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Noche
Against Managers of Revolt
2020

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On Wed. September 23rd 2020 I stepped out with some friends to a march / protest in Los Angeles in response to the verdict reached by a grand jury regarding the police murder of Breonna Taylor. Like many of such marches which occur soon after an enraging event, the march had no initial clear leadership or organization behind it. This is something which I prefer since it allows for more self-initiative, spontaneity and creativity for those who come out to express their rage to this anti-Black world. We mostly milled in a small park until the march started, being led by some people in a pickup truck and megaphones. There emerged a clear pre-emptive leadership during the march.

“Slow down!”

“Keep it tight!”

“Frontline to the front!”

These are some of the commands stated by individuals who never introduced themselves, nor described what they were attempting to do. And because of the nature of street actions and the need for a relative anonymity, it is hard to stop and be like:

*“Yo. Who the fuck are you? What are you trying to do?
And why should we listen to you?”*

Now I have not been at every street action over the summer, but my assumption is that a dynamic has coalesced around some of these individuals but on that night me and my friends grew quickly annoyed with such commands and with the idea that we *should* listen to these self-appointed leaders.

As an anarchist I bristle at self-appointed authority especially at a protest which is essentially *against* policing. At a certain point we just actively ignored these self-appointed leaders. Early on it felt like we were marching to just march and that for these leaders this was enough. There was no real conflictuality. When the self-appointed leaders directed us right past a wide-open freeway on-ramp we began to realize that there was something off. They were not only leaders, they were *managers*.

I remember some statements by Black marchers that night: “Yo we ain’t done shit but march!” / “This ain’t doing shit but getting some exercise.”

They sum up my thoughts on that night. Eventually my friends decided to leave when we saw this was to be just a boisterous parade. I carried on so that I could get back to my ride. The march headed back to the LAPD HQ and at that point I knew it was time for me to head on home too. The only upside was the ability to throw up some tags (but which were largely buffed the next day).

I am not against self-organization in a march so that we can keep each other safe and have an idea of what we’re doing, but when these leaders largely lead a rather non-conflictual march then we have to re-evaluate what happened. The next day someone in a truck drove through a march in Hollywood, hitting two marchers. We need to have lookouts and find ways to keep our street activity

safe not only from the cops but also extra-legal vigilantes who have no problems turning their vehicles into weapons but we also need to have space so that people can express their anger as they wish.

What these days on the streets should instill in us is the capacity to take our actions (and our lives) into our own hands away from specialized leadership and simply following what someone else tells us to do. Passivity is already the beat of our daily lives, why shouldn’t our street actions switch it up? I am not content to post a photo of a march, no matter how small or large on social media to say I was there. I want to *directly* affect the functioning of the city. As someone yelled out at the march, “this ain’t a fuckin’ game!”

Against the managers at work and in the streets.