

San Francisco's Queer Street Patrol

A Lack of Solidarity

Two youths beat up a gay man in front of Marcello's Pizzeria in the heart of the Castro while ten bystanders look on.

Across the street, a man is knifed while waiting at the bus stop. On the other side of a plate glass window a bar full of gay men don't intervene.

Four teenagers from the suburbs go out for a night of fag bashing on Polk Street. One of the men they attack gets a concussion and dies. Because they are juveniles they get off with a light sentence.

Teenagers in Maine throw a gay man off a bridge. He pleads with them that he can't swim but they toss him over anyway laughing. The man drowns.

A co-sexual group of skinheads beat two gay men in front of Orphan Andy's just around the corner from the knifing attack. One of the men was hospitalized. The bashers once again get treated leniently because of their age.

A gay man is knifed by his neighbor, a teenage male, and dies. When the police detectives arrive they are

sympathetic to the youths story that the man propositioned him and don't preserve evidence that might contradict that version of events. The police are overheard laughing and referring to the dead victim as a fagot.

Reading the above incidents and having been victimized by my peers all through grade and high school for being a sissy, I bemoaned the lack of street solidarity in the gay neighborhoods that I walked. When I first came to San Francisco in 1980, I ex-



... Network was community, which would provide

pected to find a gay community that was prepared to offer resistance. I imagined that in response to external violence a crowd would solidify to protect its own. My fantasies always concluded with the aggressors being trounced forthwith, sparing the victim the trauma of a continued attack.

Unfortunately that fantasy would not be realized in the San Francisco gay neighborhoods. To make that fantasy a reality, the people rushing to aid the victim would have to know that the rest of the crowd would back them up; in our atomized society, that level of trust didn't exist, even in the gay community which had every reason to come together.

A Queer Patrol is Formed

I read and heard that there was a new queer-oriented street patrol active in the Castro. It was exactly what I was looking for as a way to build the kind of physically supportive community that could defend itself against attack. At worst I would learn some street fighting tactics. The first in depth story I saw about them was in a magazine article called "Defending Ourselves" by Ellen Twine¹. In the picture accompanying the article the patrol stood, in formation, tough looking characters of both sexes, wearing berets; a very militant look.

In that article Ellen points to the bus-stop stabbing incident and others like it as being catalysts to the formation of the San Francisco Street Patrol as an interest group of Queer Nation. Ellen relates a parable of a (maybe) mythic time in the mid-70's when angry queers (brothers and sisters) would have poured out of the bars to defend their community. She bemoans modern passivity in the face of violence. That is why the Street Patrol was formed as an *interventionist* patrol.

An interventionist patrol will stop a fight or bashing themselves and perform a citizen's arrest on the aggressor. Interventionist training is much different than self-defense training in both technique and goals. In contrast, a whistle-only patrol will just call the police and make as much noise as possible to scare away the

attackers. Frankly, for me, the choice is obvious, I would rather my community defend me physically rather than just call the authorities. After all the authorities may arrive after serious damage is done to myself or another victim, and they may or may not be more sympathetic to gay bashers than to gays.

Many previous patrols were formed in San Francisco on a non-interventionist basis. CUAV (Community United Against Violence), a local counseling and statistics-gathering non-profit, originally ran a patrol, before them was the Butterfly Brigade and the Lavender Angels. Eventually all these patrols died out. Without interventionist training, these groups were ill-equipped to deal with the situations they ran into. The pacifist groups are ignored or attacked, as just happened to the Pink Panthers brigade in New York; while more militant groups, such as the Lavender Angels, were more prepared for street fighting than the typical citizen's arrest procedure. SF Street Patrol has given some thought to how to effectively conduct a citizen's arrest, and has even gone to the Guardian Angels for training in the proper procedures.

Women Can Fight Back

Other than the weekly down-to-earth trainings, one reason that Street Patrol is successful is the co-sexual nature of the group. On most evenings that we patrol, the ratio of women to men is roughly equal. This tones down some of the macho posturing that I've observed in the Guardian Angels. The reason that the group is able to attract women is because from the very start some of the key people in the group have been strong women. Even after the founding female member of the group moved out of town, the group has been able to promote strong women to positions of influence and visibility. Strong women serve as role models for other women in the group and are a visible demonstration that there is no glass ceiling about decision-making that will exclude them.

Libertarian Questions

As an anarchist activist several questions were raised for me about Street Patrol and whether I should participate in it. Since my political philosophy includes the concepts of organization, cooperation and self-defense, there was no theoretical con-



PHOTO: Jason Albertson

1. *Frighten the Horses* #5, May 1991, a sexual freedom zine.

tradition for me in the actions of such a group and my own ethics. It is possible to structure such a group in either a libertarian or an authoritarian mode. Also, going beyond the group's structure the actual practice of the group will depend on the attitudes and experiences of the people who participate in and set the direction for the group. Given the various possibilities there were some questions I had about Street Patrol's practice. Some questions I am able to answer to my satisfaction, others come up with gray answers. Political questions about Street Patrol had to be answered by myself because the group is not self-consciously libertarian and pretends to be non-political. The official Street Patrol line has been that the group is non-political informal group; in fact most of the participants tend to be on the activist side of politics rather than the conservative, but the group consistently avoids talking about issues leaving the group's politics implicit. Here is how I see some of the issues relating to the group, vis a vis libertarian politics.

How much privacy should we demand?

On my first patrol, the first thing we did was to search each other for weapons. At the time I was a bit uneasy about whether this was an invasion of privacy. It certainly isn't what I would like society in general to be like, but it has its justification in the context of a citizens' patrol. Our patrol is explicitly an unarmed patrol to stop violence against persons; we aren't a vigilante group or a group out to get revenge against the enemies of the gay community. The search for weapons weeds out nuts that may try to join our patrol to hurt someone under the cover of the patrol.

Also, the search for weapons is corroboration, in a legal sense, of the fact that we don't carry weapons. If an incident occurs, we can witness for each other that we were all unarmed. The common knowledge that our group is unarmed is also beneficial on the streets. If we get into an altercation with someone who has a gun, be it a basher, robber or officer of the law, they know that they have no need to use their weapon. Since bashers that

we detain may be armed, the search of each other is good practice for disarming bashers. Last but not least, the search lends to a common bond of trust and comradeship.

Working with the law?

Street Patrol works within the concept of citizen's arrest as defined by the law. Some anarchists may criticize the patrol for cooperating with the State in the form of the police. Turning bashers over to the police is the only practical course of action for the patrol at this time. Doing anything else would be considered kidnapping under current law and would undermine the continued existence of the group. Even a future libertarian society would confront the issue of what to do to isolate people with a propensity to anti-social behavior. I think it is obvious that even after a major social revolution there will still be plenty of violent personalities for society to contend with and that society

will have to find some practical way to protect itself from them. A libertarian society would reject the concept of punishment for crime as moralistic, but even the minimal separation of individuals from society would have more in common with our present system of incarceration than most anarchists would like to admit.

An interventionist group?

All people have the right to defend themselves against violent attack. Pacifists may choose to let violence happen to their own person, but they are in a true moral quandary when witnessing violence inflicted on others. Pacifists will often turn to the spiritual to explain the idea of "witnessing" violence.

All in all, I agree with the Street Patrol position of trying to de-escalate potentially violent situations. Mostly, just our visual presence and

STOP THE BASHINGS

JOIN

STREET PATROL

The STREET PATROL is a group dedicated to stopping the violence against us, commonly known as queer-bashing. To end the harassment, threats, and physical assaults, we will visibly walk the streets of the Castro.

Street Patrol is not out to enforce the law or clean up the streets, nor are we claiming the Castro as "our turf." Rather, Street patrol intends to make the Castro a place where Queer people can hang out without being targeted for violent attack.

Street Patrol *does not*:

- escalate violence
- act as a vigilante squad
- carry weapons, drugs or alcohol

Street Patrol *does*:

- patrol in front of bars and clubs where bashings happen
- intervene in bashings as they occur
- discourage bashings before they occur
- train in street combat techniques
- dish, cruise and windowshop shamelessly

Street Patrol meets every Friday and Saturday night at midnight at Rolling Pin Doughnuts at Castro and 18th Sts. We train every Friday from 9 to 11 pm at the Aikido Arts Center, 670 South Van Ness Ave. You must attend trainings before coming on a patrol. Wear comfortable clothes that you can get physical in.

985-7423

the knowledge that we are willing to put our bodies on the line if need be to deter attackers in our vicinity. Patrols are time-consuming and dreary for the most part, but in learning and practicing street tactics we get the confidence that we can handle most street situations. This confidence gives us that extra incentive and pride that has already kept this group working longer than some of its predecessors.

Street Patrol and the Guardian Angels?

Since we wear berets like the Guardian Angels and walk in formation, our group is constantly asked if we're the Guardian Angels. Guardian Angel members helped train Street Patrol in take-down technique, handcuffing, radio communications and citizen's arrest. As individuals, some members of the Angels are homophobic, but the official Angel policy is to be non-discriminatory. The truth is that the Guardian Angels are not very well-liked in the gay community, so the original Street Patrol was hesitant to associate with them. However, a certain practical streak overcame their qualms, and they learned what they needed from them.

In New York there is a Guardian Angels-related group called the Christopher Street Patrol. They were so disliked by the community in New York that they had to find gay people to go with them on the patrol to gain community acceptance (from the leader of the SF Guardian Angels). SF Street Patrol started in the opposite way. It came out of the San Francisco queer community and reached out to the Guardian Angels to get street smart training.

Street Patrol policy is much different than that of the Guardian Angels. Guardian Angels confront drug dealers and prostitutes and are used in some areas by storekeepers to roust panhandlers and the homeless away from their shops. The original Guardian Angel line was not to go after victimless crimes, but the new rationale is that drug dealing and general seaminess lead to a violent atmosphere. Street Patrol holds to the earlier interpretation of victimless crimes as not being our concern; our

goal is simply to stop violence against gay people, period.

No tripping on Patrol?

Street Patrol members don't carry drugs or alcohol with them, and they're never under the influence of intoxicating substances while on patrol. This is just a common-sense rule for a street-fighting organization. Members of the patrol who are incapacitated or whose judgment is impaired are a liability to the rest of the patrol and are hard to count on in a pinch. Street Patrol to some extent infringes on the turf of the police, so we have to be extra careful not to run afoul of the law as a group. Being intoxicated with either legal or illegal substances would tend to discredit our standing as reliable witnesses and would open the group up to harassment. Street Patrol's policy is not based on moralism. It has no policy on members' mental state while not associated with the group and does not enforce drug or drunkenness laws.

The Hostess Principle?

Street Patrol has a coordinated, leader-run structure while out on patrol. This is necessary to be as effective as possible in dealing with situations that involve potential risk to the individuals in the patrol. Since our goals are pre-established before going on patrol, in a sense everyone has already agreed to what he or she will do when confronted by violence. We also train and drill in mock situations involving attackers which is an indication of what would be expected while on patrol.

What the patrol Hostess (leader) does on the street then is to call out one possible response to the situation. Even if this is not necessarily the best possible or optimal response we are still better off following a unified course of action. On the street, there is no time for a group process to decide the best course of action. Most times it is going to be better for all of us to coordinate our movements in a unified way than to have up to twelve individuals doing whatever they think best.

There are many activities that require coordinated action, but that

doesn't make them hierarchical. Dancing, sex and mountain climbing are not hierarchical, but each requires consensual coordinated movement. Unfortunately, even within the Street Patrol, there isn't complete clarity on this score; some insist that Street Patrol needs to be hierarchical to be effective. This is still a source of uneasiness for me about the group in that the belief that only a hierarchy can be efficient could turn into an ideological commitment to hierarchy. One procedure used by Street Patrol that counters the tendency to form leadership cliques is the rotation of the Hostess position.

I love a man in uniform?

Actually, I don't personally, but I do wear one while out on patrol. We all wear fuchsia berets and walk in formation two abreast or single file while patrolling. The fuchsia berets that we wear and our military style formations increase our visible deterrent value to would-be bashers. In a sense, by looking more threatening, we can minimize our use of force in such situations. The basic idea is that if it works, do it; after all, all clothes are *drag*.

By moving in formation, we can avoid tripping over each other in tense situations. Several times during our practices when I or others got confused about how to carry out maneuvers, a generally disorganized situation evolved. During a street fight, the lack of formations and drilling might mean that nobody would be covering your back or that potential attackers might go free or attack another member.

Initial Contact

My first contact with Street Patrol was at a Queer Nation birthday party. My main concern then was how to follow up the contact and whether the group had a democratic nature. The person I spoke to seemed unclear on what I meant by democratic and replied that they had patrol leaders. The flyer I was given stated that Street Patrol was not a consensus group; I was relieved because of my previous bad experiences in consensus groups. It still wasn't clear what process the group did have, if any. That would

not be clear for quite a while, but if I was to find out, I'd have to devote some time to the group.

At the first practice session, I sat and watched the training with some members of the patrol who weren't training that day. I asked them that same question about process and got the same reply, "Well, we aren't a consensus organization." That was becoming clear, but still there was a mystery about how decisions were made. There was a form to sign disclaiming liability and a flyer with some rules about Street Patrol, but no indication of how these rules and forms had been created. Later, after seven weeks of trainings and patrols, with only one informal coffee-shop meeting, it was becoming clear that the method of organization was an informal clique.²

A Move Toward Democracy

After two months on the patrol, an incident happened that changed the structure of the group. A patrol I was on came around a corner to find that a man was waving a gun. Apparently he had been ejected from a party and had returned to threaten the party-goers.

The patrol leader that night was a young 18-year-old woman. Her first order to the group was to double time (run) up the street to where we thought the man with the gun was. Being an unarmed group and never having considered or been trained for this situation, several of us balked at this order, and the group milled about at the end of the street. The next order given was to post up against the wall we were near. There was less resistance to this order, but some of us expressed reservations about being potential targets in such an exposed position.

The incident ended when the man got into his van and left at a high speed. The patrol was very shaken by the incident because of the potential danger and because our group discipline broke down during the incident. After the patrol was over, we

took some time out to talk over the situation. A lot of issues around the limits of leadership and our lack of preparedness for this situation were discussed. Most people there were agreed that there needed to be more communication between members of the group and that our discipline and cohesiveness broke down under the pressure of the situation.

Subsequent to this incident, there was a lot of discussion amongst the inner circle that started Street Patrol about how to respond to it. In my conversations with one of the senior members of the group, there seemed to be a fear that this incident would change the group away from an action group to one that would spend most of its time talking. Most of the founding members of the group apparently had burned out on group process due to their experience in Queer Nation. They "liked to be in a group where they didn't have to talk." When I pressed for the group to have a more democratic process, there was a general disparagement about codifying rules. In response to my frustration about knowing what the process regarding rules was, I was told that writing things down would give those who could write more power in the group.

Luckily the people I talked to have a practical orientation when it comes to group practice. Possibly my argument that the group would be more likely to survive if the members were empowered made an impression, or maybe the group decided that the organization was getting too large to be run on an informal basis. In any case, the incident was a catalyst for a major change in the group that would have been difficult if it had a rigid ideological orientation.

A general meeting of Street Patrol was called the next week, and there was a decision made to elect a Queen (chair) and a Princess (sub-chair) to be rotated at three-month intervals. That meeting was a surprise for me in that the people who I thought would have resisted change in the group pushed for a more egalitarian process.

In the meeting some longtime Street Patrol members expressed lack

of knowledge of exactly how the group made decisions previously. This indicated that there had been no channel for internal communication that everyone was privy to for quite a while; I think the change to a more open process came just in time. The group rejected a motion to restrict who could be a patrol leader by age or other arbitrary criteria. All in all it was a pleasantly surprising meeting and a pivotal turning point for the group.

Direct Action Group

I attribute the ease with which the group made the transition from a clique to a membership organization to the group's emphases on direct action. This is not a gay democratic club, which the members are using as a stepping stone to advance their careers. There is no particular ideological slant in the group, making process changes easier to carry off. Having a leadership position in the group doesn't confer any particular material advantages. Membership and participation in the group are seen as a *service* to our community.

Democracy Out of Style

Still, there are a lot of unresolved issues in the group. No regular mechanism for calling more meetings was ever established, giving the Queen and Princess undue power. Our newsletter regularly prints articles exhorting us to obey our patrol leaders unquestioningly; while being totally uncritical of groups like the Guardian Angels that bust people for violation of drug and prostitution laws.

Most of these problems stem from a lack of internal communication. Because consensus is the norm in the activist gay and feminist movement, many gay activists have no experience of a democratic, libertarian practice. So many who go through the consensus process are burned out and oppressed by it that they retreat into a position that condemns all process as oppressive. A sort of *laissez-faire* approach to process development, that hopes that if process and power are ignored they will go away.

2. See *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* by Jo Freeman, 1970, an excellent discussion of the deficiencies of informal organizations.]

The problem with this approach is that power still exists; it just goes underground in the group and is harder to control.

A positive contribution libertarians can make to progressive groups in general is the use of direct democracy. It is up to us to explain the advantages offered by direct democracy and direct action as an alternative to the either the blocking/consensus system or to representative democracy. We have to explain the difference between a federative participatory democracy, that respects the autonomous rights of minorities, and representative democracy, with its competitive, winner-take-all rules.

Lack of Forum

One area the Street Patrol is weak in is in communication about what is expected of a patrol leader. The Hostess acts as a coordinator for that patrol. The policy of the group has been set previously to the patrol, so all patrol members have a chance to opt out if they can't abide by it. Theoretically at least, this policy is set by the group in a democratic manner now that we are a membership group, but no such group decisions have been made.

Its not as if there aren't gray areas to discuss. For instance, what if a patrol leader detains someone for drug use or shoplifting, which according to the flyers we hand out we don't do - should the patrol back him or her? There was an instance when one of our patrol leaders suggested that we patrol an area because there had been several car break-ins. For me arresting car thieves is a questionable activity. Not that an individual wouldn't be justified in protecting their transportation, but Street Patrol doing so would come dangerously close to the general enforcement of property laws - perhaps the enforcement of trespassing laws would come next. I think reasonable people can differ on this and other policy decisions, but without open discussion about this issue the decision is being made by whoever happens to be patrol leader that evening.

Another case where patrol leaders have some power is how to approach armed assailants. I think it is generally understood now in Street Patrol

that most patrol members aren't anxious to tangle with attackers that are known to be carrying guns. It isn't clear what we should do about subjects with other weapons such as knives, clubs or baseball bats, or what any particular patrol leader will do in such a situation.

A patrol leader may feel confident that they can deal with such a situation, or that the assailant is bluffing. In such a case, they may endanger the rest of the group or individuals in the group beyond a point they would freely agree to. Once again, the problem is not the specific tactic, but the lack of free and open discussion about such matters. Under the present system, patrol leaders aren't even aware of what patrol members personal limits are.

Group goals and ideals go unstated in Street Patrol because of the lack of a forum. For instance are the Guardian Angels wannabe Green Berets, are Street Patrol members engaged in an S/M fantasy trip. The answer is yes and no.

Some Street Patrol members may enjoy our practice takedowns as dominance/submission games. Some Guardian Angels could be playing at at being in a crack paramilitary unit. Democratic decision making and open discussion would temper any tendency to manipulate fellow patrol members and would reveal individual agendas. We all have expectations about what groups we are members of will provide us; the difference is between hidden agendas and public ones that are open to compromise and inspection.

Resistance to Change

People who set up groups have a tendency to try to make them stay true to their original aims. One way to achieve this is to encumber the vehicle for change with difficult to change rules.

One method is to adopt a consensus form of process. Since consensus preserves previous rules, old-timers can block change if it isn't to their liking.

Another method of controlling the change in a group is to set up a specific self-perpetuating group that maintains control of the group. This

is the most common method for non-profit organizations to be organized, with the board of directors being the body that maintains the group's original focus. In this, the non-profit shares its organization form with the vanguardist, Leninist groups.

Street Patrol unconsciously is using the third major form of resistance. By not specifying the rules of the group insiders can keep these rules from being questioned. For instance, in Street Patrol there is an informal rule that newcomers must participate for eight weeks before they can purchase berets or T-shirts. This rule isn't written down, and I've heard some people being quoted five weeks and others the full eight weeks. Whatever the merits of this rule, it hasn't been decided or recorded by any known group process. The danger with these informal rules is that they will be selectively enforced against people who make waves (e.g., people who want rules written down).

It is only natural for a street action group to be cautious about newcomers. With a group that involves itself in street situations, the potential of nuts trying to join exists; also, it is common for people to enter a group to push their political agenda (be it libertarian, authoritarian or reformist) and leave when that agenda has been achieved. An action oriented group has to make sure that its energy isn't drained by those who aren't committed to the group and its goals. Frequently groups will have a training or trial period for new members together with membership criteria and way for the membership to expulse those who don't fit into the group.

With an informal group, though, the trial period is indeterminate. A new recruit doesn't know when they will have an equal say in the group, if ever. For instance, I perceive that I can't have influence in the group (for instance, to have talks about what a patrol leader should do in various situations) if I don't occasionally get to be patrol leader. The only way to get to be a patrol leader is to get practice in that role at the training sessions; after four months of being a member of the group I've only been called upon to practice that role once.

All in all without a specific training program the goal of being a fully empowered member of the group seems to be like hitting a moving target.

Replace the Police

A question raised by community self-defense groups should be of interest to libertarians because it speaks to the problem of what to do with the police in a libertarian society. Actually, the question isn't what to do with the police, but rather, what to do in lieu of the police. Even without the police and capitalism, there will remain the same social problems caused by violent individuals that the police are now responsible for. Street patrols are not a total solution to the problem, but illustrate some of the difficulties that would be met by *any* group trying to deal with anti-social behavior. Street patrols also illustrate the need for non-worker-related movements to form groups to defend themselves and to deal with specific issues like gay bashing, racism or rape.

Accountability to whom

The fundamental policies of Street Patrol were formed at the inception of the group: queers (lesbians, gays and bisexual men and women) deserve to live without violence being committed against them, and they have the right to defend themselves. In the broader society, if citizen self-defense organizations were to become more popular and supplant the police, the question would arise about who the self-defense groups were accountable to. In a sense, our group is accountable to the larger queer community by sharing its common values.

If self-defense groups with a larger scope were to arise, such as some that dealt with anti-social ecology crimes, it wouldn't be reasonable for them to set their own policies about what would be acceptable or unacceptable in that domain. In a general sense, society has the right to direct how self-defense groups are used. Self-defense groups have a right to manage their own procedures, but it is up to broader-based societal groups to set social policy.

Once can imagine that after a social revolution assemblies of workers,

residents, women, queers, and ethnic groups would come to agree on how to plan the economy and what minimum social standards would be met by individuals. Workers would then self-manage their agreed upon production. Neighborhood and consumer groups would plan the consumption of that part of the economy devoted to their groups. Social groups would plan their educational and cultural activities.

In such a society, it would be important not to allow self-defense groups to be a specialized function in the same way that dentistry or construction work might be. Since the rationale of defense has traditionally been used as a tool for imperialism and social coercion it is important that the whole of society control patrol and defense groups; it is also important that such groups have a membership that is rotated in from the larger populace.

An Interventionist Ethic

Learning self-defense and intervention training can be fun. Lesbians, gays and women have all been expected by our society to be passive in the face of physical violence. To some extent we have bought into that myth. Organizations like Street Patrol allow us to change not only our public image but also our self-image. Through taking responsibility for our own defense we learn to be proud.

The school yard ethic I remember was don't tattle and fight like a man. When I was a child in elementary school five or six boys would escort me and whoever wanted to fight me to the playground. They cut off retreat to make it hard for me to avoid the battle. Instead of a culture that reinforces such violence, children and adults should be trained to intervene to diffuse violence. As the norm becomes to expect people to intervene when an individual is attacked there will be less and less need for special patrols to form to protect our right to just be. Ellen, in her piece, said, "If everyone is willing to respond, sheer numbers will be on our side... If half of us knew self-defense and the other half knew first aid and all of us had whistles, we would be invincible!"

Generally direct action groups, such as Street Patrol value input from all who offer constructive aid. Anarchists can positively contribute to such groups because of our emphasis on direct action and non-manipulative politics. By supporting such groups we lessen our dependence on the state and its agents the police. What we learn in these groups we can apply to other areas such as strike support and abortion clinic defense. If we want to live a free life we have to accept responsibility for providing the conditions that such a life is possible in.

— Edward Elhauge

Dear Reader,

As always, we appreciate receiving letters commenting on articles printed in the magazine. If you have comments, write us and let us know what you think. Discussion of the issues facing us today is important.

We encourage submission of articles, graphics, photos, comics, etc. We do not take a narrow "party-line" approach in deciding what to publish. Accordingly, the views expressed in signed articles are not necessarily endorsed by the W.S.A. or the editorial group.

The main criteria we use in selecting articles are:

- **Relevance**
- **Clarity**
- **Accessibility**

We prefer material that speaks to the magazine's main purposes and areas of interest. The magazine is not "neutral," and that affects our judgment as to what is important. Since our aim is working class self-emancipation, we aim to speak to as broad an audience as possible. Thus, we tend to shy away from material that is too "academic" or presupposes familiarity with a narrow leftist subculture.

We prefer that articles not be longer than 3,000 words (roughly 12 typed, double-spaced pages). However, content is more important to us than length. Longer articles may be serialized.

When submitting an article, if you can send us the text on floppy disk, this would be helpful as it would free us from having to re-type the text when we do the typesetting. We can accept copy on computer disk, FAX or electronic mail.

— the Editorial Group