is a tactic that possesses the potential to be generalized. With the notable exception of piracy in the waters off of the Horn of Africa, a significant disruption of global shipping routes seems to be untenable solely because it requires substantial maritime resources; which is something the global proletariat has little access to. Freight trucks form a significant link in the logistics of commodity-capital's circulation through drayage. Drayage is the transport of material commodities over short distances, often as a section of a longer overall transport process. We believe that the sheer number of intermodal drayage facilities and

warehouses in California alone (compared to California's three mega-seaports) makes it incredibly difficult to coordinate effective disruptions against these lesser high-traffic nodes, hence our omission of that particular circulation form. Finally, the absence of air cargo flight routes in our analysis is essentially due to the same reasons we ignored shipping routes (sea transport corridors): the proletariat does not have the technological means and access to aviation resources to effectively block air cargo transport en route. The circulation forms that we will attempt to explore as viable sites for the disruption of the circulation of capital are outlined in the table below, along with their network classification, and what we abstractly posit as their limits of form – limits which we will explore further and attempt to tactically exploit in the subsequent sections.

*Circulation Form - Network Classification - Weakness of Form*  
*Seaports/Megaports - High-traffic node - Massive Width, Breadth*  
*Railway Lines - High-traffic line - Linearity, Length, Fixity*  
*Freight Truck Routes - High-traffic line - Dispersal, Diffusion*  
*Intermodal Rail Yards - High-traffic node - Width, Breadth*  
*Air Cargo Warehouses - High-traffic node - Width, Breadth*

In what follows then, we present not a program or a set of tactics that “should” moralistically be implemented. Instead, in the spirit of adding to the cartography of the current struggles against the reproduction of capital we intend to focus on a set of questions emerging from the material tactics enacted in the immediate past within the context of Occupy. As their starting point, this set of questions starts with the material practices that attempted to disrupt the flows of capital and then problematize them through an analysis of their limits. Speculatively, this set of questions will then attempt to envisage what the generalized application of these practices may indeed look like – not in order to institute them as a necessity for revolution, or to hold on to them as “correct” forms of struggle, but rather to map a potentiality in order that their emerging forms may be recognized if and only if the struggles themselves result in their manifestation.

## **Seaports**

*“California seaports are a major economic force and are critically important elements to the growth of California and the nation’s economy. Seaports are dependent upon the goods movement chain to efficiently distribute freight around the globe and across the nation.”*  
*-Caltrans[xvi]*

In terms of high-traffic nodes in the logistics networks of commodity-capital circulation, none are more central than the seaport-form. In using the broader term seaport, we are obviously only concerned with cargo ports (break bulk ports, intermodal container ports, etc.). The sole factor contributing to the centrality of seaports in logistics infrastructure networks simply has to do with the value of their commodity throughput. In 2012, the three largest seaports in California had a combined cargo value throughput of \$477.8 billion dollars.

*CA Main Seaports/Megaports - Cargo Value Throughput (2012)*  
*Port of Los Angeles - \$283.6 billion*

*Port of Long Beach - \$155 billion*

*Port of Oakland - \$39.2 billion*

While the majority of California seaport commodities-circulation happens at three high-traffic nodes outlined above, California actually has 12 cargo seaports. These include “3 ‘megaports’ (Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Oakland); 8 smaller niche ports (Hueneme, Humboldt Bay, Redwood City, Richmond, West Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, and Stockton); and 1 private port (Benicia). [In addition to these] The ports of Oakland, Stockton, and West Sacramento are developing a new barge shipping service funded through a federal TIGER grant.”[xvii] “Megaport” is a loose term that simply refers to the world’s largest and busiest cargo seaports. On the economic significance California’s three megaports: “The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach comprise the largest port complex [San Pedro Bay Ports] in the United States and are key players in global enterprise. Together, they handle a fourth of all container cargo traffic in the United States. The Port of Oakland, the fourth largest port in the nation, handles trade from the Pacific Rim countries, delivering 99% of the ocean containers passing through Northern California to the rest of the nation.”[xviii]

In terms of the sheer economic impact of port shutdowns, one only has to look at the estimated figures of the Port of Oakland shutdown during the Occupy Oakland-led “West Coast Port Shutdown” on December 12th, 2011. Isaac Kos-Read, the director of external affairs for the Port of Oakland at the time of the December 12th port shutdown, estimated that “for the day, it was a loss of \$4 million to \$8 million, easily.”[xix] Certain moralistic debates concerning the impact such blockades had on “the working class” emerged from both the November 2nd and December 12th shutdowns of the Port of Oakland. Some Occupy activists argued that in blocking entrances to the Port of Oakland (what we identify as one of the highest-priority high-traffic nodes in California’s logistics infrastructure), such actions were in fact making the blocked truckers trying to enter the port “working-class” collateral damage. John Carino, a Tracy, California resident and truck driver attempting to deliver rice on December 12th during the port shutdown remarked to a local news agency: “I’m trying to figure out what these people want with their movement [Occupy]. I’m trying to make a living doing this. These shutdowns are hurting us.”[xx] In response to these views by the “working-class” directly affected by these port shutdowns, many moralistic sentiments were then proffered by the more liberal-minded Occupy Oakland activists: “We will find more effective means to take action. [...] Hopefully we will find other techniques that don’t burden a group like the truckers as much.”[xxi] Through this toxic activist guilt a subsequent orthodox privileging and romanticization of the “programmatic working-class” experience emerged.

We argue that the view held by many Occupy Oakland activists that such port shutdowns actually hurt “the 99%” unintentionally, formed one of the limits to the tactic of the port shutdown within the specific context of Occupy. Given the fact that many freight truckers (central conduits among the high-traffic lines of commodity-capital circulation) felt that Occupy was damaging their right to the wage-form through such blockades, and the disheartening reality that most of the Port of Oakland’s 2,000 ILWU longshoremen make “between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year”[xxii] which is considerably more than California’s average per capita yearly income of \$29,634 back in 2011[xxiii], it is painfully obvious to us that “working-class identity” is one of the interminable barriers to the generalization of communist measures. The identity of

the “programmatically working-class” itself must be overcome, hence our insistence that there is no room for moralizing discussions in the disruption of the circulation of commodity-capital. If a set of tactics emerges from a future context of struggles that explicitly targets commodity-capital circulation and becomes generalized, it will undoubtedly impact everyone and everything simply because of our own inescapable implication in the circulatory flows of capital. Despite the utopian pretenses of many radical leftists, we cannot step outside of this flow simply because of our own capital-dependent existences and the real subsumption of life under capital and “the modification of the labour-process along specifically capitalist lines.”[xxiv]

We argue that the weakness of the seaport-form is precisely their massive “width” or “breadth.” By width, we simply mean that seaports act as large material aggregate facilities in which a wide array of commodities enter, are stored, sorted, and exit. They are the super-nodes in the logistics networks of commodity-capital circulation. They are geospatial sites, which through their width or breadth possess the highest levels of circulatory “bandwidth” so to speak. The highest volume of material goods pass through these super-nodes, hence our classification of these sites as massively “wide.” While this breadth lends itself to incredible high-volume capacities and logistical centrality, this is also its structural weakness. Because such a high volume of goods enters and exits these seaport super-nodes, disrupting such sites within the circulatory network has the most economic repercussions. Unlike the less-volume high-traffic lines of railway lines, freight truck routes, and cargo plane transport, seaports are not “diffuse” forms in and of themselves – they merely act as the main node from which more “diffuse” or “dispersed” forms of transport stem from. The diffuse forms facilitating commodity-capital circulation are unequivocally more difficult to disrupt with coordinated network-wide disruptions or blockades than the “wide” seaport-form. Thus, because of the seaport-form’s “super-node” centrality in commodity-circulation networks and their relative “width” in terms of their relation to other circulation forms, we argue they are the preeminent sites for disruption in the sphere of circulation.

## **Railway Lines**

The majority of all commodities circulation via rail transport occurs in California along 5,412 miles of “Class I railroads – the designation for the major freight rail carriers – [and] are represented in California by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) and the Union Pacific Railroad (UP).”[xxv] While “these two railroads have extensive rail networks connecting California with the rest of the nation, particularly corridors to the Southwest, Midwest, and Northwest,”[xxvi] there are nonetheless still high-traffic lines within the Class I railroad network that the CA Department of Transportation identifies as “Key Freight Rail Routes.” In Southern California the CA D.O.T identifies the Tehachapi Trade Corridor (dispatched by Union Pacific) as a “major trade route which connects the State with national markets,” while in “Northern California, the Martinez Subdivision, Feather River Canyon, and Donner Pass routes serve the Port of Oakland and Port of Stockton, and are owned and dispatched by the UP but serve BNSF [Burlington Northern Santa Fe] through trackage right agreements. Donner Pass has replaced the Feather River Canyon route as UP’s primary intermodal service route eastward.”[xxvii] The Union Pacific’s “Los Angeles Service Unit operating from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach is the primary route to the four major gateways of St. Louis, Chicago, Memphis, and New Orleans,” while the BNSF “Transcontinental (Transcon) route east from the Ports of Los Angeles

and Long Beach is an integral part of the California freight rail network and is their land bridge link to markets in Kansas City, Memphis, and Chicago.”[xxviii]

What is remarkably easy to overlook in terms of the railway logistics away from California’s three megaport-seaports (Oakland, Los Angeles, and Long Beach) is that in terms of Class I freight-rail routes, there are only seven that ultimately leave the state borders of California. There are two routes exiting Northern California into Oregon, two routes exiting Northern California into Nevada, one route exiting Southern California into southern Nevada, and the final two routes exiting Southern California into Arizona. Tactically, seven seems to be a relatively small number of terminal routes out of California especially when compared with the mess of Norfolk Southern, BNSF, UP and CSX routes operating trackage in the Midwest and Eastern United States. Given that the Port of Los Angeles is the busiest port in the United States by container volume and the number-one freight gateway ranked by the commodity value of its throughput, and the 9th busiest port worldwide when combined with its immediate neighbor, the Port of Long Beach, it is striking to come to terms with the fact that there are only three Southern Californian exit points for the majority of the intermodal rail freight operating between the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the rest of the United States.

The disruption of the circulation of capital in the form of material commodities was challenged in a new, resounding way on November 2nd and December 12th – this form of blockade could potentially be expanded and generalized, in California at least, on other circulatory forms. The Port of Long Beach could not be shutdown on December 12th in conjunction with the West Coast Port Shutdown in solidarity with Longview and Occupy, and had only an estimated 200 people present. The sheer size of the so-called San Pedro Bay Ports (much larger than the Port of Oakland) made it logistically impossible for 200 people to block in any material way. With no solutions, we simply ask what could a creative occupation or blockade of the Class 1 intermodal freight-rail routes in California look like? Could a group as small as 200 people succeed in blocking an isolated high-traffic line in the desert as opposed to a high-traffic node in an urban center? A nascent response may be found in the recent radical actions of First Nations activists in Canada. As recently as March 19, 2014, “protesters near the Tyendinaga Mohawk reserve in southern Ontario [...] blocked the Montreal-Toronto Via Rail line to draw attention to missing and murdered aboriginal women.”[xxix] This was one of many recent rail and road blockades by indigenous activists in Canada. While one blockade resulted in an extremely short stop-order for all CN (Canadian National Railway Company) freight trains on March 8th, and the later March 19th blockade resulted in passenger train service on Via Rail to be disrupted for several hours – the point we wish to focus on is that these disruptions, while never intending to be anything more than actions to raise media awareness, did in fact disrupt the flow of goods and persons. The March 8th action blocking the CN mainline[xxx] can specifically be evaluated as an action that possessed within itself a sketch of how generalized railway blockades could possibly manifest[xxxi] – explicitly with the intent to disrupt the circulation of capital. If an action conducted by a relatively small group of people (infinitesimal compared to the thousands present for the November 2nd shutdown of the Port of Oakland) could halt a major Class I route operated by CN for a few hours, what could possibly emerge if intermodal railway line blockades became a tactic diffused and implemented in the same way plaza occupations were globally diffused in 2011-2012?

A word on the railway-form itself. Railways suffer from being remnants of a lingering modernity in a postmodern world. The concomitant rise of industrialism and the expansion of global rail networks were both apart of a world-view which viewed expansion as a pure linearity – outward almost always meant moving in one specific direction. While capital, production, and perhaps more specifically, manufacturing itself, changed with the development of new material and informational technologies, the rail system continued to exist with relatively few radical technological transformations. There are only so many technological leaps one can make in altering the physical way in which moving a certain volume of goods from Point A to Point B along trackage is done.

The notion of the “logistics revolution” underscores the rise in importance of circulatory management and the diminishing importance of the technology of transport itself. While new transport technologies have undoubtedly expedited the way in which goods physically traverse the world, the significance of the “logistics revolution” is precisely that it is the management of these commodity flows that has been streamlined, hypermediated, and made incredibly efficient. W. Bruce Allen argues that “while transportation is the largest components of logistics, ordering costs, carrying costs, warehousing costs, and administrative costs are nontrivial. [...] Transportation has been subsumed, in many cases, by these broader departments. Managing the supply chain – from raw material assembly, to work in progress, to the physical distribution of the final product or service – is the essence of business logistics.”[xxxii] Physical distribution itself happens in accordance with particular modes much in the same way that it did fifty-years ago; it is the drive to maximize the capacities of the existing infrastructure and material technologies (both productive and distributive) to their most efficient and fullest extent that comprise the field of logistics. Most logistics attempts to work within the already delineated form of transport in order to maximize efficiency, much in the same way that Marx writes about efficiency and the production of relative surplus-value. This brings us now to the limits of the railway-form.

We argue that the limits of the railway-form are “linearity” and “length.” The “logistics revolution” has not been able to supersede these limits, thus we posit them as weaknesses that can be exploited. We do not mean linearity and length in abstract terms; we are speaking about these limits as concrete materialities. Linearity here simply refers to the fact that the railway-form operates along a purely outward and fixed course of travel between high-traffic nodes such as stand-alone intermodal railway yards, seaports, etc. Because of the fixed and relatively immutable nature of this linearity, flexibility in transport via railway is almost nonexistent. In this context, length therefore refers to the fact that while all rail routes span hundreds and even thousands of miles, one knows precisely (geospatially) where Train X must pass through if it is using Route Y. This rigidity in the railway-form is a tactical weakness, in that it gives the potential blockader an almost clairvoyance in terms of looking into the future and knowing precisely where a certain train will ultimately have to pass through. Thus, because of this length – any point along a high-traffic line in the form of a railway line becomes a legitimate site for blockage.

It is precisely this antiquated linearity and length which makes certain points in the circulation of commodity-capital via railway lines relatively easy to identify as, paradoxically, both high-traffic lines and defensively vulnerable. Block a rail route in the right place, the right way, and for a

protracted duration – and there is simply no getting around it. Railway length also possesses another tactical weakness in the fact that many rail routes travel through isolated physical locations that are difficult to defend and access by road (the thoroughfares that any State-enacted counter-blockade defense would necessarily have to traverse). A perfect example of the hostility of the terrain and relative isolation that many rail routes traverse is the mountainous trackage section of the Union Pacific Roseville Subdivision that passes through Donner Pass in the High Sierras of Northern California.

*Class 1 Rail Lines Leaving CA -[xxxiii]*

*UP Black Butte Subdivision (I-5 Corridor) at Doris, CA (Northern CA into OR)*

*BNSF Gateway Subdivision at Kalina, CA (Northern CA into OR)*

*UP Feather River Canyon Subdivision (Feather River Corridor/Central Corridor) at Herlong, CA (Northern CA into NV)*

*UP Roseville Subdivision (Donner Pass/Overland Route) at Truckee, CA (Northern CA into NV)*

*UP Cima Subdivision at Nipton, CA (Southern CA into NV)*

*BNSF Needles Subdivision (Southern Transcon) at Needles, CA (Southern CA into AZ)*

*UP Yuma Subdivision (Sunset Route) at Winterhaven, CA (Southern CA into AZ)*

## **Freight Truck Routes**

In terms of the sheer throughput aggregate that constitutes the global supply chain, the further one gets from the large high-traffic nodes such as “mega-seaports” the more diffuse the means of freight transport become and thus, are subsequently harder to disrupt. Freight truck routes, as high-traffic lines, necessarily conform to this rule. Due to the fact that, theoretically at least, any road that can accommodate the weight, length, breadth, and height of a standard semi-trailer freight truck is ostensibly a route which commodity-capital can traverse, freight truck routes are inherently diffuse modes of transport. Thus, unlike railway lines which are fixed and relatively few in number (when compared to durable load-bearing roads and highways in the United States), freight truck routes can immediately be reconfigured in the event of blockages or disruptions. While freight truck routes are the most diffuse method of commodity-capital circulation, they still are logistically significant in terms of their sheer proliferation across the entirety of the global supply chain.

The California Department of Transportation acknowledges both this centrality and the fragility of the freight truck-form: “In terms of value and weight, most commercial freight is moved by trucks. Approximately 71% of goods by value and 69% of goods by weight are carried by truck in the United States (Bureau of Transportation Statistics, September, 2009). [...] There are many factors that challenge commercial trucking such as traffic congestion, traffic accidents, weather, operating rules and regulations, scarcity of truck parking spaces, shortage of available drivers, road restrictions, and lack of intermodal connectors to ports and intermodal terminals. Increased competition in the trucking industry, rising fuel costs, and just-in-time delivery have forced the industry to be more efficient and responsive to their customer needs.”[xxxiv]

The relative flexibility that semi-trailer freight truck transport affords the logistics of capital (e.g. the literal capacity to instantly and easily maneuver around material obstacles) comes at a cost: volume. The fact that most standard semi-trailer freight trucks lack the capacity to move

incredibly high volumes of commodities should also be of tactical consideration for those attempting to disrupt the circulation of commodity-capital. Blocking intermodal freight truck routes far away from freight truck hubs, intermodal rail yards, or seaports does not have the same tactical significance than if such disruptions were to occur physically closer to the aforementioned high-traffic nodes. The further a semi-trailer freight truck is from such high-traffic nodes, the more possibilities for maneuvering, escape, and route reconfiguration exist for it. In addition to this ability to circumvent any material impediments to its flow, the further the once tightly aggregated commodity-capital being transported in freight trucks gets from high-traffic nodes the more that high-volume of concentrated capital becomes dispersed over a vast geographical space – as vast as the entire road and highway infrastructure. Thus, blockades along the high-traffic lines of freight truck routes can be tactically effective if they are done within a relatively close physical proximity to high-traffic nodes.

This difference in form sharply contrasts with the other high-traffic line already discussed here, the railway line. The railway line, due to its limitation of form in its fixity and linearity, can effectively be disrupted along any portion of its trackage. The freight truck route is markedly different, and we venture to say that all disruptions within this particular mode of commodity-capital circulation will be most effective within a fifty-mile radius of the high-traffic node that it is arriving at/departing from. This poses another tactical problem on the part of the potential blockaders, for this necessity of relative proximity to such high-traffic nodes ultimately means that (unlike the miles of remote trackage on many Class I rail routes) such locations are more often than not concentrated in urban centers – changing the political stakes, defensive viability, and duration capability of any potential disruption along freight truck routes.

In terms of mapping potential choke points along freight truck routes, like most critical assessments of the flaws and impediments within the capitalist global supply chain capital has already done a better job of identifying these “problems” than we ever could and as such, we present the findings of studies conducted by the “American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Office of Freight Management and Operations [organizations] monitoring freight significant highways as part of the Freight Performance Measures (FPM) initiative. A central aspect of these monitoring activities is the identification and quantification of major chokepoints and bottlenecks along highways that are critical to the nation’s freight transportation system.”[xxxv] These studies showed that “of the top 250 major freight chokepoints and bottlenecks in the nation, as identified by the FHWA and ATRI in 2011, 15 were in California – 6 in Los Angeles, 3 in Sacramento, 2 in Oakland, and 1 each in San Bernardino, Corona, San Rafael, and San Diego.”[xxxvi]

*ATRI Identified Freight Truck Infrastructure Choke Points in Close Proximity to Seaports:*

*Port of Los Angeles - 7 ATRI Choke Points*

*Port of Long Beach - 7 ATRI Choke Points*

*Port of Oakland - 3 ATRI Choke Points*

What then could a disruption in freight truck route transportation possibly look like? We need look no further than the context of recent struggles in Oakland. In 2010, as a part of the national March 4th “Day of Action to Defend Education” a more radical contingent of about 200 protesters broke away from the larger march from Berkeley to Downtown Oakland and stormed

onto Interstate 880 effectively forcing Bay Area rush-hour traffic to a standstill for close to two hours. While this action was largely symbolic and the temporary “blockade” was literally comprised only of stubborn human bodies, it still nonetheless points to the fragility of highway infrastructure in certain parts of California. The freeway “takeover” on March 4th took place at the northbound I-880 entrance to what is aptly described by locals as “The MacArthur Maze” after the confluence of the I-580 (MacArthur Freeway), I-880, and I-80 freeways. “The MacArthur Maze” is identified by the ATRI as 41st out of the 250 most congested chokepoints in the US affecting freight truck infrastructure. Freight trucks entering and leaving the Port of Oakland and OIG must necessarily contend with and add to the congestion of “The MacArthur Maze,” and as such it forms a material site for potential freight truck route disruption – with a relatively recent historical precedent of blockading already enacted.

### **Intermodal Rail Yards and Air Cargo Warehouses**

We end our analysis of circulatory forms within the capitalist global supply chain with two types of high-traffic nodes that we argue are strategically less-important than seaports simply according to their lower total value throughput: intermodal rail yards and air cargo warehouses. This section is admittedly brief for three reasons:

1. We believe that in terms of rail networks that railway lines (high-traffic lines) are more tactically sound to disrupt than intermodal rail yards (high-traffic nodes) – and if generalized, the successful blockading of railway lines makes the blockading of intermodal rail yards redundant.
2. Air cargo transport already possesses inherent limits to the realization of its logistical capacity that make it the less relevant mode out of all the modes of commodity-capital transport previously discussed – i.e. the technological limits to air travel and volume capacity or the fact that out of all the various logistical transportation modes “air cargo grew [least,] by a meagre 1.4% in 2013, trailing significantly behind the 2.6% increase in freight capacity. That prompted IATA [International Air Transport Association] to call freight markets the ‘biggest worry’ for the airline industry. Although freight traffic has picked up slightly in 2014, IATA warns of ‘trends which are not in the industry’s favour.’” Consider this juxtaposed against rail’s “record intermodal growth” in 2013.[xxxix]
3. Given that intermodal rail yards and air cargo warehouses are high-traffic nodes similar to seaports, we argue that they possess the same inherent weakness of form – width/breadth (though to a lesser extent than seaports) – and as such, we do not feel the need to reiterate our analysis of this weakness of form. Please refer to our discussion of this weakness of form at the end of our section on seaports.

#### *California Intermodal Railway Yards:*

*Operating Railway Company- Facility- Location*

*BNSF - Commerce Intermodal Facility - Commerce, CA*

*BNSF - Fresno Intermodal Facility - Fresno, CA*

*BNSF - Los Angeles Intermodal Facility - Los Angeles, CA*

*BNSF/UP(trackage rights) - Oakland International Gateway (OIG) Intermodal Facility - Oakland, CA*

*BNSF - San Bernardino Intermodal Facility - San Bernardino, CA*

*BNSF - Stockton Intermodal Facility- Stockton, CA*

*UP - Los Angeles Intermodal Facility - Los Angeles, CA*

*UP - LATC - Los Angeles, CA*

*UP - City of Industry Intermodal Facility - City of Industry, CA*

*UP - ICTF - Long Beach, CA*

*UP - Lathrop Intermodal Facility - French Camp, CA*

## **On Finance Capitalism and the Circulation of Money-Capital**

Starting from the premise that the capitalist sphere of circulation is essentially comprised of both the circulation of capital as commodities and capital as money, we must at least mention the problem money-capital poses for the cartography of the anticapitalist counter-logistics that we have been attempting to map. In regards to the transformation of capital through exchange Marx writes that, “the circulation of money as capital is an end in itself, for the valorization of value takes place only within this constantly renewed movement. The movement of capital is therefore limitless.”[xl] This forms the basis for the well-known general formula of capital, M-C-M‘ (money exchanged for a commodity exchanged for a larger sum of money). Faced with the restructuring of capital in the 1970s in the first zones of capitalist accumulation, the commodity central to the production of value, labor-power, is essentially pushed out of the production process through technological developments such as wide-spread automation explicitly as a reaction to the crisis precipitated by the worker’s movements of the early 1970s. The less actual living-labor involved in the production process, meant that less real wages were being paid, and as a result capitalist firms could extract higher amounts of surplus-value from what little actual variable capital they were ultimately realizing.

Post-Fordist financialization is, as Christian Marazzi argues, a direct result of the fallout from “industrial profits not reinvested in instrumental capital [specifically variable capital] and wages.”[xli] Yet, as is always the case with capitalism, the fundamental contradictions of its form came to bear down on capital’s impetus towards valorization. As Marx points out about this paradox, “...the mechanism of capitalist production takes care that the absolute increase of capital is not accompanied by a corresponding rise in the general demand for labour.”[xlii] An exclusion of labor-power alienates the only consumers of any commodities produced-in-general, and as such capital through its restructuring in the 1970s witnessed an attempt to circumnavigate this truism by the proliferation of the credit economy and the financialization of the global economy. The formula now at play within finance capitalism does away with the transformation of money into other commodities, simply relying on the pure liquidity of the money-capital form as the sole means towards capital’s valorization: M-M‘ or according to Marx, “money which is worth more money, value which is greater than itself.”[xliii] Interestingly enough, Marx initially uses this formula in Capital Volume 1 to describe usury – not far off from today’s finance capitalism. As the universal equivalent for all other commodities, the money-form in 21st century finance capitalism circulates faster and in stranger transubstantiated modes than Marx could have ever imagined.

While it is tempting to view money-capital as the blood coursing through the veins of commodity-capital networks, this is simply too reductive a reading of the newer immaterial

conduits through which money-capital moves and transforms. The terrain of money-capital's circulation is at once entirely related to the flows of material goods within the global supply chain, and paradoxically, autonomous to such structuring. Just as the "logistics revolution" ushered in a whole new language in which to understand and remake the capitalist sphere of commodities circulation through things like just-in-time production, radio frequency identification, and intermodal containerization, finance capitalism created virtual spaces and relations that are all too real in terms of their impact on the global economy. This virtual reconstitution of the money-form is incredibly complex, complete with spaces and relations in the further transubstantiations of "collateralized debt obligations," "asset-backed securities," "toxic assets," "subprime loans," "leveraged buyouts," "hedge funds," etc. [xliv] This is all to simply acknowledge the profound qualitative difference in blockading or disrupting capital's circulation in its commodity-form versus its hypermediated money-form. We have no illusions about our ability to effectively disrupt the circulation of money-capital, hence our insistence that in terms of mapping potential chokepoints in the network of capital's circulation the mere materiality of the global supply chain makes it the more viable terrain for contestation.

## **Conclusion**

*"The generalisation of the struggle can only be the generalisation of practices that question proletarian's existence as proletarians. [...] The generalisation of the struggle, as a coming together of conflicts within struggles, will immediately bring multiple aspects of surplus value production/capitalist reproduction to a halt, thus putting at stake proletarian reproduction itself, necessitating simultaneously the intensification and expansion of what will then be an open insurrection, or probably multiple insurrectionary fronts."*  
-Rocamadur/Blaumachen[xlv]

We have attempted to sketch out not a program, but a cartographical analysis of that which already exists. What use is any of this, beyond a geospatial recontextualization of aggregated value in the form of commodity-capital? Our aim is that through such analyses a clearer conceptualization emerges of the terrain or stage upon which "a coming together of conflicts within struggles" may materialize. We make no pretense in attempting to articulate what forms of struggle will generalize and thus be realized as communist measures; only that because struggles must happen on material terrains of contestation, we therefore believe that studying such spaces constitutes a worthwhile project. This is not the defining of the form struggle must necessarily take, but rather the delineation of a space in which struggles may emerge and generalize if at all. Our hope is that if a disparate set of actions, some evocative of past events like the Port of Oakland shutdown, the I-880 takeover, and CN railway blockades, and others without historical precedents, begin to emerge as a part of future struggles we can situate them within a broader tactical framework and understanding – a map of sorts – and evaluate their merits and limitations within a more clearly elucidated counter-logistics aimed at bringing "multiple aspects of surplus value production/capitalist reproduction to a halt."

## **-Degenerate Communism, July 2014**

*Many thanks to the handful of comrades that helped in refining this essay, especially LH.*

[i] Jasper Bernes, Endnotes 3, “Logistics, Counterlogistics, and the Communist Prospect” (<http://endnotes.org.uk/en/jasper-bernes-logistics-counterlogistics-and-t...>)

[ii] Caltrans, “Freight Planning Fact Sheet: California Freight Rail”

[iii] Bay of Rage, “Blockading the Port is Only the First of Many Last Resorts” (<http://www.bayofrage.com/from-the-bay/blockading-the-port-is-only-the-fi...>)

[iv] Marx, Karl. Capital Vol. 2

[v] We realize the inherently negative position we assume here in our belief that the disruption of the circulation of commodity-capital and the destruction of the value-form is both a means and the end. For a cogent argument against this type of purely negative reading, see Alberto Toscano’s “Logistics and Opposition” in Mute – in which he asks what it would look like to repurpose networks of circulation for communist aims rather than simply disrupting them. (<http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/logistics-and-opposition>) Also see Out of the Woods’ “Disaster communism part 3 – logistics, repurposing, bricolage” (<http://libcom.org/blog/disaster-communism-part-3-logistics-repurposing-b...>)

[vi] Rust Bunny Collective, SIC 2, “Under the Riot Gear” (<http://www.sicjournal.org/en/under-the-riot-gear>)

[vii] Ibid.

[viii] See Rust Bunny Collective, SIC 2, “Under the Riot Gear” for more. (<http://www.sicjournal.org/en/under-the-riot-gear>)

[ix] (<https://nrf.com/sites/default/files/Port%20Closure%20Full%20Report.pdf>)

[x] Long Beach Press Telegram, “National Economy Could Suffer from Shutdown of West Coast Ports, According to Study” (<http://www.presstelegram.com/business/20140626/national-economy-could-su...>)

[xi] Manuel Castells, “The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy”

[xii] Eugene Thacker, “Foreword: Protocol Is as Protocol Does” – Foreword to Alexander Galloway’s Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization

[xiii] Research & Destroy, SIC 2, “Limit Analysis and its Limits” (<http://www.sicjournal.org/en/limits-analysis-and-its-limits>)

[xiv] “A Profile of the Port of Los Angeles” (<http://portoflosangeles.org/about/profile.asp>)

[xv] “Facts and Figures” (<http://www.portoflosangeles.org/about/facts.asp>)

[xvi] Caltrans, “Seaports” (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/seaports.html>)

[xvii] Ibid.

[xviii] Ibid.

[xix] George Avalos, “Occupy shutdown costly for Oakland port” ([http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci\\_19540367](http://www.mercurynews.com/breaking-news/ci_19540367))

[xx] Ibid.

[xxi] Ibid.

[xxii] Ibid.

[xxiii] U.S. Census Bureau, “American Community Survey, 2011. American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B19301”

[xxiv] Endnotes 2, “The History of Subsumption” (<http://endnotes.org.uk/en/endnotes-the-history-of-subsumption>)

[xxv] Caltrans, “Freight Rail Overview” ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/freight\\_rail.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/freight_rail.html))

[xxvi] Ibid.

[xxvii] Caltrans, “Freight Planning Fact Sheet: California Freight Rail”

[xxviii] Ibid.

[xxix] CBC News, “Via Rail blockade by First Nations that halted Montreal-Toronto trains ends” (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/via-rail-blockade-by-first-nation...>)

[xxx] “On March 8, following a week of action demanding a national inquiry into the at least 825 missing and murdered indigenous women across Canada, warriors from Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory blocked the CN mainline. This action, which fell on International Women’s Day, came the day after the release of a Parliamentary report which attempted to dismiss and deny the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and prevent any meaningful response or action. This is a continuation of colonization and its inherent violence against Indigenous communities, particularly Indigenous women. For more information on missing and murdered women in Canada, please visit: [missingjustice.ca](http://missingjustice.ca)” from “Warrior Publications”

[xxxi] There are other recent North American precedents for rail blockades (all emerging from the activist milieu), such as the June and August 2013 “sit-in” rail blockades on tracks in Fairfield and Auburn, ME done by 350 Maine and Maine Earth First! activist groups calling attention to transportation of Bakken crude oil by rail.

[xxxii] W. Bruce Allen, “The Logistics Revolution and Transportation”

[xxxiii] US Dept. of Transportation: Capacity levels: Below, Near, At, Above ([http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight\\_analysis/freight\\_story/congestio...](http://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/freight_story/congestio...))

[xxxiv] Caltrans, “Commercial Vehicles” ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/commercial\\_vehicles.html](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/commercial_vehicles.html))

[xxxv] American Transportation Research Institute, “FPM Congestion Monitoring at 250 Freight Significant Highway Locations” (<http://atri-online.org/2011/10/01/fpm-congestion-monitoring-at-250-freig...>)

[xxxvi] Caltrans, “Fast Freight Facts: Commercial Vehicles (Trucks)” ([http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/fact\\_sheets/Fast\\_Freight\\_Facts\\_...](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/fact_sheets/Fast_Freight_Facts_...))

[xxxvii] American Transportation Research Institute, “FPM Congestion Monitoring at 250 Freight Significant Highway Locations” (<http://atri-online.org/2011/10/01/fpm-congestion-monitoring-at-250-freig...>)

[xxxviii] Ibid.

[xxxix] “The Association of American Railroads (AAR) today reported that U.S. rail traffic for 2013 saw record intermodal growth with a slight full year decrease in carloadings. U.S. rail intermodal volume totaled a record 12.8 million containers and trailers in 2013, up 4.6 percent or 564,276 units, over 2012. Carloads totaled 14.6 million in 2013, down 0.5 percent or 76,784 carloads, from 2012. Intermodal volume in 2013 was the highest on record, surpassing the record high totals of 2006 by 549,471 units.” From the Association of American Railroads (<https://www.aar.org/newsandevents/Freight-Rail-Traffic/Pages/2014-01-09-...>)

[xl] Marx, Karl. Capital Vol. 1

[xli] Christian Marazzi, The Violence of Financial Capitalism

[xlii] Marx, Karl. Capital Vol. 1

[xliii] Ibid.

[xliv] It is also worth noting the way in which the theoretical language of money-capital’s circulation is influencing the development of the material practice of capitalist logistics. One revealing example of this integration of virtual and immaterial practices into the development of more efficient transport logistics is the notion of the “Physical Internet.” According to the Physical Internet Initiative: “The Physical Internet is an open global logistics system founded on physical, digital and operational interconnectivity through encapsulation, interfaces and protocols.” Using lessons about how to expedite interconnectivity learned throughout the information age, proponents of the Physical Internet are attempting to transpose what was originally a virtual language onto the materiality of the global supply chain. See: (<http://www.physicalinternetinitiative.org/index.php>)

[xlv] Rocamadur/Blaumachen, SIC 2, “The Feral Underclass Hits the Streets: On the English Riots and Other Ordeals” (<http://sic.communisation.net/en/the-feral-underclass-hits-the-streets>)