

# PROVO

EXPLAINING PROVO, by Martin Lindt

The Provo movement was started in April of last year by a few anarchist students and workers, some of whom had already worked with De Vrije (the Dutch equivalent of FREEDOM); they saw, however, that the methods of the old anarchist movement were too isolated, too small, too stupid. Do not forget that the anarchist movement here is, unlike in England I think, only the remainder of the big movement Holland once possessed. Provo understood that anarchist theory was very relevant to present society and that its impact should, therefore, be, basically, an immediate one. So we wanted to create a movement directed towards what we later called the "Provotariat", i.e. the conglomeration of all students, artists, beatniks, mods, rockers, and so on, who are already protesting in their own way, but not as yet politically conscious; to make them politically conscious was our task.

From April 1965 Provo has grown amazingly quickly. Our organizational principles are thoroughly anarchist: no hierarchy, only solidarity; no orders, only spontaneity; everyone who joined the movement changed it a little with his personality and new ideas. I think that it is this aspect that has made Provo so attractive to young people of all kinds.

Provo is based upon two fundamental principles, a cultural and a political one. The cultural part is most evident in our "happenings"; which were, initially, the creative activity of some unengaged beatniks, but which are now a constant protest against authority. The police now suppress these activities as much as they can. The "happening" has another function, in our theories, contributed by the famous contemporary Dutch artist, Constant Nieuwenhuys, concerning the "New Babylon" -- the coming world of automation; but it would lead too far afield to explain all this now. Many artists are supporting us, including the well-known Dutch folk and protest song singer Simon Vinkenoog.

The political side of Provo is reflected both in its monthly publication Provo and in the demonstrations which we organize. We feel ourselves very near to, almost a part of, the Dutch "New Left" ideas. We have contacts with the American "New Left" organization, and I think there is a new left organization in England also, with the Committee of 100 and the Anarchist Federation of Britain. We think these movements are linked to one another, and the fact that they actually exist at all is indicative of the death of the antagonism between the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, which have both melted into one big indifferent mass of unengaged people worrying only about their television and their second car. The only rebellious group left in the Welfare State in the "Provotariat". Hence our "Appeal to the International Provotariat".

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## APPEAL TO THE INTERNATIONAL PROVOTARIAT

What is the Provotariat?

Provos, beatniks, plainers, nozems, teddy boys, blousons noirs, gamblers, raggare, stiljagi, mangupi, mods, students, artists, fringies, rockers, delinquents, anarchists, ban the bombers, misfits . . . .

Those who don't want a career, who lead irregular lives, who feel like cyclists on a motorway. Here in the carbon-monoxide-poisoned asphalt jungles of Amsterdam, London, Stockholm, Tokyo, Moscow, Paris, New York, Berlin, Milan, Warsaw, Chicago, Seattle . . . .

The provotariat is the last rebellious grouping in the Welfare State countries. The proletariat has become the slave of the politicians, happy to watch TV. It has joined its traditional enemy, the bourgeoisie, making with it, becoming a bloated, grey Arse-people.

The new class opposition is Provotariat versus Arse-people.

But the new provotariat is not a class -- its make-up is too heterogeneous for that. The provotariat is de-classed.

THE PROVOTARIAT IS A GROUPING OF SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS.

Why does the provotariat rebel?

The example of millions of elbow-bargers, rat-racers and social climbers is too boring. "Success": a home of your own, a car of your own, a TV of your own, a woman-of-the-year of your own, a fridge of your own, a position of your own.

We live in a tasteless, monolithic, mass-society. The creative individual is an exception. Behaviour and consumption patterns are thrust on us by the Big Bosses, capitalist and communist alike.

But the provos want to be themselves.

They want to be the Creative Leisure Activators of tomorrow!

Down with Philips, Seven Up, Persil, BMC, Players, MacLeans.

THE PROVOTARIAT DESPISES THE SLAVE CONSUMER.

We live in an authoritarian society. The authorities (the heads and arms of the Arse-people) decide what happens. We can get stuffed. We organize happenings. The happening is our contribution to the Happening which the authorities withhold from us.

Against our will the authorities are preparing for atomic war. The full weaponry of mass destruction is being stockpiled everywhere; in America, England, France and China, and soon in West Germany, Sweden, Indonesia, Israel, India and so on. If the war in Vietnam becomes nuclear war we can expect the Northern Hemisphere to be uninhabitable!

The Authorities decide our manner of living and our manner of dying.

THE PROVOTARIAT IS SCARED OF THE AUTHORITIES' ATOMIC WAR.

So the provotariat is at odds with authorities everywhere. The police hit out at us when we demonstrate against the atom bomb, when we organize happenings, when the mods and rockers come on the scene in their own way (in subconscious protest against society). The police work off their spite on us provos.

POLICE VERSUS PROVOTARIAT + HIERARCHY AGAINST ANARCHY.

The anarchistic spirit of the international provotariat has inspired anarchism anew. In Holland the provotariat has given birth to the anarchist Provo movement which attempts to make the provotariat of the whole world aware of its alienation.

What does anarchism want?

COLLECTIVIZATION. (No private property, as much as possible common property).

DECENTRALIZATION. (Abolition of the State in which Government holds practically all power).

A new society composed of a federation of communes, each as autonomous as possible, in which private property is abolished. In the approaching cybernetic age electronic machinery will carry out the tasks of administration which are the eternal pretext for the existence of politicians.

In such a technological society, decentralized into small communities, there will be real democracy.

ANARCHISM DEMANDS REVOLUTION!

Provo despairs of the coming of Revolution and Anarchy. Nevertheless it puts its faith in anarchism; for Provo anarchism is the only acceptable social concept. It is our ideological weapon against the authoritarian forces which threaten us. The provotariat lacks the strength for revolution but one thing remains to us:

PROVOCATION.

The subtle pin-prick -- our last chance to hit the authorities in their soft, vital spots. Through provocation we force authority to tear off its mask. Uniforms, boots, helmets, sabres, truncheons, fire-hoses, police dogs,

tear gas and all the other means of suppression they have lined up for us, must be produced. The authorities must be forced to act like authorities: chin jutting, eyebrows knitted, eyes glazed with rage, threatening us right and left, commanding, forbidding, condemning, convicting. They will become more and more unpopular and the popular spirit will ripen for revolution. A revolutionary feeling will once again be in the air: crisis.

A crisis of provoked authority.

Such is the gigantic provocation we call for from the International Provo-  
tariat!

PROVOKE! FORM ANARCHIST GROUPS!

PROVOS AWAKE! WE ARE LDSING A WORLD!