

Naming All Of The Names

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In early February, two communiques surfaced on the Seattle-based website Tides of Flame^{1, 2}. The communique author(s) took credit for obstructing the passage of workers headed to their offices at Microsoft in Redmond, WA, and again the next day of workers going to Amazon Headquarters in the Lower Queen Anne neighborhood of Seattle. Similarly, in the Bay Area (San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley) anarchists and radicals have taken to blocking Google, Yahoo and Twitter commuter busses, even going so far as to physically attack them. In one of the communiques from Seattle, the author(s) plainly state that they have taken inspiration from these Bay Area actions. This invokes the memory of Os Cangaceiros, a group of social rebels in France during the 1980's-90's who would commonly block trains with banners and leaflets proclaiming solidarity with prisoners on strike and listing their demands. While it is exciting to see such tactics taken up commonly and spread beyond the original context in which they surfaced, anarchists and other rebels should nonetheless be willing to give actions and their communications the critical glare that we apply to the rest of the world. Holding back critique of anarchist communications out of respect for the actions they accompany would do nothing to further and enhance the struggle against domination.

As quoted in the first communique, "On Monday, February 10th, a small group of people blocked a Microsoft Connector Shuttle in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle." The Microsoft Connector shuttle provides free transportation to Microsoft employees across the city of Seattle to the Microsoft headquarters located in a suburb of Seattle called Redmond, which can sometimes take hours to drive to during rush-hour. In the communique, the author(s) claim "Without the Connector Shuttle bringing these employees to Capitol Hill, Ballard, South Seattle, and the North End, the hyper-gentrification we now see would not have happened. Microsoft currently employs more people in the Seattle area than Amazon, Google, and Adobe combined. So it is not unreasonable to place the blame for the drastic restructuring of our neighborhoods largely on Microsoft and the developers who built according to their needs."

On the contrary! This reasoning fails to acknowledge the Leviathan that is civilization, capitalism and the death-march that is technology and progress. Microsoft cannot solely be the party responsible for the economic development and gentrification of neighborhoods in Seattle, the

¹ <http://tidesofflame.wordpress.com/2014/02/10/capitol-hill-microsoft-connector-bus-blocked-for-45-minutes/>

² <http://tidesofflame.wordpress.com/2014/02/11/train-blockaded-at-amazon-hq/>

Leviathan is much more nuanced than that. It uses its limbs to obstruct authentic life, whether through policing, science, or dystopic visions of 'the future'. Furthermore, it is not just the police and city councils who wish to see neighborhoods "cleaned up" and are responsible for raised rent-prices. We are all complicit in capitalism, and the "revitalization" of neighborhoods in Seattle is an effort applauded by many of those who have relocated to the Seattle metropolitan area in the last five to ten years to begin careers and families. While it is important to connect the dots and name the names of those who play roles in maintaining the ever increasing drudgery of every day life, we cannot fall into the trap of attempting to find one common enemy when the Leviathan is everywhere, and such our enemies.

The other communique, detailing the blockade of a train of Amazon workers, goes into detail about the developed relations of the CIA and Amazon, a history of CIA-staged-coups and Amazon's union-busting practices, and Amazon's intention to replace all of its human workers within their service and delivery centers with drones and robots. The sentiment here is one of desiring a more fair workplace and a preservation of the working class as it has existed since industrial capitalism began. This is similar to the first communique that deeply stresses the economic hardships that have fallen on the poor and downtrodden throughout Seattle as gentrification rages throughout neighborhoods and rent prices soar, stopping just short of crying "We want cheaper rent now!"

If one were to take these communiqués in good faith, it could be assumed that the author(s) do indeed carry a larger critique of Microsoft, Amazon and the developments in technology and surveillance society that these corporations are currently aiding in. So why leave these sentiments out? In hopes of attracting more followers, or to have a message that is more eligible to the masses? Given that journalist Brendan Kiley (who seems to consistently know what the anarchists are up to and writes almost positively about them) from Seattle's liberal paper *The Stranger* had gotten a secret heads-up of the action³, the motivations seem clear: to communicate as far and wide to the general populace of Seattle an incredibly acceptable critique of Microsoft and Amazon, thus watering down the critique to be provided. This sentiment abandons the belligerence that is the ineffable and inflammable idea of anarchy. By definition, anarchy goes against the grain of the dominant social order, shouting "No!" while the rest of the world retires into bleak submission. If anarchists water down their ideas with the intention of finding more comrades and co-conspirators, surely they are to only find compromise and relations that in truth lack any real notion of affinity.

For the destruction of this world and for the fostering of friendships that light the night and our souls aflame, we must not hide the unruly elements of our characters in hopes of fitting in with a social body that will never accommodate our desires. Our enemy is ever expanding and developing as a vast and plural being, and so must our contempt for it.

³ <http://www.thestranger.com/slog/archives/2014/02/11/this-mornings-amazoncia-protest>

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