

A67S4



ANARCHY 66

TWO SHILLINGS OR THIRTY CENTS



PROVO

Contents of No. 66**August 1966**

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What are the means to deliver us from all this? By opposing tyranny, by loosening every authority, each in his own manner and wherever he is able to do so. If someone should say that such protests are of no avail if they are not practised on a large scale, we should answer: "How will you succeed in doing it on a large scale if you do not begin on a small scale?"

—F. DOMELA NIEUWENHUIS: *The Pyramid of Tyranny* (1909)

Revolution and white bikes

JOHN SCHUBERT

ONE OF THE PROBLEMS which faces anarchists, or at least, which faces those anarchists who really want to change the authoritarian structure of the society in which we live, is that of being an apparently permanent and minute minority. What exactly do you *do* in such circumstances? The nineteenth-century anarchists, like the adherents of most other ideologies of the time, thought that "the day" was imminent, and that popular revolutions would usher in the society envisaged by their particular panacea. But in our particular time and place, to anticipate that kind of revolution, however much we may think it desirable, indicates a certain lack of contact with social and political realities. It is an article of faith, like the Second Coming for Christians, or the Withering Away of the State for Marxists rather than a reasonable prediction of what is likely to happen.

On a personal level we all have our own solutions to this difference between "ought" and "is", but what kind of *social* action do we take? Far and away the most significant answers to this question to emerge in the anarchist movements of Western Europe, have been the Committee of 100 in Britain and the Provo movement in Holland. The significance for anarchists of the Committee of 100 and the lessons of its rise and decline have been discussed at length in ANARCHY, and ever since hearing about the "White Bikes", we had been planning to have an issue of this journal about Provo. But events caught up with us, and the riots in Amsterdam on June 13th to 16th made front page news all over the world while bewildering Provo's sympathisers. The documents, manifestos and impressions gathered together in this issue may not change your attitude to the Provo movement, but will probably make it more explicable. But not altogether

Waarom stemmen lastige Amsterdammers PROVO ?



het lieverdij:

Provo heeft een heel nieuwe opvatting over A'dam; het moet de eerste speelstad ter wereld worden, waar geen happening verboden is en ieder vrij is te zeggen wat hij wil. Ugge, ugge, ik ben blij dat provos Witte Schoorstenenplan een einde aan de luchtverontreiniging zal maken. De provos zijn tegen Mobil Oil, die onze lucht verpesten zal.



de dokwerker:

De provos verzetten zich principiëel en positief tegen de Autoriteiten. Hun Witte Fietsenplan is de oplossing voor de verkeerschaos in de stad, d.w.z. het Centrum sluiten voor particuliere auto's en daarvoor in de plaats openbaar vervoer: gemeentelijke Witte Fietsen, gratis trams en elektrotaxies.



domela nieuwenhuis:

Als anarchist stem ik zeker op Provo. In de gemeenteraad zullen zij de autoriteiten controleren en iedereen op de hoogte houden wat er met A'dam gebeurt. Recht voor allen, woningen voor allen. Leve Provos Witte Woningenplan... het paleis moet niet leeg staan, maar gebruikt worden als stadshuis. Weg met de nazaten van koning Gorilla.

omdat PROVO positieve plannen biedt

Waarom stemmen ook AUTORITEITEN PROVO ?



De provos hebben gelijk, "Van Hall moet met vakantie". Het is te gek mij maar te laten begaan, demonstraties verbiedend, de politie ongestoord te laten ranselen, arresteren en fouilleren. Wil een Wit Wijf met mij op vakantie? Ik vrees van niet, die witte wijven zijn zo goed voorgelicht op speciale provoconsultaties. Maar vrouwen en meisjes zijn ze ook zo wit.



Met hun Witte Kippenplan zijn de provos mijn beste kameraden. De blauwe diktatuur moet opgehouden. De agent moet sociaal werker worden i.p.v. een rammende smeris. De politie moet zo snel mogelijk door de gemeenteraad gekontroleerd worden en ontwapend, voordat er doden vallen, zoals van mijn mannen uniform.



Vorige keer heb ik op Koekoek gestemd, maar nu ga ik Provo stemmen. Ik moet nodig weg als toonbeeld van het nederlands militairisme en koloniale strijd. In deze militaristische tijd, die de heilzaamheid bedreigt wil ik niet de trotse generaal spelen. Haal me a.u.b. weg provos. Voorwaarts, mars, geef geen 8 maar 12 op 1 juni, stem PROVO!

so. What about Roel van Duyn's manifesto from the first issue of *Provo*, with its mixture of anarchism and nihilism and flamboyant nonsense? What about the moral issue raised by Charles Radcliffe?

Provo is obviously a number of quite different trends of discontent, rather than one movement. This is perfectly explicable if you think of the variety of factions in the Committee of 100 or in the ban-the-bomb movement generally, or of the head-shakings and heart-searchings displayed in the columns of *FREEDOM* and *Peace News* each year after the Aldermaston March. When Bernhard de Vries talked in London about Provo he remarked that "It appears from the outside to be a jolly crowd of like-minded souls, but to insiders it is a heterogeneous collection with at least four types of people in it." These he categorised as (1) the artists, the people who organised Happenings. "Art and authority have always been enemies, and because of the attitude of the police, these art-orientated happenings have turned into political happenings." (2) Beatniks and hipsters of various types, "self-confessed escapists, seeking the means to their own personal world". (3) Thinkers and philosophers, like the group around the publication *Provo*. (4) Activists, the direct action Provos, organising demonstrations, sit-downs, teach-ins, platform discussions and legal and illegal activities. Many Provos, de Vries remarked, belong to more than one of these categories. But it is not surprising that a common and consistent "line" has not emerged from them. The situation is much the same as it was in the Committee of 100, in which, just as Irene van de Weetering explained last month about Provo, "When someone doesn't agree with a plan he doesn't take part."

Of the various Provo projects and plans, by far the most interesting and creative so far has been the White Bikes scheme. The first account of this that we read, in *FREEDOM*, described it as a protest against "the tyranny of car traffic" in Amsterdam, and went on, "Thirty comrades painted their bicycles white and let it be known that anybody can use them. All they asked was that people should leave the bicycles in the street after they finished their journey for use by the next person. This idea spread very quickly until the bicycle manufacturers, the insurance companies and the police stepped in. The police confiscated the bicycles under the pretext that they were 'liable to be stolen'."

But the project was more subtle than this. Barnaby Martin explained in a letter to *Peace News*:

"The bike scheme is perhaps the most constructive part of the Provos' demonstrations, in which they sought to clarify the results of attempts to improve human relationships through law. Bicycles are far more numerous in Amsterdam than in London, and closer to the hearts of the people. There is a law which says that if you leave your bicycle on the street, you must lock it. The reason is probably quite genuine on the part of the police—we have to spend a lot of time tracking down people's stolen bicycles and therefore we must force people to protect their machines so as to save our time and public

expense.' Very reasonable in its context; but the context is not a loving one.

"The result is that one must assume that others will steal one's bike; it is illegal to trust your fellow men (even though you know that this trust will sometimes be broken). By declaring that their bicycles would be left unlocked, the Provos provocatively asserted their belief in founding social relationships on trust and responsibility, and by painting their machines distinctively, told police and potential thieves alike where their principles lay.

"I don't think the idea of letting these bikes be used generally will come into practice, until perhaps the number of white bicycles is much larger. But clearly if a white bicycle is 'stolen', the Provos will not call on the police to institute a search that may end, not so much with the finding of a bicycle, but with the diminution of human personality in court and, perhaps, in prison."

The White Bikes project is thus a "happening" or improvised drama or a morality play, acted out in the streets of Amsterdam to inculcate a moral lesson, with a beautiful economy of means. But it is also a practical solution to an existing problem. Amsterdam is a beautiful city which is being destroyed by private motor transport—just as London and New York are. As Professor Buchanan says, "It is not a traffic problem we are faced with, as much as a social situation." And the White Bikes plan is exactly the kind of campaign for citizen action "to defend the city against erosion by automobiles" that Robert Swann recommended in his article "Direct Action and the Urban Environment" in ANARCHY 41.

Here, at least, the Provos have something to teach us. The answer to the question of what can a handful of people with revolutionary ideas do in a profoundly non-revolutionary situation, is to find imaginative direct action solutions to immediate, close at hand, problems of daily life. Paul Goodman, whose thinking is in this respect very much like that of the Provos, says that "on problems great and small, I try to think up direct expedients that do not follow the usual procedures". For as David Wieck put it, in ANARCHY 13:

"Proceeding with the belief that in every situation, every individual and group has the possibility of *some* direct action on *some* level of generality, we may discover much that has been unrecognised, and the importance of much that has been under-rated. So politicalised is our thinking, so focused to the motions of governmental institutions, that the effects of direct action to modify one's environment are unexplored. The habit of direct action is, perhaps, identical with the habit of being a free man, prepared to live responsibly in a free society. Saying this, one recognises that just this moment, just this issue, is not likely to be the occasion when we all come of age. All true. The question is, when will we begin?"

This is Provo

ROEL VAN DUYN

PROVO is a monthly for anarchists, provos, beatniks, layabouts, tinkers, jailbirds, saints, sorcerers, pacifists, charlatans, philosophers, germ carriers, major domos, happeners, vegetarians, syndicalists, hustlers, incendiaries, marionettes, infant teachers, and of course we must not forget the men of the Internal Security Service.

PROVO opposes capitalism, communism, fascism, bureaucracy, militarism, snobbism, professionalism, dogmatism and authoritarianism.

PROVO feels it is faced with two choices: either desperate resistance or passive withering away. PROVO calls for resistance wherever it is possible. PROVO realises that in the end it will be the loser. However, it will not forfeit the chance to thoroughly provoke this society once more.

PROVO regards anarchism as the inspirational source for resistance. PROVO wants to renew anarchism and spread it among the young.

Why is PROVO called PROVO? Are we negative or positive? What is our norm? What are our ways?

PROVO = PROVO because PROVO-behaviour is for us the one and only acceptable way in this society. To climb the social ladder and serve in a job means contributing towards coming nuclear destructions, towards capitalism and militarism. It means collaboration with the authorities and their cunning carrot-on-a-stick: TV. Call us anti-professionals. We cannot perceive of a "job" as the popular careerists like to call it, which has not as its aim the prolongation of the state of emergency in which we live. The worker manufactures the inferior "desirable objects" from which the capitalist extorts his "increasing returns". The civil servant keeps the records of the victims of bureaucracy. The inventions of technicians and learned men are immediately misused for military ends.

The asocial PROVO is the only ray of hope. Its activity is a spoke in the wheel of "progress" which thunders ahead at such speed that the bomb under the rails is not spotted.

We know that the attitude of the PROVO, a beatnik type we are told in Dr. Buikhuizen's doctoral thesis, is not yet perfect.¹ Buikhuizen says: "Provo-ism is not an exponent of resistance against present society; PROVOS do not find their jobs unimportant; PROVO is for them a recreation."

ROEL VAN DUYN's introduction to the Provo point of view appeared in the first issue of Provo on 12th July, 1965. It was translated for us by Hugo le Comte.

But we propagate provo-ism as resistance against this society. We hope that it will become clear to the PROVO that his "job" degrades him to a cog in the time bomb which this society is. We plead for full-time provocation. We wish to promote a development from the formula "PROVO equals provocative beatnik" to "PROVO equals anarchist, dangerous to the State".

Today the PROVO is not uselessly occupied in provoking the police, rioting on the Dam, throwing crackers in letter boxes.

Tomorrow he has to face the police consciously as an enemy, making an assault on the palace on the Dam, and finally placing bombs in the letter box of the Interior Security Service.

Because only the young, idling and provoking masses in the streets can still be set in motion, they are open to resistance, not the so-called working class which is tied hand and foot to the social system. The PROVOS form the last revolutionary class in the Netherlands.

We denounce capitalism, bureaucracy, militarism, and the inevitable political-military collapse of World War III. We acclaim resistance, freedom and creativity. In other words, we repudiate the positive and affirm the negative. Hence we love hatred and hate love. Our one norm is: let everyone in the name of his own existence wage war against the outside world to the very end.

We cannot convince the masses. We hardly want to. How one can put one's trust in this apathetic, dependent, spiritless horde of cockroaches, beetles and ladybirds, is incomprehensible. However, our late Domela Nieuwenhuis, De Ligt, and others have tried, and their posterity still try. It was not successful, it is still not successful, and it won't be in the future. We are turning the emergency into a virtue by provoking these masses. Our ways will not be prophetic or idealistic, but simply provocative. We are fully aware of the ultimate uselessness of our activities, we willingly believe that neither Johnson nor Kosygin will listen to us, and this is precisely the reason why we are free in what we do. We realise that a demonstration is senseless in the end. Therefore it is vital to make the best of a demonstration, for otherwise the demonstration would be useless, not only objectively, not only absolutely, but also relatively. We dare to say: demonstrate for demonstration's sake, provoke for provocation's sake. Resist for resistance's sake!

EDITOR'S NOTES

¹"The movement had its origin in a group of anarchists, prominent among whom was a young man Roel van Duyn. A Dr. Buikhuizen wrote an article on the discontented and sometimes violent youngsters. He called them provocateurs or 'provos' who were pinpricking authority to find out its real faith. When a year ago another group of anarchists emerged, among them van Duyn, they took the name 'Provos' for themselves and their magazine."—*Manchester Guardian*, 18.6.66.

²This first issue of PROVO (which was seized by the police because of its article on explosives) included a report on police violence when Provos placed a bunch of flowers at the foot of the National Commemoration Monument in protest at Claus von Amsberg's visit to Amsterdam before his marriage to Princess Beatrix.

Are we fed up with Juliana and Bernhard, Beatrix and Claus? Is the policeman really our best friend? Are we red, are we black? Of course we are fed up with Juliana and Bernhard, Beatrix and Claus. We are not the only ones. What is special about us is that we are also fed up with every monarchy, every republic, of whatever governmental system and every State and authority. We are anarchists.

Now it stands to reason that the policeman is our best friend. The policeman is the most unpopular representative of the State's authority. The higher their numbers, the more impertinent and fascistic their behaviour, the better it is for us. The police provoke the masses just like we do. They do it from one side and we from the other. They make sure of irritating the people by their behaviour and thus, by authority. We endeavour to whip up this irritation into resistance. Eminently favourable in this respect is the fact that we can lure the police out of their hiding places just as soon as we think necessary. All we have to do is to sit in the street (the Bomb is a thankful and handy object for demonstration) or place a few flowers near a monument, and howling sirens announce the arrival of patrol cars with their grim-faced crews. Before the eyes of a large crowd they hack their way in on the peaceful demonstrators.² Can one imagine a better comrade than the policeman?

Red men with an inclination towards black magic, this is how we can sum up the anarchists best. No wonder the anarchist colours are red and black. With a red future in view we haul in Beelzebub to change the Here and Now. This change, in the first instance, is a demolition job, hence Evil. Thus in this way we make a destructive impression and are not ashamed of it. If the good God has created *this* society, it is as well for us to ally ourselves with the Devil.

That is why we do not believe in complete non-violence as a means of fighting. To aim at Good through Good, to act as if Evil does not exist in everything and everywhere, is too one-tracked and too short-sighted a way of thinking for us. Moreover, non-violent resistance in Europe has had little effect (against the A-bomb) because this method depends too much on mass participation and on a favourable public opinion. For Gandhi non-violent resistance was eminently suitable because he had the masses behind him, but for us it is only occasionally suitable as we do not have the masses behind us and never will.

Are we revolutionaries? Are we the builders of a new society? Do we believe in anarchy?

If only we could be revolutionaries. But we are more likely to see the sun rise in the West than the outbreak of a revolution in the Netherlands. If we lived in Spain for instance, or in the Dominican Republic, then we certainly would be revolutionaries. Here and now we cannot be much more than insurrectionaries. Even as an insurrectionist here, you can bash your head to pulp against the granite wall of bourgeois pettiness. The only thing we can resort to is provocation.

As our force is inadequate to function as the demolisher of the old society, so we also cannot be the builders of a new. That really would be a happening and a creative act! Police, the army and the

state apparatus gone! The workers would take over the management of their own factories, the means of production would fall into the hands of the people and power would be decentralised. This is how it happened in parts of Spain before Franco conquered the country, this is how it was in the Ukraine before the communists drove out the anarchists.

In a condition of anarchy, man at least is free. In it he has the optimal conditions for human freedom and creativity. We believe in anarchy and we put it to you as an alternative, inspiring us to our last and first aim: resistance.

About New Babylon

CONSTANT NIEUWENHUYS

NEW BABYLON is a world city of leisure and creativity, spreading in all directions, enveloping the globe like a net, fifty feet above ground level, leaving the ground free for agriculture, nature and highways.

Under New Babylonian circumstances the lust for aggression in mankind will be sublimated into a lust for playfulness. (As Freud wrote to Einstein fifty years ago, this is the only alternative for mankind if it is not to be wiped out by wars.)

New Babylon is the "ambience total" for "homo ludens".

Homo ludens is the new man of a mechanised world.

The mechanised world of cybernetics and automation will leave much leisure time, and in this free time, man will establish his own settlement in collective creativity.

This settlement we call New Babylon.

New Babylon is the environment for a new type of man: homo ludens.

Homo ludens evolves in free time: time freed by automation. "A nous la liberté, après nous la liberté".

Automation frees man from the slavery of forced utilitarian labour.

New Babylon is the world man evolves while at play.

CONSTANT NIEUWENHUYS (who is not, so far as we know, a descendant of the famous Dutch anarchist Domela Nieuwenhuis), is the architect of a theoretical "model" for a new city, the New Babylon, which has appeared as a paperback in Holland and is a kind of Provo utopia. It seems to be something between the schemes set out in Paul and Percival Goodman's Communitas, and the "Fun Palace" ideas of Joan Littlewood and Cedric Price. We would like to know more about it.

Explaining Provo

MARTIN LINDT and JIM HUGGON

FROM SOME OTHER PEOPLE on the Dutch ABC March here in April, I understand that you were interested in the Dutch anarchist Provo movement. There exist many misunderstandings even here in Holland about the Provos. It is very important to us that Provo gets more international influence. Some progress has already been made in this respect in France and Belgium, but we believe that there must be even greater opportunities for Provo to spread in England.

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, and 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 all 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 organisational 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 Nieuwenhuis, 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

MARTIN LINDT's response to a request for information about the Provo movement and JIM HUGGON's comments on it were, of course, written before the June riots.

Vinkenoog.

The political side of Provo is reflected both in its monthly publication *Provo* and in the demonstrations which we organise. We feel ourselves very near to, almost a part of, the Dutch "New Left" ideas. We have contacts with the American "New Left" organisation, and I think there is a new left organisation 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 is the "Provotariat". Hence our "Appeal to the International Provotariat".

Amsterdam, May 1966

M. J. LINDT

Comments by Jim Huggon:

I HAVE A FEW THINGS TO SAY concerning this article which was written in response to a request to the Provos to explain their position more fully.

The first thing is that I have written to them correcting their opinion of the Committee of 100 and the Anarchist Federation of Britain as part of the "New Left". Both, I feel sure, would disown the description.

Secondly, I have told them that, at least in my opinion, there is little prospect of the Provo movement as such becoming a force over here because (a) It is to a large extent a reaction to a neo-fascist (and I do not use this term lightly) attitude prevalent in the police and the ranks of the administration. The forces of law are only potentially and occasionally neo-fascist in England, despite what we say in moments of justifiable exasperation; in Holland the epithet would seem more nearly to describe the normal day-to-day situation. (b) It is a movement more typical of the "continental" temperament and, as such, not really in keeping with the English way of thinking. (Yes, even budding revolutionaries display certain sociologically conformist tendencies, and the libertarian movement in Britain is not as overtly emotional as this.)

Thirdly, it is, I think, true to say that the Provo movement on the continent, due perhaps to its new and very attractive ideology, has acted as a magnet to many totally destructive elements that have given the ordinary Dutchman a totally false impression of its real standpoint. In this article, indeed, the writer not only admits this, but also cites it as a basic objective to encourage such elements into its fold in order to change them, and make them more politically aware. I am not sure, however, who changes who in the end.

Finally I think the Provo movement has serious flaws in its logical basis; among these is its attitude to violence and non-violence. The Provos advocate non-violence but say that anarchy cannot be created without violence. This typifies, to my mind, the confusion inherent in their outlook. Nevertheless, much confusion has arisen in England concerning their ideas, and I thought it necessary to attempt to clarify the situation somewhat.

Appeal to the international provotariat

WHAT IS THE PROVOTARIAT?

Provos, beatniks, pleiners, nozems, teddy boys, blousons noirs, gammler, raggare, stiljagi, mangupi, mods, students, artists, 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. . . .

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.

The 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 organise 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 organise happenings, when the mods and rockers come on the scene in their own way (in subconscious protest against this 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?

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

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

DEMILITARISATION. (Disarmament and no hierarchies.)

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, decentralised 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 Provotariat.

PROVOKE! FORM ANARCHIST GROUPS!

PROVOS AWAKE! WE ARE LOSING A WORLD!

(Provocation No. 8, published by PROVO—an anarchist journal, Amsterdam 1965.)

Day trip to Amsterdam

CHARLES RADCLIFFE

IMMIGRATION OFFICIALS EYE LONG HAIR SUSPICIOUSLY: they want to check my ticket to ensure that I will fly out again tonight. They tell me I must be on the 10 o'clock flight, as booked. Unfortunately I have no choice anyway.

Everyone talks of provos and riots. The airport is dull and provincial and it is difficult to believe anything can ever really have happened here. I take a coach into the city centre—curiously all the notices in the coach are in English. The city is flat but beautiful, fanning out from the centre with "islands" of houses and narrow streets, linked across the framework of narrow canals by narrow bridges. The houses are old, beautiful and somehow airy. (I am already affected by romanticism.)

The recent riots add a curiously ambiguous touch to Amsterdam's essentially placid, patient nature. The town seems full of kids, police and promenaders. To a Londoner everything seems to move at half-speed; people have time to walk and talk in the streets. It is a city still small enough for people to live within the centre: the provos talk of urban crisis, smoke control, depopulation of the city centre. They are entirely right, of course, but they obviously have acute environmental consciousness. (In London we have already tolerated the almost total depopulation of the city centre, the construction of giant, community-destroying highways into the city centre and an air of breathtaking, poisonous filthiness, without apparently even noticing. If the very nature of Amsterdam, built on water and with only very narrow streets, prohibits the grotesque irresponsibility which has marked London planning and secured for London its place among the truly inhuman structures of the world, it is nevertheless absolutely right that the provos should worry about such problems now, before it is too late. Even if they have nothing else to tell the world the saving of Amsterdam would be enough to justify them.)

I walk into a bookshop selling English paperbacks, China-friendship literature, pamphlets on Vietnam, books on surrealism and a few

CHARLES RADCLIFFE's account of his flying visit to Amsterdam, which conveys much more of the atmosphere of the city in June than all the thousands of explanatory words which appeared in the British press, is reproduced from the first number of *Heatwave*, the successor to the British edition of the *Rebel Worker*. (See inside back cover.)

New Directions books. The guy behind the counter has a head covered in band-aid.

* * *

In the street outside a kid, dressed predominantly in white, came up to me after seeing my London nuclear disarmament pin and asked whether I was an English provo? Rather than confuse the issue I said yes. He asked a lot of questions about the anarchists, CND, the Committee of 100. I told him the anarchists, as such, were largely irrelevant, CND absorbed into all that is wrong and the Committee of 100 without the money to bury itself. I asked him about the provos and, in particular, their public dissociation from last week's rioting. (This worried me a great deal when I read about it in the English press, seeming to be a classic example of "intellectuals" behaving irresponsibly, isolating themselves from the physical consequences of their effective intelligence and, in this case, incitement of youth.) He thought that perhaps the issue was too simple for the provos—"the real provos were in the riots". It was simply a case of Amsterdam's youth against authority. The provos disapproved because they did not want violence which made authority stronger. I said I considered that many of the provos' statements had violent overtones and violent implications. He agreed but said the provos were not very consistent. Were the provos who demonstrated with building workers on Monday "official" or "unofficial"? He said they were "official" but that their actions were the direct inspiration of the later "unofficial" youth riots. Was the provotariat disillusioned with the provos? He did not think so; most of the provotariat acted with limited understanding of the provos' actual position. A number of people who admired the provos stopped rioting when the provos made public appeals for the rioters to stay home. Further riots—perhaps soon, perhaps later in the year—were inevitable. The provotariat was frightened but not overawed by the action of the authorities. By this time we had a small group of kids around us and I started giving out copies of *The Rebel Worker*. "What is Burn, baby, burn?" "What is IWW?" A couple of fuzz (I suspect actually members of the Royal Marechaussée) moved in on us. Some of the kids dispersed but most hung around, ignoring the fuzz. Questioned, I said that I was English. "Why are you in Amsterdam?" "Just to look around, see the Dutch." "How long are you here?" "One day." They drifted away without checking *The Rebel Worker*. The kids were, however, interested in it.

* * *

I wander through the streets. For someone increasingly stoned sky-high on the possibilities (and no longer sure whether it will all end in social outrage or nervous collapse) Amsterdam is perhaps the most beautiful city in Europe. Not only well-planned but, almost overnight, the capital of youth-rebellion. The kids are the most self-assured I have seen anywhere. They have little of the Londoners' sullenness and their rebellion is much more extroverted. They move around in loose gangs or else storm through the streets in twos and threes on bicycles and mopeds. Amsterdam is designed for the guerrilla

warfare of provocation. The streets, at least outside the immediate city centre, are too narrow for cars to move really fast. Mopeds, on the other hand, hardly need to slow down at all. The town is full of beats and the extraordinarily decadent Dutch "mods", decked out in fantastic floral suits. There is a fantastic impression of tranquillity to which the riot police, moving around town in small Volkswagen micro-buses, add a strange distorting effect. Kids do not take very much notice: they seem slightly elated by the continuing concern of the authorities as to whether they will explode again. (In Amsterdam casualness seems a way of life. The Dutch work a 45-hour week but under nothing like the pressures facing a Londoner.)

I had lunch with a young, middle-aged man (the actual reason for my business trip to Amsterdam) who gave me impressions of the last week in Amsterdam. He was not sure whether the provos were responsible for the riots; he thought their ideas and statements probably gave the rioters a justification. The provos, in his view, are quite respectable. "They just want their happenings, white bicycles instead of cars in the city, and smoke control. Many people agree with them. One of them was elected to the city council with 13,000 votes (the Dutch voting age is 21). They have good ideas. They stop Holland going to sleep which is necessary. I think they will grow. In ten years, twenty years, they might even be the government of Holland!" What do older people think of youth rioting in the streets? "Mostly shock . . . but maybe that is necessary. Of course no one in Holland likes riots—people and property get hurt. The provos are believed by many when they say they have nothing to do with riots but they make strong statements and people expect them to be responsible for strong actions." Why do people object to the white bicycle plan which would mean that the city centre would be served by public transport and white bicycles which can be freely used, and left wherever the rider wishes to await the next rider. "Mainly it is the police who object. They are anti-theft . . . they must protect property. These bicycles would be no one's property. Also, of course, people with cars do not want to ride in the city. They want to show their cars."

* * *

After lunch I make my way further over to the West-side of the city, attempting to find PROVO's offices at Valkenburgstraat. (It is fairly easy to find the way in Amsterdam: the town is small and its layout makes it easy to move quickly in any direction.) I have a number of questions I want to ask: after my previous conversations I am anxious to hear what they say about their "betrayal of the provotariat", which is now the way it looks to me.

I walk up narrow streets, filled with bars and shops selling an even wider selection of pornography than can be found in those little specialist shops in Soho, which proudly announce their medical and psychological interest in flagellation, the circumcision rites of Western civilisation and various other oddities of vital importance to us all. There are plenty of prostitutes—many of them seem startlingly young but perhaps they are simply amateurs. I notice a surprising number of

Negroes—mostly very, very cool. They seem much hipper than most West Indians, better dressed, more self-confident. They do not seem to attract the sneaky, half-envious, half-hating glances they would get in London. They are, I imagine, more like the really hip spades of the American ghettos.

As I move further West the town begins to look more decayed. On the blank walls of buildings are Provo leaflets and posters. Provocation No. 10, which features crude but delightful sketches of cars, exhaust fumes and free-form BRAM! BRAM! BRAM! sound effects, catches my attention. The provo approach is infinitely more imaginative than anything we have done in London (that, at any rate, must now be changed). The walls have painted all over them slogans advertising rock-'n'-roll groups—The Monks, The Sailors, The Croes, The Houw (The Who??), The United Sounds, The Idols, The Amplifiers, The Keys, The Ways. (Unfortunately I did not get the chance to hear any groups play but judging from the frequent pictures of The Rolling Stones in the Dutch pop press I guess that Dutch rock is ex-American-via-Britain.)

By mistake I found myself in the Lazarus Market. It was very, very hot and sticky and this, together with the kaleidoscopic impressions of the city, made both my concentration and energy wilt. I sat down on a box in the market, next to a beat, who talked briefly to me in French. Our conversation was limited to simple French, simple philosophy and metaphysical grunting. He also got a copy of *The Rebel Worker*. He was amused by the explanation of the title. (We are not workers: we rebel against being workers: we are therefore rebel workers.) He was totally disinterested in the rebellion of the provotariat. He liked Amsterdam because the living and the pot was cheap. It is now, he said, the new European centre for youth. It used to be London but the authorities in London didn't like foreign beats, so they now go to Amsterdam instead. He said to me that there was no point in returning to London, that I would do better to stay forever in Amsterdam where no one minds.

(In this part of town everyone seems to be wide-awake; even small kids wear battered denim suits. A wrecked van up against the wall, propped on stones, is crammed full of old crates. The market itself is hot and sandy. None of London's pushing grind. I thought this sort of placid ease was a feature of only provincial France—I suspect it exists on this scale in no other major Western capital.)

I find PROVO's offices: there is no answer when I ring the bell but the front door is open, and I walk up perilously steep stairs to No. 4 at the top. On the landing a pair of white jeans hang out so I knock on the first door I see. Someone shouts so I walk in. The room is small, bare but light. A slight whiff of fish-scent occasionally wafts in through the window. Posters of Castro and nuclear disarmament symbols on the wall. Inside there is a kid of about 15 and two chicks about the same age. His hair is longer than most English kids of that age. They all seem totally turned-on; rather in the manner of some of the kids who used to cram the Committee of 100 offices and

who were, in terms of personal liberation, far further out than any of their so-called mentors. Unfortunately we converse only in an erratic, if flexible, combination of Dutch, English and French. After an hour I get a further address and leave.

* * *

Later in the day, in a small, attractive house in Karthuiserstraat—described by *Le Figaro* as “certainly the most wretched house in the street” in “one of the most crumbling parts of the town”—I found Roel van Duyn, editor of PROVO-Amsterdam. He pointed out a headline in the evening paper: “VAN HALL SAYS PROVOS RESPONSIBLE”. Were they? Van Duyn said perhaps they were: “The blousons noirs come into Amsterdam because of what they hear about us.” Was it true that the provos dissociated themselves from the riots? He said they dissociated themselves from the riots because they were caused by blousons noirs from outside town, who had no political consciousness and were violent. The Amsterdam blousons had been “educated” by the provos but this had not so far been possible with the suburban ones. But surely, I asked, PROVO's appeal to the international provotariat (reprinted in this issue) called upon all elements of the provotariat to help provoke a crisis of authority? Surely this was what had happened in Amsterdam? He admitted a crisis of authority had been provoked by the riots but, like his colleague Bernhard de Vries who addressed London meetings last week, said the provos disapproved of this unless it was politically motivated and did not believe in violence against authority because it both justified and encouraged authority to increase the strength of repression. What do the provos want? According to Roel van Duyn a democratization of society, white police, a mayor elected by direct election rather than chosen by the central government, the curbing of air pollution, the prevention of urban depopulation, white bicycles, a squatter movement for the unoccupied houses, the provocation of authority so that it would reveal its true, anti-social nature. Roel van Duyn admits the programme is reformist, “but we live in this society!” The “white police” plan is for police to be disarmed like English police (amongst the most sophisticated forms of authoritarian control any government has ever been allowed to get away with—C.R.). Eventually they would become trained social workers. (Anyone who wants to check out how fast the notions of authority can change in this respect ought to search out *Newsweek* for June 27, which shows just this *trend* happening in the USA.) I told him I was very confused by these ideas. I thought some excellent, others very naïve. I was surprised that an anarchist group should stand for city council election. Roel said that it is to observe authority from inside. Was there no risk of being thus absorbed by tame authority, being maintained as tame rebels? Roel thought the danger very small. He told me he would probably be doing a six week jail sentence shortly (unless his appeal was successful) for publishing an inflammatory article in PROVO 7. (I was unable to ascertain whether this was the one calling for the physical destruction of the petty bureaucracy.) I told him I thought many provo statements were

inflammatory and I was hardly surprised that the kids took them so seriously, or that provos were blamed for riots. Roel said the more extreme statements were essentially provocative satire rather than direct statement. I said I felt quite honestly that the provos had unconsciously betrayed the provotariat. He no more agreed than did Bernhard de Vries in London when I made the same point. I said I felt it was the provos' task to explain the riots even if they felt unable to physically support them. Certainly to denounce riots which were the provos' philosophical responsibility seemed not only naïve but potentially dangerous. "We did not denounce them—we dissociated from them because they served no purpose." (In London Bernhard de Vries said he could understand them but seemed surprised by suggestions that he might have acted as explainer of the riots, even if he felt compelled to say they had nothing to do with the provos.)

As I make my way back to the Central Station from the East-side of town, I pass through a square in which an old man with a guitar begins to play and sing, in a superbly demonic, cracked voice. Immediately he is surrounded by kids, some clambering on top of post boxes, dancing and hamboning as the old man plays and sings.

Whatever the provos say or think, they seem to be in an ironic position: they are the only group—apart from Jonathan Leake's delirious saboteurs of social peace, The Resurgence Youth Movement—who make youth revolt their point of departure. Their manifesto is quite definitely the best and most interesting statement on youth revolt to come out of the Continent. On the other hand they seem astonishingly keen to deny the implications and consequences of their thought. The irony is, ultimately, that the first group of revolutionaries (of any sort) to get through teenagers (and particularly the type of teenagers who are usually totally ignored by "serious" revolutionaries) are, at the point of crisis, prepared to turn their backs.

* * *

I talked to a long-haired kid wearing the brightest floral suit I have ever seen, at the airport. He was bugged as hell, having to look after his very-kid brother who blew Pepsi-Cola bubbles out of his bottle over everything and, in between, laughed deliriously. When will the next riot happen? "When we feel like it. Authority needs time to prepare for fighting us but we just come when we want. We always win. Riots, they don't cost nothing for us. Authority pays." Did he read PROVO? "Sometimes I see it. I like PROVO and provo happenings. PROVO gives us cause and we enjoy rioting. There will be more riots."

I do not recall ever having been so sorry to leave a city. I like Amsterdam and, despite my reservations, admire the provos. (In the end I find I agree with the husband of provo "leader", Irene van der Weetering, when he says: "It's a heart-rending, muddle-headed organisation".) It is a nice final touch to fly in over Clacton after visiting the capital of the World Revolution of Youth—Amsterdam—beautiful, gentle, patient town raped by the savage hip of the provotariat.

Follow-up and argument :

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 62: ANARCHISM AS A THEORY OF ORGANISATION

COLIN WARD'S ARTICLE ON ANARCHISM as a theory of organisation was most interesting and instructive but the sting, I feel, lies in the tail. Anarchism does present an alternative theory of organisation but how do we set about making "the opportunities of putting (it) into practice"?

Social ideas may well become important but will they be concerned with "systems of large variety sufficient to cope with a complex unpredictable environment"? It is possible that they will rather be concerned with a complex, but essentially more predictable environment in which "welfare" is distributed more equably but in which the government's grip on the citizen is vastly increased—though in more subtle ways than in the past.

Ward notes that "people have been conditioned from infancy to the idea of accepting an external authority". Accepting the authority of the government in the social sphere absolves one from so much (painful) responsibility to one's fellows. "They" may put awkward irritating obstacles in one's way in certain spheres but it seems that for the majority, unconcerned with social and "world" problems, life is remarkably pleasant and orderly in the affluent society.

For what are the anarchists offering? Freedom yes, but how is this concept to be made meaningful to the majority? It is freedom with responsibility; problems will have to be solved by the use of personal effort and initiative.

How are people to be persuaded that this will give them a more satisfying life than the present attitude of letting "them" get on with it. Anarchist organisation would require active participation not acquiescence but I am sure that it is not immediately apparent to many people that this is "freedom" or, indeed, worth very much.

Rousseau was very well aware of this dilemma, although he suggested a Legislator (!) as the way out for people emeshed in a destructive social process over which they had no control. Substitute "anarchism" for "law" and this seems to sum up the situation very well; "The social spirit, which should be created by these institutions, would have to preside over their very foundation; and men would have to be before law, what they should become by law".

Winey

CAROLE PATEMAN

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE IN ANARCHY 62 on anarchism as a theory of organisation. It is of assistance in appreciating some of the subtleties of the anarchist point of view on social organization. As one might expect in the case of a short article on a major subject, it leaves a good number of questions unanswered.

The most urgent one is simply the question of the here and now. How do we begin now to create a society of permissive institutions?

A proper answer to this question can only be reached if it is clearly understood that, in fact, a social revolution is the coming into being of new institutions which, in a longer or shorter time, become the dominant forms of the society. Movements of protest, demonstrations, acts of violence including armed revolt, are useless for actually changing the conditions of our lives unless they change the nature of the institutions—social, economic, and political—within which we live. Decadent, unsatisfactory institutions must be revitalized, or new ones constructed.

The starting place is at the nexus of intimate personal relationships of the individual, which in our society, as in all past human society, has been the nuclear, conjugal family . . . or nothing. In other words, in our society, urbanized and capitalist, the sole provisions for the encapsulation of the individual into stable social bonds is through the family. And this small model family which has emerged as typical of the Western world is too often a completely unsatisfactory unit to support and nourish the individual. And for a very large proportion of the population, children and adults, there is no basis for family relationships at all. This may arise from any number of causes: death of the parents, separation, widowhood, etc. The result then is an irony that may well appeal to one with anarchist sensibilities: the free individual, torn loose from all significant social relationships, the helpless victim of the capitalist and the state.

The answer provides us with the starting place for the rebuilding of society. It must be surely to find an institutional form which will supplement or replace eventually the function of the family in relation to the individual and society: procreation, physical support, socialization, social intercourse, orientation, etc. This form probably cannot reconstitute from the earlier days of mankind a blood or marriage relationship which will provide satisfactorily for all these things in our complex society. It will, I think, have to be a "contract family". The relationships under which man, woman and child can live together have to be redefined so that all the isolated individuals of our society can be recreated as social beings by becoming part of a tightly-knit small group which will provide them with the essential of a face-to-face community.

To wean people away from their present support of current institutions by intellectual arguments is extremely difficult. However unsatisfactory we can show them to be, they are yet filling needs in some fashion. We have got to be able to offer immediate benefits in new institutions which will win support in this very concrete fashion. Social institutions are the ones we can work at first, leaving the more difficult political and economic ones until later after we have built a base from which we can function. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that the power of the corporation and the state over the individual is just so much greater in proportion as he is isolated from close social "family" intercourse with a group of his fellows. It is difficult

in that case to resist exactions or arbitrary treatment.

To sum up then, I am suggesting here that what can be done immediately to begin building a new society is to begin the establishment of new social bonds between individuals which will begin to provide the institutional framework for the performance of the basic social functions in which every individual must participate or be isolated and helpless.

Don Mills, Ontario

LLOYD SAWYER

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 62: ANARCHISTS AND NUCLEAR DISARMERS

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ARTICLE on *Anarchists and Nuclear Disarmers* was so inaccurate and so incomplete that it cannot be taken as a serious contribution to the subject.

The anarchists are not unique in their early opposition to the use of nuclear weapons—it is not true that "informed opinion of all parties, of all nations, was satisfied that the A-bomb was a deliverance". The pacifists, the libertarian socialists, and many others have been unilateralist as long as we have (the honour of making the first protest goes to the Independent Labour Party, who published Bob Edwards' pamphlet *War on the People* in 1943—two years before the Bomb was used). Nor are the anarchists unique in their early publication of the effects of nuclear weapons—it is not true that "they printed the facts while informed opinion was silent" or that "informed opinion took years to catch up with the anarchists". The facts about the Bomb were published by all kinds of papers, and were after all taken almost entirely from official sources (the most important of these were the American Government's *Strategic Bombing Surveys* of 1947).

But above all, the article—despite its title—scarcely mentioned the significant relationship between the anarchists and the nuclear disarmers. Anarchists have been involved in the unilateralist movement throughout the last decade, especially in the more radical sections of the movement—the Non-Violent Resistance Group, the Pacifist Youth Action Group, the Direct Action Committee, Polaris Action, the Committee of 100, and so on. Some anarchists may believe that "an anarchist does not court arrest", but there are other anarchists who have done so several times, and have played an active part in developing the theory and practice of civil disobedience. The evidence for this appears in many back numbers of *FREEDOM* and *ANARCHY*.

London

N.W.

OBSERVATIONS ON ANARCHY 63: ANARCHISM, SOCIETY AND THE SOCIALISED MIND

FRANCIS ELLINGHAM'S ARTICLE IN *ANARCHY* 63, is extremely valuable and thought-provoking, but it seems to me that much of his argument remains open to question. I think his attempt to make a key distinction between a society and an anarchist *milieu* is unreal and can only be

sustained by giving to both words a very particular meaning, a meaning which is not contained in the general currency of either. It also leads him to adopt quite indefensible positions. To argue, for example that "society" before the Industrial Revolution did not exist, or that "the Greeks had no concept of, or word for, 'society'," is surely to narrow the word to apply simply to the very special phenomena that the Industrial Revolution has helped to create.

This distinction is not only unreal, it is unimportant, and has the unfortunate consequence of obscuring the major distinction that the Industrial Revolution has helped to create. This is not simply the greater size of the social unit (to which Francis Ellingham refers), but the greater *scale* of organisation. All pre-industrial societies had this much in common, they were small-scale and dominated by the nature of the relationships of their members. They were human-scale communities. Even the Roman Empire was, perforce, a large number of human-scale communities linked by a common rule and legal system. The reason for this emphasis on a human-scale was simple. In the absence of mechanical transport a community was restricted largely to the capacity of its members to reach most parts of it with a fair degree of facility on foot. A secondary factor was the very large degree of economic self-sufficiency that was practised.

After the Industrial Revolution the scale on which all operations of trade and government were conducted grew to enormous proportions. The change was not only quantitative, it was qualitative too, for these operations ceased to be human-scale they became machine-scale. Armed with the new powers of machines and machine methods of organisation and administration the forces operating here no longer do battle against the forces of freedom within the social order, that stage is long past. Today they are determining the very nature of the social order. This is why, despite the spread of ballot-box-mongering, there is less freedom in our societies today than there was 100, or even 200, years ago.

This is the major consequence of the growth of machine-scale societies and it seems clear that even if these societies do not succeed in destroying us altogether with the new ways of war that they have produced, they will achieve an even more disastrous diminution of freedom over the next 100 years.

A shopkeeper or trader in a human-scale community is a potential danger to freedom because he is always seeking to extend his scale of operations until they dominate and, at least in part, control the rest of the community. In such circumstances, however, this potential threat rarely becomes actual since the countervailing forces (other shopkeepers, the small scale of other fields of economic activity, the potency of a small-scale community's moral code and so on) will act as an effective brake on his ambitions.

In a machine-scale society this brake is removed. Rival traders are merged, taken over or simply driven to bankruptcy; the machine-scale of the trader's new operations is buttressed by a similar scale in other spheres, in banking, transport, government and so on; and as

for morality and such commands as "love thy neighbour", which may be taken to be incompatible with his economic exploitation or subjugation, it is ignored. The new power is able to ignore it because the power of morality is a product of human relations within a human community. Under machine-scale operations community is murdered and replaced by the mass. Since the members of a mass are no longer in a power-relationship with each other and are merely instruments of a remote centre, they can have no moral relationships (for there is then no power of sanctions, ostracism and so on to enforce them). Men no longer devote the toil of their daily lives to the common good, they become subordinate and passive parts of the machine-scale schemes of others for profit.

It is our own age, and one that has the temerity to attach to itself the label of progress, that singles out for its acclaim and reward not its artists or philosophers, or even its statesmen, but its grocers, its pork butchers, its purveyors of soap and butter substitutes.

It is instructive that Francis Ellingham shares the defect of much anarchist literature in refusing to grapple seriously with the problem of economic organisation. This is curious, for even Marx was merely acknowledging the obvious when he insisted on the key role of economics as a determinant social force. (He was surely wrong to insist it is *the* dominant social force, but that is another story.)

At one point Francis Ellingham declares that prior to the Industrial Revolution the state played no direct part in economic affairs. This is surely a slip of the pen, or has he never consulted any of the standard texts on the history of the English wool trade, and the efforts of the state to regulate it in minutest detail? Has he never heard of the Tudor "Statute of Apprentices" and the numerous attempts made under the first Elizabeth, to go no further back, to regulate wages and prices? What does he suppose the Luddites were fighting for if not to retain these elements of economic paternalism in face of the powers of the new machine forces?

Does he know nothing of the same monarch's role in financing the trading-cum-piracy activities of Drake and, later, of the new companies of Merchant Venturers? And at a time when the Church was an integral part of the state organisation and engrossing a major share of the community's economic increment does he suppose all those vast and splendid cathedrals were built with a mixture of prayer, asceticism and the freewill offerings of the credulous?

This omission leads to a failure to recognise the basic cause of our current political dilemma. Owing to the vast scale of the forces employed it is now impossible for people at the base to control them, *even if they should want to*. A generation or so ago Robert Michaels made the reason for this clear, although he omitted to spell out the mechanics of it. He pointed out that mass political parties (and it holds true of almost any mass organisation) have an inbuilt disposition towards oligarchic leadership. Anarchists, of course, start with this kind of assumption, but what are the mechanics?

As an organisation grows, decision-making is necessarily operated

on a representational basis. The bigger the scale the more remote the representation and the more powerful the mechanism by which representatives are selected. In politics this is true at both the primary (party) stage of selecting a candidate, and at the secondary stage of a public election. As the scale continues to grow there comes a point where the power of the representative machinery, however organised, becomes greater than the power of the electorate. We are a long way past this stage today. What needs determining is just what form of social organisation we can have which is susceptible to the control of all the members of a given society.

Talk here of an "anarchist *milieu*" is hopelessly vague and impracticable, and certainly provides no kind of tangible alternative to which masses of bewildered and disillusioned people can turn.

Since the dominant aspect of our powerlessness is the sheer bigness of the scale of the forces confronting us, is it reasonable to suppose that the first requisite is *small-scale* forms of organisation which it is possible for us to control?

The commonest answer one is apt to receive to such a suggestion, is, "We can't put the clock back". One can only reply to this that if we can devise some form of social organisation which will reap the real benefits of technology without allowing machines and machine-scale operations to distort and pervert human needs we shall have made the most significant step towards social progress in the history of mankind.

London

JOHN PAPWORTH

*

IT WOULD REQUIRE A LINGUISTIC PHILOSOPHER to analyse adequately the semantic morass that appeared in ANARCHY 63. However, as my attempt to clear away some of the minor misconceptions that linger in anarchist theory has apparently resulted in a misunderstanding so profound as to make one despair of words as a means of communication, I would like to attempt to clear up some of the more obvious misunderstandings, and correct a couple of the more glaring misrepresentations, in Mr. Ellingham's polemic.

A great deal of the confusion in Mr. Ellingham's mind seems to stem from his use of the concept "society". Now I grant that to some extent society is an analytical abstraction, and because of this any given definition is valid only to the extent that it is adequate for the task involved. Nevertheless within the context of social theory most people have some idea of society as a system of social interaction that recruited its members primarily by sexual reproduction. In writing *Anarchism and Stateless Societies* I used the word as a concept denoting a group possessing four major characteristics: (a) definite territory; (b) sexual reproduction; (c) comprehensive culture; (d) independence. Thus when I said that without society the human animal cannot develop into a human being I was saying that the newborn infant must participate in an on-going system of social interaction and that this system socialises the infant in terms of its culture. In this respect then Mr. Ellingham's mind is as "socialised" as mine and

his use of the word as a perjorative adjective is totally meaningless in terms of the essay he is attacking.

Culture I took as "that complex whole which includes the knowledge, belief, art, morals, law custom and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society". But again this definition of Tylor's is an abstraction, as culture and society are only separable analytically, they are in fact different ways of looking at the same thing. Thus when Mr. Ellingham accuses me of regarding culture and society as the same thing he is correct, but for quite the wrong reasons; I was making an analytical distinction but I was not claiming, as he appears to be doing, that the two can be separated empirically.

Mr. Ellingham's confusion here arises (rather oddly as he accuses me of conceptual sloppiness and circular argument) because he takes his own idiosyncratic definition of society and by arguing backwards in time attempts to apply *his* conceptualisation to *my* arguments, while ignoring my usage. Such methodological errors even an agrarian utopian like Mr. Ellingham should avoid, as they lead him to make such highly risible statements as "Before the Industrial Revolution what we call society did not exist. . . ." Within my own usage of the term, what Mr. Ellingham calls a *milieu*, or *community*, are both societies and, in the same context, the phrase *anarchist society* is no more a contradiction in terms than is the phrase *nation-state* when discussing modern forms of political organisation in an industrial mass society. In fact Mr. Ellingham appears to use the term society for the concept that C. Wright Mills termed "mass society". But this is only a *type* of society, or more accurately, the cultural aspect of a type of society; it is no more the only type of society than the state is the only political form in human history.

Mr. Ellingham also makes a rather odd use, or at least a use that bears no discernible relationship to mine, of the terms "social" and "sociate". Any group of people interacting are involved in social relationships and the term "non-social *milieu*" insofar as it is used to describe a human group, as Ellingham does, is literally non-sense. By sociate I meant (it is difficult to discern what Ellingham inferred from the term), having some degree of understanding of social processes. It seems to me logical that human beings should have some knowledge of social processes and institutions if they are attempting to alter or abolish them, just as we expect a surgeon to have a knowledge of biology and anatomy. Social institutions are social facts and require social knowledge if they are to be altered in any desired direction. Otherwise the result is likely to be as disastrous as the various attempts to institute the millenium by revolution and insurrection have been. The purpose of my essay was, in its minor way, directed towards that very end, in that I was attempting to refute the idea that the abolition of the state could, on its own, bring about any kind of anarchist utopia.

It is at this point that the solipsistic Mr. Ellingham totally misrepresents my argument—when he attributes to me the statement that anarchism is "simply inadequate". A slightly more careful perusal of the text would have shown him that what I actually said was that

a particular anarchist postulate, that the state was the prime reason for divisions in society and the main source of its inequalities (a perfectly reasonable theory at a certain point in the development of human knowledge) could no longer be regarded as valid in the light of our knowledge of the stateless societies that had also perpetuated these divisions. (Another advantage of being "sociate" as I used the term, is that we then avoid wasting our time barking up the wrong tree.)

Finally, I would argue that mere statelessness cannot be the anarchist goal, if only for the reasons stated above. I certainly do not conceive of anarchism as "essentially only a doctrine which rejects the state". Anarchism is a rejection of the authority principle in human relationships and this subsumes the abolition of the state among many other factors. The development of a freely co-operative society will take a great deal of time, if only because for the majority of human beings the socialisation process involves an acceptance of the authority principle, but given the right social environment it would just as easily involve its rejection. And we stand much more chance of achieving such an environment, in which the individual could live anarchistically and happily by an understanding of social action than by making the blind leap into a mystic religiosity (by Hobbes out of Gautama Buddha) that Mr. Ellingham makes towards the end of his article.

London

JOHN PILGRIM

*

MOST OF FRANCIS ELLINGHAM'S CRITICISMS of John Pilgrim and Ian Vine spring from a misinterpretation of their ANARCHY articles, that old bugbear—semantic confusion.

According to F.E., both J.P. and I.V. are "so-called anarchists" because they rate something higher than the individual, namely some concept of society into which the individual must fit or else. Now, there are anarchists ("anarchists" if you prefer it) who seem especially concerned with something called "society", to which individuals have "duties" and which must always be the first consideration. Similarly there are anarchists (I used to be one) who set up blueprints for anarchy and believe that other people "should" work towards them and mould themselves (or be moulded) into the kind of person that would make the dream societies work. Examples are extreme pacifists, anarcho-syndicalists, technology worshippers (there WILL be automation, comrades) and extreme simple-lifers, a position F.E. himself once defended in FREEDOM although with sound arguments and not just emotional dogmatism.

However, neither J.P. nor I.V., either in their ANARCHY articles or elsewhere, show the kind of "socialised outlook" that F.E. complains of although it would have been better if they had avoided the ambiguous word "society" with its implications of duties and obeisance and used instead "milieu". In particular, I don't regard I.V.'s view that mentally sick, violent people should be restrained (but not punished or despised) incompatible with anarchism. I.V.'s choice of words was perhaps a little unfortunate but unless F.E. believes

murderers and rapists should be left to carry on, his use of "brute force" and "sickening" to describe I.V.'s views seems silly.

F.E. also believes that the confusion caused by talking about "societies" and "states" when defining anarchism could be avoided by using the definition "the doctrine that every human being would do well to become—one who neither governs nor is governed; and who is not governed by himself—that is, by selfish cravings, fears, etc." The definition is excellent as far as it goes but it doesn't avoid the confusion. Try using it to someone who wants to learn about anarchism and ten to one their first question will include the words "state" or "society" thus the net result of F.E.'s definition that avoids these words is to postpone their use by about ten seconds.

Certainly "spontaneous" behaviour is anarchist behaviour (one sort anyway) and if enough people behaved like that there would be anarchy. But most people's spontaneity has been warped by this crazy, authoritarian world. If the world has made one a nonentity or a compulsive bingo player then spontaneity for you is being a nonentity or playing bingo neither of which seem particularly anarchistic to me. F.E. should tell us how people can break free of the effects of upbringing, environment, etc., and become "fearless", etc. So far as most people are at the moment spontaneity (other than spontaneous conformity) is not possible, this is a subject I hope to discuss in a future ANARCHY.

It is also true that whether anarchy will bring automation or simple life is idle conjecture. I feel intuitively, however, that automation and anarchy don't mix and that as the world has set its sights on automation anarchism in the future will be largely concerned with keeping out of the way of the automation state.

London

JEFF ROBINSON

*

I HAVE JUST GOT ROUND TO READING Francis Ellingham in ANARCHY 63. How a writer of his ability can really believe such crazy nonsense is incomprehensible. As for Aristotle, does it really matter whether or not he considered man to be a social animal? More apt surely is Bakunin's view of man as "not an isolated individual but a social being". And again, "The individual is a product of Society. Without Society, man is nothing. All productive labour is, before all, social labour, production only being possible by the combination of the labour of past and present generations; there has never been any labour which could be called individual labour".

The fallacy of spurious individualism is even more obvious today than it would have been to Bakunin. Can we imagine Ellingham's *milieu* operating transcontinental railways, ocean liners or airways; or for that matter, the everyday production of the necessities of life. Why waste time (and space in ANARCHY) on such fantasy? I am aware that F.E. does not approve of technology and automation. I am sure that he would reject the necessity of air travel with scorn. But does he really think the time will come when these things will be no more? If so, his only hope is a tiny community on an unnoticed islet. His theories have no relevance to realities. To quote Bakunin

again, "The concept of man as an isolated individual is a metaphysical and theological concept". Individualists have no part in life today, if indeed they ever had. Their place is with the religious and mystical bodies with which they are related, to put into practice (if they can) the individual salvation they profess.

The true expression of the individual can only be when the conflict of economic interest, embodied in and essential to, the private ownership of the means of producing wealth is ended and common and social ownership with identity of interest substituted. That this necessitates social organisation is undoubted. This does not mean "one opinion" though as F.E. fears. On the contrary, the energies and mind would really be freed and the individual become sovereign as a result of being free economically. This is the way to the true individualism which can be attained by no other means. Nor is there any substance in the totalitarian objection. Governments exist for one purpose and one purpose only, the protection of private property. This is so even when the seemingly benevolent and "Welfare State" legislation is enacted, the necessary brake on the worst excesses of private ownership. With the passing of Authority which would have no place in a free community, there could be no restriction on liberty, Ian Vine notwithstanding. Unsocial acts are the direct result of unsocial conditions. There is no cure for such acts under private ownership, as centuries of legal oppression have proved. Nor would Ellingham's ideas be more effective (if they could be put into practice) since they have no material basis. Like Ingersoll on the Heavenly Father, the anarchism and ideals of the Individualists are "the baseless shadow of a wistful human dream".

Woldingham

F.B.

*

FRANCIS ELLINGHAM QUOTES OUT OF CONTEXT a statement from John Pilgrim—by no means original to John—(indeed almost axiomatic to most people), deduces something from this which does not follow, uses something like a Stalinist amalgam to saddle John and those who agree with him with the pro-prison views of Ian Vine, chides John for someone else's mistranslation from the Greek—which in fact was not a mistranslation, though Ellingham repeats another common mistranslation later; and bases an article on this fallacy. If this were the best that individualists could do, even my low opinion of them would sink.

Without society the human animal cannot develop into a human being. This does not, to anyone with any knowledge of logic, necessarily mean that all forms of society are conducive to such development, and Ellingham if he has read John's articles or those of any other "socialised"-thinking anarchists as he terms us, knows perfectly well that it is the contention of anarchist-communist revolutionaries, as of gradualists like John, that all authoritarianism in society inevitably corrupts human development. A short reference to Kropotkin or Malinowski would, incidentally, have given observed evidence for the axiom—more important to anarchists than Aristotle.

In point of fact, since I came into the anarchist movement I have

met some half-dozen anarchists who are not insistent on the need to abolish prisons, one would have called herself an anarchist communist, I doubt if Ian Vine would do so, and four were definitely individualist anarchists, as of course was Benjamin Tucker, who was prepared to retain hanging.

The Greek word *politikon* which, as Ellingham so rightly says, we must not assume is identical with our politics, is in fact the art of living in a polis. (A *polis*—a city—being in Greek times hardly larger than a modern village, or, if a megapolis, a market town.) Since neither the word urbanity, nor the word civilised (both with similar derivations), gives the meaning, while the word politics as we understand it is totally unrelated, it is perfectly accurate as a translation to render the word as social or sociate. I know of no other translation giving a comparably fair rendering of the term.

While we are on the subject, *anarkhia* did not mean absence of government, it meant a society or state which governed itself without *archons*, who were a curious sort of elected priest-king; and it would not have been thought incongruous for a Greek to say of a city that it was *anarkhia* and that it had a *tyrannois*, a self-made king. I did once come across a Greek term for the absence of government, but unfortunately forgot it, *Akephalous* (with head) is about as near as one can get.

Incidentally a stateless but also totalitarian society, besides being a contradiction in terms is not a Marxist ideal, any more than it is anarchist. Marx believed that to reach the stateless society one had first to pass through the totalitarian, but nowhere did he, or even Lenin, suggest that the two might co-exist.

There are several dozen other inaccuracies or errors of logic in Ellingham's article, but I believe this is a fair cross-section and is adequate to demolish his argument.

Oxon.

LAURENS OTTER

Adrian Mitchell, poet 1966

JOHN GARFORTH

POETS CAN BE DANGEROUS FELLOWS, not washing, questioning the basic structure of our society, travelling on trains without paying their fares, refusing to conform and leading dubious sex lives. Lunatics, lovers and so forth. Plato was the first aspiring politician to suggest excluding such people from society.

... the people of Britain, who were never consulted,
are paying for the cold war
paying in every sense
while the cost of the cold war goes up and up.
We will pay for kicking Red China in the teeth
We will pay for arming the South African fascists
We'll pay eventually

*If we don't first have to make the final payment
of our own lives and our children's lives.*

The mandarins of our culture may claim that this is not real poetry. Its tone is so different from *The Wasteland*. "I think we are in rats' alley Where the dead men lost their bones." They claim that all propaganda is bad art. Which is not to say that poems must not have a theme, or that poets must not try to change our way of seeing the world. It means only that poets must not write about politics or comment on the society around them.

But since Christopher Logue collected a £1 from each of his friends and published his first volume of poetry at their expense, establishing *himself* as a poet, the mandarins have been losing influence. In 1958 Logue published a broadsheet, "To My Fellow Artists" and went around selling it himself. Now his latest broadsheet, "I am going to vote Labour because God votes Labour" has been sold in all the best bookshops and has received attention in the press.

Logue is well known throughout the country as a performer, because of his readings in canteens for Centre 42 and because of the Poetry and Jazz recitals. He and Yevtushenko and Allen Ginsburg found a new audience for poetry, leaving the way open for new poets. The finest of whom is Adrian Mitchell.

On the wall of a dripping cave a stunted man with weak eyes wrote:

"It's your standard of living

Don't let the Bronze Age ruin it."

Mitchell's shy, tense and mumbling performances are now familiar to a wide audience. His slight build is emphasised by the jeans and boiler jacket that he affects, making him look like the bewildered Johnny Ray on a massive and alien stage. (He would no doubt prefer a comparison with Brecht's proletarian gear.) A flatly regional accent is ideally suited for snarling out lines such as, "Tom Sawyer's heart has cooled, his ingenuity flowers at Cape Canaveral." Each time the audience laughs, or applauds the end of a poem, he seems to grow more bitter. Any recent sign of relaxation, the hint of a smile, do not alter his intensely savage persona.

A master of the Trafalgar Square rallies and the Beat barbecues at the Albert Hall, a popular draw at the St. Pancras Town Hall—he is clearly doing something quite different from T. S. Eliot, who wrote for his six friends. Mitchell's emotion is not shared by *The Times* or the BBC (those arbiters of good taste), which is why they would call him hysterical, but he speaks with and for a massive section of the community who have no place in the Stuffed Poets' scheme of things.

Most people ignore most poetry

because

most poetry ignores most people.

Mitchell is, of course, hysterical, and he is naïve. There is none of the awful knowingness that we find in the New Movement. His power as a poet lies in the strength of his emotion, rather than in his verbal elegance. But this should be easy for us to appreciate since

Allen Ginsburg broke through the form barrier. We can comprehend the slack rhythms, running lines and sudden, jagged stops (just as we comprehend that a lack of rhyme can still be poetry). If we accept this, the things that seem weaknesses in Mitchell become part of his armoury.

His phrasing and his wit sometimes parody the adman, and sometimes have the slickness of an adman. "Snow white was in the News of the World—Virgin Lived with Seven Midgets, Court Told. And in the psychiatric ward an old woman dribbles as she mumbles about a family of human bears, they ate porridge, yes Miss Goldilocks of course they did." From a poem that communicates to every moron who failed his eleven plus, never learnt to read more than the *Daily Mirror*, and has his ignorance exploited by the moguls of the colour comics and commercial television. Salts of the earth, of course, but Mitchell communicates through a vernacular that is almost universal (it sells everything from brassieres to Bentleys), and thereby demonstrates that language is the class barrier rather than intelligence.

It is not necessary to argue that a great poem can be simple in its language; *The Wasteland* uses simple speech patterns, as does *The Dust Coloured Girl with a Child on her Back*, and nobody is more direct than Robert Graves. What matters is the complexity of the idea being expressed. And Adrian Mitchell is speaking directly to all those people who suffer or fear the "real" agonies. War, death, insanity, injustice, as well as the "poetic" agonies of love, nostalgia and God. It is sheer snobbery to assume that Hopkins became a great poet because at one time he was considered difficult to understand. Hopkins was writing about these same things.

Adrian Mitchell uses broad, satirical effects instead of obscure and personal nuances to express his anguish. The hero of his novel, *If You See Me Comin'*, is a blues shouter; no lieder for him. In the pages of *Woman's Mirror* Adrian Mitchell writes about pop music, and in the *Sunday Times* for a while he reviewed television. He proved at Oxford how clever he was, so now he can dispense with all that.

If You See Me Comin' is a spiritual autobiography, given shape by covering a week after the central character's arrival in a northern town to sing the blues, which is also the last week in a condemned man's life before hanging for murder. It is a poetic novel, concerned with the hero's attempts to re-enter the normal, brutal and alien world after a nervous breakdown. He has white hair, wants to be loved and to love, yet the only real relationship he sees around him is between a man and his dog. The rest is all for fun or for gain. Like Mitchell's poems, if it weren't so funny it would be unspeakably depressing. We don't even wonder what is going to happen next in his world.

Mitchell is like the novelist in *The Tin Men*, he wants to convey moods, describe what it is like to walk down a particular street, how places feel, to express the smell of a November evening. And this he does without savagery. He seems only to dislike people. As

someone said about Evelyn Waugh, whether or not this is a bad novel it does not contain a bad sentence. Every word, page, paragraph is superb, full of gags, insight and anguish. Only his enemies for other reasons would attack Mitchell for not having written a rattling good yarn.

What are you going to put in its place? ask the old mythologists. What are you positively for? Well, Mitchell probably wants socialism (broadly), but this is beside the point in 1966. There are plenty of Harold Wilsons working and scheming for compromised improvements. Mitchell is more valuable to us while he is being idealistically negative, saying no, help, and this is ugly. When every rogue has the right to reply and every racket employs a public relations man, it is unnecessary to demand balance from the victims.

Adrian Mitchell may be a highly successful victim, but he seems genuinely to write from his own suffering or outrage. There is no slick protest or clever argument, merely articulate screams, and this rivets our attention. People who feel the kind of despair that Mitchell expresses have seldom bothered to write about it, and when they have it has usually been easy to dismiss. Herein lies his uniqueness.

In 1961 Yevtushenko came to England, and he visited a recital at the St. Pancras Town Hall one Sunday evening. Adrian Mitchell was on stage, and he made an incoherent speech that broke off in choked emotion. He said that as a child during the war he had been taught that the Russians were heroes, brothers, and fighting for what was right. Since the war he had been told continuously that the Russians were evil and monstrous. . . . But he wanted to welcome Yevtushenko, assure him that most English people of his age regarded Russia as a country with problems like our own, facing them with us. . . . The cold war was something to do with business men and politicians. Yes, he was pretty naïve.

To write such a poem as *Veteran with a Head Wound* you have to be naïve. It would not otherwise be such a fine poem. Naivety is the counterpart of those words like barbed, bitter and brilliant. But to conclude with an assessment of Mitchell's place in contemporary culture would be pompous and slightly previous. He has earned enough money from his translation of the Marat/Sade play to give up his reviewing to work on another novel and write more poetry. But we can be sure that he will never be Poet Laureate.

*When death covers England with a sheet
Of red and silver fire, who'll mourn the state
Though some will live and some bear children
And some of the children born in hate
May be both lovely and complete?
Try to distract this soldier's mind
From his distraction. Under the powdered buildings
He lies alive, still shouting,
With his brothers and sisters and perhaps his children,
While we bury all the dead people we can find.*

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