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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Patricia Hearst, the S.L.A. and the Shootout

The Bonnie and Clyde ambush or Roman Emperor Gallus's blood-thirsty gladiatorial combats look pretty tame in comparison with the disgusting televised S.L.A. massacre in Los Angeles.

While cheering fans looked on, 500 police found it necessary to pulverize a tiny building with semi-automatic machine gun bullets, to set fire to it (since when does tear gas cause fires?), slowly charring the inhabitants to unidentifiable ash.

For all they knew, Patty Hearst could have been in that building. For all we know, the police could be lying, and she was in the building. Remember it was those same police who told us that the whole thing was a suicide.

I do not care what the S.L.A. people are accused of doing; they are still deserving of a trial. In this modern age we can capture polar bears, tigers or whales without so much as bruising them. Surely 500 police could do the same with a tiny band of humans.

ROEDY GREEN.

Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

The FBI's assertion that Patricia Hearst is a willing participant in the criminal activities of the S.L.A. is not in accordance with the principles and ethics of a true democracy where even a hardened veteran gangster is advised of his rights when apprehended and referred to as a "suspect" until formally charged and convicted.

The fact that Miss Hearst was kidnapped and dragged from her home at gunpoint should convince even the most cynical American of her reluctance. That she should be the object of a national lookout and considered extremely dangerous is understandable and justified. She has probably been warned by her captors that she is a member of their "army" and that any attempt to escape would result in her execution or gunning down of someone near to her. Since there were no female survivors in the Los Angeles

shootout their story will never be known. If Miss Hearst is released or apprehended there may be those who would still not believe her story and regard it as a defensive alibi.

In any event her family has endured enough anxiety and hardship without having her prejudged and branded as a modern Calamity Jane by our top law-enforcing agency.

DAVID KANDEL.

Washington.

I am sickened by the way in which the police and F.B.I. seem to be so eager to kill members of the Symbionese Liberation Army. The attacking police forces raiding the house where six S.L.A. members were slaughtered could have taken more time talking to the defenders before assaulting the house with tear gas and opening fire with their vast arsenal of weapons.

The police didn't even clear the area of civilians before assaulting the house. Nor did the police know how many innocent people were in the house. A woman claiming she was a hostage came running out after the fight had gone on for some time. Certainly, this is clear evidence that the police would have killed everybody in the house without regard to their innocence or guilt.

The police and F.B.I. statements constantly threatening to shoot other fugitives gives the police and F.B.I. the image of being trigger happy goons.

I never approved of many things the Symbionese Army did or of many things they said, but after that brutal police assault and the slaughter of six SLA members, I have great sympathy for those six and their cause. And never have I felt such hatred for the establishment, which is now exposed in my mind as being a bunch of murderers.

RICHARD H. PERRY.

Alexandria.