



Police Lathi Charge

Eruption in India

CALCUTTA: CAPITAL OF TURBULENT West Bengal. Lenin appears under a burning sun shining through the palm trees. Impudent slogans, clenched fists, suspicious looks. A student asks me how to make a Molotov cocktail. The round smiling face of Mao looks on. These are the Naxalites from the little town of Naxalbari in West Bengal where a peasant insurrection broke out in the spring of 1967. Today there are 5000 Naxalites to commemorate the anniversary of the uprising. All firmly believe in peasant guerrilla war. The most militant have already gone out into the villages. It is the beginning of armed struggle. The sea of red flags is refreshing in starving, wretched India. Perhaps red is the color of hope as more than 200,000 gaunt bodies stretched out along the sidewalks pave the Calcutta nights.

Calcutta: city of four million dying people although it accounts for 20 per cent of all of India's industries, according to one expert. It is impossible for India to feed her 525 million inhabitants; what will she do with the 170 million additional

mouths expected in the next ten years in spite of the family planning institute which is supposed to solve all problems?

In the official census taken in March 1961 there were ten million people unemployed (in fact, there are at least 30 million). Seventy-six per cent of the population is illiterate, a third of the peasants have no land, the caste system is still powerful. Government corruption exists at every level. Only foreign "charity"—almost \$600 million annually—makes the budget deficit good.

From 1961-62 to 1965-66, the years of the Third Plan, the national revenue was only increased by 12 per cent. The same goes for the population. The Indian people run, but they don't ever get anywhere. The director of the Unit Trust of India said to me in Bombay: "The ground is moving backwards under us." An elegant man of 50 who is equally at home in Paris, London or the New York Hilton, he is the president of the first Indian company that has variable investments.

The volcano certainly had to erupt one day or another.

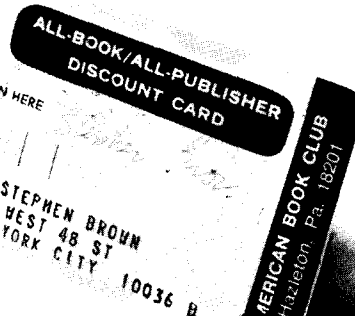
by Phillipe Gavi

Photograph by Shambu Baneyee

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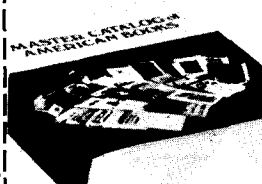
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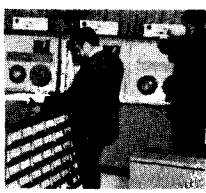
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On December 18, 1968, in a small town on the border between Bihar and West Bengal, a rich farmer wakes up to find a disagreeable surprise: 500 peasants are surrounding his house. His house is destroyed and his reserves of wheat, rice and fertilizer are seized. Several shots are fired into the air and the mob flees.

In Bihar one month later a farmer is killed; his harvest is looted by about 40 people shouting Maoist slogans. In the State of Kerala, more than 2000 kilometers away, police stations are attacked. Everywhere, in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Kerala, the disturbances take on alarming proportions. Revolutionary peasant committees are formed. Wealthy landowners and *jotedars* (small farmers) are attacked, sometimes massacred, by crowds of infuriated peasants. Estates are occupied by force. In the cities: strikes and demonstrations, *gheraos* (workers surrounding the places—or the managers—where they work), street-fighting. In mid-July of 1969, bombs explode in the American Consulate in Calcutta. The repression is correspondingly intensified: men are killed on both sides. Entire villages in revolt are burned; the women raped, the peasants massacred. Striking workers give in to bullets or the *lathi*, the bamboo cane which the Indian police use as clubs.

On July 31, 3000 cops, infuriated by the death of one of their men, march in the streets of Calcutta carrying their friend's body on their shoulders. Three hundred people break into the West Bengal Parliament, destroying furniture and microphones and attempting to molest certain Members of Parliament. They demand that Deputy Chief Minister Jyoti Basi, who is supposed to be the head of the police in the State, explain why he always sides with the demonstrators and criticizes the police who enforce the law with force. Keeping law and order is the duty of the police. It is true that the Minister of the Interior belongs to the Indian Marxist Communist Party (CPI-M). How did it happen?

THE CONGRESS PARTY, which has ruled India since independence, is losing strength. General elections were held in India in February 1967, the fourth general elections since the Proclamation of the Constitution in 1950. The Congress Party underwent a decisive defeat, losing 81 Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament) where it had only 280 seats left out of 520. Its defeat was helpful to everybody—the right (Swatantra, Jan Sangh) and the left (Praja Socialist Party, Samyukta Socialist Party, the Communist Party of India [pro-Soviet], the independent Indian Marxist CP).

The Congress Party also lost power in the States of Punjab, Bihar, Orissa, Madras (which voted on the right), West Bengal and Kerala (which voted on the left). It pays heavily for having failed in the projects it had set up and for the economic and social chaos into which the country had fallen.

As Chandra Sekhar, who is considered to be one of the powerful members of the Congress Party, explained to me: "The Congress Party is not a political party: it's a front that has no coercive power. This is both its strength and its weakness. It is popular because it was the lever for independence, not because of what it's doing right now. Revolutions are always more progressive than when they're being put into effect. The new generation doesn't worry about the past. It wants something concrete. This is how the Congress

Party has begun to lose its popularity."

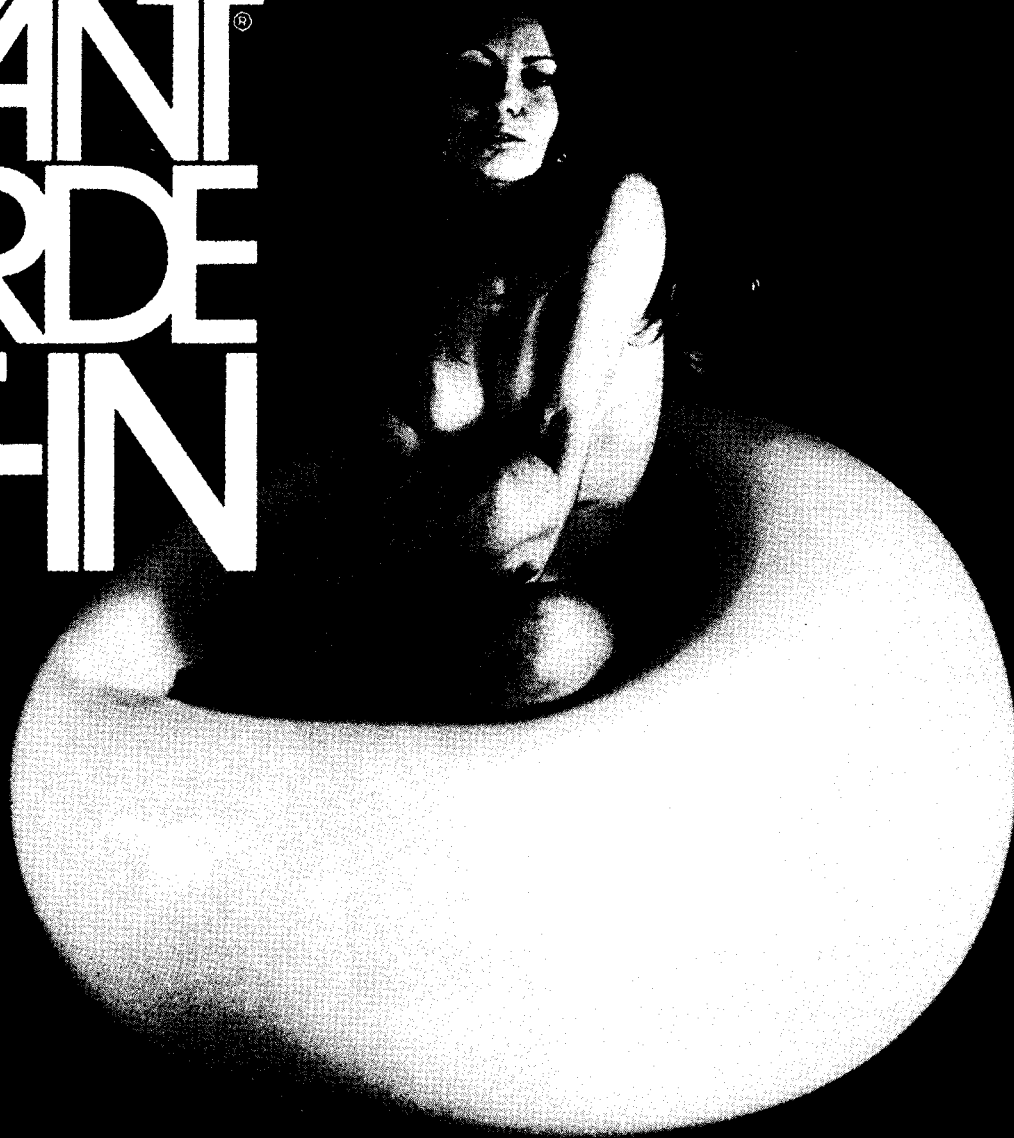
Mr. Chandra Sekhar, a sworn enemy of totalitarian Communism "based on violence," lives in New Delhi. New Delhi is green and pink like a bag of bitter candy. Huge and bureaucratic, its avenues are lined with trees and its Parliament is navel-colored. On the other side is Old Delhi, the ancient city of the Moghuls. That's the Delhi that President Nixon didn't visit. On that side is death. Neon signs lose some of their brightness in the dusty, shady heat. Purple spots of slow agony that overflow the human leprosy, the huge mob is nothing but an explosion of starved corpuscles. Violet night bathes the Fort and the Grand Mosque. Time no longer exists. Time is mutilated, like the stumps which the lepers hold out to foreign visitors. Flies are everywhere, oppressive. Car horns and noisy engines—the human race is swarming. The half-naked *sadhus* look syphilitic. In these wretched alleys you feel like crying out "Enough!" But the city keeps on voting for the Congress Party. The same for the Maharashtra area and Bombay, where thousands of prostitutes who aren't even 12 years old beg for customers for ten rupees behind the bars of a cage whose door doesn't even have to be closed any longer.

And yet the cry of protest has been uttered. Two states, Kerala and West Bengal, gave way. In each, a government on the left directed by the Communists was elected in 1967. Two states out of 17 isn't much, but their population put together is equal to the combined population of France and Belgium. Kerala has 20 million inhabitants in 39,000 kilometers, and West Bengal has 40 million inhabitants in 87,167 kilometers. The two states have in common the highest population density and the highest rate of literacy in India, factors which contributed to the victory in both states of a United Front that includes all leftist or supposed leftist factions, and is led by the Indian Marxist Communist Party.

TWO MEN DOMINATED the electoral campaign: Mr. EMS Namboodiripad, Chief Minister of Kerala, author of many theoretical books and one of the founders of the CPI-M, and Mr. Jyoti Basu, Deputy Chief Minister of West Bengal. Both have defended the line "Administration with agitation." But how far can they go with agitation? Outside of education, the Constitution grants no more power to the state governments than is granted to a French municipality. If the authorities of a state take measures which are thought to be against the Constitution, or if they do not take measures which are provided for by the Constitution, the central government and its representative, the state governor, with the approval of the President of the country, can dismiss the state government and organize new elections. That is what they call President's Rule—the President has the final say.

In 1959, President's Rule was applied to the state of Kerala after two years of a strong-man government directed by EMS Namboodiripad. In November 1967 the central power attempted this operation again in West Bengal. It was in vain, for in the February 1969 elections the people showed their discontent with the government's abuse of power and voted heavily for the left-wing United Front after months of rioting. In the legislative assembly of Calcutta, the Congress Party won only 55 seats, compared with 127 in 1967. The United Front of West Bengal and the left coalition in Kerala are therefore similar: they are both caught between Scylla and Charybdis. Either they follow the popular sentiment for

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radical change, risking President's Rule being held over their heads again, or they follow a more moderate road, keeping the power—but the people will lose all caution. The latter risk has obviously been chosen.*

"We don't have any hope of doing much, and we say this honestly to the masses. We are practically impotent so long as we don't have the central power. In this sense, we don't believe in parliamentary means. But one shouldn't refuse the parliamentary weapon right off. We can be in power and help strikes perfectly well. The only thing is that one has to let the people know that there are limits."

Eight a.m. The little man with the debonair appearance looks almost like an accused man in his modest office of

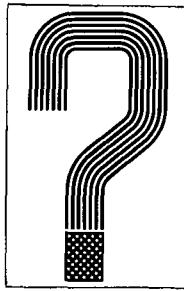
*The United Front in Kerala broke down in October 1969, and the CPI-M left the government, which is now led by a chief minister of the still more revisionist CPI. [Editor's note]

Tribandrum where he consults the day's files. EMS Namboodiripad, familiarly called EMS, is the target of many people's rage. The industrialists treat him like a "red," the Naxalites like a "turncoat." For others, like the American Consul of Bombay, the "Chief Minister of Kerala is a remarkable man, perhaps the most remarkable man in India, but he can't do anything." In fact, Kerala is perishing because of a lack of industrialization, which is especially strange since it is this state which, thanks to its spice, tea and copra, supplies 25 per cent of the foreign currency of the central government. Kerala is reduced to drawing part of its resources from money orders sent to families by Kerala men living in other states of India or abroad. Yet how can a Communist government which is favorable "a priori" to the workers and not to capital attract the industrialists and get them to invest in an area which is threatened by social upheaval?

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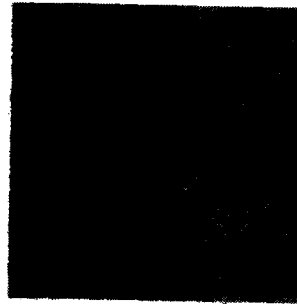
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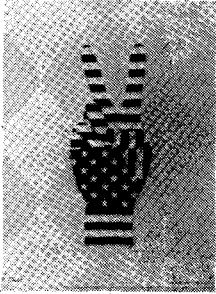
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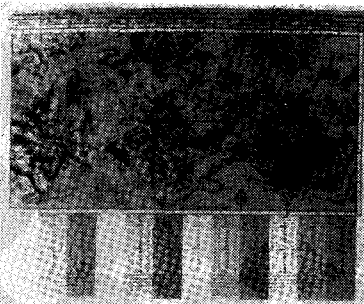
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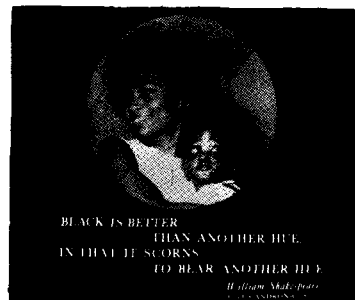
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(COLOR)



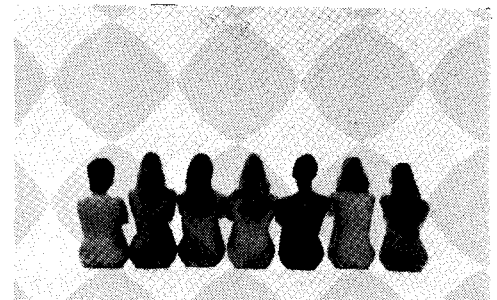
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Two directors of the First National City Bank confided to me in the very exclusive English-type Bengal Club of Calcutta that "it's out of the question for the industrialists to invest in Kerala or in West Bengal." At the bar sit "ladies and gentlemen"—mostly European, mixed with a couple of Indian magnates to whom the club has only recently been opened; with monocles and mustaches they look so "British" that they become caricatures. This whole universe has subsisted, and in fact done well, during the CP's take-over. And this sovereign elite society has no intention of risking anything at all—especially since in spite of the United Front's efforts to extinguish the fire, social "agitation" continues to spread. Strikes and *gheraos* are now daily events. Sometimes the police intervene, killing demonstrators. The government disclaims unjustified brutality. To sum it up, things are in an impossible state.

THE CPI-M HAS ACTUALLY produced its own Trojan Horse. In 1967 the United Front encouraged the movements for peasant demands. These demands took on special meaning in the Naxalbari area, which is a sub-district of Siliguri at the foot of the Himalayan chain of Darjeeling, in West Bengal. Gradually, thanks to CPI-M organizers like Mr. Kanu Sanyal, revolutionary peasant committees began appearing. The estates of large landowners were taken over; their farms were burned. Despite the appeals for calm by the Central Committee and by the government of the United Front, the movement turned into insurrection. The United Front became resigned to the fact that police forces sent to the spot brutally repressed the rebellion which, being poorly organized and without arms, was crushed in a couple of months, costing many lives. The limit was reached because of the Party's attitude: a group of the most militant members broke off, forming a revolutionary committee.

Little by little, the Naxalite movement—the name they have adopted in homage to Naxalbari—took on larger proportions. On May 1, 1969, while tens of thousands of pro-Naxalite demonstrators rushed to the march organized by the CPI-M, Kanu Sanyal, recently let out of prison, announced the constitution of a third Communist party, the Indian Marxist-Leninist-Maoist Communist Party (CPI[M-L]), calling for Chinese-type armed struggle in which groups of men surround the cities. Besides the CPI[M-L], other groups of Naxalites, such as the Nagi Reddy group in the Srikakulam district, led an armed struggle.

"Our country has no hope; we lose before we begin," I was told by the director of an insurance company. A Communist in his youth, he thinks of himself as an "average Indian." "We can't get angry: not even when people were dying in the streets like flies during the famines in Calcutta."

Around us, behind the barbed wire fence, lies Calcutta, the monstrous city. From a study made by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce in December 1968, it was learned that the city has one hospital bed per 333,000 inhabitants. Three million people are unemployed in West Bengal. The water is 45 per cent virus-infested; 200,000 people sleep on the sidewalks while 50 per cent of the industrial capacity of the country is concentrated in this state. Hell must be like Calcutta. Calcutta is paved with thin brown flesh. Lizards. Mutilated bodies. The blind. Rickshaws pursue me, ringing their bells. Poverty-stricken civil servants are squeezed together in old busses. In-

tellectuals are out of work: there are 80,000 engineers without jobs in India. Students don't have the right books. Peasants from Bihar who have neither land nor work come to fail and perhaps to die under the commercial arcades of Jawaharlal Nehru Road. Workers with salaries of 150 to 200 rupees live in sewers. Solemn old buildings of the colonial period are falling apart. The country is falling apart. The country is going downhill although the birth rate, according to documents of the International Monetary Fund, is down by 0.7 per cent since 1947.

THE FACT THAT NOTHING has changed since the victory of the United Front is not normal. How absurd it was to nationalize the banks—which has nothing to do with socializing the country. How absurd the campaign of Mr. Giri for President—using axes, the symbol of the United Front, and alarm clocks, the symbol of the Congress Party, to decorate a city in which a man can walk down the road completely naked without being noticed at all. And yet the clenched fists, the cries of protest, the riots, the farmers who are attacked, the estates which are taken over, the red flags which are beginning to show through the long gray Indian night, certainly show that hope is not as dead as my insurance director would like to think. On the contrary, hope is appearing a little everywhere. Sometimes it bursts out. Little by little power is being set up in the streets.

Neither Mr. Desai (formerly Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, and one of the powerful members of the "Syndicate"—those in the Congress Party who represent big business) nor Mr. Namboodiripad takes the Naxalite movement lightly, because they know very well that it corresponds to an unbelievable feeling of frustration. One of them proposes repression and economic development; the other rightly shows how economic development in the present system is not possible, but puts off insurrection "till tomorrow." The "average Indian" still believes in a passive India, even though people are getting angry everywhere. Often the anger doesn't take political form. Sometimes it takes the form of criminal action or acts of spontaneous violence, like the riots in February 1969 which stopped the city of Bombay for five days. This pressure explains the safety valves which are opening up: On August 16, 1969, Mr. Giri, the "left" candidate, supported by the left wing and center of Congress and notably by Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi, beat Mr. Sanjiva Reddy, the candidate of the Official Congress and of the right. In a way, Congress votes against the Congress. The "left," Socialists, Communists, Congress supporters, claim the victory. But whose victory is it?

While traditional political parties are still fighting it out among themselves to gain a couple of seats and to protect some of their interests, a large movement is being born without their knowledge. In its political form it is affecting only two states, and only several pockets within those states. But the movement is growing, gnawing at borders and social barriers. Undoubtedly India still doesn't have her new Yenan. But India does not and will never again conform to the classic model of non-violence.

Phillipe Gavi is a French journalist and a contributor to Sartre's magazine, Le Nouvel Observateur. Translated by Judy Oringer.

Huey would say, "a newspaper is the voice of a party, the voice of the Panther must be heard throughout the land."

The line dividing the progressive people from the machinery of oppression is ever widening as the people begin to realize that there can no longer be a middle of the road position with regards to freedom for the people of the world; however, it has only been within the past four years that the ameriKKKan people have shed their rose-colored glasses and patriotic blinders to face the reality of what their country was doing to the world's population. With the realization of the ameriKKKan role came the closer examination of all the things that had really never been questioned before....the 'ameriKKKan dream', the foreign policy, the treatment of minority peoples within this society, the real role of the 'police' and the press.

We found we as citizens of this country were being kept duped by the government and kept misinformed by the mass media.

In an effort to give the facts to the people, the so-called 'underground press' developed with various groups setting up newspapers and magazines with differing emphasis.

The Black Panther Party Black Community News Service was created to present factual, reliable information to the people.

The Black Panther Party has been organized to serve the needs of the people of the Black community and to educate and politicize the masses of Black people, but the Black Panther Party realizes that racism can only be eliminated by solidarity among oppressed people and the educating of all the people. It is the news and problems of Black and oppressed people in ameriKKKa that are dealt with in the Black Panther Party along with international news.

The Black Panther Party Black Community News Service is the alternative to the 'government ap-



July 1967--Minister of Defense, Huey P. Newton (right) and Chairman, Bobby Seale (left), reading an early edition of B.P.P. Newspaper at the home of Eldridge Cleaver, Minister of Information B.P.P.

proved' stories presented in the mass media and the product of an effort to present the facts, not stories as dictated by the oppressor, but as seen from the other end of a gun.

ALL POWER
TO THE PEOPLE!

SEIZE THE TIME!



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Fragments from the Shooting Gallery

HE HAS BEEN ENIGMATIC, playing our game and allowing us to make of him a victim or monster, whichever suits our fantasies. Equal parts of Chaplin and Jack the Ripper, he has been arrested 37 times in his 35 years. When asked if he can read and think well enough to conduct his own defense, he says cagily that he has been too much in prison to get much of an education, but yes, he can struggle through it. He knows the language of oppression, having grown up in the '50's, a time when the kid from the other side of the tracks was still an occasion for sentimentality and long before it occurred to anyone that this kid, freewheeling in the cultural revolution, might become a warlock, practicing sexual black magic on his witches and laying bad karma on us all.

"You want to know about my philosophy?" he asks the journalist, as if he were a real estate agent querying someone who wondered about an exotic vacation spot. "You want to know where my philosophy comes from? I'll tell you. I'm not from your society. I have spent most of my life in a world of bars and solitary confinement. My philosophy comes from underneath the boots and sticks and clubs they beat people with who come from the wrong side of the tracks. People like me are society's scapegoats."

He has a sense of theater, but it's hard to tell if it comes from the Stanislavsky method popular in the '50's, or the freer style of the Yippies.

[11]

SHE IS A PRETTY 21-year-old prison songstress, trying to look demure and misled, but unable to suppress a barmaid's wanton eye. You sense that if Manson hadn't found her, Susan Atkins could have been anything she wanted—a car-hop, say, or a highbrow groupie. But now she is a witch, and she has only two items of magic left: an attorney and a P.R. man. The one tries to save her life by getting her to give state's evidence; the other, a hack named Lawrence Schilling, attempts this by helping compile and sell the official edition of her confessions—a volume filled with "O Wows" and "Flashes," the Aquarian Age's variation on "Golly Gee." She



is passive, victimized by Manson and her own epiphanies, as when, after holding Sharon Tate's arms so "Tex" can stab her, she returns to the body and wonders if she should rip open the eight-months pregnant belly and save the child. A drama within a drama: "I flashed, wow, there's a living being in there."

When this Miranda describes the strange powers of her Caliban, one has the option of reading it like a poem:

*"It was done
to instill fear
in man himself,
man,
the establishment.
That's what it was done for:
to instill fear
to cause paranoia
to show the black man
how
to go about taking over
the white."*

One imagines her reciting this into the tape-recorder with Little Orphan Annie's button eyes, speaking with the uncomprehending wonder of one who just got her first period. Susan is not much of a proponent of Women's Liberation. She inspires the age-old question: what's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?

by Marshall Singer

Photographs by Wide World Photos

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