

:: THE PROVOS ::

Amsterdam's Anarchist Revolt

By

RICHARD KEMPTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Chapter 1: Amsterdam, the Magic Center (1961-1965)	8
Chapter 2: The Prophet of Magic Amsterdam: Robert Jasper Grootveld (1961-1965)	14
Chapter 3: The Birth of Provo (May-June 1965)	21
Chapter 4: The State Is Provoked (July 1965-March 1966)	30
Chapter 5: The Finest Hour of the Dutch Republic (March 10 1966)	38
Chapter 6: Two Dimensions of Police Brutality: The City Under Siege (March 19-June 13 1966)	46
Chapter 7: The Monster of Amsterdam (June 14 1966)	61
Chapter 8: The Decline of Provo (June 15 1966-May 14 1967)	76
Appendix 1 New Babylon	86
Appendix 2 Dada Influences	88
Appendix 3 Anarchist Antecedents in Amsterdam	91

Appendix 4	Provos in the Provinces	95
Appendix 5	The Kabouters (1970)	98
Appendix 6	Sartre's Concept of the Fused Group: Analytical Applications to the Neo-Anarchist Groups of the 1960's.	102

INTRODUCTION

In the 1960's the political and artistic imagination of the Netherlands was seized by a unique and bizarre political movement known as Provo, that sprang into birth full-grown, almost overnight, by virtue of a fatally timed pun, and succeeded in fermenting a year-long rebellion in the heart of the Dutch capital, culminating explosively in a spontaneous five-day riot on June 14th, 1966. Provo made a lasting impression in the Netherlands, changing the course of Dutch political life and turning Amsterdam into the legendary mecca of a new international subculture. The Provo movement, though not well known outside of Belgium and Holland, is one of the most stunning of the cultural revolutions of the 1960's. Bits and pieces of the Provo legend have been woven, here and there, into the mythology of the period. Non-Dutch readers, however, have never had the opportunity to become acquainted with the movement because little was published that wasn't in Dutch.

The Netherlands was not the same after 1966. One basic result has been the de-facto if not de-jure recognition of the use of soft drugs such as marihuana, hashish, LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline, making the Netherlands a pioneer in unofficially but openly tolerating the drug subculture. Another effect of the Provo movement was to move this smug middle-class social democracy to the left, to a point where the Dutch parliament disassociated itself from the efforts of the United States in Vietnam on two occasions. Then too Provo was to create a solid political base for the New Left and give rise to later Anarchist movements in the Netherlands: the student seizure of the Maagdehuis, the administrative building of the University of Amsterdam, in 1969, as well as inspiring the creation of the Kabouters movement in 1970. This new movement showed promise of taking even wider hold than the Provos on Dutch political life before it too faded out. A host of new imaginative movements sprang from the Provo incubator, such as the Paniek-Zaaiers (Panic Planters), an ecological movement, as well as neighborhood activist groups in Amsterdam, ever on hand to keep the political pot boiling and the imagination stirred. A third effect of Provo was to promote a sexual revolution in the Netherlands, at one time the most puritanical of countries.

Scandinavia is better known for its militant social democracy and its sexual revolution, factors that were opposed in the Netherlands by strongly entrenched religions that were well organized politically, as well as by puritanical traditions. But Scandinavia cannot match the unique Anarchism of the Provos and the active role played by the thriving avant-garde cultural scene of Amsterdam in giving birth to this movement. Provo began as a humble one-man anti-smoking and anti-tobacco campaign in 1962 and reached its climax in the five-day battle of Amsterdam in June 1966.

Although most of the information on the movement is in Dutch, Delta magazine, a semi-official English language quarterly of Dutch culture that was

published in Amsterdam before its demise, brought out a special issue on the Provos (Volume 10, Number 3, Autumn 1967). The coverage is surprisingly pro-Provo, has an attractive layout and is available in many libraries. However, it concentrated on the 1966 political phase of the movement and avoided looking at the rich artistic and drug culture milieu out of which the movement developed. Yet this issue has been the best source of information available to non-Dutch readers.

The main source of information on the Provos is some half-dozen books published in Dutch and listed in the bibliography. The present text seeks to provide a narration of the Provo movement up to the moment it peaked, translating the thoughts of these books as well as interpreting the social milieu of the country so that this fascinating story can be made known outside of the Netherlands.

I decided to write this book once I realized that no one else was going to write an account of the Provos in English. It is regrettable that the early “Happening” phase of the movement has been relatively neglected, even by the Dutch, particularly the career of Robert Jasper Grootveld as a “happener-magician” (1962-1965), as this phenomenon has only been sketchily recorded. But perhaps it was meant that the purest and most inspired acts of humanity should exist only as partially recorded deeds, unheralded in history, save for the long shadow they cast on the events that follow, possibly so they may become more quickly absorbed into some future mythology.

I wish to emphasize the artistic aspects of the movement: the use of the happening, which is a very “avant-garde” matter, even now, years after it has been declared as “dead”; the imaginative use of language; the relationship of many Provo concepts to the drug subculture, so scrupulously avoided by political writers; and further, to show how the Provos effectively used art forms to accomplish or attempt to accomplish a social revolution, a conversion of social and political life into theater, by the confrontation of artist and authority, protestor and police, the tactic which, borrowed from a concept in a Dutch academic dissertation on juvenile delinquency, gave the Provos their name and their modus operandi.

The purely political aspects of the movement are likewise important. But much of what was published in Dutch is dogmatically biased, particularly when it tried to be rational. The success of Provo was largely a success of empirical political action dictated by the mood of the moment. I will give a narrative of the events as they unfolded without trying to evaluate these events too closely. Indeed, by 1966 everything was moving so quickly that it was impossible for the Provos to act within a theoretical framework. It is beside the point to criticize them for this “failure” for the element of Time was creating its own factors.

Briefly stated, Provo was the marriage of two youthful elements: the “hip” audience at Robert Jasper Grootveld’s magic happenings, every Saturday at midnight, with the proto-New Left remnants of the Ban-The-Bomb movement, the Dutch Aldermaston marchers in Great Britain, now turned Anarchist in 1965, at the ripe moment of the politically controversial marriage announcement of Beatrix, then the Dutch crown princess.

The Dutch monarchy, the war in Vietnam and air pollution from automobiles became the major issues for the movement. And anyone who dared to protest publicly on these issues in Amsterdam during the tense atmosphere of late 1965 and 1966 was subject to immediate arrest and a possible month-long jail sentence.

The score for the movement was played against the complex background of Dutch political life, shot full of acronyms, those abbreviations for various government offices. For instance the Dutch equivalent of the F.B.I. is the “B.V.D.”, the Binnelandse Veiligheid Dienst. BVD’s are also known as a major brand of men’s underwear in the United States. Dutch social and political life is based on the peculiarly Dutch Zuilen system (pronounced zow.len), zuilen meaning “pillars” in Dutch. It amounts to being vertical interest groups: Labor, Capital, Catholics and Protestants (Calvinists). The political booty of governing the country was divided four ways, to no one’s complete satisfaction, accomplishing little save for the frustration of genuine political or social change. A valuable book on the subject is Arend Lijphart’s monograph, “The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands”. 2nd revised edition, University of California Press, 1975.

“Holland” is a medieval province, now divided into two modern provinces, North Holland (Amsterdam, Haarlem) and South Holland (The Hague, Rotterdam, Delft, Leiden) that comprise two of the eleven provinces of the country we know as the Netherlands (meaning Lowlands). Holland counts for 16% of the land area of the country and is home to 67% of the population. Referring to the Netherlands as “Holland” is comparable to referring to Great Britain as “England”. The national language is called “Nederlands” and used to be called “Hollands”. It is closely related to German and English and sits somewhat midway between the two languages. In English “Nederlands” is called Dutch, taking its name from Diets (pronounced Deets), the medieval forerunner of Dutch. 13 million people in the Netherlands and five million people in Belgium, the Flemish, speak Dutch. The difference in speech between Flemish and Dutch is comparable to the difference between the English spoken in London and New York. For this reason the Provo movement caught on quickly in Belgium, but spread to no other country, cut off as it was by the too effective barrier of the Dutch language, which served to isolate the Provos.

The Netherlands, it should be recalled, is a part of Western Europe, along with France, Germany and Italy and, as such, its own culture shares a common past

with these countries. The Netherlands too has made its contribution to wider European culture. Unfortunately, the Dutch language has been relegated to the status of a barbaric tongue and now enjoys about the same social and cultural prestige as Albanian. As a result modern Dutch literary and intellectual life have largely been lost on the outside world: both the postwar literary renaissance of the 1950's and the Provo movement have suffered from this fact and remain unknown abroad.

It would be a pity for a movement as fascinating as the Provos to remain unknown outside of the Netherlands. It is to be hoped that this history of the movement can serve both as an introduction to the subject and foster new interest in the movement and further research on the history of the neo-Anarchist movements of the Sixties and Seventies.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Delta: A Review of Arts, Life and Thought in the Netherlands”. (Amsterdam) vol. 10, #3 (Autumn 1967) [Special Issue on the Provo Movement] 152 pp.

Lijphart, Arend. “The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands”. 2nd rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.

CHAPTER 1 :: AMSTERDAM, THE MAGIC CENTER (1961-1965)

The Provo movement was born to a city that has taken part in many of the avant-garde movements of the past 100 years. Amsterdam is one of those magnetic European centers, such as Paris, Copenhagen, Munich, Berlin, Rome and Vienna that boast of rich cultural traditions and a witty and intelligent population sympathetic to inventive new ways of human expression. A similar situation often existed in San Francisco, which nurtured both the Beat and Hippie movements a half-century ago.

Important art and literary movements in the Netherlands date from the late 19th century onward: the Haagse school (a circle of painters in The Hague which influenced the early work of Vincent Van Gogh before he went his separate way), Nieuwe Kunst (the Dutch Art Nouveau movement), the Amsterdam School of architecture in the early twentieth century, “De Stijl” (which means “The Style” and is pronounced like “style” in English, a movement that included Piet Mondriaan, Theo Van Doesburg and the architect Gerrit Rietveld, being the Dutch equivalent of the Bauhaus), as well as Dutch Dadaists such as Theo Van Doesburg.

The Netherlands was neutral in the First World War. This fact, not generally known, was to have important consequences: the shock of the German invasion in World War Two seriously dislocated the smug and stifling middle class culture that had reigned for much of the past 300 years. In 1939 and 1940, as advancing German armies fanned across Europe the Netherlands fully expected to remain neutral once again. Since 1918 the dominant Calvinist ideology, a strict Protestant outlook, took self-satisfied credit for the country’s good fortune in escaping the ravages of war, ravages that fell on their less fortunate infidel Catholic neighbors in places such as Belgium.

This smugness was shattered, both by the war and by the loss of the Dutch colonial empire in Indonesia, the former Dutch East Indies, a country of fabulous wealth with a population ten times that of the “mother” country. It is against this background of historical shock that vital new art forms developed in the Netherlands shortly after 1945. At first the new artists were laughed away by the middle class cultural mentality, but by 1954, after a seven-year struggle, free verse and abstract painting were dominant modes in Dutch artistic life. Painting and poetry were the favored forms of expression in the creative burst of artistic energy from the young artists in the late 1940’s. Abstract Expressionism developed simultaneously in Europe and New York, springing from a common background of Dadaism and Surrealism. In New York it was baptized as

“Abstract Expressionism”, although the painters themselves preferred terms such as “Concrete Painting” or “Action Painting”, best exemplified by the work of Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning, an American painter born in the Netherlands. As historical chance was to have it this movement was to be the spiritual grandfather of the Provo movement.

In Amsterdam the Cobra movement in 1947 launched abstract painting. “Cobra” represents the initials of the three centers of the movement: COpenhagen, BRussels and Amsterdam. The leading Dutch figures were Karel Appel, Corneille, Constant Nieuwenhuis and Lucebert. Cobra was closely tied to the new movement in Dutch poetry, “De Vijftigers”, pronounced “Fivettiggers” and meaning Writers of the Fifties (1950’s). Some of the poets of this movement later became major Dutch novelists, such as Remco Campert and Hugo Claus, a Flemish writer published in the Netherlands. Another poet, Simon Vinkenoog, became the spiritual leader of the psychedelic subculture of 1960’s Amsterdam. Lucebert was eminent both as a Cobra painter and a Vijftiger poet.

The Vijftiger movement attained its crowning moment, quite literally, in what amounted to a happening, five years before its time. Lucebert was awarded the municipal prize for poetry by the city of Amsterdam in 1954. He showed up for the presentation ceremony at the Stedelijk Museum, the city’s modern art museum, just down the street from the more famous Rijksmuseum, triumphantly dressed as the self-proclaimed Emperor of the Vijftigers, wearing a crown and velvet and ermine robes, accompanied by a royally decked queen and several armed attendants (other Vijftiger poets). Museum officials telephoned the Burgemeester, the term for the city’s mayor. The police soon made an appearance, an important recurring theme for the next 15 years in contemporary Dutch art. The Emperor-Poet and his entourage were forcibly “escorted” from the building. This event burns like a flame in the historical memory of the period, highlighting the triumphant climax of one movement and flickering on the horizon of what was yet to come. It was a magnificent gesture, a symbol, or a symptom, as Robert Jasper Grootveld, the prophet of Provo, might have phrased it.

Dutch literature continued to develop during the early Sixties. The short story and the novel replaced poetry as favored modes of literary expression. In the 1960’s Dutch writers grew considerably in their ability to handle the literary medium, showing a suppleness equal to the writing being done in Europe and the Americas. The two most important novelists were Willem Frederik Hermans and Gerard Kornelis Van Het Reve, who later modified his name as Gerard Reve. Other important novelists were Campert and Claus, already mentioned, as well as the surrealist novelist and journalist, Harry Mulisch, who was to pen a book on the Provo movement, “Bericht Aan De Rattenkoning”, (Report To The King Of The Rats), an unflattering reference to authoritarian bureaucrats. A later school of poets, the Zestigers, Poets of the Sixties, came into being. They wrote concrete poetry and sound poetry. Among the many poets of this group was Johnny the

Selfkicker, who figured in the Amsterdam happenings scene. The impact of these writers has been greatly felt in the Netherlands, and some of the writers, Hermans, Van Het Reve, and in Belgium, Hugo Claus, were brought to trial on charges of offending public morality. This writing hit hard at the core of the Dutch society of that period. In his novel, "The Darkroom of Damocles", published by Macmillan in London in 1965, Willem Frederik Hermans questioned the vaunted wartime heroism of his countrymen and G. K. Van Het Reve showed postwar Dutch life to be lacking in significant content in his novel, "De Avonden", (The evenings).

HAPPENINGS

In the 1960's Amsterdam was receptive to the numerous new art forms coursing through Western Europe. The city was the European base for the Living Theater of Julian Beck and Judith Malina from 1964 to 1968. Dutch poetry and painting were becoming more abstract and Dutch composers were working in electronic music. Amsterdam soon picked up on the newest art form of the early Sixties, the "happening", that proved to be a dynamic catalyst for change and transformation.

The first happening ever, which also gave this art form its name, was "Eighteen Happenings in Six Parts", staged in New York by Allen Kaprow in 1959. He began with "assemblages" in 1952, which were mounted constructions. Then, under the influence of Jackson Pollock's action painting, Kaprow developed an "action-collage" technique, using great quantities of various objects. The "action-collage" grew in size and included sound as well as visual items, until it reached the point where it filled the entire space of the art gallery. The spectator found himself in an "environment". Kaprow felt limited by the confines of the gallery space so he moved his "environments" outdoors. The final step in this evolution was to "score" activities for the spectators, whom he viewed as an integral part of the "environments". Thus the happening was born.

Other artists in New York who were working in abstract expressionism took up the new art form. Large, or more often, small groups of people, barely distinguishable as performers or spectators, moved about in what was apparently spontaneous movement, doing inexplicable or ordinary everyday activities, such as sweeping the floor. All this activity appeared to be absurd because of the lack of context, or due to contrast with other activities. The happenings were juxtaposed to the audience or else disconnected from their setting, settings such as Grand Central Station in New York. One early happening featured two grand pianos on stage, alongside of two walls, each of which had a small hole. There were two teams of people on stage. The first team to get their piano through the

hole in the partition was the winner. One's own reaction to this description would serve as the best possible definition of the happening.

Most of the original American happenings occurred in New York before 1964 and few were performed since then. However, there has been a great deal of discussion about happenings in the United States ever since. Germany became the European point of departure for the happening. They came to the Netherlands from there around 1962.

Michael Kirby, an authority on the subject, wrote that happenings were hard to find, that they were rarely performed, and that the number of people who have seen them was small. The general public must therefore depend on secondary sources for information about the happenings, which is somewhat like trying to understand what painting is without having seen one. Thus the personal emotional impact of the art form is lacking and it can only be grasped intellectually.

Happenings are carefully planned, programmed activities that seem to lack content because they are structure, and only structure. The content is supplied by the audience in its reaction to the happening and its interpretation of what has been experienced. Michael Kirby compares the happening to a three-ring circus, an art form without "information structure" and with simultaneous compartmentalization.

Kirby calls happenings "non-matrixed", which is to say that the performer is not integrated into the activity he is performing but is simply himself and expressing his own emotions. A performer sweeping the floor is himself and not Hamlet with a broom. The role of the audience is changed as well. It is required to move around, to shout and to perform as a chorus, performing according to highly structured instructions that have been handed out to them when they enter the theatrical space. The happening depends upon the audience to complete it by means of its own performance, its reaction and its understanding of what has been happening, regardless of whatever planning that was done beforehand. This serves to destroy the traditional passive role of the audience, creating what amounts to a revolutionary new situation, or what definitely has the potential of such, given the right circumstances.

The happening is a catalyst. The automobiles or whatever other objects employed in the happening are not changed, but the audience witnessing the event is allegedly changed, because the message of the happening states that reality is an arbitrary illusion. The happening jolts the spectator out of his illusion of reality. This curious juxtaposition of everyday objects and activities in ridiculous situations and incongruous locations serves to corrode the arbitrary sense of reality and also destroy the now intolerable boundary between art and life.

HAPPENINGS IN AMSTERDAM

The earliest happening in Amsterdam was “Open Het Graf” (Open The Grave), on December 9, 1962, organized by the Dutch writer Simon Vinkenoog with two Americans, Melvin Clay and Frank Stern. The theme of this particular happening was to honor the dead. The title was a satire of a 24-hour Dutch television marathon for flood relief, “Open Het Dorp” (Open the Village). It was staged to serve as an introduction of the happening to the Dutch public.

While New York happenings tended to be highly structured and even require rehearsals, the Amsterdam and other Dutch happenings had more of a spontaneous note, being what Kirby would call “Improvised Events”, that were executed by gifted and inspired eccentrics. They were far wackier than the New York happenings, which were actually quite intellectual in concept.

A number of interesting happenings took place in Amsterdam in the early Sixties. One was an Ice-Happening, in the home of Fred Wessels, a painter who was later associated with Grootveld’s pre-Provo anti-nicotine happenings. He lived in the bohemian Jordaan (Jordan) district. In freezing weather all the faucets in his home were turned on and the windows were propped open, which allowed an ice rink to form. A woman skated in a pair of klompen, the Dutch wooden shoes.

The poet Johnny, the Self-Kicker (Johan Van Doorn) wrote scenarios for the happenings. He called himself a “free-jazz speaker of the anti-jazz”, styled himself as being anti-theater and stated that the age of the individual artist was finished. Gerrit the Ether-Sniffer, who had to give up his chosen means of tripping because it eventually proves fatal, accompanied him at his happenings on the saxophone.

“Stoned in the Streets”, a famous Dutch happening of 1964, was more of a series of outlandish nightclub acts, rather than the happening it purports to be. Dr. Bart Huges, a medical intern and an advocate of psychedelic drugs, had bored a hole in his forehead, a “Third Eye,” that gave him a permanent high. His successful operation was unveiled at the happening when the bandages on his head were unwound to the accompaniment of a drum salvo. Johnny the Self-Kicker got himself high in his usual fashion by chanting at a shout, then he danced in the audience with the bust of a department store mannequin. Marijke

Koger, the self-styled “Hippiest Chick in Town”, did a slow striptease of seven thin dresses that finally revealed her nude body, completely covered in paint.

Although these Dutch happenings were inane, to the point that taxed the medium, they maintained the defining components of the happenings: audience participation, meticulous structuring (or planning), and most importantly, fulfilled themselves in the audience reaction to that which just “happened”. The happening is a totally open form, with illimitable possibilities for exploitation, and it was in Amsterdam, the passionately adored “Magic Center” of the Dutch avant-garde, that the happening was to be put to stunning new uses by a gifted new master.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Haftmann, Werner. “Painting in the Twentieth Century”. London, 1960.

Huges, Bart. [Interview] “Transatlantic Review” #23 (Winter 1966/1967).

Kirby, Michael. “Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology”. New York: Dutton, 1966, c.1965.

Meier, Henk J. “Dit hap-hap-happens Amsterdam”. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1966.

Mulisch, Harry. “Bericht aan de rattenkoning”. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967.

CHAPTER 2 :: THE PROPHET OF MAGIC AMSTERDAM (ROBERT JASPER GROOTVELD, 1961-1965)

Robert Jasper Grootveld, the Prophet of Amsterdam, was a genius of the absurd. He relished carrying out his strong convictions against tobacco and nicotine addiction to fully logical conclusions. Though his rationale hung together formally, but with tongue in cheek, the actual expression of his ideas bordered on sublime inanity, illuminated by an uncanny penchant for accurate prophetic prediction. Much of what happened in Amsterdam by 1965 seemed due to the fact that Robert Jasper Grootveld willed it that way. He had been busy for four years with the bizarre incantations that came to serve as trademarks of Amsterdam's Sixties heritage.

Grootveld himself never wrote much, save for several manifestos and a short article. However, two Dutch journalists, Dick P. J. Van Reeuwijk and Henk Meier, wrote books about Amsterdam's hectic bohemian or alternative lifestyles in the early Sixties and captured much of Grootveld's flair in their Dutch texts. Later accounts of the Provo movement, written by politically oriented observers who didn't care to delve into the drug culture or the complex artistic phenomenon of the happenings, either ignore Grootveld or gloss over his activities with a few general statements. However, the prophet should be restored to his rightful position and his genius accorded the recognition it deserves if the Provo movement is to be fully appreciated in its miraculous (or artistic) dimension.

Grootveld was born on July 19, 1932 in Amsterdam. His father was an Anarchist, a rich tradition in the history of the city. Grootveld, a school dropout, held some sixty odd jobs: furniture maker, advertising copy writer, window dresser, window washer, seaman and hospital janitor, among others, before he decided to become a full-time happenener.

He worked, at one point, as a window washer for five years at the Hirsch Building on the Leidseplein, a square ringed with cafes in the center of Amsterdam. He also bought a bakfiets (pronounced: bock-feets), which is something like a bicycle-powered pick-up truck. "Amsterdam-Paris" was painted on its sides. Friends urged him to peddle the contraption to Paris, following the

logic of the message it bore. He took them up on their advice and was on the road for months.

While still employed at washing windows he spent a week living on a life raft afloat in the Amsterdam canals. With him he had a camp stove for cooking and wore a different suit every day. As a result of his stint on the canals the newspapers picked up his story. He says that was when he learned the power of publicity. Subsequently he sailed to Africa as a seaman aboard a Dutch ship. He was struck by the resemblance between tribal ritual and what he termed the addiction of the consumer in modern society, particularly by what he termed the idolatry of cigarette smokers. He considered smokers to be sacrificial victims to lung cancer, although cigarette advertising could be seen everywhere. Grootveld noted that the first Dutch tobacco company was called “Kerkhof”, a family name that happens to mean “cemetery” in Dutch. He realized that something needed to be done to protest such danger, even as he personally resented his own life-threatening addiction to nicotine. Concrete pillars around the city were used for commercial advertising and were often covered with cigarette ads. Grootveld referred to them as the totem poles of the Western Asphalt Jungle. This was when he decided to become a one-man protest movement against smoking, a “charlatan, a simple and inadequate exhibitionist”, as he called himself.

Grootveld’s first act was to mark up the cigarette ads in chalk with the word “Kanker” (cancer) or simply the letter “K”, which he soon made synonymous with “cancer” in Amsterdam. Several of his friends joined in the cause. This was hurting the advertising firms, which brought a successful lawsuit against him. Because he had no money with which to pay his fine he was sentenced to sixty days in jail. After his release he would soon be back in jail for another sixty days because the “K’s” quickly reappeared. His anti-smoking campaign earned him much press coverage and publicity, a concept he combined with his flair for exhibitionism. He stated that he would use publicity to fight the millions that the tobacco companies poured every year into their advertising budgets.

The anti-smoking campaign was continued in an abandoned shed near the Leidseplein, which was owned by Nicolaas Kroese, the owner of the Vijf Vliegen (“Five Flies”), a renowned restaurant in Amsterdam. Grootveld called this shed the “Anti-Smoking Temple”. He led spectators, primarily artists and local teenagers, in ritual performances against smoking and tobacco. Smoke was produced to exorcise evil spirits. Grootveld jumped around a smoking fire in ceremonial dress, his face painted up, with his spellbound audience following him in circling the flames.

His sermons ended with the anti-smoking coughing song: “Ugge-ugge-ugge-ugge” (in Dutch the guttural “g’s” sounded exactly like a cough). The Publicity Song followed: “Publicity, publicity, publicity, mooooooooooore publicity”. Everyone sang together until no one could keep up with the heightened

tempo. Grootveld's rituals were in a sense, happenings. And the rituals became increasingly wilder.

On April 18th, 1964 Grootveld set fire to the temple, which he was now calling the Church for Aware Nicotine Addicts, and was arrested by the police. He set the fire with newspapers soaked in gasoline, crying "Remember Van Der Lubbe!", referring to the Dutchman accused of burning the Reichstag, Germany's parliament building in 1933, an incident which consolidated Nazi power. At first Grootveld's audience thought it was a joke, but they fled the premises once they realized what had "happened". In court Grootveld testified that he didn't mean to set fire to his temple, saying that it was a case of a ritual that got out of hand. For this particular act he was placed on probation.

He continued with his happenings one way or another. This included an exhibition of 31 "anti-smoking" paintings at the LSD Gallery on the Prinsengracht Canal. He arrived for the opening floating down the canal on a rubber raft. In a speech he advanced the thesis that millions of people, the addicts of tobacco, were human burnt offerings to the totems of advertising and the big tobacco companies that made millions off their victims. He went on facetiously to include marihuana, pills and opium as part of the problem, stating, "Opium is the religion of our people", inverting Karl Marx's famous remark in the Communist Manifesto that "Religion is the opiate of the masses".

Grootveld continued to insist that the only weapon he had to oppose the millions spent by the tobacco industry on advertising was only "some itsy-bitsy exhibition" (in Dutch: een ietsie-bietsie exhibietsie, pronounced ayn eatsy-beetsy exhibeetsy). His goal was to outlaw cigarette advertising in the Netherlands. With this in mind he launched the "Marihu" project, "marihu" being short for marijuana in its Dutch spelling (marihuana). And it was the Dutch phonetic system of spelling that Grootveld masterfully used in a series of puns that can only be fully appreciated in Dutch itself. "Marie what? Marie where? Marihu! Watch out for the Mariheer!", this last term which can be translated as the Marihuana Master. He defined Marihu as anything that smokes: straw, wood, weeds, even marijuana. But never tobacco!

Grootveld instituted the Maruhette game (after Roulette), using the marihu substances listed above. Packages of marihu were made up, with wood shavings, straw or whatever, even marijuana, that were then set in circulation. The goal was to sow chaos, particularly among the police, who had been conducting arrests for possession of marijuana. The rules for the Maruhette game appeared in a manifesto, "Marihu #2", authored by Grootveld. He called the manifesto a magic chain letter and requested that people copy it five times and circulate it among friends, giving his followers at the same time, the freedom of improving on the rules or adding to them. Everyone was to make packages of marihu. His names for the various substances to be used were many and were often puns in

Dutch, French and English, such as marivoodoo, marivoodoomari, maritaboo, mariboobytrap, mariyoghurt and marihuwelijk, this last a pun on the Dutch word, “huwelijk” (pronounced who-va-lick), for wedding, a pun that would soon have charged political connotations for the Dutch nation. Further, “mari” puns were made at the expense of Dutch brand names for cigarettes, as well as aspects of Dutch society. The puns often rhymed in Dutch and caught on easily in Amsterdam. Grootveld stated that everything was Marihu and that Marihu was to be found everywhere. Finally, in his manifesto the city of Amsterdam was identified as “The Magic Center”.

In his plan the profits would be turned over to the Consumptiebond, which is Dutch for “Consumer’s Organization”, but is also a pun, meaning “Tuberculosis Organization”, a disease gravely affected by smoking. He filled hundreds of empty cigarette packets with marihu: again, dried weeds, straw, catnap, and so forth. When he saw someone buying a pack of cigarettes out of an automatic vending machine he would ask the person to keep the drawer open so he could insert a packet of marihu. People often obliged for he was becoming a well-known figure and Amsterdammers have a taste for both humor and political adventure. Of course the next automat patron would be purchasing a packet of “marihu”.

The Marihuetta game had a point system as well: a marijuana bust (or arrest) was 100 points; a voluntary visit to the police station was 150 points, and so on. No one understood the game. When tipped off, the police made regular raids on the marihu games, hoping to find marihuana and make an arrest, but they were never able to do so because the tips phoned in were made by the Marihuetta players themselves, adhering to Grootveld’s inane point system. Total chaos set in and the police finally gave up. In Grootveld’s view addicted potheads were being arrested by policemen who were nicotine addicts, arrests that were written up in the press or commented upon in the media by alcoholic journalists and read or viewed by a public addicted, in turn, to cigarettes and television.

Fred Wessels, a painter who was associated with Grootveld, had an exhibition of anti-smoking paintings in Dendermonde, Belgium. A group of twenty Dutch people, including Grootveld and Bart Huges, the man with “The Third Eye” that was drilled in the middle of his forehead, set out for the opening. However, the Belgian police, who had been tipped off about the group, arrested them at the border. Evidently Grootveld himself had originally tipped the Dutch police about the group. A large quantity of marihu was confiscated. However, as none of it was marijuana no arrests were made.

One of Grootveld’s most bizarre stunts was his “Acetone Miep” performance, carried out in Amsterdam’s tobacco shops. He dressed up as a woman and entered various tobacco shops, asking if he could use the telephone. He then dropped a bottle of acetone on the floor and the smoke from the chemical

filled the store, robbing the tobacco of its taste as it settled on the merchandise. During this campaign he was constantly arrested.

He called himself a fanatical social worker, concerned more with the problem of addiction in the modern world than with a sense of revenge against the tobacco industry because of his own addiction to a substance that endangered his health.

Grootveld helped another artist friend, Aad Veldhoen, market his erotic prints in an attempt to bypass the commercialized gallery scene and deal directly with the public, from the back of Grootveld's bakfiets, the one on which he had cycled to Paris and back. This project was unveiled at the Lieverdje (pronounced Lee-Vert-Cheh), meaning the little, beloved one. This was the statue of a small boy, located in a street called Het Spui (pronounced Het Spow, more or less), near the Leidseplein. The statue was originally meant as an expression of the city's desire to honor someone besides a general or a monarch. No one could possibly realize at the time that the pedestal of this small statue would become the fulcrum of activity upon which the whole country and its precarious monarchy would soon be madly teeter-tottering back and forth, simply because there was a bronze plaque on the pedestal of the Lieverdje that stated that the statue was a gift to the city of Amsterdam from the Hunter Tobacco Company.

Grootveld and Veldhoen sold prints for a week before the police stepped in. Three nudes were found to be unfit for viewing by minors. Grootveld was fined eleven guilders for each picture that was indicted. However, the charges were later dropped. Grootveld's anger now turned on the little statue and its donor. He was furious that the statue was dedicated, in his mind, to "the addicted consumer of the future" (De verslaafde consument van morgen).

To oppose this he organized gatherings at the Lieverdje every Saturday at midnight, in which he would give one of his speeches, always ending with a burnt offering. Often the police would interfere, but Grootveld persisted in his efforts. Dozens of teenagers and university students showed up, chanting "Image, Image" in the French pronunciation (ee-ma-jeh), then shouting out some of Grootveld's slogans, such as the coughing chant, "Ugge, ugge". Next, Grootveld would make his appearance and conduct a solemn, if tongue-in-cheek-sermon ("Friends, we are gathered here in this earliest hour on Sunday...") against smoking. Grootveld began his rituals or happenings at the Lieverdje in June 1964 and they continued, with interruptions such as bad weather and police interference, until September 1965, by which time the Provo movement was well under way.

He recalled his father, also an Anarchist, telling him about the five evil "K's": Kerk, Kapitaal, Kroeg, Krommenie, Kazerne (the Church, Capitalism, the Bars, Krommenie, a factory town that used child labor in the 19th century, and the Barracks, meaning the Army). He spoke of the introduction of tobacco from

colonial America, but thought that the Indians may have been smoking something else, something more psychedelic, in their peace pipes. It was his opinion that the Cigarette had replaced the Cross in modern life. He compared the habit of smoking in contemporary society to the human sacrifices of the Incas.

He was concerned about addictive behavior in the modern world, both the use of drugs, under which he included tobacco, and the addiction to television and the constant purchase of commodities. He complained of the obsessive need to buy motorcycles, television sets and electric eggbeaters, this last of which carries the delightful name of “roomkloppers” (pronounced roamkloppers) in Dutch. He felt that the solution to these problems would arise dialectically, that is to say confrontation of the problem by an opposing point of view, such as his own. In brief, necessity would furnish the solution. The new prophets of our time would have the answer. But more of that later.

Grootveld had a clear understanding of the happening. He considered a sporting event to be a happening; happenings occurred in a vacuum of time, a time of emptiness. Of chaos: anything could be a happening, such as the failure of a chaplain to show up for a religious ceremony.

He envisioned a special mission for the city of Amsterdam, saying that the city had a special effect on him, just as it had on everyone else. He attributed this to the encircling patterns of the city’s canals. For Grootveld Amsterdam was the Magic Center of the Western Asphalt Jungle. He predicted, quite accurately as it would turn out, that a mass influx of young people, particularly from America; and that the “Publicity”, the image, of the city would prove to be an irresistible magnet.

Grootveld went on to attack advertising and the entire network of publication and publicity, calling upon people to “name the names” in the vast computer system that controls and directs modern life. He laid much of the blame at the feet of the dope syndicates, by which he meant the tobacco industry, the liquor industry, the press, television, advertising and the nauseating middle class, “het misselijk makende middenstand” (“misselijk” is pronounced miss-eh-lick, he other words are closer to English sounds). He said that the press would become so corrupt and bland that illegal newspapers would spring up everywhere. Everyone would have his or her own newspaper, for man experiments with communication, which turned out to be a prophetic observation.

Although the happenings that Grootveld staged at the Lieverdje supplied the form of things to come it was actually another idea of his that magically ignited the atmosphere that gave birth to the Provo movement, an idea connected to his concept of Amsterdam as the world’s Magic Center. The rituals continued as well at his burned-out temple. Grootveld said that the world’s prophets would gather in Amsterdam in order to launch their own projects. These prophets would

collectively be known as Klaas, the Dutch equivalent of the name Claus, short for Saint Nicholas (Nicolaas in Dutch), for Saint Nicholas was the patron saint of Amsterdam. Grootveld began a new campaign: in place of chalking up “K” for cancer he was chalking walls and advertising with the slogan, “Klaas kom!” Claus is Coming!

Housing would be built for the middle class outside the old center of the city of Amsterdam. The newly vacant buildings in the city center would then provide housing for the new prophets of the Magic Center, Amsterdam. Which proved to be an uncanny prediction of what the Anarchist Kabouter movement (pronounced ka-bow-ter) was to do with vacant, condemned buildings six years later, in 1970.

According to Grootveld there would be a Council of Clauses, then the vacuum in society created by the corruption of modern civilization would be resolved by Claus, by a Claus figure who is yet to come, that he, Grootveld, didn't know who this was, but that it would be resolved dialectically, and no, he was not the Claus figure, but merely an impoverished and impotent exhibitionist.

Grootveld preached, “Claus must come. Claus will come! Claus is the new prophet!”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duyn, Roel van.

Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provos. (White Danger: A Guide for Provos) Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 9-14

Meier, Henk J.

Dit hap-hap-happens in Amsterdam. [Dutch text]
Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1966. unpagged (See the beginning texts).

Reeuwijk, Dick P. J. van.

Damsterdamse extremisten. [Dutch text]
Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1965. pp. 11-25; 35-37

CHAPTER 3 :: THE BIRTH OF PROVO (MAY – JULY 1965)

And Claus came!

His name was Claus von Amsberg, a 37 year-old German diplomat and member of the minor German nobility. At the age of 17, in 1945, he served in the German Army like all teenage boys whom Hitler had conscripted at the end of the war in order to defend the fatherland against the allied invaders. This otherwise obscure foreigner was catapulted to fame overnight by virtue of being the fiancé of Princess Beatrix, the oldest of Queen Juliana's four daughters and heiress to the Dutch throne. The official announcement came on June 28, 1965. Harry Mulisch, a leading Dutch novelist and essayist, noted that "Klaas came and was called Claus". This resulted, he pointed out, in Grootveld's prestige soaring to new heights. It now seemed as if a stage had been erected and the actors were being prompted by fate to speak their lines.

The announcement of the wedding climaxed a hectic seven-week period of wild speculation and veiled disclosure, after photographs of Princess Beatrix appeared, walking arm-in-arm with an yet unidentified young man, in the world press in early May. The Dutch government, which is responsible for the succession to the royal throne, initially handled the situation in a secretive manner, helping to inflame the same negative sentiments it wished to keep dormant.

On May 6th the sensationalist English tabloid, the "Daily Express", published photographs of the couple, taken by a Dutch free-lance photographer, John De Rooij, who sneaked into the castle grounds of Beatrix's private residence, "Drakensteyn". The photographs appeared the next day in "De Telegraaf", a popular (to put it mildly) Dutch newspaper, whose name forms a sinister leitmotif in the history of the Provo movement.

There had been much speculation about Beatrix's future because she was single, 27 and her next younger sister, Irene, had made a politically unpopular marriage the year before, to Prince Charles Hugues de Bourbon-Parma, a pretender to the then vacant Spanish throne, in 1964. The marriage was unwelcome because of widespread aversion to the fascist regime of Generalissimo Franco in Spain. It was equally unacceptable to the Dutch law of Protestant secession to the throne, because the marriage necessitated Irene's conversion to Catholicism. Ironically, her secret conversion only became public when she was photographed unawares, while praying in a Catholic church in Denmark. The Dutch royal family, the House of Oranje (Orange, pronounced Oh-ran-yeh), is required by "constitutional tradition" to belong to the protestant Dutch Reformed Church, an historical holdover from the successful struggle for Dutch independence against an arch-Catholic Spain in the 16th century. As a result Princess Irene had to officially renounce any eventual right to the Dutch throne, either by herself or her heirs. Ironically, a Dutch

coalition government dominated by the Catholic People's Party (KVP) delivered this demand.

However, "constitutional tradition" was at odds with the reality of the country's population. Because of the declining Protestant birthrate and the large size of Catholic families, the Catholics had now become the largest religious group in the country, at 50% of the population. However, this Catholic majority lived in a country that identified at that time, as Protestant, both by tradition and by virtue of economic domination. At times a tense atmosphere prevailed. It should be noted, however, that this situation was to change in the late 1960's, as a result of the ecumenical climate in world Christianity. By 1977 the national elections in the Netherlands saw the merger of the two major Protestant political parties with the Catholic People's Party in the new Christiaan Democratisch Appel (C.D.A.).

Beatrix's engagement to a nominal ex-nazi only a year after her sister Irene's unpopular marriage and abdication was a political bombshell. Still, no announcement was forthcoming from the royal family after the photograph appeared in the press. In the tense weeks that followed the entire country awaited some word of confirmation. The two leading Socialist papers, "Het Parool" and "Het Vrije Volk", were critical of the marriage, for by now Claus von Amsberg and his relationship to Princess Beatrix had been established. However, the Dutch Socialist Party, Partij van de Arbeid (Labor Party), stated that these editorials did not reflect the official position of the party itself. While the Establishment, a complex structure in the Netherlands (see the description of the Zuilen system in the Introduction), never challenged the political grounds of the marriage, the moderate Left was tearing itself to pieces as it tried to decide which position to take. The events of the next two years would show that the Left, as people had been wont to call it in the Netherlands, the Socialist and Communist parties, had silently entered various sectors of the Establishment some time ago.

The steering committee of the National Federative Council of the Former Resistance Movement in the Netherlands said that it would refrain from taking a position on the marriage question. However, six prominent members of the former wartime resistance issued a counter-statement that deplored the marriage of Princess Beatrix. Opposition to the marriage was made on dynastic grounds rather than any issues of personality. It was felt that Beatrix ought to abdicate her right to the throne when she married Claus von Amsberg because of the sinister Nazi symbolism of his past. Indeed, von Amsberg, a personable, capable and attractive man, was generally well liked, even by people who objected politically to him becoming the future Prince Consort.

By June leaders of the five major political parties in the Tweede Kamer, the lower house of the Dutch parliament, issued press statements that, in essence, spelled political sanction for the marriage. Any hesitancy on the part of the parties was glossed over in wording of polite acceptance of Claus von Amsberg. It was this tacit consent that government circles were waiting for, and undoubtedly working for behind closed doors. The secretive manner of operation that the government found so expedient at the time set the tone for handling all dynastic questions in 1965. However, what passed for

expediency soon proved to be borrowed time in March 1966 and again in June 1966, demonstrating that the government was deeply alienated from a significant sector of the Dutch people.

Nonetheless, by June 1965 the government felt confident enough to submit a Bill of Consent (for the marriage) and a Bill of Naturalization (for Claus von Amsberg) to the Tweede Kamer (the lower house of parliament, but effectively the national legislature, much like the House of Commons in Great Britain or the Assemblée Nationale in France). Only the small Pacifist-Socialist Party was unequivocally opposed to both the marriage and the continued existence of the monarchy. Even the Dutch Communist Party, at the time a dreary Stalinist backwater with a larger following than it perhaps deserved, kept silent, preferring to avoid taking an immediate position, and ultimately abstaining on the vote in the Tweede Kamer, for reasons of social respectability. They only claimed to be against the undue haste concerning the two bills for the marriage. The Communist Party leadership likewise remained steadfastly opposed to the new Provo movement and to the republican or anti-monarchist sentiment that the marriage helped fan. It was probably a source of undying mortification for the Dutch Communist Party that the rank-and-file membership of one of their unions was to become the spark plug that ignited the greatest riot during the Provo struggle. But again, it would only be two years later, in 1968 that the French Communist Party conducted itself in a similar manner, to such an extent as to be credited with the collapse of the May 1968 revolt in France.

There are a number of fine points that need to be appreciated in order to understand the situation as it slowly unfolded. A factor, little known outside of the Netherlands, is that the Dutch royal family, the House of Orange has been unpopular throughout much of its history, with the single exception of Queen Wilhemina, who personified Dutch resistance to the Nazi invasion of World War II. Otherwise, the dynasty has been tolerated rather than actively liked, even in its best hours. Because of historical factors, the Dutch royal family, like most European royalty, is largely German by blood. For more than a century Dutch monarchs have married German royalty and nobility.

Wilhemina re-established the popularity of the royal family. Juliana, the reigning queen in the Sixties, was something of a retiring, matronly Hausfrau, and incidentally, one of the richest women in the world, by virtue of shares in Royal Dutch Shell and other companies. Her husband Bernhard, the Prince-Consort, was a capable and outgoing man, active in economic affairs and a permanent Dutch goodwill ambassador to Latin America, because of his fluency in Spanish. He too was German, a member of the German petty nobility, who had to quit the Nazi party in 1936 when he became engaged to (then) Princess Juliana. However, he served in the R.A.F. in England and thus had a “good” war record. Juliana and Bernhard were married in January 1937 and he was made a captain in the Dutch army. The young couple moved into the palace at Soestdijk that had been partially modernized as a “gift” from the Dutch people. But that was thirty years ago. There had been uneasy rumors about the business dealings of Prince Bernhard for many years, rumors that surfaced only in 1976, with rather curious results that could not have been foreseen.

The reign of Queen Juliana was fairly calm, save for a single scandalous episode concerning the influence of the faith healer retained by the Royal Court in 1956, a woman named Geert Hofmans, who had been brought into the court to cure the eyesight of the youngest princess, who was almost blind. However, Miss Hofmans was a dedicated pacifist and exerted much influence upon the Queen and the court, which proved to be a great political embarrassment in the time of the Cold War. Subsequently Prince Bernhard had to have her removed from the court. At the time the political dimensions of the affair were not understood and Miss Hofmans was generally perceived as a quack. Otherwise the middle-class decorum of the royal family set the tone for the conservative moral and social life of the country, that seemingly, in 1965, was a way of life destined to endure forever.

Beatrix's wedding announcement on June 28, 1965 was given in the form of a press conference before several hundred journalists and photographers from many countries. Beatrix and Claus were raked over the coals by the press, but they handled matters well.

Dutch opposition to the marriage and the monarchy at this point was greatly tempered by aversion to the consequences of a presidential system, that would have made a Dutch president out of one of the country's professional politicians, such as Foreign Ministers Luns, who would have been greater anathema to many people, including the far left fringe of Amsterdam, than Beatrix or Claus could ever be. Seen in the light of the political alternatives available at the time, the republicanism or anti-royalist sentiment that surfaced in 1965-1966 was primarily a protest against the paternalistic Zuilen system of the establishment and the conservative tone of political and social life that it set.

There was little open opposition to the marriage because the government was able to saddle both the people and the parliament with the nature of the marriage in piecemeal fashion, that, however, incited opposition even as it tried to stifle it, forcing political resentment to take on an underground character that gradually built up to the point of explosion, nine months later, much to everyone's astonishment. Nobody had expected the smoldering resentment to ever take flame.

Three public opinion polls in 1965 averaged 73% for the marriage, 12% against, and 15% no opinion. A national petition opposing the marriage got a scant 65,000 signatures nationwide. The vote in December 1965 for the Bill of Consent to the marriage won easy passage. In the Tweede Kamer the vote was 132-9, with 9 abstentions. In the Eerste Kamer (Upper House), the vote was 65-5, with 5 abstentions. Again, only the small Pacifist-Socialist Party opposed the marriage joined by a few Socialists in both houses. The Communist Party abstained in both the Eerste and the Tweede Kamer.

After the wedding announcement on June 28th Beatrix and Claus made quick visits to the major Dutch cities. Only in Amsterdam were they met by demonstrations. A few anti-Claus leaflets fell on them, dropped from a bridge, as they passed through the canals of the city by boat. These few free-falling pamphlets, which caught and reflected

the daylight in their slow, leisurely descent, marked the first political activity of the Provo movement. From that date, July 4, 1965, the police were to pay close attention to this new and unknown group.

Princess Beatrix made a personal decision to be married in Amsterdam, the traditional capital of the country, and the government headed by Prime Minister Cals, one of the most liberal governments the Netherlands had known up to that time, unwisely accepted her choice. When opposition to the marriage being held in Amsterdam began to mount the Prime Minister refused to budge from his original decision, feeling that the government's prestige was at stake. Dutch writer Harry Mulisch characterized this type of reaction as the "regent mentality" which follows from a system of paternalistic governing authority that doesn't feel the need to be answerable to the governed. Probably a majority of people, certainly the majority of Amsterdammers, were willing to accept the marriage itself, with all of its political implications and symbolism, but were unwilling to see it being held in Amsterdam. The Nazis had deported 100,000 Jews from the city to certain death in the concentration camps, one-eighth of Amsterdam's pre-war population. The memory of the deportations was still a bitter one for all of Amsterdam. Had the marriage taken place elsewhere, say in The Hague, it is unlikely that the events that were to occur would have taken place. Opposition to the marriage began to harden, reflecting popular dissatisfaction with the high-handed manner in which the government was dealing with the situation. The three chief rabbis of Amsterdam, speaking on behalf of the Jewish community, refused invitations to the wedding, as did 18 of the 45 members of the Amsterdam Gemeenteraad, the city council.

Roel van Duyn, the political theoretician and "founder" of the Provo movement, was born in The Hague in 1943 and was 22 at the time of Princess Beatrix's marriage. He proved to be a gifted and inspired political thinker, an effective revolutionary activist, at the same time that he was a revolutionary purist and a writer whose observations are filled with acute insight and feeling for other people and for history. His own book, "Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provos)" (The White Danger: A Handbook for Provos) is the major source of information on the movement.

Already in high school in The Hague he was a pacifist activist in the Ban-The-Bomb Movement. He was dismissed from the progressive Montessori Lyceum, where he was a student, after organizing an anti-war sit-in on the busy Laan Van Meerdevoord street during rush hour. Van Duyn also helped organize a sit-in in Amsterdam that was broken up by the police. When he enrolled at another high school in The Hague the students unfurled a banner reading, "Go Home, Van Duyn".

He worked on the staff of the Rotterdam Anarchist paper, "De Vrije" (The Free) in 1964 and 1965, but found it old-fashioned despite his admiration for the editor. He decided to start a paper of his own, "Horzel" (Gadfly), because Anarchism in the Netherlands of 1965 couldn't hope to be more than an annoyance to society. Van Duyn changed his mind about the title of his paper when he read about a dissertation on the "nozems", the working-class juvenile delinquents of the country, who resembled the

English Teddy Boys. This dissertation, “Achtergrond van Nozemgedrag” (Background to Nozem Behavior) by one Wouter Buikhuisen, attracted a great deal of attention in the Dutch press at the time of its publication in 1965. It was a study of the deliberately *provocative* anti-social behavior of bored, unemployable teenagers against adult society in the modern welfare state, for they had not been given a role in which to participate socially. The nozems shouted obscenities at older people and even went so far as to shove people off the sidewalk. Buikhuisen called them “provos”, after the French word “provoquer”, to provoke, a word also employed in Dutch. Van Duyn had found the name for his magazine! That summer, as a result of Provo activities against the marriage, Buikhuisen was boosted overnight into national fame along with the Provos and became a professor in record time. He was incorrectly considered to be an expert on the new Provo movement, both by the press and the government.

Van Duyn felt that the new Dutch Anarchists needed to base their activity on the revolutionary potential of the nozems, to channel their aggression into a conscious revolutionary force, and that the students, as well, had to become Provos, which is to say revolutionary nozems. While Anarchists could no longer hope for a social revolution in the Netherlands they could provoke the authorities; that is, to provoke the State. This proved to be a brilliant analytical and political coup, providing a major springboard for the “Provolution” and is perhaps Van Duyn’s greatest contribution to the Provo movement.

A letter to “De Vrije” in March 1965 put Van Duyn in contact with Rob Stolk, who was from Zaandam, to the north of Amsterdam. He too was a young (19) pacifist activist and subsequently became one of the leading Provos. Stolk and Van Duyn joined forces to publish “Barst” (Burst), a journal that ran for only one issue, April 1965, in which “pre-Provo” Garnt Kroeze wrote an open letter to the B. V. D. (the Dutch F. B. I.), stating that they, the Anarchists or Provos would burst the smooth façade of a society that debases human beings by turning them into machines of conspicuous consumption; that by smashing that façade they would bring about the collapse of middle-class society.

Provo was first announced by a stenciled leaflet dated May 25th, 1965. The leaflet criticized the pacifist movement because it hadn’t accomplished the job that needed to be done, having reduced itself to an annual protest march in Amsterdam, “staged with painful regularity”. The Provos felt called upon to abandon empty gestures of opposition to warlike policies and go into an attack or *provocative* mode; that a last desperate effort to change society had to be made, even if that effort were doomed to failure. Several Dutch commentators called this the most pessimistic manifesto of birth made by a modern political movement, but noted that events of the coming year turned Van Duyn into an eager optimist. Van Duyn stated that Provo would bring about the rebirth of Anarchism by creating an aware new generation. Anarchism would become a new source of inspiration for political activism.

A series of pamphlets called “Provokaties” (Provocations) made their appearance. The first one was entitled, “Goed dat er politie is...” (Good That There Are Police...), but it didn’t capture public attention. “Provokatie #2: Claus Von Amsberg, Persona Non

Grata”, made the mark. Olaf Stoop, one of the small Provo group, stuck the pamphlet into copies of the conservative newspaper, “De Telegraaf” that he sold at a newsstand in Amsterdam’s Schipol Airport. As a result he was fired and the name of the Provo movement first broke into print, gaining necessary publicity for the fledgling movement.

Roel van Duyn was aware of Grootveld’s Saturday night rituals at the Lieverdje. He was often present at Grootveld’s happenings and found them to be “uniquely creative”, completely different from anything else to be found in Amsterdam at that time. According to Van Duyn Grootveld was responsible for conditioning Amsterdam’s youth for Provo. He introduced the street happening to the Leidseplein crowd and supplied much of the new vocabulary and symbolism for the Provo movement.

In May Van Duyn and Rob Stolk passed out leaflets announcing the appearance of their forthcoming anarchist periodical, “Provo”, at one of Grootveld’s Lieverdje happenings. Grootveld himself invited them to his apartment because he was interested in the new magazine. He told them that his own father had been an Anarchist. Grootveld explained that Amsterdam was the Magic Center from which the Klazen (Clauses) would launch their mission. He invited the Provos to work together with him.

On July 2nd the Amsterdam police arrested a group of people who lay a wreath of flowers at the National Monument on the Dam, the large square in the center of the city, to protest the official visit that next day, of Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg, her fiancé, who had been labeled as an ex-Nazi because of his wartime military experience.

Roel van Duyn was likewise moving towards confrontation. On July 3rd several Provos met at the Lieverdje with copies of “Provokatie #3” (Provocation #3), entitled, “Which of the Three?”, referring to Prince Bernhard, the husband of Queen Juliana, whose official title was Prince Consort, Don Carlos (i.e., Prince Charles Hugues de Bourbon-Parma, the husband of Princess Irene) or Claus Von Amsberg, was the most democratic (of The Three)? The question posed by the title of the pamphlet was answered with a brief review of each man’s allegedly fascist background. This “provokatie” was dropped into the rondvaartboot (glass-top touring boat) in which Princess Beatrix and Claus were making their official tour of the city, dropped from a bridge arching over the canal.

Amsterdam burgemeester (mayor) Gijsbert van Hall was nominally a Socialist, but occupied a position appointed by the Queen. The Amsterdam police was under his control, and the mayor, in turn, is responsible to the national Ministry of the Interior rather than the Amsterdam City Council (Gemeenteraad). Instead of pursuing a “cool” tactic of letting this small demonstration run its course, he chose to have the seven people arrested as they lay their wreaths at the foot of the National Monument that night. He was likewise responsible for the harassment of those Amsterdammers who flew their Dutch flags at half-mast the next day, when Beatrix and Claus were touring the city. This implacable rigidity on the mayor’s part, at the beginning of political discomfort about the royal marriage, set the tone for events that would unfold over the following months.

“Provokatie #3”, dropped into the canal, over the heads of the princely couple, encountered even more trouble. The photograph of Prince Bernhard that was used in the leaflet had been snipped out of a newspaper, but had been copyrighted by the firm of Stevens & Magielsen. The firm sued the Provos for copyright violation and Van Duyn had to pay a fine, plus legal costs, which came to 530 guilders (about \$148 1965 U. S. dollars for a penniless Provo). Afterwards the leaflet was issued with the word “censuur” (censured) in place of the forbidden photograph.

“Provokatie#3” was the first Provo publication seized by the Amsterdam police, on the first day of the fledgling movement’s activity. In his book, “Het witte gevaar” (The White Danger), Van Duyn lists the following publications confiscated by the police: Issues 1 and 7 of their magazine, “Provo”, “Provokaties” 3, 7, 9 and 13, 3 unnumbered leaflets, 2 issues of “Image”, and 2 issues of “God, Nederland en Oranje” (God, Netherlands and Orange, this last being the royal Dutch dynasty). The charges were lese-majeste (insulting the Royal Crown) and publishing inflammatory material.

The first issue of the magazine “Provo” appeared on July 12th, 1965. The magazine was the nucleus of the movement as well as being the most tangible proof of its existence. It called for revolutionizing Buikhuisen’s nozems, the juvenile delinquents of Amsterdam’s central area, Het Centrum. The article which resulted in the magazine’s “bust” was entitled “The Practical Anarchist”, a reprint from an old Anarchist magazine from around 1900, that advocated the use of dynamite to achieve the goals of social reform. It stated that the life of one Anarchist was worth that of a hundred capitalists. To add zest to the article, which the Provos considered to be a joke, a cap, such as used in a cap gun, was placed in the text, with instructions on how to make it explode. The bust of “Provo #1” was a great publicity stunt that helped launch the movement. Both the police and thereby, the State, had been provoked! Under the constant, if not tender, care of the police the Provo group was to grow of about 50 loosely associated individuals to more than an estimated 5,000 adherents over the next eight months.

The conservative “Telegraaf” was the first newspaper to foresee the Provo “menace”. On July 24th journalist Conny Sluysmans published an interview with eight Provos. She noted that they had long hair for the most part and wore torn clothing, aging from 16 to 33, calling them young people who refused to work and were opposed to everything; that they smoked marijuana and attended Grootveld’s Saturday night happenings. She complained that none of them offered to open the door for her when she concluded the interview. Further, she concurred with the opinion of someone who knew them and called them a “bunch of degenerates”.

Roel van Duyn said that, thanks to the media publicity, a handful of Anarchist provocateurs were considered to be a segment of the population, whereas the truth was that a small band of activists had effectively revealed the great unrest hidden beneath the surface of society’s smooth veneer. He went on to add that Provo was rooted, not in the Working Class but the Loafing Class (De lanterfarende klaas).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Banning, Johan Petrus Dorothee van. "Het huwelijk van Hare Koninklijk Hoogheid Prinses Beatrix. [The Marriage of Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix. Zaltbommel: Europeese Bibliotheek, 1966.

Berg, J. van den. De Anatomie van Nederland. Vol. 1. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. (Useful introduction to constitutional and political structures in the Netherlands)

Buikhuizen, Wouter. Achtergrond van Nozemgedrag. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1965. (The doctoral dissertation on the provocative behavior of teenage delinquents from which the Provos took their name)

Duyn, Roel van. Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provoos. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 12, 18-28.

Hofland, H. J. A. Tegels lichten, of ware verhalen over de autoriteiten in het land van der voldongen feiten. Amsterdam: Contact, 1972.

Mulisch, Harry. Bericht aan de rattenkoning. (Report to the King of the Rats) Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 65-69.

Rooij, Maarten. "A Constitutional Question: The Marriage of Princess Beatrix". Delta (Amsterdam) v. 9, nos. 1-2 (Spring/Summer 1966), pp. 24-27

Singer, Daniel. Prelude to Revolution: The May Revolt in France. New York: Hill & Wang, 1970.

CHAPTER 4 :: THE STATE IS PROVOKED (JULY 1965 - MARCH 1966)

Roel van Duyn's thesis of provocation was to prove a huge success. Basically, the Dutch government brought in heavy artillery to kill a fly. However the fly, with limited means, somehow managed to orchestrate ensuing events to its own best advantage. A major component of this success was the unwitting but nonetheless indispensable participation of the government. It had been provoked! And swallowed the bait! However, it should be recalled that the Provos were self-proclaimed Anarchists, thus their anti-monarchist position led the government to fear either assassination of a member of the Royal Family at the hands of the Provos or indirect influence on an anonymous, demented individual to commit an act of assassination.

The first confrontation between the police and the Provos took place over an innocent enough presentation on the ecology of the automobile, the White Bicycle Plan, authored by Provo Luud Schimmelpennick, a future Provo member of the Amsterdam city council. It was the first of the celebrated White Provo Plans, which was their ecology platform. It was announced at the end of July 1965 in *Provokatie #5*, the "Witte Fiets Plan" (White Bicycle Plan).

It was planned for the White Bicycle Plan to be unveiled at the *Lieverdje* on July 28th at 3:00 P. M. The plan called for anyone to use the white bicycle, leaving it wherever the rider had taken it, for the next person to use. The Provos hailed it as a protest against private property as well as a free means of public transport. It never closed, they boasted. Borrowing their imagery from Robert Jasper Grootveld the Provos spoke of automobiles as the asphalt terror of the middle class and stated that victims, the casualties of automobile accidents, were sacrificed daily, that the consuming masses paid homage to the auto-authority, for whom carbon monoxide was its incense. *Provokatie #5* closed with the remark, "Immers een fiets is iets, maar bijna niets" (Immers ayn feets is eats, mar by-nah neats), "a bicycle is always something, but almost nothing", a commentary on how much less space a bicycle occupies compared to an automobile, and how it doesn't pollute the atmosphere. In this context it should be remembered that many Dutch people used bicycles rather than automobiles at that time, as a means of transport, so that an automobile was much more of a consumer status symbol than an absolute necessity.

On Tuesday night, July 27th, Olaf Stoop and Dick Roseboom were arrested for posting up *Provokatie #5*. The next day the first white bicycles were presented at the *Lieverdje*. Grootveld held forth on the "Asfalt-terreur van het gemotoriseerde klotjesvolk" (the asphalt terror of the motorized masses). Van Duyn and other Provos were busily painting black bicycles white. The police were also present but no one was arrested. One officer told a reporter that no one would be arrested as long as automobile traffic was not obstructed.

Several days later, on Saturday, July 31st, a crowd gathered at the Lieverdje to witness Grootveld's midnight ritual. The Provos, such as they were, a few stray individuals, were also present. They decided to paint bicycles white at every Saturday midnight happening. However, Grootveld didn't show up that night. His followers set fire to a stack of newspapers at the foot of the Lieverdje statue and began to chant, "Imaazje, Imaazje!" (Image, in the French pronunciation) as well as other slogans based on Grootveld's puns. Van Duyn and other Provos continued to paint bicycles white. Then a police car, a white Volkswagen, pulled up at the Lieverdje, discharging four policemen who ordered the crowd to disperse immediately. The policemen surrounded the Lieverdje statue. Van Duyn, who was painting a bicycle white at that moment, was ordered to move out. When he asked why he was struck by a club. His girlfriend dragged him to safety. However, the crowd refused to disperse. The police, sensing that they were helpless and outnumbered, drove off in their Volkswagen car. Traffic at the busy intersection was blocked. The "Holy Cows", as Van Duyn called the automobiles, began to "moo" (honk), but the Lieverdje crowd kept its ground.

Provocation of the police was the earliest and most effective political tactic of the Provos. Roel van Duyn saw that the exploitation of the "fascistic" regent (ruling) mentality of the police would be provocative enough that it would in turn transform Provo from a small nucleus of passionate and gifted, but politically frustrated individuals, into an effective and fluid political movement.

The police beat up innocent bystanders as well as demonstrators. By their use of intemperate violence the police galvanized much of Amsterdam's population on the vague issue of the right to hold Anarchist happenings; they, the police, became almost the sole agent in creating political polarization in Amsterdam. In chemistry this is referred to as a catalytic agent, the catalyst remaining unchanged, even as it produces a chemical reaction.

On July 28th, when the first bicycles were painted white, police commissioner Landman said that there would be no arrests. However, the police did not adhere to that policy. They confiscated white bicycles throughout the city. They stated that the bicycles were not locked and therefore invited theft (!), which, of course, is prohibited by law. "Polietsie, polietsie, waar is m'n fietsie?" (Pole-eatsee, pole-eatee, wahr is mine feet-see), meaning, police, police, where is my bicycle?) was the new Provo cry at the Lieverdje. Some 50 white bicycles had been confiscated. Later, a Provo got some small measure of revenge by painting a police bicycle white. Ironically, while the police accused the Provos of blocking traffic with their bicycle happenings, the White Bicycle Plan was meant as a solution to Amsterdam's pressing traffic congestion.

The technical and theoretical justification for the White Bicycle Plan was laid out by its originator, Luud Schimmelpennick in Provo #2 (August 17, 1965). He noted that the burgemeesters of Amsterdam didn't allow carriages into the city in 1634 because the streets were too narrow. Six parking lots were laid out at the entrances to the central city, one of which, symbolically enough, was the Leidseplein. Passengers had to leave their vehicles in the lots and enter the city on foot. Schimmelpennick wrote that the 7% of the

rush-hour commuters who drove automobiles created congestion for streetcars, bicycles and pedestrians, as well as polluting the air. Further 71.4% of all traffic victims were pedestrians, "sacrificed to the Holy automobile". The Provos were quick to see the basic injustice of the private automobile in the crowded living conditions of Western Europe.

Some of the points made by Schimmelpennick were: To close the center of Amsterdam to motor vehicles; that the city of Amsterdam purchase 20,000 white bicycles annually to supplement public transportation; that the Provos volunteer to paint anyone's bicycle white at the Lieverdje every Saturday at midnight. Other points included municipal taxis, electrically powered, and parking lots on the outskirts of the city for people to park their car and transfer to public transportation.

The White Bicycle Plan was written up in the press and enthusiastically received by the Municipal Planning Service of Amsterdam, saying that the plan would go a long way toward solving traffic problems in the center of the city. The Provos tried to interest bicycle manufacturers in the idea. Schimmelpennick worked on a cheap new bicycle model. As a concession to the police the bicycles would be provided with a lock and common key.

The Provos tried to continue with their happenings at the Lieverdje without having them turned by the police into riots every Saturday night. Van Duyn wrote a letter to the police chief, Van der Molen, requesting a meeting be held to resolve the confrontations, after police raids on the Lieverdje happenings on July 31st and August 7th.

The request was granted and the meeting took place on Saturday afternoon, August 14th. The Provo letter was signed by Grootveld, Schimmelpennick (who was not at the meeting), Van Duyn and Rob Stolk. They met with four police commissioners: Van der Molen, Molenkamp, Landman and Kessler.

Van der Molen spoke of the responsibility of the police to maintain order, Grootveld gave an anti-smoking speech and Van Duyn defended the right to hold "illegal demonstrations". Van der Molen agreed not to interfere with the happenings that evening if the Provos didn't confront the police. Despite the police chief's promise 34 police officers encircled the Lieverdje at 10:30 P. M. At midnight Provos Rob Stolk and Garnt Kroeze planned to lay flowers at the base of the statue. They were immediately arrested.

When Grootveld arrived shortly after he tried to get the crowd to disperse by having the assembled people move through the city in a Silent Procession, the "Stille Omgang", an Amsterdam Catholic tradition, but the crowd refused to comply. Instead people stood their ground and stared at the police. Several nozems ("delinquents") threw cans at the police, who in turn charged at the crowd, estimated to be at 2,000. The police made thirteen arrests.

There was another unsuccessful meeting between the Provos and the city government; this time it was between Grootveld and burgemeester (mayor) Van Hall. However, the police, the press and the public set the scene for what was to unfold in the course of the coming year. The Dutch press began to play up the Saturday night

happenings as major confrontations. One newspaper, the “Algemene Handelsblad”, even went so far as to say that the happenings might well become a major tourist attraction.

The police showed up again on August 21st. Nothing happened, but the police had dogs on hand, for the first time. Van Duyn noted that August 28th was the last time that a happening was held in the “classical genre”. It rained. Few people showed up. Even the police didn’t bother to show. One of the Provos, Peter Bronkhorst, led the ritual happening, which lasted for thirty minutes, the usual duration of Grootveld’s own rituals. It was over by 12:30 A. M.

Carel Kenulmans, the sculptor of the Lieverdje statue, complained about the Provos defacing his statue in an interview with the weekly newspaper “Vrij Nederland” (August 1965). He suggested that they hold their protest happenings at the monument to General Van Heutsz, the military “pacifier” of the former Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), whose enormous memorial is in fashionable South Amsterdam, given the respective nature of the two monuments. His suggestion was followed.

Three weekends of Van Heutsz happenings took place, the first occurring on September 4th. All these happenings began at the Lieverdje. Hundreds of people paraded through the streets of Amsterdam for about a mile, to the Van Heutsz Monument. After a few speeches the monument was smeared with white paint. On September 18th two Provos, Peter Bronkhorst and Auke Boersma, mounted the statue at the top of the monument and refused to come down. The police dispersed the crowd of 200 people and arrested both Provos. No further happenings were staged at the Van Heutsz Monument.

3.

The annual Troonrede (Throne Speech) is the Dutch equivalent of the American President’s “State of the Union” message, read by Queen Juliana before Parliament in The Hague, every mid-September. Hans Tuynman, who was later to write an interesting book, “Full-Time Provo”, a Dutch book with an English title, addressed an open letter to “Mrs. Von Lippe-Biesterfeld von Mecklenburg”, better known as Queen Juliana, this being an obvious play on both her German marriage and her German ancestry. He invited her to join him in public debate in front of the royal palace on the Lange Voorhout in The Hague. Although the Queen didn’t appear, obviously, about 100 Provos showed up. They brought a cardboard T. V. set with them, with a picture of the Queen on it and the word “Image” under her picture. The high point of the happening came when the T. V. set was burned with chemicals, producing a column of smoke 30 feet high. At this point the police arrived and dispersed the crowd, beating up several people, including an English tourist.

Before the actual Throne Speech was given Roel van Duyn drafted his own version, “such as it ought to be given”. This pseudo-Throne Speech was Provokatie #7 and was distributed in The Hague. The police arrested nine young men and confiscated hundreds of copies of the Provocation. In Van Duyn’s version, Queen Juliana proclaims

the Social Revolution, abolishes private property and urges the workers to seize the means of production, the factories in which they work. The Queen also offers to abdicate her throne and donate her fortune to the establishment of communes and open all of her palaces to the people in order to alleviate the severe housing shortage in the Netherlands. In this pseudo-Throne Speech the Queen pledges her adherence and that of her daughter, Crown Princess Beatrix, to the principles of Anarchism and the Provos.

One of the nine Hague Provos arrested for distributing Provokatie #7 was released early and able to warn Roel van Duyn of an impending house search, so he was able to hide the compromising manuscript of the pseudo-Throne Speech before the police arrived. Their search turned up little except for some rusty stenciling equipment. The police left without finding anything of a compromising nature.

Towards the end of September two policemen stormed into Rob Stolk's room on a false tip that the Provos had robbed a jewelry store. The police were ready to believe anything. Rob lived upstairs from Roel van Duyn. Carla, Roel's girlfriend, was using Stolk's room to study. The police turned the room upside down in their search for stolen diamonds. Carla and Provo Auke Boersma were taken to the police station. Van Duyn was in his own apartment downstairs. When the police arrived they told him that he better confess to the robbery of the jewelry store because his girlfriend had already confessed. However, he was able to prove that he was at the theater on the evening of the robbery.

In August and September two Communist members of the Amsterdam city council raised the question of police brutality. Van Duyn says that the Communist Party viewed the Provos as "petty-bourgeois, decadent half-baked intellectuals", but were concerned about the precedents set by the police, precedents that could undermine any future "genuine" Communist uprising. The Amsterdam police replied that they were only answerable to the national government in The Hague and not to the city council. Burgemeester Van Hall spoke for Law & Order and cited a Dutch public opinion poll, which showed that 81% favored giving the Provos a spanking. Van Duyn called the mayor's statements "undistinguished banalities".

Although members of the non-religious parties on the city council were critical of the police Van Duyn found that they basically agreed with Mayor Van Hall's opinion that the Provos shouldn't disturb public order, that automobile circulation took precedence over any happenings, and that the happenings shouldn't be allowed to continue. He also noted that the summer of 1965 gave shape to the Provo movement, a phenomenon that grew from a handful of people with Anarchist ideals into a movement that he characterized as having both political and cultural content.

4.

The police began to make arrests under Article 186 of the Criminal law Code (Wetboek Van Strafrecht), which stated that anyone who does not disperse in the event of

a third order from the police to do so, when there is a mob, will be considered to be participating in an illegal gathering and subject to imprisonment of not more than three months, or a fine not to exceed 600 guilders (\$200 U. S. dollars).

In the weeks that followed tension mounted continually as the happenings turned into confrontations with the police. They stepped up surveillance of activity at the Lieverdje, as the date of the Royal Wedding approached. It was set for March 10, 1966 in Amsterdam. The order to disperse under Article 186 became telegraphically short. "I request that you disperse. One, two, three, I have said it three times". Having been said in such a manner, the police would arrest anyone present.

Thirty-four arrests were made on October 16th, another 25 on October 23rd. On October 7th the official residence of mayor Van Hall on the Herengracht was painted white. On November 7th the Marechaussee confiscated signs opposing the wedding at the traditional (but unoccupied) Royal Palace on the Dam. By now the Marechaussee was guarding the Palace on the Dam, the National Monument, also on the Dam and the Westerkerk, where the Royal Wedding was to take place on March 10th, 1966, all of which kept tension from lagging.

The happenings at the Lieverdje continued into January 1966. But by the end of November, 1965 attendance had dropped because of cold weather and because the police stopped making arrests. Van Duyn notes the accelerating judicial penalties awarded Provos through the autumn season. October 1st: 14 days probation and 25 guilders fine. October 9th: three weeks in prison, of which two weeks are to be on probation. October 17th: six weeks imprisonment, of which four weeks are to be on probation.

Provo riots broke out across the country. Local youth besieged their own local statues. Among the cities swept by the Anarchist fad were Barneveld, Bergen-op-Zoom, Heerlen, Venlo, Terneuzen, and Utrecht. The fact that the nozems, the teenaged delinquents, had turned into Anarchists alarmed the local press. The Utrecht "Staatsblad" called it the "Lieverdje sickness" and demanded that the police take care of the patient.

Van Duyn mentions the "Bastaard" group (same meaning as in English), a group that split from the Provos in November 1965, whom he characterized as drug addicts. They lived together in the house of Joop Dielemans, who styled himself as "the anti-achievement painter". Bastaard criticized Provo for not being radical enough and promised to issue a magazine whose every issue would be confiscated, "an extremist, semi-literary, political pop-art magazine". A pamphlet by Dielemans shows a policeman being choked by the hand of a Bastaard. Van Duyn says that their magazine never made an appearance because the Bastaards were too spaced-out to produce anything.

However, Van Duyn credits the Bastaards with organizing the first anti-Vietnam War demonstration in the Netherlands, a sit-in at the entrance of the American Consulate in Amsterdam, on December 23rd, 1965. They invited the Provos and other groups to participate. Among the groups at the protest were the Provos, P.S.J. W. (Pacifist Socialist Youth Workgroups), S.O.K. (Socialist Meeting Circles) and S.J. (Socialist Youth of the

Netherlands). This was the first of a series of demonstrations opposed to the Vietnam War and it was also the first use of the Provo smoke bombs that were to figure so prominently at the royal wedding on March 10th of 1966.

Provo Peter Bronkhorst set an American flag on fire and had the police in hot pursuit of him, chasing him on horseback as he ran down the busy Van Baerlestraat, the street on which the Amsterdam Concertgebouw is located, in the heavy morning rush hour traffic, which, no doubt, created a stirring image. The police forced the demonstrators to quit the consulate. They headed across town and broke a few windows at the office of American Express.

In January 1966 the “Provo-Oranje Committee, De Parel van de Jordaan” (The Pearl of the Jordan Quarter) was created. “They”, another name for the Provos, were to play an important role in the next few months. The Jordaan was the classic bohemian/working class quarter of Amsterdam, the neighborhood where Van Duyn, Rob Stolk and Grootveld lived. In mid-January a bakfiets full of Provos dressed in orange and painted completely in the same color, distributed leaflets against the monarchy. One picture showed Princess Beatrix on a new coin with a shaven head, depicted like a woman who had associated with the Germans in the War and had been punished by neighbors after the Allied liberation by having her hair shorn. The group, which included Rob Stolk and Hans Tuynman, were arrested at the Lieverdje.

A “National Gift” from the Dutch people to the royal couple, that was to be collected along the lines similar to the Community Chest in the United States, had been set up. The amount of money collected proved to be disappointing. The Oranje-Committee then decided on launching an anti-gift for the marriage. They issued a manifesto calling for a series of anti-fireworks and anti-festivities.

The Anti-Wedding Gift campaign netted 500 guilders, with which the Provos purchased the chemicals for the smoke bombs that would be launched along the route of the wedding procession on March 10th. On November 10th, 1965, Rob Stolk pressed the fire alarm in the Binnehof, the building in The Hague where the Tweede Kamer, the Dutch parliament meets while they were in session, discussing the bill for the royal marriage.

And the tension continued to mount. The Amsterdam police made a house-to-house search in the area of the Westerkerk after the Belgian sensationalist magazine “Kwik” (Quicksilver) wrote that the Oranje-Committee had a cannon hidden that was aimed at the Westerkerk, with the intention of splattering the official entourage with orange paint. Dutch newspapers carried a number of fantastic stories, among them one that the Provos would blow on supersonic whistles to frighten the horses drawing the royal carriage, or that the Provos would broadcast tapes of machine gun fire in order to sow confusion among the police.

Another white plan, the White Explosion Plan, was a threat to dump LSD into the city’s drinking water. As a result the Amsterdam water supply was guarded by the

Marechaussee. The water was tested on a regular basis and the Tweede Kamer passed a bill outlawing LSD, in seven day's time, a Dutch legislative record for speed on any bill.

Ton Regtien, a student leader who had allied himself with the Provo movement at the time, returned to his room after several day's absence, a few days before March 10th. The door to his room was opened and the floor was littered with letters and newspaper clippings that he had been collecting. However, nothing of value was missing. At first he thought that a neighbor had gone berserk, but later he read that a member of the city council had lodged a complaint against police raids and house searches similar to what Regtien had experienced. The police justified their action by stating that they were searching for weapons.

The tension kept mounting. Then it was March 10th 1966, the day of the Royal Wedding. And the tension broke.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duyn, Roel van. *Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provoos*. Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenoff, 1967. pp. 83-102, 126-136.

Meier, Henk J. *Dit hap-hap-happens in Amsterdam*. Amsterdam: De Arbeiderspers, 1967. [p. 62]

Mulisch, Harry. *Bericht aan de rattenkoning*. Amsterdam: Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 74-76.

Ton Regtien, in Frenkel, F. E., ed. *Provo: kentekeningen bij een deelverschijnsel*. Amsterdam: Polak & Van Gennep, 1967. p. 35

The White Bicycle Plan", pp. 39-40. Delta, v. 10, no. 3 (Autumn 1967)

CHAPTER 5 :: THE FINEST HOUR OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC (MARCH 10th 1966)

The events that unfolded on March 10th only became known on March 10th itself. The Provos had no more idea of what would happen than did anyone else. True, many people, Provos and police among others, had a good idea of what they would *like* to see happen. By March 9th it seemed obvious that the Government was going to have its way; that the monolithic press and government combination would prevail in holding an orderly ceremonial event, one greeted joyously by crowds of good Dutch citizens.

On March 9th Roel van Duyn escaped from his apartment by going out the window and running up the fire escape to hide with his neighbors when the police came knocking at his door. Other Provos gathered at the apartment of Hans Tuynman. They were concerned for their own safety as protestors the next day, when a crowd whom they estimated at a million pro-Orange (pro-monarchist) Dutchmen, would be on hand and might do them in when they demonstrated against the wedding. They heard about Van Duyn's close escape from arrest.

Issue 7 of "Provo" had just come off the press, in offset printing for the first time. Rob Stolk came in, upset with an article by Simon Vinkenoog, a Dutch writer who was an advocate of psychedelic drugs. Stolk was concerned that the article in "Provo" would give the Provos the image of being drug users. Tuynman argued the point with him. Then Van Duyn showed up, ill at ease. A German magazine asked him what would be happening the next day. There were only vague plans for manufacturing and throwing smoke bombs along the route of the royal wedding procession. Bernhard De Vries, a student activist and future Provo member of the Amsterdam City Council, arrived at Tuynman's apartment. He sought to enlist help in making smoke bombs, having spent the day in mixing the necessary ingredients. Tuynman told him that they had to get the latest issue of "Provo" out and wouldn't be able to help. Rob Stolk and Van Duyn left with De Vries.

Tuynman writes that both he and Peter Bronkhorst had been living on French fries for five days and that he hadn't had any sleep for three nights. They had serious doubts about the effectiveness of the smoke bombs as a tool of protest and were concerned for their personal safety. Someone showed up with a bundle of "Provo" #7. Tuynman and Bronkhorst went with him to a basement where others were busily collating copies of the paper. It was discovered that a neighbor had phoned the police, so everyone took off with a bundle of "Provo" #7, running down the street as the upstairs neighbor yelled at them. They met at the apartment of Duco van Weerlee, another Provo. Several teenaged Provos joined them, fleeing from the home of their angry parents after the police had put them under house arrest.

"Provo" #7 was ready by 1:00 A. M.. It was already March 10th by the clock. No one knew of Roel van Duyn's whereabouts. His girlfriend, Carla, thought of telephoning

the police. At least they could inform her of his arrest, should that be the case. Tuynman left at 3:00 A. M. to get some sleep. He was soon awakened, at 5:30 (on March 10th) by Peter Bronkhorst, who had a lot of the homemade smoke bombs with him.

Tuynman and Bronkhorst were able to reach the Raadhuisstraat, a street on the route of the wedding procession, because the police in the area were from out-of-town units and didn't recognize them. They heard people yelling, "Claus raus!" (German; Down with Claus), and more cries of "Republiek, Republiek, Republiek!" (Republic). Young demonstrators had occupied the graceful Victorian galleries of the Raadhuisstraat. As a regiment of soldiers marched by they cried out, "Ein-Zwei, Ein-Zwei!" (German: One-Two, One-Two). Facing them on the opposite side of the street were the pro-monarchist Oranjeklanten who applauded the troops.

Then more police showed up and dispersed the protestors. Some of the police were mounted on horses. The crowd was a milling mix of "Republican" youth, Oranjeklanten and various Dutch police and military units. The situation along the procession route was already quite tense. The Royal coach was approaching.

The smoke bombs were wrapped in tinfoil. Tuynman describes how he tore open his smoke bomb with his thumbnail, lit it with a cigarette and dropped it at his feet, trembling as he did so. He was immediately enveloped in a cloud of white smoke. All hell broke out, with the police running everywhere. Tuynman took off, leaving the sound of battle behind him. He saw Peter Bronkhorst take flight at a run. A policeman on horseback swung at him with a nightstick and missed. Peter disappeared into the crowd. Then a young fellow came by on a bicycle, a complete stranger. Peter jumped on the bicycle and whispered the magic word: "Police" and they sped off.

A small book on the Provo movement, "Provo: een jaar Provo activiteiten" (Provo: A Year of Provo Activity) written by a Dutch journalist, De Jongh, which was hardly noticed, even in the Netherlands, gave a well rounded account of the day. At 1:00 A. M. De Jongh was at the bar of the Krasnapolsky Hotel on the Dam, Amsterdam's large central square. The hotel faces the vacant and ceremonial Royal Palace, on the far side of the Dam. He was drinking along with the many Dutch and foreign journalists assembled for the Big Event, the royal wedding. The hotel was press central for some 600 journalists.

Outside, numerous policemen were patrolling the Dam square. Already, some monarchists had gathered in order to claim their places along the procession route. Earlier that evening smoke bombs had gone off at the Royal Palace. The police, clearly on edge, were beating up on innocent bystanders. At one point the entire square of the Dam had been cleared, even of monarchist Oranjeklanten. The wedding procession was scheduled to begin at the Dam, proceeding eventually to the Raadhuisstraat, the street that led to the Westerkerk, the church where the couple would be married., some seven blocks distant. At 3:00 A. M. Harry Mulisch arrived at the Krasnapolsky Hotel, accompanied by several other writers. They complained of the police brutality that they had witnessed as they drove around the city.

On the morning of March 10th the Provos scheduled a protest meeting at the Dokwerker (Dockworker) Monument on the Meijerplein square, across the Amstel River, a half-mile east of the Dam square. Symbolically, it was the site of a large, brave worker's protest against anti-Semitic regulations in 1943 under the Nazi regime. Police barriers had been set up along the entire route of the wedding procession. At 8:00 A. M. the center of Amsterdam was closed to automobile traffic. The police, who were making spot checks on automobiles as they entered Amsterdam, patrolled highways coming into the city from the directions of The Hague, Amersfoort and Utrecht.

Several hundred protestors gathered at the Dokwerker Monument. An hour after the Dutch battleship, the H. M. S. "De Ruyter", gave a 21 cannon salute from Het IJ (pronounced het eye), Amsterdam's harbor, the royal guests were seated in their limousines on the Dam. At 10:30 A. M. Beatrix and Claus got into the Golden Coach and the procession moved towards the Raadhuis (City Hall), situated at the time on the picturesque canal, the Oude Zijds Voorburgwal, before heading for the Westerkerk.

After several speeches, including one by mayor Van Hall, the Golden Coach and the wedding reception moved towards the Westerkerk at 11:45 A. M., about the time that Dutch Army and National Police units charged into the crowd of protestors at the Dokwerker, estimated by now to be 2,000 people. The crowd, swelling as it moved, headed in the direction of the Westerkerk. The first skirmishes between police and demonstrators broke out in the Kalverstraat, a narrow pedestrian shopping street that begins at the Dam. It was at this point in time that Hans Tuynman and Peter Bronkhorst threw their smoke bombs in the Raadhuisstraat. De Jongh states that Bronkhorst threw the largest bomb, one that enveloped the Golden Coach in white smoke for several minutes, the very image that appeared on the front pages of the world press.

Battling the demonstrators, the police and the Marechaussee (the Marines) were able to drive them out of the Kalverstraat, which only succeeded in pushing the demonstrators closer to the Westerkerk. There were already many injuries on both sides of the battle line. By now police activity was uncoordinated. Although the police had orders not to let any protestors onto the Raadhuisstraat in the area of the Westerkerk, smoke bombs were set off and orange flags were set afire.

The Provos also succeeded in surprising the police by sailing down the Prinsengracht canal, the canal next to the Westerkerk, and make a landing near the church. The police and the Marechaussee drove into the demonstrators, mostly younger people, whom they beat brutally. Sympathy on the part of the general public for the police changed to sympathy for the demonstrators. By the time the wedding service in the Westerkerk was over the protestors had been dispersed, but a tense atmosphere hung over the city for the rest of the day.

Roel van Duyn has also written an interesting account of the events surrounding March 10th, an account that fills out the record quite well for its comprehensive coverage. He begins with the first contacts between the Provo movement and the student political

opposition to the Establishment. “Propriety Cures” (Latin: Mind your own business) was the student newspaper of the University of Amsterdam. Its editors expressed opposition to the forthcoming royal marriage, but when Grootveld called on them to ask if they were ready to work for the revolution they replied that they felt more comfortable behind the typewriter. However, by February 5th there was an enthusiastic article on the Provos in “Propriety Cures”. The editors of the paper then got together with the Provos to bring out a joint “Orange-Issue” of “Propria Cures” on March 5th. It included the same article, “The Practical Anarchist”, that caused “Provo” #1 to be confiscated in the summer of 1965. This marked the beginning of a somewhat uneasy alliance between the students and the Provos. The “Orange” issue of “Propria Cures” however, was not confiscated. At this time Bernhard De Vries, a student activist, joined up with the Provos. In June 1966 he was to be the successful Provo candidate for the Amsterdam City Council.

By March 5th many of the Provos had gone into hiding. Rob Stolk left the city for Zaandam and Grootveld spent his days at home, leaving his apartment only at night. Luud Schimmelpennick, the originator of the White Bicycle Plan, and Roel van Duyn hid out at the homes of friends. Police raids were becoming a daily occurrence and much of the movement’s literature was confiscated at this time.

Van Duyn wrote an article in Provo calling on the Amsterdam Provotariat to protest the wedding, saying that the working class could no longer be counted on because of their middle class outlook (“embourgeoisement”, a French term employed in Dutch), exemplified by the Dutch Communist Party. In turn, traditional Marxists condemned this denigration of the Proletariat, the traditional working class upon which Marxist revolutionary theory has generally rested.

As Van Duyn put it, the Oranje-Comite (Orange Committee), De Parel van de Jordaan (The Pearl of the Jordan Quarter) called upon “The Monster of Amsterdam”, the potentially revolutionary Provotariat, to meet at the Dokwerker monument at 9:30 A. M. on March 10th for a protest happening. He says that the Provos were hoping for a spontaneous massive protest, which turned out to be the case. To put it mildly, their expectations were exceeded.

Television broadcasts that day showed crowds of youth running, pursued by the police as they shouted “Leve de Republiek”. Van Duyn notes a grave tactical error on the part of the police, saying that they should have dispersed the crowds at the Dokwerker and closed off the bridge over the Amstel River.

Bernhard De Vries ordered the smoke bombs weeks before the wedding from a 17-year-old student from the provincial town of Ede (pronounced: Aid-ah). However the student, Harman De Bont, was afraid to actually make the bombs, but delivered the chemical ingredients to De Vries on March 9th, the eve of the wedding. The ingredients were potassium chlorate, sulfuric acid, nitrate and powdered sugar.

De Vries brought the bombs to the St. Olafspoort student club, against the wishes of the club’s directors, who feared a police raid, which necessitated that the bombs be put

together somewhere else. Martin Visser and Peter Bronkhorst concocted more bombs, which they later divided with Hans Tuynman. Another batch of smoke bombs was made during a party on the houseboat of Kees Hoeker, proprietor of the Lowland Weed Company, a marijuana farm on his houseboat that became a famous alternative tourist attraction in the 1970's. Hoeker was to be featured in the "White Chicken Happening" of March 10th, that next day, when he was thrown into a canal by an angry monarchist.

The crowd assembled at the Dokwerker on the morning of March 10th moved out after 9:30 A. M. As they crossed over the Amstel River the demonstrators could hear smoke bombs going off in the center of the city. The crowd managed to reach the procession route via the Blauwbrug, Reguliersbreestraat, Munt and Kalverstraat, in spite of the police guard. Van Duyn speaks of a completed process, the politicalization of the "provocerende nozempje" (the provocative "little" delinquent) who had now become a conscious revolutionary. The Provo "army" moved out on the Spui, yelling "Republiek! Republiek!" and singing "Oranje boven, Leve de Republiek" (Up with Orange, Long Live the Republic). The crowd was dispersed on the Raadhuisstraat by repeated police charges. One demonstrator was knocked unconscious. Few monarchists were still present.

Van Duyn estimates the crowd of protestors at 5,000. Willem-Jan Stevens, a Provo who lived next door to the old Stadhuis (City Hall), located on the charming and ancient Oud-Zijds Voorburgwal canal, where Mayor Van Hall delivered a welcoming speech to the royal couple, threw a rat from his window at the Golden Coach. Another plan of his, to have tapes of speeches by Hitler blasting out over the canal, didn't work. Someone tipped off the police and they climbed to the roof and dismantled his equipment.

A few smoke bombs went off in the Paleisstraat (Palace Street). Kees Hoeker threw his white chicken into the path of the Golden Coach when it passed over the bridge spanning the Herrengracht canal. This caused the horses drawing the Coach to bolt. An angered monarchist threw Hoeker into the canals, from which he was rescued by the Waterways Police.

The procession continued up the Raadhuisstraat, followed by smoke bombs thrown by Bernhard De Vries, Peter Bronkhorst and Hans Tuynman. Bronkhorst threw his bomb at the corner of the Keizersgracht canal, then turned around and started running with the police in hot pursuit. Van Duyn says that demonstrations continued all day long and some 200 smoke bombs were set off. In all 26 people were arrested.

Van Duyn states that the demonstrations put March Tenth on the front page of the world press and that in Amsterdam itself enthusiasm for the Provos reached new heights. The first printing of "Provo" #7, 3,000 copies, sold out in three days. "New faces, both insane and intelligent, adhered to the cause", Van Duyn wrote.

Others however, tried to minimize the impact of March 10th. Chief Inspector Heyink of the Amsterdam police said that all went well, except for some minor incidents.

There were also attacks from the press, notably “De Telegraaf”. Jacques Gans, an infamous journalist (the Dutch equivalent of Westbrook Pegler), writing for this paper, compared the Provos to the Nazi S. A. and characterized the demonstration as several hundred youths who were unaware of the fact that they were demonstrating against the marriage. An editorial from the shocked “Elsevier’s Weekblad”, a Dutch weekly version of “Time” or “Newsweek”, a magazine with a stodgy conservative outlook, stated that the Provo leaders managed somehow to lure several thousand young people, who had no idea what it was all about, into the streets, while they themselves kept out of sight. Further, “Elsevier’s Weekblad” felt that there was no reason whatever for justifying the demonstrations.

Premier Cals blamed the demonstrations on the foreign press, whom he charged with subsidizing the protests. Van Duyn considers Cals to be the big loser of March 10th, saying that it was his hoped-for prestige victory in staging the wedding in Amsterdam that led to the events of the day.

Shortly after March 10th the committee, “De Parel van de Jordaan” credited Mayor Van Hall with puncturing the image of a popularly supported marriage, by virtue of the police violence that he unleashed. They considered the events to be of “pop art” dimension” and told the mayor that they hoped to make use of his brilliant ideas in the future.

Actually mayor Van Hall had been opposed to holding the wedding in Amsterdam, but was overruled by Premier Cals, who persisted in adhering to Princess Beatrix’s wishes, because the government stubbornly refused to reverse its decision, feeling that its prestige rested upon keeping a firm hand. This was a prime example of what writer Harry Mulisch refers to as the Regent (or Ruling) Mentality in his book, “Bericht aan de Rattenkoning”, calling it a bureaucratic way of thinking, one that heeds no voice but its own, for the simple reason that it possesses the necessary exercise of power to enforce its own views.

The Provos did have a number of wild ideas that weren’t executed, such as filling the organ of the Westerkerk with laughing gas, or collecting lion shit from the Artis, Amsterdam’s zoo and spreading it along the procession route, on the assumption that it would frighten the horses in the procession, who would then bolt. Another fantasy was the LSD scheme mentioned earlier.

Writer Harry Mulisch, who changed genre from surrealist novel to political commentary (with books on Adolf Eichmann and Fidel Castro’s Cuba), also authored a book on the Provo movement, the previously cited “Bericht aan de Rattenkoning” (Report to the King of the Rats), an unflattering comparison of government bureaucrats to a nest of rats. Mulisch has been an iconoclast who has been frequently criticized by fellow icon breakers, a writer who stands clearly outside the Provo movement, even as he is generally sympathetic to it. His text is valuable as the acute observations of an outsider and gives an added dimension to the narration of the events,. A tour de force in its own right, the book is unfortunately full of ingenious Dutch in-group innuendos that defy

translation, let alone explanation, to foreign readers, so that much of his book remain a secret national treasure.

He wrote about various incidents around the March 10th demonstrations. The house where Anne Frank hid with her family is run by an international student organization that conducts tours through the secret apartment where the Frank family lived in hiding. It is located on the Prinsengracht canal, next to the Westerkerk where Princess Beatrix was to be married. In her famous diary Anne Frank writes about looking at the church tower and listening to the peel of its bells. The Amsterdam police vainly requested the use of the house as its headquarters while the wedding was taking place. The enormous lack of tact in making this request, in view of the grounds for opposition to the marriage, hardly needs comment.

The Provos too had gone into hiding. The Lieverdje was quiet for the first time in months. No one knew what the outcome of March 10th was going to be. Mulisch wrote that no one knew what the Provos were going to do, but everyone knew himself to be too intimidated to do anything in the way of protest. He imagined an audience of a million people lined up to cheer the wedding procession. Even if anyone was on hand to protest the wedding he thought that they would be lynched by the jubilant multitude. Mulisch said that it was this image, created by the press and the radio, that intimidated everyone, even the Provos, on the eve of the wedding.

His reaction to the events of the Tenth came as he watched the procession on television (like the majority of Netherlanders). They felt hopeless, realizing that there wouldn't be any protest against the wedding being held in Amsterdam. Suddenly they could hear people shouting, "Oranje boven, Oranje boven, Leve de Republiek!" (Up with Orange, Long Live the Republic!). The television cameras swerved away from the ensuing violence. Next there was a white cloud, possibly a break in the transmission? But that wasn't it! The haze on the television screen was something else. When Mulisch realized what had happened he was overcome with emotion.

What had passed that day was the finest hour of the Dutch Republic, briefly rekindled on that long stretch of March 10th. The tide had turned and the wraps were off on an Anarchist rebellion. March 10th set the scene for the struggle in the next three months, a struggle that would climax in the full-fledged Battle of Amsterdam on June 14th 1966.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

De Jongh, A. Provo: een jaar Provo-activiteiten. Rotterdam: Uitgeverij Kerco, 1966. pp. 44-52.

Duyn, Roel van. Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provoos. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 138-145.

Mulisch, Harry. Bericht aan de rattenkoning. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 115-116, 128.

Tuynman, Hans. Full-Time Provo. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 11-18.

**CHAPTER 6 :: THE TWO DIMENSIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY:
THE CITY UNDER SIEGE
(MARCH 19 TO JUNE 13 1966)**

In the aftermath of the Wedding several student groups organized a photography exhibit on the police brutality of March 10th. It was held at the gallery of Polak & Van Gennepe, a Socialist publishing firm located on the Prinsengracht, the same canal as where the Westerkerk and the Anne Frank House are located. The opening was scheduled for Saturday, March 19th. The ironic twist of this exhibit was that the Amsterdam Police staged a “happening”, one that seemed to step out of the photographs themselves.

The exhibit was opened by Dutch novelist Jan Wolkers, author of “Turkish Delight” (“Turks fruit”) among other works. Someone threw a white chicken, now become the Provo symbol for the police, over the heads of the people waiting in line outside the gallery. Leaning out of a window, Jan Wolkers caught the chicken. It was a symbolic repeat performance of the white chicken that Kees Hoeker had thrown at the Golden Coach on March 10th (for which he had been thrown in the canal).

However, someone in the neighborhood had phoned the police. A police car arrived shortly. There was a scuffle and the police hit a girl in the face. Later, as Wolkers left the gallery and walked down the Prinsengracht with the white chicken tucked under his arm, he was ordered to move on by a policeman who accused him of leading a demonstration. Wolkers left but the crowd remained, waiting to enter the exhibit gallery. The two officers present called their station for reinforcements. 26 more police arrived, armed with clubs. They moved into the crowd, dispersing people because they were blocking traffic, of which there was little that Saturday afternoon. The numerous photographers, on hand for the exhibit, were able to take even more photographs of police brutality, as did filmmaker, Louis Van Gasteren.

Roel van Duyn called the event a “spiegelbeeld-provokatie” (mirror image provocation), implying that spectators could see photographs of police violence on March 10th inside the gallery, as well as witnessing it live on the street. Two people were hospitalized with brain concussions.

Auke Boersma had brought twenty white chickens to the opening, ten of which were “arrested” by the police. According to Van Duyn, Boersma’s plan was to release one of the chickens with a note to the Vietnamese people. Once the chicken reached Vietnam there would be peace (!). However, the student organizers of the exhibition wouldn’t let Auke in with the white chicken he intended to present to Jan Wolkers. Instead, Wolkers had to catch the bird through an open window. The Provos also attempted to present the White Chicken Plan to the police, but Auke Boersma only got hit in the face with a billy club.

Harry Mulisch was unable to get into the exhibit because of the overflow crowd so he went to the Sint Olofspoort, a student club on the next canal, the Keizersgracht, to see a private filming of the March 10th police brutality. The audience couldn't understand why the sound track only picked up the sirens and not the voices of people in the film. Once everyone left the club the explanation was clear: March 10th was being repeated.

Nico Scheepmaker, a journalist for "Hollands Maandblad", a politico-literary monthly, likewise witnessed the events of March 19th. He ran into Joop van Tijn, a journalist friend who was with his wife. Then they met Jan Wolkers and his wife. Wolkers already had the white chicken tucked under his arm. As the five of them left the Prinsengracht a police Volkswagen pulled up. It was at this point that Wolkers was accused of leading a demonstration.

Scheepmaker parted company with Wolkers and went to the Sint Olofspoort film showing, where he heard about the attack of the police at the gallery of Polak & Van Genneep. Returning there, he kept to the opposite side of the canal and entered a café with several other journalists. The owner quickly locked up. They witnessed the police violence through the windows of the café. Scheepmaker writes that the flower of the journalistic nation present.

Several celebrities walked by, including Harry Mulisch and some of the leading Provos. Then more police cars and a paddy wagon arrived and a new shipment of clubs was passed out to the police. After an hour everything was quiet and the police left. Scheepmaker left to get his car and saw Mulisch and journalist Braam De Swaan, among others, who were looking in astonishment at a row of mounted police on the nearby Amstelveld square, off the Rembrandtsplein. They seemed ready to charge if needed as reinforcements. De Swaan squatted to see if all the horses were in line and even gave helpful advice: "Fifth horse, a bit forward".

The events of the afternoon were followed by what Mulisch calls the "Provo Night of March 19th". On the night of the 19th 10,000 Catholics from all over the Netherlands were scheduled to hold the annual Stille Omgang, the Silent Procession, in the center of the city, to honor the "Miracle of Amsterdam" which occurred in 1345, when a sacred wafer vomited up by a sick man didn't burn in a fire. The procession had been prohibited since the Protestant Reformation and was only permitted to resume in 1881. The route of the Stille Omgang led down the older side streets, that had once been the main streets of the Medieval city, streets such as the Warmoesstraat and the Nes, and crossed over to the Kalverstraat and returned up the Nieuwedijk. At its southern extreme the Catholic route came within a block of the Lieverdje, on the Spui, where the Provos were holding a big happening, called for that evening, to protest police action earlier in the day at the Prinsengracht photo exhibition.

Mayor Van Hall told Police Commissioner Landman to hold off on any police activity, save for actual criminal acts. Van Hall was worried that another Provo "riot happening" with the police might spill over to the route of the Stille Omgang at the point where it turned into the Kalverstraat, possibly causing a disruption of the procession.

Catholics and Protestants form two major pillars of the Zuilen System (Pillar System), the structure upon which political power is allocated in the Netherlands. Van Hall obviously did not want to see a Catholic procession, that had been prohibited for 300 years, turned into a rout in nominally Protestant Amsterdam, the official capital of a nominally Protestant country in which the Catholics constitute a slender majority.

The police waited out the Provo happening at the Lieverdje, along with numerous police in plainclothes capacity. Van Hall writes that once the Provos tired of failing to provoke the police they headed for the monumental (and unoccupied) Royal Palace on the Dam and set fires in the porticos of the building. Landman sent in the Mobile Unit but the Provos had already dispersed by the time that police arrived. The Provos finished their night of demonstrations by yelling outside the mayor's official residence on the Van Beethovenstraat. According to Hans Tuynman, however, the Provo demonstrations that night had moved on to the Van Heutz Monument.

The White Chicken Plan launched that evening is probably the one quoted in Van Duyn's book as a publication of the so-called organization, "Vereniging Vrienden van de Politie" (Organization of Friends of the Police). The Plan called for the evolution of the police from "Blue Chickens" (the color of their uniforms) to "White Chickens", a friendly social worker of the future, whose main task would be the transport of White Bicycles to the repair shops.

That evening of the 19th the VARA, the radio/television network of the Dutch Socialist Party showed Louis Van Gasteren's filming of that day's police violence, followed by a speech from mayor Van Hall, calling on people to have an understanding of the young people of the day, and further asked for an "Afkoelingsperiode", a cooling-off period, a term borrowed from American journalese of the Sixties. In his television speech Van Hall spoke of a Jewish policeman who was heckled by protestors who called him a Nazi SS officer. Van Duyn noted, parenthetically, that this was because he was behaving like a Nazi at the time.

An interesting development that followed from Van Hall's remark about the Jewish policeman (an obvious play for the strong pro-Jewish sentiment of Amsterdam) was a satire on his remark by the popular Dutch television equivalent of "That Was The Week That Was", (Zo Dan Nog Eens Een Keer). An actor in the guise of Van Hall gives an interview, in which he repeats the phrase about the Jewish policeman and becomes hypnotized by it. He shouts "Jewish cop" until two hospital attendants lead him away in a straight jacket, still shouting "Jewish cop". This was too much for the Socialist Party's VARA network because it insulted Van Hall, who was nominally a member of the party. The VARA refused to allow the television program to be broadcast unless the scene was cut. In turn the cast refused to comply with the order and the liveliest Dutch television show fell victim to the self-imposed censorship of the Dutch Socialist Party.

Another unforeseen result of Van Hall's television interview occurred when Robert Jasper Grootveld reacted strongly to the plight of the Jewish policeman who had been called a Nazi. For Grootveld the level of violence had reached an intolerable point.

He felt personally responsible for what was now occurring. Grootveld withdrew from Provo activity, and indeed from Amsterdam and the Netherlands, by passing the next five months on an extended vacation in the Mediterranean. He didn't return to Amsterdam until September.

It is striking to realize that however necessary and indispensable he was in sparking the initial momentum of the Provo movement's existence, his absence didn't hinder onward developments in the coming four months, a period that witnessed the peak of Provo's two year lifespan. Indeed, on his return in September even Grootveld couldn't have saved Provo from the slow decline that led to its eventual demise.

An unexpected attack against the Provos came from a sector of the Socialist press. "Het Vrije Volk" (The Free People) declared that the police had the right to use force against demonstrations that protested against police brutality. The paper called for imprisonment without parole, for a period of several months. They felt that this would contribute to the cooling-off period. "Street terror, from whatever side, is unacceptable in the Netherlands", the editorial concluded paradoxically.

On March 21st the Komite 19.3.66 (March 19th 1966 Committee) was formed by a coalition of student groups, Young Socialists, Provos and Communists, all of whom had a considerable following in Amsterdam. Hans Tuynman, who attended the opening meeting, one that lasted for six hours, expressed skepticism, as he worried about the danger that such a broad coalition would pose for the richly surrealistic Provo imagination. He wrote that they turned down the White Chicken Plan for the police, dismissed the happenings as being apolitical and rejected a proposed teach-in with the Amsterdam police. The only item approved, after six hours, was to file a complaint with the national Ministry of Interior about the police attack on the photography exhibit on the Prinsengracht on March 19th.

Van Duyn says that the committee should have been called the March 10th Movement. The goal of the committee, he says, was not cooling-off, but rather to seek a solution to ongoing problems. He describes the coalition as a New Left front, but notes that the two Communist student groups, the ANJV and the OPSJ, still operated in the sphere of the old left. Most of the Communist youth belonged to these groups because their parents were members of the Dutch Communist Party. Their spokesman was Roel Walraven, a 36 year-old member of the Amsterdam city council. Van Duyn praises the Socialist Youth (S.J.) because of their willingness to participate in "illegal demonstrations", which Van Duyn refutes as a built-in contradiction.

He states that the Provos decided against asking for permission to hold demonstrations because freedom should consist of the right to demonstrate in a democratic society. He felt that demonstrations needed only to be announced in order to enable the police to regulate traffic accordingly.

However, permission was sought for a demonstration on March 26th (a Saturday) so as not to antagonize the coalition. It was a protest against police violence in Amsterdam. The demands were:

1. Van Hall and Van der Molen, the police chief, be removed from office.
2. The police be made answerable to charges of brutality to the City Council.
3. Reorganization of the Police Department.
4. Popular election of the burgemeester (mayor).

The first demand was actually realized in 1967, as was the third, to a degree. The others? Note, however, that Dutch mayors are appointed by the Crown, that is, the Queen, who selects an appropriately designated person. Gijsbert Van Hall, for example, was a war hero, serving as the treasurer of the Dutch resistance movement, and was a member of the Socialist Party, the majority party in Amsterdam.

On March 26th, a committee of five people, including Roel van Duyn, met with Van Hall. Tuynman was to have been the original Provo representative. However, he couldn't make it in time and Van Duyn went in his stead. Van Hall tried to assure them by saying that a nephew of his had a beard, a sign, at that time, of social rebellion. He told the committee that he could not grant permission for a demonstration because of threats received by letter and telephone against the Provos. He also doubted the coalition's ability to control its own membership. However, a monitoring corps had been organized by the 19.3.1966 Komite. But a Provo proposal to identify monitors by painting a "third eye" on their foreheads was rejected by the coalition committee.

As an alternative to open defiance the Provos suggested a "demonstration of the spontaneous organization and solidarity of the provotariat". On that Saturday evening, March 26th, an absence happening was "held" at the Lieverdje. No one was to show up! Duco van Weerlee and Van Duyn worked on a "Manifesto to the Amsterdam Provotariat" ("Provokatie" #12), calling for a general absence happening and temporary coexistence with the klotjesvolk (the common run of people). Hardly anyone came to the Spui that evening and Van Duyn claims victory by virtue of the fact that the Provos had achieved something that the police and government authority could no longer accomplish.

The following Thursday there was another meeting with Van Hall. He objected to the language of the manifesto because of its anti-police slant. He also objected to the fact that two roast chickens had been delivered to his home by Auke Boersma and Peter Bronkhorst. For by then the "Chicken" had become a derogatory symbol for the police, much like the term "pig" used in the United States to designate cops.

The mayor would only permit a demonstration as long as signs saying, “Van Hall met vakantie” (Vacation for Van Hall) and “Van der Molen weg” (Down with Van der Molen) were not displayed, as he claimed that demonstrations against persons was unlawful! The Komite 19.3.66 refused to accept the terms of the permit. However, they let Van Hall show his hand by asking for permission for a demonstration on April 4th, with such innocent slogans as “Democracy”, “Freedom of Expression”, and “Right to Demonstrate”. Once again Van Hall refused to permit the demonstration. It took place anyway, on Saturday, April 2nd.

On April 1st Hans Tuynman was arrested for “inciting sedition”. The April 2nd demonstration was called an “individuele demonstratie” to avoid full-scale defiance. Tuynman was passing out leaflets calling for participation in the “individual” demonstration. He gave a leaflet to two policemen as an April 1st joke, whereupon he was immediately arrested. He was detained for five days at the police station and sent to prison on April 6th. He was freed on April 15th on condition that he not participate in any activity or assembly that might disturb public order (a Provo!).

Van Duyn called this a new trick on the part of the authorities. On April 23rd it was ruled that Tuynman had disturbed the peace when he shouted “imaazje” [Provo-Dutch for the French pronunciation of the word “image”] at the Lieverdje. He was imprisoned once again and sentenced on April 27th. The prosecutor asked for a three-month sentence, of which one month would be on probation. However, the judge sentenced him to a full-term imprisonment of three months. Tuynman appealed and won his release two weeks short of his full sentence. However, he had another sentence of three weeks to serve, for selling wafers without a license.

The April 2nd “individual” demonstration, held without permission and without signs or slogans, was carried out without incident from the police.

It was now evident that the judiciary was aiming its energies against the Provo movement fully as much as the police. Mulisch attributes this to the paternalistic outlook of the judiciary and finds it guilty of caste justice, where citizens are unequal before their judge. One of the Amsterdam judges, Stheeman, told a Provo that “you can’t pass judgment on the War because you didn’t take part in it.” Mulisch points out that such an outlook would put an end to history, not to mention the judicial system itself.

On April 2nd the editors of the student newspaper of the Sint Olafspoort club, “Bikkelklacht” were detained in prison for four days for offense to Princess Beatrix because the cover of their most recent issue showed a girl in a bathing suit who bore a striking resemblance to the Crown Princess. That same day an 18 year-old boy was arrested on the Spui for yelling “fascist” at police officers. He was sentenced to 8 weeks of prison, of which 5 weeks were on probation.

A KVP (Catholic People's Party) member of the Eerste Kamer (Upper Chamber of parliament), Van Lieshout, complained about an anonymous article in "Provo" #7, that had facetiously called for blowing up the proposed IJ Tunnel (pronounced "eye") to be built under Het IJ, Amsterdam's huge harbor, connecting the northern quarter of the city with the center. The article also called for liquidating the tunnel's architect, De Gier. On April 4th J. H. Hartsuiker, Officer Van Justitie (prosecutor) ordered the arrest of Van Duyn, Schimmelpennick, Rob Stolk and Hans Metz as the responsible parties for the article. They were charged with inciting seditious acts. Metz was jailed until April 6th, Stolk and Schimmelpennick until he 7th and Van Duyn until the 15th of April. On May 27th the assistant prosecutor, Renesse, asked the court for a three-month sentence for Van Duyn, of which one month would be on probation, ten weeks for Rob Stolk, of which six weeks would be probation, and somewhat lesser sentences for the other two defendants. The basis of the prosecutor's case was that, although stable intellectuals might find the article amusing, what if a few readers, or even one, were led to commit acts of violence under its influence. The prosecutor said that the court had to consider insane or paranoid people, which led the defense attorney to reply, "Then we must ban all films, books and newspapers." De Gier, the architect who had been sentenced to death by the article, said that he had read it with amusement and didn't feel threatened by it. The outcome of the April 4th arrest was that Van Duyn was sentenced to six weeks imprisonment on June 9th, Rob Stolk to four weeks and Schimmelpennick to three weeks.

On April 16th Peter Bronkhorst was arrested "on suspicion of holding a speech" (!). Then two Provos were arrested for setting a fire between the legs of the Lieverdje statue, but were freed the next day. Bronkhorst drew a fine of 75 guilders.

The Amsterdam municipal elections were scheduled for June 1st. The movement had decided, in a meeting of some forty Provos to participate in the elections. An older generation of pre-Provo anarchists opposed the decision, as did writer Harry Mulisch, who saw in it an end to Provo as the original and creative street Anarchist movement it had been. There are 45 seats on a Dutch gemeenteraad (City Council). Each party draws up a complete (or partial) list of candidates. Voters vote for the party and the individual candidate on the party list is elected in proportion to the percentage of the vote that the party receives at-large. For instance, a party receiving 15% of the vote would get 7 seats on the council (15% of 45). The first-named candidates at the head of their party list have the best chance of being elected. The Provos chose 13 names for their list out of the possible 45. Van Duyn was not high on the list (#5), so as to avoid the label of "leader". Other commentators have averred that he was removed from the top of the original list against his will. The first name on the Provo list was student journalist, Bernhard De Vries, from "Propria Cures", who joined Provo shortly before the Wedding. He was a handsome young man and showed promise

as a political leader. Irene Donner-Van der Wetering, wife of the Dutch chess champion, Jan Hein Donner, and an active feminist (The White Women Plan), was number 2 on the Provo list. At the time of the election meeting she had been in Provo for only a week. These two were the most likely to be elected should Provo have any success at the polls. Also on the list was Jef Last, 68 years of age, a Dutch writer and hagiographer of Andre Gide. Constant Nieuwenhuys, the Cobra artist who developed the New Babylon plan (See Appendix 1), was also on the list. Van Duyn argued for participation in the election, saying that by running candidates the Provos would be able to get the judiciary and the police off their backs.

Although Mulisch didn't approve of Provo participation in the elections he did vote for them as he felt that they now needed to win, having gone this far. Otherwise the police and the judiciary would come down hard on them. Mulisch reports that they worked hard in their print shop, day and night. Their posters could be found all over Amsterdam, on every corner and on bridges that crossed over the canals. Guards were mounted to watch the posters as they were torn down, either by right-wingers or admiring collectors.

An idea of what the Provos were seriously campaigning for can be gained from the program outlined in the brochure, "Wat de Provo's willen" (What The Provos Want), written a month before the June election by Duco van Weerlee, a student in the movement. Although the main Provo slogan was "Vote Provo For Better Weather", a fabulous idea for rain-soaked Holland, there was actually some serious intent in their campaign that included a number of White Plans:

White Bicycles: To be the common property of all Amsterdammers. Automobiles would be excluded from the center of the city.

White Chimneys: built-in incinerators, to combat air pollution, with fines for infractions.

White Chickens: the Amsterdam policeman as a friendly social worker, with candy and band-aids in his pockets.

White dwellings: the housing shortage would be eased by publishing a weekly list of empty buildings.

The Royal Palace would once again become the City Hall. (Note that this is only a ceremonial palace, rarely used, and built on the site of a city hall that had burned down in the 17th century).

The Van Heutsz statue, a monument to colonial militarism, would be demolished.

Prevent the depopulation of the central city.

Rights to free happenings.

The streets as a play area.

Van Hall on permanent leave.

Expanded sexual education.

White Sex Plan, in the interest of emancipating under-aged girls; likewise rights for under-aged homosexuals.

White Schools Plan, being opportunities for democratically organized study and discussion.

Amsterdam would become a White City, the first segment of Constant Nieuwenhuys' concept of New Babylon.

The Provo program was tied to the idea of Amsterdam as a cultural playground for society, where the bulk of labor would be performed by computers. Although parts of the program might seem unfeasible, or perhaps reformist in character, the program as a whole had the potential of reordering the civic life of the city.

On April 23rd Koosje Koster, a female student, who was number six on the Provo electoral list, was arrested at the Lieverdje for passing out raisins to passers-by. At the police station she refused to be undressed by a woman police officer, a tactic justified by the police as a means of preventing suicide. However, the reason for the procedure was not explained to her at the time. When she continued to refuse three male officers aided the policewoman in undressing her. She was only allowed to wear underwear and a blanket during the lengthy police hearing afterward. Her own account of what occurred was at considerable variance from that of the police. The case became a celebrated instance of police manhandling during the growing political crisis. On April 27th Van Hall told the city council that a repetition of such acts was impossible to prevent and that a revision of the police ruling requiring prisoners to undress was impossible to change because it served as a deterrent to suicide. Koosje Koster was released the day after her arrest, on probation. She was re-arrested, on the violation-of-probation tactic May 31st, the eve of the municipal elections, and imprisoned for five days, for posting election signs.

The following Saturday night, April 30th, there was more rioting on the Spui. At 11:45 P. M. about 400 people gathered at the Lieverdje. A car seat that had been soaked in gasoline, was set on fire at the base of the Lieverdje pedestal. People danced in a circle around the fire. Then plainclothes police moved in and made arrests. Uniformed police tried to disperse the crowd, but when people

refused to comply many of them were arrested under Article 186 of the Penal Code. Fights broke out between the police and the crowd. When the police finally left many people tried to organize another happening, which prolonged tension for several more hours into the night.

Cor Jaring, a free-lance photographer won Grootveld's confidence in 1965 and became the unofficial "court photographer" of the happening scene. He gave a vivid description of what was occurring in Amsterdam before the June 1966 elections.

Jaring agreed to help two English television journalists who were making a film on the Provos, leading them to the Provo boat and the Provo press, set up in the basement of the home of the avant-garde Dutch composer, Peter Schat. Later, however, when they tried to photograph activity at a happening on the Leidseplein the police chased them away. To escape the police Jaring, the two Englishmen, a Dutch photographer and a Dutch cameraman, five in all, jogged down the Leidsestraat, leading away from the Leidseplein, in the direction of both the Lieverdje and the Dam. However, when they reached the Koningsplein (Kings Square), near the Lieverdje, the street was closed off by the Rijkspolitie (National Police), who waved them back in the direction from which they had fled from the local police.

The five journalists and photographers found themselves closed off on two sides by more than 200 policemen. Jaring says that there wasn't a Provo in sight. They were ordered to keep moving by the police. The police hit both Jaring and the cameraman, Piet van Strien. The Dutch photographer, Wim van Rossum, was beat up by two policemen. Jaring was wearing a polyester shield on his back, under his clothing. As the police beat him they heard hollow sounds that they were unable to account for. Keeping to the sides of the buildings, so that he would only be hit from one side, Jaring was able to break through the wall of the police by shoving one of the policemen to the side and make a run for the Singel canal.

The attention of the Rijkspolitie was diverted by a group of Provos coming over the bridge from the direction of the Lieverdje. The five journalists and cameramen were able to escape with the Provos. However, Van Rossum could barely move. Then one of the Provos fell, which caused about twenty people to tumble over one another, with the police in hot pursuit. Jaring rolled under a car as the other four members of his party kept running.

From his hiding place Cor Jaring witnessed two dozen policemen beating up the twenty fallen kids, a beating that endured for five minutes. When the victims, as he calls them, finally stumbled away, three of them lay unconscious on the street. Jaring visited them later in the hospital.

He says that there was much resentment on the part of people in Amsterdam, who were constantly being mistreated by the police. Although mayor

Van Hall said that the teenagers were only interested in rioting Jaring notes that only a small minority were deliberately bent on provoking riots. He felt that Amsterdam was ripe for a major riot, a thought that proved to be an accurate prediction in short order.

Demonstrations became a daily occurrence. The editorial staffs of both “De Bikkelklacht” and “Provo” had been arrested. On May 5th the windows of the American consulate on the Museumplein were broken in the course of a demonstration against the Vietnam War. The May 5th demonstration occurred on a Dutch national holiday, the anniversary of the country’s liberation from the Nazi occupation in World War II.

The May 5th demonstration led to the formation of the “Aktiegroep Vietnam” (Vietnam Action Group), which staged demonstrations on the third Sunday of every month. At the first demonstration there were hundreds of arrests. There was likewise a demonstration every Saturday night to protest the imprisonment of Hans Tuynman, in a march from the Spui, where the Lieverdje is located, then later, from the Leidseplein, to the prison on the Amstelveenseweg.

Harry Mulisch describes these colorful demonstrations, calling them mass guerilla theater. The crowd would disperse under police pressure, then regroup. The marchers played wooden flutes (recorders) and clap hands, to the chant of “Tuyn-Man-Free! Tuyn-Man-Free!” The sidewalks of the demonstration route were crowded with spectators and the busy Amstelveenseweg, in front of the prison, was jammed with blocked automobiles.

Van Duyn described the Provo events of April 30th, which was Queen Juliana’s birthday, a national holiday in the Netherlands. The Oranje-Komite, “De Parel van de Jordaan”, decided to host a provotarian celebration that included a White Bicycle marathon on the Dam, circling the Royal Palace, followed by a beauty contest, the competition for “Miss Provo-Chick, 1966”. Princess Beatrix and her sisters were invited to compete for the title. The beauty contest was to be followed by a “Butter, cheese and egg throwing tournament” between the police and the Provos.

Other points of the announced celebration would be an auction of the rare 1st and 7th issues of “Provo” magazine, rare because most of the print run had been seized by the police, and a smoke bomb throwing competition, among other events. The celebration was to begin at the Lieverdje, where the Provonadu Orchestra, an ensemble of recorders, would perform.

Afterwards the crowd moved to the Leidseplein and dumped lemonade powder into the fountain on the square. Members of Jong Europa (Young Europe), a Fascist group that was passing out leaflets were thrown into the fountain as well. The crowd then moved on to the Huis van Bewaring (House of Detention) where Hans Tuynman was incarcerated and held a sit-in

demonstration. The official program followed, on the Dam. A two year-old girl was chosen to be “Miss Provo-Chick, 1966”. When Auka Boersma presented the White Housing Plan at the vacant Royal Palace, evidently a squatters’ plan, the police began to make arrests, far into the night.

On May 30th nine Provos, including Koosje Koster, a Provo candidate for the City Council, were arrested for carrying the White Whale, composed of air mattresses and sheets, into the center of Amsterdam.

The Provo phenomenon was spreading to other Dutch cities. On April 30th 29 people were arrested at the Geis statue in Maastricht, capital of the province of Limburg. On May 14th 16 people were arrested at the Fikkie statue in Rotterdam.

On May 7th 11 people were arrested on the Spui in Amsterdam. On May 13th Auke Boersma was jailed for five days, for violating his May 1st probation, when he climbed a statue in Dordrecht, a city in the province of South Holland, on May 7th. On May 16th 9 people were arrested for staging a sit-in at the home of the American consul-general in Amsterdam. On May 21st 10 people were arrested at an Amsterdam happening and 22 people were arrested in Rotterdam during a demonstration, for failure to disperse.

On May 26th, as a result of police misconduct during a protest demonstration at the Portuguese consulate, against the colonial war in Angola, three complaints were filed against the police.

On May 29th Ite Hamming and another Provo were arrested for driving a truck plastered with political slogans around the Leidseplein and held for five days.

On May 31st Koosje Koster, already arrested during the White Whale happening on May 29th, was arrested again for posting Provo campaign literature. She was sentenced to five days for violation of her April 24th probation (when she was forcibly undressed)

Irene Donner-Van der Wetering, number two on the Provo list of candidates for the City Council, was arrested on June 1st, the night of the municipal elections, along with NTS (Netherlands Television) editor Van der Linde, for failure to disperse. Both were held overnight. The executive committee of the Amsterdam Press Club filed a protest with the ministries of Justice and Interior on behalf of Van der Linde. He was told to keep his distance from any place in Amsterdam where disturbances might take place. The press felt that this prohibition would hinder the professional operation of journalists.

Harry Mulisch’s sharp reaction against the tide of events in Amsterdam was typical of one segment of the population. Until now, he said, judges were held to be unprejudiced interpreters of the law, interested only in seeing that

justice was served, being above any expression of personal bias. Now, however, people were debating which of the various judges was worse than the others, and who was the worst judge of all.

Mulisch concludes that there existed a system of caste justice in the country, with different standards for Provos and their sympathizers than for some others who might pass through the courts. This was confirmed by the TRES case. TRES was an exclusive fraternity at the University of Utrecht, whose membership came from the nobility. In May of 1966 a young man died as a result of his fraternity initiation. The two young noblemen held responsible for his death were merely given a small fine. This contrasted sharply with the treatment reserved by the court for the Provos. The upshot was a strong protest throughout the country, with the result that the guilty aristocrats went to prison. The case was a symptom of what the Netherlands was going through at this time.

The police beat up Mulisch and Ed Hoornik, another Dutch writer, during the month of May, near the Spui. When they protested they were told to move on. Police were beating up teenagers and pulling them into the police station. This was at a time when one could go to prison for passing out leaflets. In Hans Tuynman's case it meant prison for several months.

The Establishment was also preoccupied with reacting at the other extreme: Kill Them with Kindness. The V. V. V., the Dutch national tourist office, published a folder, "See the Provos", that was distributed in the hotels. Tourists were driven to Enkhuizen, a picturesque 17th century port an hour north of Amsterdam, where they would then be provoked, for a fee, by "Provos", kept on hand for the occasion by the government.

One demonstration against the Vietnam War was almost brought off peacefully. No one shouted "Johnson Mordenaar!" (Johnson Murderer), referring to Lyndon Johnson, the American president, the slogan that the Dutch government found so offensive. The charge: insulting a friendly chief-of-state. Anyone who shouted it as subject to arrest. Nor did the demonstrators carry any banners with slogans, which Van Hall would inevitably object to. As a police report, dated May 15th, 1966 described it, 500 people marched silently through the center of the city, carrying flowers and obeying traffic regulations, keeping to the sidewalks. At the Dam the flowers were placed on the National Monument.

Then a group of noisy, yelling Provos moved into the Kalverstraat, the pedestrian shopping street leading from the Dam. They headed for the Museumplein, behind the Rijksmuseum, and staged a sit-in at the American consulate. Nine people were arrested. The remaining demonstrators headed for the Hilton Hotel where they pulled a flag to half-mast. The crowd was dispersed by the police.

Van Duyn writes that Bernhard De Vries, the #1 Provo candidate for the City Council, was arrested on May 24th during a deliberately staged “attempt” to free Hans Tuynman from jail. The charge was trespassing. In his possession were a firecracker, a broken radio, a map of Spain, a floor plan of the prison and a long rope.

Amsterdam’s municipal elections were held on June 1st. Rock bands played at a tent set up for dancing on the Amstelveld. Although the Provos won only one seat on the City Council, that of Bernhard De Vries, expectations had been high and the news was ruefully accepted by the provotariat, hoping for 3 or 4 seats on the council. Note that the voting age in the Netherlands at the time was 23. After the election was over there was another demonstration for Hans Tuynman at the House of Detention.

Professor Van den Berg, Professor of Roman Law at the University of Nijmegen, protested against Hans Tuynman’s imprisonment and the practice of suspending due process of law for anyone on probation. Protest also came from a young member of the central committee of the large Dutch Socialist Party, Jan Nagel. 850 intellectuals signed a protest advertisement against the behavior of the police and the judiciary, but only the two Socialist dailies, “Het Vrije Volk” and “Het Parool” (after considerable hedging) would publish it. The other newspapers refused to publish the ad. Harry Mulisch was active in organizing the letter of protest, but it was quickly outdistanced by other events. Fifty of the signers paid 500 guilders and more names were coming in.

Mulisch noted ominously that in the night of June 13th a sign had been painted on the National Monument on the Dam, in blue letters six feet high: MOORD, meaning “Murder”. It was suddenly as if a veil had been lifted from the façade of respectability that served to cloak the basic injustice upon which society is built; shattered by the word “Moord”. The people of Amsterdam, walking the streets of their city, were about to be transformed into combatants and the streets into battlefields.

The fact of murder, or rather, belief in the “fact” of murder, transformed atomized people into brothers-in-arms and gave a unified voice to a slowly accumulating, smoldering sense of outrage. History caught up with the city of Amsterdam, taking every side by surprise: the police, the government, the Provos, the Communist Party, and the press, and quickly outdistanced them all. The city of Amsterdam that had drowsily gone off to sleep on a warm summer night, in the aftermath of a minor labor dispute, the city that slumbered unknowingly while the specter of Murder hung above it like a threatening cloud, suddenly awoke with a scream!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Commissie voor Onzerzoek Amsterdam. [Commission on Research of the Amsterdam Events]. Report (of the Dutch Government) 's-Gravenhage, 1967. "Rapport". Vol. 2, Bijlage 98, p. 2-3.

Jaring, Cor. "Je bent, die je bent (en dat ben je)" (You Are Who You Are, and That's Who You Are). Huizen [Netherlands]: Triton Pers, 1968. pp. 144-148.

Mulisch, Harry. Bericht aan de rattenkoning. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 137-138, 153-158; 174.

Scheepmaker, Nico. "Hollands Kwartier", in *Holland Maandblad* (April 1967), pp. 15-16.

Singer, Daniel. Prelude to Revolution: France in May 1968. New York: Hill & Wang, 1970.

Sinner, Louis. "Provo's en justitie". [Provos and Justice] Amsterdam :De Bezige Bij, 1966. pp. 11, 45-47.

Tuynman, Hans. "Full-time Provo". Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1966. pp. 32, 34, 46, 50.

Van Duyn, Roel. "Het witte gevaar". Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 146-151, 184-188.

Van Hall, Gijsbert. "Ervaringen van een Amsterdammer". [Memoirs of an Amsterdamer] Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1976. pp. 174-178.

Van Weerlee, Duco. "Wat de Provo's willen" [What the Provos Want] Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1966. pp. 38-39.

**CHAPTER 7 :: THE MONSTER OF AMSTERDAM
(JUNE 14th 1966)**

It was a jest of cosmic irony that the official capital of the Netherlands could be brought to the brink of civil war over a minor labor question, the 2% cut in the vacation allowance of the unorganized construction workers of in Amsterdam, a pay cut mandated to pay the administrative costs of handling their leaves.

However, the underlying issue was more basic: the same issue that the Provos faced: Authoritarianism. A decision had been made at the national level of the trade union movement, that the unorganized construction workers would pay these minor administrative costs out of pocket. There hadn't been any discussion of the issue with the workers themselves, nor had a vote been taken. As a result the construction workers of Amsterdam simply said, "No!" Once more the structure of authority was being challenged. But this time the challenge was about to be made by the potentially explosive combination of workers and youth, the same combo that was to bring off the dynamic and explosive "May Revolution" that rocked the French nation in 1968.

Roel van Duyn came to the same conclusion, stating that the tension created by the government's reaction to past Provo activity needed little fuel in order to take fire.

The most accessible source of information on the Battle of Amsterdam, as the labor dispute quickly became, is a small 90 page booklet, "Oproer in Amsterdam" (Revolt in Amsterdam), written by reporters from "De Telegraaf" and editorially slanted in favor of the police. From time to time the book takes snide digs at both the workers and various government officials, most of whom were members of the Dutch Socialist Party. Nonetheless, it does an excellent job of capturing the essence and chaos of the June 14th riots, being in part a summary of a long official document, the Interim Report of the Commissie Van Onderzoek Amsterdam (Commission for Research on the Amsterdam [Incidents]), created by the Dutch parliament in order to investigate both the riots and the circumstances that led to them. Eventually a three volume report was published, verbose in official language, but richly documented with depositions from dozens of witnesses, an important source of information about June 14th.

Monday, the 13th of June, was a warm workday morning. Beneath the serene countenance of the weather the events of the past few months were gathering for a head-on collision with fate. A few days earlier, on Saturday, the Leidseplein had been in a state of siege at 1:00 P. M. For the first time assembly was forbidden at the popular square. The police had been criticized from both sides for their changing tactics in dealing with Provo disturbances, vacillating between an approach that was far too harsh to another that was too soft. "Oproer in Amsterdam" concludes that the ongoing criticism ultimately short-circuited

both Van Hall and Van der Molen, the burgemeester (mayor) and police chief respectively, the two officials responsible for the direction of the Amsterdam police.

In July 1965 Van Hall told Princess Beatrix and Claus von Amsberg, on the occasion of their first official visit, that “Amsterdam is a recalcitrant city and Amsterdammers are a recalcitrant people, but that is perhaps because the heart of the Netherlands beats most strongly there”. “Oproer in Amsterdam” [and “De Telegraaf”] felt that the mayor never seemed that secure as the principle authority in the city and that his policy was to avoid pitched battle at any cost.

Although the organized construction workers were to be reimbursed for the 2% cut in their vacation pay by their own trade unions, 70% of the construction trade was unorganized, the majority of whom were Communists. A month earlier the C. P. N. (Dutch Communist Party) launched a major campaign against the unfair ruling. The party newspaper, “De Waarheid” (The Truth) termed it “wage theft”. On that warm, workday Monday morning of June 13th Communist pamphlets were distributed, calling for a demonstration that evening at the St. Elizabeth Patronaat on the Marnixstraat, at the far edge of the Jordaan district, where organized union members whose last names began with “A” or “B” would be reimbursed for the vacation pay cuts.

Jan Weggelaar, 51, a construction worker, wore slippers to the demonstration because he lived nearby. This casual fact, so typical of that warm summer day, was lost in the impact of his death less than an hour later, a death that would plunge the city into a state of civil war. Chief Inspector Brouwer of the Amsterdam Police had spoken at noon with leaders of the three organized unions. He anticipated trouble from the unorganized workers after seeing the pamphlets, but he agreed with the request of the union leaders to send only plainclothes police to observe the payments that evening.

Brouwer arrived at 7:10. Payments were to begin at 8:00 P. M. Small knots of men were waiting for the hall to open. Because of the prevailing calm Brouwer told his men that, once again, they were there for nothing. By 7:20 the crowd was growing, but there was still no sign of trouble. The Mobile Unit, a motorcycle group, was kept on hand at police headquarters and a Volkswagen van of four men was on reserve at a nearby station.

By 7:25 the crowd was blocking traffic on the busy thoroughfare of the Marnixstraat. The four reserve officers were called in at 7:30 to direct traffic. They arrived at 7:45. By now the crowd numbered 600 to 700 men. The police VW van was surrounded and tension was mounting. Brouwer decided to pull his men further from the crowd and have them direct traffic from a short distance, but the task was too much for four men. The Mobile Unit, another 30 officers, led by Chief Inspector Wit, was called in. By now the crowd numbered over a thousand men. “Oproer in Amsterdam” labeled them as ripe for a riot.

Speaking through a megaphone of the Mobile Unit, Wit ordered the crowd to disperse but his words were lost in the pandemonium. He then tried speaking to some of the demonstrators. Suddenly there was an impromptu sit-down on the Marnixstraat. Three men began to hit Wit. Then they took his hat. Wit drew his club and gave the order for his men to do likewise. The fight was on. It lasted for only five minutes and was over before 8:00, ending as quickly as it had begun.

The police regrouped. The result: a draw. Then there were shouts of "Someone is dead!" "Oproer" states that the man suffered a heart attack and was lying down before the fighting began. At least someone had mumbled something to that effect within Inspector Wit's range of hearing. The question of this heart attack became moot, one way or another, for justifying what both "sides" did in the next 24 hours. In a broader perspective it is beside the point to establish exactly what happened, as Mulisch observes. For all practical purposes (and effects) the Amsterdam police had murdered a man. Amsterdam had been on the brink of a riot for months and Jan Weggelaar's death couldn't be balanced without a major battle.

Wit and Brouwer retreated. The police had to beat their way back through the crowd. They took a wounded demonstrator with them, who was hit by a flying cobblestone aimed at the police. An ambulance arrived to pick up Weggelaar's body.

The demonstration moved from the Marnixstraat, via the Rozengracht, in the direction of the Stadhuis (City Hall). Wit contacted Police Commissioner Molenkamp to inform him of the situation. Molenkamp tried, without success, to telephone Mayor Van Hall, who was visiting friends that evening. So he called Deputy-Burgemeester Van Wijck, who refused to take responsibility for the command of the police in the burgemeester's absence.

At 8:30 Van der Molen was called at home and informed of the situation. When he arrived at police headquarters he was astonished to find carbines, helmets and tear gas grenades being handed out to Inspector Wit's Mobile Unit in order to head off the demonstration at the Stadhuis by the unorganized construction workers. Van der Molen put a stop to the preparations in order to forestall unforeseeable developments, and possibly more deaths.

More high-ranking police officials arrived, but the police were unable to contact Van Hall all evening. At this point it seemed possible that the situation would cool down, possibly resolved by a meeting between the burgemeester and the leadership of the unorganized construction workers. Van der Molen drove to the demonstration at the Stadhuis in uniform, and tried to reason with the leaders. Only 10 policemen were present. A go-between set up a meeting for Van der Molen and the leaders, but only after he agreed to dismiss two police vehicles in the area. In the course of the meeting it appeared that the heated emotions of the

day were cooling off and that the demonstrators only wished to have a meeting with someone from the City Council.

Several members of the Council met with the strike leaders and one of them told the police chief that the construction workers would be meeting at the Dokwerker Monument the next day at 10:00 A. M. in order to decide whether or not to walk off the job. By now it was midnight and all was quiet at the Stadhuis.

Dr. A. P. Van der Weij, a physician who lived across the street from the Wilhemina Gasthuis, a large Amsterdam hospital, was telephoned by the Admissions Department and asked to help in the treatment of wounded construction workers. He was the first doctor to see the late Jan Weggelaar. He heard from other construction workers that Weggelaar had been beaten, so he was surprised to find no signs of violence. He hazarded a guess to Weggelaar's father that the victim might have died of a broken neck. However, the autopsy conducted by Dr. Wagenvoort, at the request of the Judicial Commissioner, showed no evidence either of violence or of a broken neck. Dr. Zeldenrust, the judicial physician, concurred with his report.

The press conference on Jan Weggelaar's death would only take place at 1:30 A. M. "Oproer in Amsterdam" notes that the late hour of the press conference did not permit the city edition of "De Telegraaf", which appeared at midnight, to carry a more accurate story than the one it printed, saying that Weggelaar's death was caused by other demonstrators. The paper paid for this untruthful story with dire consequences.

Later that night Amsterdam was quiet, save for a few Provos who shouted "Murderers!" at police headquarters, but retreated to the Leidseplein when chased away by the police. By 4:30 A. M. all policemen not usually on duty at that hour were sent home. And it was only at 11:30 P. M. that burgemeester Van Hall was finally apprised of the evening's events, when he returned home. He considered the incident to be closed. No one expected any violence the following day.

2.

At 9:00 A. M. on June 14th a crowd gathered at the Dokwerker monument on the Jonas Daniel Meijerplein, to protest the 2% pay cut and Weggelaar's death. By 9:45 the crowd was estimated to be at 5,000.

Police Chief Van der Molen arrived at police headquarters at 8:45 A. M. In a later statement he explained that he thought any problems had been resolved the night before, when he spoke to the demonstrators. That day the City Council

met to discuss the situation created by the 2% cut. Van der Molen expected general acceptance of the fact that Jan Weggelaar had died of a heart attack, rather than as a result of police brutality. He further stated that it was pointless to ask for reinforcements in the city, first because more uniformed men might incite a worse riot, and secondly because the Minister of Interior in The Hague was not supportive about the situation in Amsterdam and had turned down earlier requests for reinforcements.

Van der Molen phoned Van Hall and asked to meet with him at his office to discuss events of the previous evening. This conference would prove to be of dire consequence. At 9:30 A. M. Van der Molen walked to the Stadhuis. Before he left he told Chief Commissioner Hammega, the ranking officer on duty, that he could be reached at the burgemeester's office. And he explicitly told him that the Mobile Unit was not to be deployed, save on his, Van der Molen's, personal order. Hammega assumed that Van der Molen had already discussed this matter with Van Hall and that the order originated with the burgemeester. This misunderstanding deprived the Amsterdam police of taking any initiative, should a disturbance occur. Van der Molen didn't foresee any problems that would arise because of his absence, as he could easily be reached by phone.

After their talk Van Hall asked Van der Molen to stay in order to discuss police reinforcements with the Procurer-General (the [national] Attorney General) for the province of North Holland. Among those present was P. J. P. Hoogenboom, the burgemeester's advisor on political affairs. News of the demonstration at the Dokwerker and the subsequent movement of the construction workers in the direction of "De Telegraaf" office was received just before the meeting began at 10:00 A. M.

"Oproer in Amsterdam" gives a vivid and perhaps overly dramatic description of the worker's rally at the Dokwerker. Stating that the workers' tempers were fanned by the inflammatory oratory of Klaas Staphorst, a Communist labor leader. Many of the workers armed themselves with tools and barrel staves. Staphorst reportedly said of "De Telegraaf", "I could do without that paper for a while". The crowd set fire to copies of "De Telegraaf" which by now, it is noted in "Oproer", were carrying "correct information about Weggelaar dying a natural death".

It is tempting to see Robert Jasper Grootveld's famous "Klaas" effect as manifesting itself once again, this time in the unwitting person and action of Klaas Staphorst, the Communist trade union leader.

The chief inspector of the police station at the nearby Meijerplein, A. M. Koppejan, had given permission for the meeting to be held at the Dokwerker to two members of the Construction workers Action Committee. He further agreed to use policemen for directing traffic away from the square. The union representatives said that they could manage the crowd and that more uniforms

would only incite the workers and inflame the situation. Koppejan had few men on duty and almost no reserves. Two of his men were roughed up by the crowd.

A group of workers attacked the Sociaal Fonds van de Bouwnijverheid (Social Pension Funds of the Construction Industry) near the Meijerplein. This was the same office that dictated the 2% cut in vacation pay. The director, J. M. de Roy van Zuydewijn, phoned the police station at the Meijerplein, amidst a shower of splintering glass. He was told that the station couldn't spare any extra men. Twelve windows were broken, but the crowd dispersed shortly, without attempting to force entry into the building.

As the crowd poured out of the Meijerplein they yelled, "On to De Telegraaf! On to De Telegraaf!" Two reporters covering the demonstration for the paper called the news chief, Otto Kuijk, to warn him of possible danger. Kuijk then called his security chief, Van Rossem, and told him to shut the doors of the building and take all precautions for a possible attack. At 10:00 A. M. Van Rossem phoned the police. By the time that the police arrived it was 11:50 A. M., far too late to be effective.

Otto Kuijk went to the office of the managing editor, C. J. Brandt, to inform him of developments. While there he had a phone call from Inspector Romeijn of the Amsterdam police, who promised to keep the "Telegraaf" building under surveillance and requested to be kept informed of anything further.

A crowd of 120 men, mostly construction workers, reached the building of "De Telegraaf" at 10:40 A. M. Inside the building Van Rossem pressed the button for the siren and the iron gates closed down the main entrance. The side doors and larger windows were likewise protected by metal shutters.

Not a single policeman was in sight. The battle lasted 75 minutes. Construction workers shattered the windows on the lower floors with bricks from a nearby building site. A "Telegraaf" reporter was hit by a flying brick and later taken to the hospital. Then a streetcar was stopped in its tracks, its front windows broken and the driver shoved from the vehicle. However, he managed to escape capture a few minutes later, making his getaway with the streetcar.

At 10:50 A. M. several demonstrators climbed onto the shipping section of the building and did what damage they could. Another group knocked over a large delivery truck from "De Telegraaf", which fell on top of a parked car. A bonfire was made of copies of the paper in the middle of the street, the Nieuwe Zijds Voorburgwal. Another demonstrator drove a "Telegraaf" vehicle onto the streetcar tracks. The newspapers inside were then unloaded and set on fire, as was the vehicle, after it had been driven over the flames. When two fire engines arrived they were blocked by the crowd. Yet more automobiles were damaged, the shower of bricks continued, and other demonstrators tried to force their way into the building, using ladders and wooden beams as battering rams. They also

tried forcing the front gates of the building, destroying the revolving door, telephones and cash registers at the front area. However, the steel doors couldn't be breached, even though they sustained heavy damage. Meanwhile "Telegraaf" employees made barricades of desks and other office furniture in the stairwell leading up to the mezzanine and the second story.

The "Telegraaf" staff rolled out fire hoses and, in subsequent action, a few of the attacking construction workers were washed out. After the demonstrators gained the ground floor the fighting centered on the stairway leading to the mezzanine. Newspaper employees fought back with chairs, iron bars and fire extinguishers. They succeeded in driving back the attackers. Demonstrators were also fought off at other points in the building. The subscription and advertising cash registers were robbed of 828 guilders (about \$300 1966 dollars) in the course of the siege.

At 11:20 A. M. several demonstrators entered the building of the "Trouw" (Trust), a newspaper next door to the "Telegraaf". Women employees were advised to leave the building by a fire escape at the back.

At 11:50 A. M. the police finally arrived. By then the demonstrators had left.

During the fighting top officials of "De Telegraaf", Brandt, Kuijk and Selman, the administrative secretary, kept telephoning the police in turn. At 10:40 Otto Kuijk spoke to Inspector Romeijn for the second time. He was told, "We'll be there in five minutes". But nothing came of it. Finally they were advised to phone mayor Van Hall himself. Brandt got him on his personal line at 11:00 and told him some of the demonstrators had entered the building and that he was under the impression that the police were waiting for his, Van Hall's, permission in order to take action. Brandt requested that Van Hall take immediate action. Van Hall replied that "De Telegraaf" could hold off 100 demonstrators (the number that Brandt had given him), because in other parts of the city 1,500 demonstrators were massed.

Brandt replied that 100 demonstrators on the attack were a greater threat than 1,500 "massed". Van Hall's response was that he was in an important meeting at the moment that was addressing just this problem. He urged Brandt to cut the conversation short. It was only at 11:20 that Commissioner Molenkamp informed Brandt that the Mobile Unit would be deployed, but it was another twenty minutes before they arrived.

Other "Telegraaf" officials telephoned Samkalden, the Minister of the Interior, in The Hague. But he was not familiar with the situation in Amsterdam, 70 miles away, and could only express surprise at the long delay in the arrival of the police.

The “Telegraaf” building sustained extensive damage. Many windows on the lower levels were broken, the floor of the director’s office, on the second story, was littered with bricks, the entire building was dripping with water, and on the lower floors the water mixed with printers ink. Phones were destroyed, as well as the neon signs outside the building. The Nieuwe Zijds Voorburgwal, the street in front of the “Telegraaf”, was littered with burnt, overturned vehicles, damaged automobiles and half-burned stacks of “De Telegraaf”.

Meanwhile, at police headquarters Commissioner Molenkamp and other top officials were powerless to do anything as long as Van der Molen remained in conference with Van Hall. Molenkamp kept in touch with Van der Molen throughout the morning by means of notes. He would phone the Stadhuis and be put in contact with a city official, J. A. Mittelmeijer, who then wrote out Molenkamp’s bit of information or urgent questions as a note which a messenger brought to Mittelmeijer’s superior, Hoogenboom, who was in the conference room with Van Hall and Van der Molen. Hoogenboom then handed the notes over to his superior, burgemeester Gijsbert van Hall.

“Oproer in Amsterdam” points out that Molenkamp was unable to breach protocol and attempt to contact Van der Molen, his superior, by other means. “Oproer” notes the bizarre situation that consequently arose, where Van Hall spoke on the phone for more than an hour with the staff of “De Telegraaf”, members of the Amsterdam judiciary, and ministers Samkalden (Interior) and Smallenbroek (Justice), both of whom were in The Hague, but that Molenkamp’s contact with Van der Molen, the one contact that would have yielded results, was relegated to passing notes through two other intermediaries in order to communicate.

Commissioner Molenkamp had the horses saddled and the Mobile Unit on stand-by alert, waiting to receive orders from the Stadhuis. At police headquarters 67 men waited, in a state of preparedness, while some 100-120 construction workers attacked “De Telegraaf”.

At 10:35, and again at 10:45, Molenkamp phoned the Stadhuis, telling Mittelmeijer that he urgently needed an immediate decision about deploying the Mobile Unit. At 10:50 Brandt called Molenkamp from “De Telegraaf” and told him that demonstrators had entered the building. Molenkamp replied that he awaiting orders from the police chief, who was at the Stadhuis. Tempers were short on both ends of the line.

At 10:55 Molenkamp called the Stadhuis for the fourth time, but was still unable to get past Mittelmeijer. After waiting in vain for a reply from Van der Molen for ten minutes he rushed to the police chief’s office, for he recalled that there was a direct line to Van Hall’s office. Van der Molen’s secretary showed him how to make the connection.

It was 11:15 A. M. when Molenkamp finally made contact with Van Hall. He asked for permission to deploy the Mobile Unit, equipped with carbines and tear gas. Van Hall handed the telephone over to Van der Molen, who granted permission immediately. Molenkamp later testified that he realized that Van Hall and Van der Molen had been aware of the situation at “De Telegraaf”. The conversation finished at 11:30 A. M. and a few minutes later the Mobile Unit was on its way.

It is still not known exactly what was happening at that conference at the Stadhuis in the 75 minutes when the “Telegraaf” was under siege, from 10:00 A.M. when Commissioner Molenkamp initially asked, via a written note, for a decision on deploying the Mobile Unit, and 11:15 A. M., when the decision was finally made. Those present at the Stadhuis meeting were Van Hall, Van der Molen, Gelinck (the Attorney-General for the province of North Holland), Van den Berg and Hoogenboom. However, their testimony before a parliamentary investigative committee is vague and contradictory. Ironically (or not) the notes, on which Molenkamp’s frantic messages were recorded, disappeared.

Another note of irony, a monumental one at that, was that “De Telegraaf”, the Netherlands loudest voice for the “Law-and-Order” mentality, should have been let down so badly by its own cherished police force in its hour of greatest need.

3. The Midday Battle

Since the demonstrators left before the Mobile Unit arrived there was nothing further for the police to do at “De Telegraaf” so they drove to the Stadhuis, which was also quiet. Finally they headed in the direction of the Dam.

The crowd that besieged “De Telegraaf” was now crossing the Dam, in the direction of the harbor, by way of the Damrak, the wide street that leads from the Dam to the Central (railroad) Station. By now, however, the demonstration had grown from a few hundred construction workers to a cross-section of the city’s population. The police, who were still not in full force at the moment and not equipped with anti-riot gear, were unable to take effective action. Instead of a few hundred construction workers the police found themselves confronted by thousands of demonstrators as they headed towards the Dam, facing a crowd that was swollen by office workers on their lunch break and foreign tourists.

One group of demonstrators unraveled an enormous roll of paper taken from “De Telegraaf”, rolling it down the Damrak, while another group set fire to it as it came undone. The mixture of police, construction workers, Provos and the

general population resulted in total chaos, as public sentiment began to turn against the confused police, who were bent on controlling a demonstration and behaving too indiscriminately at their task.

At the Stadhuis things were quiet throughout the day. The men guarding the building had nothing to do. However, on the Damrak the rioters continually dispersed and regrouped. Whenever the police charged forward the Damrak filled up again behind them, with the demonstrators at their backs, throwing stones, bottles or whatever else they could find to aim at them.

“Oproer in Amsterdam” narrated the tale of Floris Schaper, who as to become the most seriously wounded victim of the June 14th riots. His story gives a living, personal reality to the confusing details of the day.

Schaper was one of the 5,000 people at the morning demonstration by the Dokwerker on the Meijerplein. He was 32 years old and one of the unorganized construction workers but was not an activist. He went to work at 7:00 A. M. at the construction site of St. Lucas Hospital. His co-workers were engaged in heated discussion about the events of the previous evening.

A few minutes later a crowd of some 400-500 construction workers arrived and persuaded the crew at St. Lucas Hospital to join their demonstration at the Dokwerker. Once there Schaper was too far away to be able to hear the speakers, but he saw a group of men going after a policeman, who in turn was rescued by other members in the crowd.

Afterwards Schaper followed the demonstrators who were headed towards “De Telegraaf, where he watched the action from across the street. When the attack was over he followed the demonstrators back across the Dam and down the Damrak, in the direction of the Central Station. For a while he was caught up in the spirit of the events and shouted “Thieves! Murderers!” along with the rest of the crowd. But he soon tired of this. Since there would be no work that day he decided to drop in on his mother-in-law who lived nearby. Just as Schaper turned off the Damrak he saw the first motorcycles of the Mobile Unit moving up the Damrak. He paused to watch the demonstrators as they battled with the police, arming themselves with bottles and stones.

A truck parked on the Damrak was loaded with a full load of Seven-Up bottles, both filled and empty, an excellent source of ammunition for the demonstrators. Schaper later stated that when he saw Seven-Up bottles flying over his head he thought he better leave and headed up the Oudebrugsteeg, a narrow street off the Damrak. Meanwhile a police motorcycle equipped with a sidecar and carrying two policemen headed down the same narrow street. One of the officers was dragged from his motorcycle and beaten up. The other officer drew his pistol and threatened to shoot, in order to save himself and his colleague. But

his call went unheeded so he aimed his weapon at the leg of the nearest attacker. However, at that moment he had to duck as a man tried to hit him with an iron chair from a nearby restaurant terrace. Several shots went off. The man swinging the chair was hit in the arm and Floris Schaper, halfway down the alley, was shot in the back. The bullet grazed his right kidney, passed through his liver and went out of his body.

Schaper crawled away. People in the stores along the narrow street dared not open their doors to help him. He was finally discovered by members of the Mobile Unit who came to the rescue of their two beleaguered colleagues. One of the shopkeepers phoned for an ambulance and Schaper was taken to the hospital in critical condition. Several days later it was clear that he would eventually make a full recovery. At first, however, it was believed that he was the man who had attacked the police with the iron chair and as such it was reported in the press.

News of the shooting spread rapidly through the city, inflated by rumors of three deaths. Many of the striking workers returned home. However, the riots continued among another sector of the population. The nozems, whom Roel van Duyn called the “Monster of Amsterdam”, took to the streets.

The national government in The Hague was basically unaware of what was happening in Amsterdam. However, ministers Samkalden (Interior) and Smallenbroek (Justice) were kept informed of events by their own subordinates in Amsterdam. They decided to go to Amsterdam that same afternoon and view the situation at first hand. The two ministers chastised Van Hall for failing to send the police to “De Telegraaf” in a timely manner. They also decided to reinforce the Amsterdam police with several hundred national and military police.

At 1:00 P. M. a delegation of construction workers met with Van Hall over the 2% cut in vacation pay. However, the mayor was powerless to act on the matter, as the decision for the cut in pay lay elsewhere, at the national level. The delegation called for a general meeting at the Dokwerker at 3:30 and tried to have Van Hall speak to the workers, now returning to the streets for the 3:30 meeting. The delegation gave a report of their meeting with the mayor to the assembled workers, who were furious when they heard that nothing could be done. So they broke the remaining windows in the nearby office of the Sociaal Fonds voor de Bouwnijverheid (Social Pension Funds of the Construction Industry), the group responsible for the 2% cut. Klaas Staphorst, the strike leader, proposed a wait-and-see attitude, but the workers were impatient. Some of them stoned a van of the military police, but were driven off. By 4:00 the construction workers were back in the area of the Damrak and prepared anew for rioting.

Ministers Samkalden and Smallenbroek were dissatisfied with Van Hall’s leadership of the police and Smallenbroek planned to relieve both Van Hall and

Van der Molen of their duties. In the Netherlands the government is nationally centralized. Both the police chief and the mayor were appointed in The Hague. The two ministers were en route to their meeting with Van Hall at the Amsterdam Stadhuis. A number of high ranking officials were present at the meeting and though little is known of what transpires, Van Hall was asked to account for the absence of the police at “De Telegraaf” while it was under siege earlier in the day. He replied that there were not enough police available to handle the situation and that The Hague made it difficult for the city to request reinforcements. Both claims were disputed, but Van Hall was able to retain his position until May, 1967 when the report of the parliamentary commission, the Commissie voor Onderzoek Amsterdam (Commission for Research into the Amsterdam [Riots]), (also known as the Enschede Commission, after its chairman) was published. The report took exception to Van Hall’s claims about the June 14th riots.

While the two ministers conducted their meeting with Van Hall the riots continued on the Damrak in full swing. Windows were broken in the two large department stores near the Dam, the Bijenkorp and C & A. Both stores had to roll down their metal shutters and close around 1:30 in the afternoon. Tacks were strewn across the Damrak and many police vehicles ended up with flat tires. Between war bulletins reporting on the progress of the day’s battle over the mobile telephones of the police, were requests for sodas and sandwiches.

The Damrak was littered with demolished parking meters, felled traffic signs, garbage cans and broken glass from automobile windows and storefronts. As soon as the Sanitation Department cleared the streets bands of rioters streamed in and renewed the piles of debris, in an ongoing cycle. Afterwards the Rokin, the wide street below the Damrak, was littered with debris as well, as were the narrow side streets in back of the Beurs (Stock Exchange), off the Damrak. Finally, at 6:00 P. M. the rioters broke for dinner.

Most of the police were likewise able to break for dinner, as the Dutch Civil War sat down for its evening meal. Traffic resumed its course momentarily on the Damrak, although the traffic lights had been destroyed. By 6:45 the streetcars were running again.

4. The End of the Battle

The sun set on June 14th as a lovely summer evening, but by 7:15 the Mobile Unit stationed at the Dam informed police headquarters that it was crowded on the Dam. For the rioters had returned from dinner. The police battled demonstrators into the rest of the night. Commissioner Molenkamp had “De Telegraaf” under guard through the night, but the demonstrators ignored the

building. By 8:30 P. M. the fight was fully mounted on the Dam. Nozems were tearing up cobblestones for ammunition to throw at the police. Construction huts were salvaged for use as barricades. By 8:00 the streetcars once again came to a halt.

Injuries piled up on both sides of the battle line. At least no one was shot. Both the Communist Party and the Provos condemned the riots, for which they had been blamed. Communist taxi drivers, unaware of their party's position on the riots, organized a procession of cabs that honked their horns as they drove through the city. The streets were full of burning automobiles and the tar wagons of roofing companies were set afire. Gangs of youth ran back and forth through the narrow streets, with the police in hot pursuit. Someone drove around in a truck full of stones for use as ammunition by the rioters. All the remaining windows of the department stores were broken and the last parking meters in the area of the Dam were uprooted. Seven foreign tourists, from Germany and Japan, were injured by flying glass at the entrance of the hotel, "Die Port Van Cleve" when police charged a barricade erected by rioters in front of the hotel. By the time that the riots died down several hundred national and military police reinforcements had arrived on the scene.

The warm weather held for two more days, as the riots gradually ground down to a halt. There were 15 arrests on Wednesday and three on Thursday, the 16th. Jan Weggelaar was buried at noon on Friday. His funeral was conducted in an orderly manner. On Friday night it rained. The center of Amsterdam was almost completely deserted. The Battle of Amsterdam had come to an end.

5. From a Provo Perspective

While the Communist Party and the workers at the Dokwerker collected money for the widow of Jan Weggelaar on June 14th, Roel van Duyn participated in a sit-down strike on the streetcar tracks that crossed the Dam, as part of a protest against police brutality. Speaking of the violent demonstration on the Nieuwe Zijds Voorburgwal he states that the "Telegraaf" served the demonstrators as a substitute scapegoat for the absent police on which to vent their anger. He compares the attack on "De Telegraaf" in 1966 to that on "De Waarheid" (The Truth), the Dutch Communist newspaper, during the Hungarian uprising in 1956, noting that the earlier attack had the blessing and tolerance of the government, whereas the latter did not, being that it was an act of revolt against the state.

Van Duyn notes that the youth or nozems who participated in the three days of fighting did so out of a craving for some first-hand experience of adventure in their lives. He reported that whole families arrived in Amsterdam from other cities in order to experience a riot. The Communists did their best to

keep the workers from rioting but had little success. In spite of overwhelming popular support to continue the strike Van Duyn writes that the Communist-controlled strike committee voted to end it.

Van Duyn says that the Provos were in sympathy with the attack on “De Telegraaf”, although they didn’t support the subsequent rioting later that day and on the succeeding nights of the 15th and the 16th. He felt that the ongoing rioting detracted public focus from the issues of the day: police brutality and the 2% cut in vacation pay, and further, that the riots would give the government an excuse for unleashing even more police force upon the city of Amsterdam. He also notes that Bakhuisen’s “provos” (or nozems), the classic juvenile delinquents, were still a force in the Netherlands, converging as they did, from all points of the country. Indeed the Amsterdam nozems were only a small part of the rioting contingent. He concludes that the “provotariat “ was only the tip of the iceberg and that the Provo movement itself had no control over the young rioters.

It was at this point, June 14th, that the dramatic momentum of the Provo movement came to an end, although another 7 or 8 weeks were to elapse before the tumultuous events that had been building up over the past year would themselves finally wind down. Through the summer of 1966 Provo crawled slowly toward the consummation of its goal and the delivery of its message, until it finally proclaimed its demise in May 1967.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anarchy (London) #66 (vol. 6, #8) August 1966. (Special issue on the Provo movement. English critiques of the Provos, written shortly after the June 14th riots. “Day Trip to Amsterdam”, by Charles Radcliffe, pp. 237-242, is a charming eyewitness account. Short texts by Van Duyn and Constant translated into English).

Duyn, Roel van. “Het witte gevaar”. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 189-190, 193-198.

Fahrenfort, Jacques, Janszen, Henk E. and Sanders, Fred. “Oproer in Amsterdam: het verhaal van twee historische dagen, 13-14 juni 1966”. [Revolt in Amsterdam: The Story of Two Historic Days, 13-14th June 1966] Amsterdam: H. J. W. Becht, [1967?], pp. 11-13, 16-18, 20, 34, 36, 40-49, 53-90.

CHAPTER 8 :: THE DEATH OF PROVO (JUNE 15 1966 - MAY 14 1967)

It is far more interesting to chart the gestation and birth of Provo than to untangle the threads of its gradual demise, fitfully chronicled in the Dutch press of late 1966 and early 1967, in order to follow the movement’s last eleven months, so as to understand why Provo died and why Magic had failed.

In order to provide a general theoretical framework by which to clearly explain an otherwise difficult and inexplicable passage of history I have included, in Appendix 6, a discussion of Jean-Paul Sartre's brilliant if difficult Theory of Social Groups, as expounded in his "Critique of Dialectical Reason", a book that gives a detailed analysis of what was to occur in the course of the 1960's, a prophetic work in that it was published in 1959, before it all began.

After June 14th 1966

Roel van Duyn wrote his important book, "Het witte gevaar" (The White Danger) in November 1966. He explains the timeframe that followed in the wake of the June 14th riots as a period of inertia in which any demonstration after June 14th was doomed to become repetitive and anti-climatic. Happenings, demonstrations and arrests continued, but they failed to take on a new direction. He felt that Provo failed because it didn't produce any effective and innovative new imagery. Even Robert Jasper Grootveld, who returned to Amsterdam in August, two months after the riots, failed to come up with a novel perspective. Van Duyn says, "We aimed too short".

The situation didn't cool off immediately. The two major forces opposing one another, the police and the peace movement, continued to confront one another, which kept political passions stirred a while longer, as the city's streets were filled with demonstrations for another month. "Elsevier's Weekblad", a conservative weekly magazine, surveyed the period from June 23rd to July 10th 1966. The police and national military police reinforcements arrested 295 people in 18 days. The charges included disturbing the peace, failure to disperse, and participation in a prohibited demonstration against the Vietnam War. Most of those arrested belonged to seven student or political youth groups, including Provo, Rode Jeugd (Red Youth), the Students Union and Aktiegroep Vietnam (Vietnam Action Group).

Provo activity continued into the summer and autumn of 1966, particularly in demonstrations protesting the war in Vietnam, in participation with other like-minded groups, who by then had taken over the leadership of these projects. Yelling "Johnson Mordenaar"! (Johnson Murderer) at Vietnam demonstrations led to immediate arrest because it insulted a friendly chief-of-state, a criminal offense in the Netherlands, an extension of the Dutch law of lese-majeste (literally, insulting the monarchy). This archaic law, enforced only in the Netherlands, was repealed a short time later. However, the demonstrators found a way to get around it, while still making their point: they yelled "Johnson Molenaar"! (Johnson, miller, i.e. someone who grinds wheat). Legally speaking, this was inoffensive, at the same time that it sounded close enough to be associated with "Mordenaar" (Murderer).

Some reports from this period state that police violence had subsided, however, by mid-November, 1966 some 28 complaints of police brutality in Amsterdam that had been made through the channels of the Ministry of Justice had not gotten anywhere.

Some of these charges were brought by innocent bystanders who had been severely injured by the police attacking them under circumstances which could not be justified.

Hans Tuynman used the proceeds from the sales of his book, “Full-Time Provo”, to purchase a houseboat in the winter of 1966. This became the short-lived and notorious Provo boat, “Hashiminh” (apparently a union of “Hash”, for hashish, and the last part of the name of Ho-Chin-Minh, the Communist leader of North Vietnam). The boat was burned in April 1967 by nozems from the Central Station area who were jealous because the Provos were getting more attention and state money than they were. Rather than retaliate the Provos offered them the shared use of their Provo cinema on the nearby Harlemerstraat.

Police chief Van der Molen was fired on July 16th 1966. Both the right-wing press and the Provos felt he was made a scapegoat for the ineptitude of burgemeester Van Hall’s municipal government. As it turned out Van Hall and Van der Molen were on the worst of terms and it transpired that the police chief had been stripped of any real power. The Enschede Commission (Commissie voor Onderzoek Amsterdam), set up by the Dutch parliament, published its three volume report on the June 14th riots. One result of the report was the firing of the “arch-villain” Gijsbert van Hall, on May 12th 1967, two days before Provo would declare itself dead at a meeting held in the Vondel Park. They outlasted their declared major foe by only two days.

The two ministers of the national government in The Hague most concerned with the June 14th riots and the Provo movement fared quite differently from one another. Smallenbroek (Justice) hit a parked car while driving down the street in which he lived in The Hague, but failed to report the accident, thus making himself a hit-and-run driver, some three days after the June 14th riots. He was quickly traced from testimony inadvertently given by his neighbors and was eventually forced to resign his post in the government. Samkalden (Interior) was appointed the next burgemeester of Amsterdam in 1967.

* * * *

It is ironic to recall that the authorities who led the attack on the Provos were themselves under attack for leaning too far to the left by the arch-conservative “Telegraaf” which was not pleased with the Socialist-Catholic coalition government of Prime Minister Cals, one of the most liberal governments in the Netherlands up to that time. “De Telegraaf” launched a vindictive attack on the Minister of Justice, Jan Smallenbroek, after his hit-and-run accident. It was possibly delightful that the man who chewed out Gijsbert Van Hall behind closed doors and pressured for the burgemeester’s immediate dismissal, had to resign from office himself, at the end of August, under a barrage of attacks from “De Telegraaf”. And again, burgemeester Van Hall himself had been the national treasurer of the Dutch resistance movement during World War II. Of course another part of this ironic tableau is the conservative role played by the Dutch Communist Party throughout the Provo period. The Provos weren’t just fighting “evil men”, but rather an outmoded authoritarian outlook held by a different generation of

“good people”. The total political picture in the Netherlands was more complex than “good” versus “bad”. In fact Provo was hardly considered by many observers to be within the Dutch political spectrum. Indeed Provo in turn, battling against an authoritarian mentality, banished the other Dutch political parties from serious political consideration in the spectrum of its own political thought.

Indefinite Note Towards a Conclusion

The narrative of Provo essentially ends with the June 14th riots in 1966. Against a background of lethargic apathy in 1965 Provo set itself in isolated opposition to the Monarchy, the War in Vietnam, Portuguese colonialism (or more specifically the Dutch government’s tacit support of these last two as a member of NATO), endorsed Grootveld’s declaration of war against consumerism, and, to put it in a nutshell, challenged authoritarianism. Then by virtue of a chance-in-a-million pun that turned Santa Claus into an ex-Nazi and by the brilliant tactic of provocation, the impossible was quickly realized: Amsterdam was brought to the brink of social revolution. But there was no Revolution; only a three-day riot. The Spontaneous Revolution had failed, just as it was to fail in France two years later. And with the failure of the June riots Provo fulfilled its mission.

No knew it at the time, neither the press, nor the government, not even the Provos themselves, but the movement lost its momentum as of June 14th and continued to function only on the inertia of their own myth and in response to the pressing issues of the day. But it soon became apparent that the momentum so gratuitously supplied by Fate was steadily ebbing away. The “official” declaration of death on May 9, 1967, eleven months later, was a formal acknowledgement of the historical process at work.

As long as the momentum held its own anything could have happened. Provo was creating and being created by History, but was so unprecedented as to be outside of History and seemingly outside of political theory. However, once this momentum snapped Provo became subject to the harsh criticism and analysis of historical and political theories. The Communist Party denied the possibility of a “Spontaneous Revolution”, insisting instead upon its own theoretical application, the formation of ideological cadres and the membership of the Party, to successfully execute the Revolution. Anarchism has never solved this problem to great satisfaction, for unlike the Communists they have refused to institutionalize the Revolution. Thus far in history revolution has only succeeded by becoming institutionalized, either crystallizing in a bourgeois capitalist republic or in a Communist state. (See Appendix 6 on Jean-Paul Sartre)

Even as the Provos possibly failed theoretically on the larger issues of what a movement and what a revolution ultimately are, it is necessary to recall that social laws and theories are themselves subject to modification by the events of ongoing history.

Many of their tactical moves become open to question: Should the Provos have participated in the Amsterdam municipal elections? Were the Provos too reformist? Should the Provos have eschewed the student movement? Should the Provos have worked closer with the working class? Bluntly stated, a political movement reaches the point where it must institutionalize or face dispersion. After June 14th the Provos could no longer be themselves. They had to become a political party, a political journal, possibly a cult or a discussion group. Instead they were to eventually choose a symbolic death, much like the funeral procession of the Hippies in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in October 1967.

The moment of truth for a social movement is that success spoils revolt. In the classic study of Ernst Troeltsch, “The Social Teachings of the Christian Church” (“Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen”), written in 1911 (and translated into English in 1931) the author traces the development of the Apostolic *sect* of Jesus until it becomes the Roman *church* of Paul and demonstrates at length the development of religious movements or sects into churches, which is to say, religious institutions. The charismatic figure of the prophet is replaced by the official eminence of the pope and the College of Cardinals. The plotting, underground Communist ascetic gives way to the crafty, overfed Party or government bureaucrat. Even the United States, let it be recalled, began as a revolutionary movement. But institutions tend to ossify as revolutionary ardor cools and becomes commemorated by murals, holidays (July 4th anyone?), history and shrines (Williamsburg, Virginia or Mount Vernon). Lip service continues to be rendered to the shadow memory of the Revolution. Mexico and the late Soviet Union leap to mind as examples of this ossification.

Although the Provos probably hadn’t read either Troeltsch or this particular theory of Sartre they were conscious of the institutionalizing factor and chose not to “become old news”; they deliberately took this path, abetted by their Anarchist outlook as well as by a “ludic” distaste for the drudgery of everyday politics. Inspiration had gone out of the movement and so it became time to close shop.

The Provo Council (Concilium), Borgharen, November 1966

The Provo Concilium, modeled in name and more vaguely, in concept, on Vatican II, met on the weekend of November 12th, 1966 in the Europahuis (Europe House) or Borgharen Castle, located in the outskirts of Maastricht, capital of the Dutch province of Limburg. Although billed as “international”, those in attendance came almost entirely from the Netherlands or Belgium. The meeting began on Saturday with a ritual washing of the feet. Then some 50 participants, interlaced with unraveled toilet paper and yelling

“Communication”, entered the building. Roel van Duyn made the opening speech. That evening Robert Jasper Grootveld spoke on “Creative Economics and the Klaasbank”.

At midnight, after the press had left, a procession of some twenty people who had their heads wrapped in silver foil, followed a girl carrying a burning torch as they sang “Johnson is een mordenaar” ([Lyndon B.] Johnson is a Murderer), but the police made no arrests.

That morning Rob Stolk and several of his followers arrived with a red flag in the name of the RTR, the Revolutionaire Terroristische Raad (Revolutionary Terrorist Council). They declared the Concilium to be illegal and claimed to have overthrown the Concilium leadership. Actually, they had already seized the Provo press in Amsterdam and moved it to a hidden location. After several hours of heated debate, chaired by Luud Schimmelpenninck, who wielded a broom as a gavel, they were able to pass several unanimous resolutions. A decision was also made to stage a second Concilium, but that never came to pass.

Some of the resolutions decided upon at Borgharen were:

The publication of secret documents that would expose the role of Prince Bernhard in the Bilderberg Conferences, annual meetings that were held by government leaders, military chiefs and industrialists of various countries.

Anti-NATO provocations under the slogan of S. O. S. De SHAPE Op het Schavot (SHAPE On the Gallows). SHAPE was the military command of West European NATO forces and was headquartered in Brussels.

Sending Provo delegations to both North and South Vietnam in order to gather information on the situation there.

Demonstrations protesting the deaths of five Anarchists in Spain.

Anti-tourist activities and anti-advertising activities.

To set up an international “Provo” magazine, with selections of the best articles from all over Europe.

Borgharen was also the first definite sign of Provo’s demise. The conference failed in its aim at internationalizing or exporting the Provo movement and the programs of the conference failed to “take fire”. Finally, the unmistakable signs of a split were to be seen in the original nuclear ranks of Provo, something more significant than personality conflicts.

Early in 1967, possibly January or February, Aad van der Mijl conducted an interview with Rob Stolk in “De Gids”, a prestigious Dutch cultural magazine, entitled

“Provo na de dood van Provo” (Provo After the Death of Provo). The article is particularly valuable as little was published either by or about Stolk who was a major figure in the Provo movement. The winter interim of 1966-1967, proved to be a fatal period of inactivity as the movement came to a complete standstill. The interview sharply underlines the mood of this period, at a time when Provo was probing the reason and need for its continued existence and, should it continue to exist, then what role should it properly play.

Van der Mijn said that there were few happenings, provocations or pamphlets in recent months and that “Provo” #13 was making its tardy appearance after an unduly long silence. He asked if Provo was indeed dead. Listing the “assets” of the movement he noted that there were perhaps 25 active members, who had a cellar at their disposal, a boat, two printing presses, a closed-down movie house, all of which were brought with the proceeds of the sale of their publication, “Provo”, as well as a debt of 8,000 guilders (about \$2,000).

When asked if Provo might continue or, in fact, if it had anywhere to go, Stolk replied that the past power of the movement lay in its mystique. For the present moment all he could hope for were a few small victories, nothing more than that, adding that Provo was never more than just that. Stolk didn’t feel that any radical improvement in society was possible as long as the masses remained unaware of their own destiny. When Van der Mijn asked if such a realization was a long way off Stolk replied that people go to their jobs and allow themselves to be exploited, brainwashed as they are by television and advertising, reiterating his point that change wasn’t possible as long as the masses let themselves be led.

When asked if Provo was in a slump Stolk replied by characterizing the June 14th riots as a case of mass hysteria that had nothing to do with Provo. The movement never held hope for the arrival of “The Great Revolution”. Yes, Provo had plans, but he didn’t see the need for them to have a member on the City Council because a sign in a demonstration could accomplish just as much as an elected official. He stated that democracy was a semi-fascist dictatorship whose existence makes opposition a necessity.

Rob Stolk felt that many people were going to turn to violence, just as they did in the June 14th riots, because, essentially, nothing had changed. He said that he himself didn’t believe in violence, but could understand why people reacted in that manner.

Stolk said that Provo was a small group of people who met regularly in a cellar, a group kept together by the collective memory of an event that had passed its prime; that the appeal of the movement was only in the past, and that Provo was probably no longer of any significance to its following, the Provotariat (or nozems). He noted that Provo was continually changing, that there were new groups following their own version of “Provo”. People who never did anything before were learning about printing, typing and photography. Should Provo disappear they would probably fall back on their old ways. But Stolk felt that resistance would continue, even if it on a violent scale. Provo had been beaten down on everything they tried to do. Resistance would continue because “the

street provotariat feels itself to be the Vietcong of Amsterdam. They shoot at anything that is American.”

In an interview with J. Van Tijn, a political journalist for “Vrij Nederland” (Free Netherlands), a left-leaning weekly (March 4, 1967, p. 7), Luud Schimmelpenninck, who originated the White Bicycle Plan and was the current representative for the Provo seat on the City Council, agreed with much that Rob Stolk had to say, including the observation that confrontation with the police would continue, even as he found it positive that Provo had given the nozems (delinquents) something to believe in and fight for. He felt that “Provo”, the magazine, was more important than the seat on the City Council, but thought the movement needed to find a new message. Possibly the newspaper “Provo” could develop into a political journal. The Provo movement, according to Schimmelpenninck, had been a pacesetter, participating in the first demonstration against the Vietnam War, a function now taken over by other organizations. He also felt that something along the lines of Robert Jasper Grootveld’s present project, adapting Americans as a race of loveable idiots, might signal a novel approach for the movement to take. At this time Grootveld had moved to Copenhagen, Denmark where he was busily preparing his new theory. Of this new theory Schimmelpenninck said that it was characteristically “Provo”, in that it was an idea that no one else had thought of before, and that in Amsterdam demonstrators against the War were passing out chewing gum. This was an echo of Lyndon Johnson’s visit to the Netherlands when he was the Vice-President of the United States, just a few weeks before President Kennedy was assassinated. On the occasion of his visit Johnson had passed out chewing gum, a blatantly American commodity (and habit) to Dutch crowds. This gift of chewing gum was widely commented upon in the Dutch press.

The “ceremonial” death of the Provo movement occurred on May 20th 1967 at the Speaker’s Corner in the Vondelpark, Amsterdam’s mile-long park near the city center, named for the 17th century playwright Joost van den Vondel, the “Dutch Shakespeare”. As “Vrij Nederland” characterized it “several hundred Provos, journalists, photographers, members of parliament, plain clothes policemen and Harry Mulisch” assembled for the late afternoon event. A number of people made speeches, among them, Roel van Duyn who called for the movement to continue its operation under a different name, whereas Rob Stolk said that Provo no longer had a reason to exist in light of the disappearance of so many who had made Provo great: burgemeester Gijsbert van Hall, who had been fired two days earlier, Police Chief Van der Molen, also fired, and the Minister of Justice Jan Smallenbroek, who had to resign after being involved in a hit-and-run accident a few days after the June 14th riots. Hans Tuynman called for the continuation of illegal activity and Jaap Ham, a rank-and-file Provo opposed the dissolution of Provo, because he earned his living by selling issues of the magazine, crying, “The bread has been stolen right out of our mouths”.

Many people spoke in favor of continuing some of the Provo activities: the magazine, the boat, and the movie house. Then too, a decision needed to be made about

Luud Schimmelpenninck's seat on the City Council. One suggestion was to sell the seat to D-66, a new left-of-center party. However, a member of the crowd protested, saying that Provo owed something to the 13,000 people who voted them into office. Finally, it was agreed to let Schimmelpenninck continue in office so that his White Bicycle Plan could be presented to the City Council. The meeting gradually disintegrated and the crowd moved on to the Lieverdje, where "friendly songs" were sung for the police, who gladly obliged by breaking up the final Provo assembly, as the Lieverdje had become a forbidden area for assembly.

The Unpredictability of the Provos

Unpredictability was the watermark of the Provo movement, and so long as matters stayed that way the police couldn't successfully contain them, and so long as they were unpredictable Provo could count on the adhesion of a sizeable public following. And being unpredictable they could capture and mirror the "collective unconscious" of a considerable part of the Amsterdam populace. Possibly by entering the municipal elections in June 1966 they committed a fatal error; they made themselves predictable. They gave up the elements of suspense and surprise that had constituted its main weapons of attack and counterattack.

To use Jean-Paul Sartre's term the "Fused Group" (or revolutionary mob) can be viewed as the unpredictable moment in history, a moment that can only be prophesized but not predicted. And it is only in becoming predictable that the Fused Group loses its momentum, in becoming an organization. But again, this is what human beings crave on one level: predictability and organization, so that at a certain moment of revolutionary chaos people choose to live by the rules of an organization out of fear of the chaos engendered by the revolution. In studying the chaos of the unpredictable moment in history we may come to understand something of the tension of revolutionary creativity and why it cannot, or else why it should, be prolonged- the golden possibility of an alchemy of dialectical Time.

Provo and Chance

The Provo movement owed its successful momentum to a series of fortuitous incidents, and one incident in particular, as well as to the historical timing that the political will, heretofore hidden, of Dutch youth, validly reflected in a miniscule, obscure and newly formed splinter Anarchist group, manifested itself.

Had Princess Beatrix married a German nobleman named Heinrich or Friedrich or Wolfgang, instead of one named Claus the phenomenal magical energy ring of Robert Jasper Grootveld's Sabbath night incantations would not have found its circuit completion and subsequent release in an electrifying charge. Whether by Magic or by Destiny Grootveld had come upon the prophetic word with which he leapt onto the platform of an ominous teeter-totter whose fulcrum was "Klaas", and thereby sent the whole Kingdom of the Netherlands into a cataleptic spiral that momentarily threaten to unseat the Monarchy. And again, "Klaas" was the magical incantation, the fulcrum from which the phenomenal career of Provo propelled itself.

Had Magic never played any such role, then Beatrix certainly flaunted historic destiny when she chose to marry an ex-Nazi and still maintain her right of succession to the throne, It was ironic that the Princess had to marry this German and no other. He was 13 years her senior, so he barely qualified to be old enough to be drafted as a Nazi soldier. Had she married a German closer in age to herself, or one whose parents had an anti-Fascist record there would have been little ground for the public outrage that was to nourish the newly-born Provo movement.

Had Beatrix's sister, Princess Irene, not married a Spanish fascist only the year before there might not have been such a bitter outcry against the royal family in general. But all these things did indeed happen, as history and magic conspired to give the Netherlands a considerable jolt in 1965.

But there still remained one last connection to transmit this moment of magic energy from Robert Jasper Grootveld's incantation. And the self-appointed ministry for this act was to be the Dutch government. And this is where Provo enters the scene.

Had there not been such harsh repression against the isolated demonstrations opposing the marriage there would have been no flare-up in 1966. But again, allowing politicians to blunder this far, had they held the royal wedding in The Hague or at the Royal Palace of Queen Juliana in Soestdijk, there would have been little or no storm to ruffle the calm sea of Dutch life. But the Crown Princess and the Dutch government willed to have it otherwise. They defied the Grachtengordel, the magically endowed canal belt of central Amsterdam, and so the Monster of Amsterdam, prophetically diagnosed by Roel van Duyn, raised up its head (and its fist) and the enigmatically smiling and diminutive statue of the Lieverdje became the suddenly magnetic monument of the fleeting, illegal Republic of the Netherlands, the shadow republic of the spirit.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berg, J. van den. "Anatomie van Nederland" [Anatomy of the Netherlands] v. 1, pp. 146-147. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967.

Duyn, Roel van. "Het witte gevaar: een vademekum voor Provoos". Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 199-200.

“Happenings, Perpetuum Mobile”. Elseviers Weekblad July 16, 1966.

Mijn, Aad van der. “Provo na de dood van Provo”. [Provo After the Death of Provo] De Gids 1967, pp. 134-136.

POR #3 (Leeuwarden)

Sartre, Jean-Paul. “Critique of Dialectical Reason. I. Theory of Practical Ensembles”. London: Verso/New Left Books; New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Tijn, J. van. “De krenten zijn nu wel uitgedeeld: Provo in een nieuwe fase”. [The Raisins Have Been Parceled Out: Provo in a New Phase] Vrij Nederland March 4, 1967, p. 7.

Troeltsch, Ernst. “The Social Teachings of the Christian Church”. 2 vols. London: Allen & Unwin ; New York: Macmillan, 1931. [many subsequent editions]

“Borgharen”. Vrij Nederland Nov. 19, 1966.

“De dood van Provo” [The Death of Provo] Vrij Nederland May 20, 1967, p. 20.

APPENDIX 1 :: NEW BABYLON

New Babylon was the utopian vision of the future, conceived by the Dutch artist Constant Nieuwenhuys (born 1920) and eagerly adopted by the Provos, with his blessings, as their own. He likewise became identified with the Provo movement and was an important contributor to “Provo” magazine as well as being a candidate on the Provo list for the Amsterdam City Council. Constant is generally referred to by his first name. He had been a founder of the important abstract painters group, “Cobra”, that was

founded in 1947 and for whom he was one of the chief spokesmen (See Chapter 1). He left Cobra in 1951 and was eventually dismissed from the influential, Paris-based Internationale Situationiste, an ultra-left artists group, in 1960.

Constant's utopia was created for the population of a future world, some 50-100 years from 1965. Its citizens would pass their time in perpetual tourism, living in hotel-like accommodations, clustered every so many miles across the face of the Earth, in units of 25-50 hectares (equal to 100 acres per hectare, so that 50 hectares would equal about 8 square miles), that would be raised 16 meters (40 feet) from the ground, for the Earth's surface would be given over to agriculture, natural preserves and historic buildings and monuments. It makes many commentators shudder, for they can only foresee unsatisfying, perpetual youth-hostelling, mandatory for everyone, something that they would consider to be continual boredom.

Constant's utopia furnished the Provos with the battle cry of "New Babylon!" which they used in their ecological white plans campaign for a better and more livable Amsterdam and for a better quality of life in general. It also gave Provo a model that contrasted sharply with the present-day capitalist system and furnished them with a perspective for a radical socio-economic critique of society on a utopian plane.

Roel van Duyn was enthusiastic about Constant's vision. He referred to New Babylon as a cybernetic paradise in which total automation of the means of production would bring about total welfare, as well as a socialist-anarchist state in which authorities would be superfluous. People would be freed from work because labor would be done by computers and robots. "Living-time" would replace "work-time" and free time and creativity would be optimally developed. Then Man would be delivered from the drudgery of work and become the "Homo Ludens", the playing man, a concept developed by the Dutch historian, Johan Huizinga (but in a different context).

In a long article, "New Babylon", that appeared in "Provo" (and was subsequently anthologized in "Het slechste uit Provo" {The worst from "Provo", so titled as to avoid a lawsuit from the Dutch edition of "The Best From the Reader's Digest"}, Constant sketched his utopia at length. Machinery and robots would do the work heretofore done by mankind and would be the new proletariat. Automated factories would be built underground in order to avoid pollution. He did allow that some human work would still be needed, as not all labor can be automated. but added that mankind would collectively be liberated from work and free to engage in creativity, that the human potential was for creativity, which Constant felt would now be possible under such a new economy. He stressed the fact that technological development made such a vision feasible.

"Use" would be replaced by "Play" once people were freed of the necessity of working. They would be free to roam across the face of the Earth; fixed residence would be replaced by hotel accommodation. Transportation would become joy riding. Constant thought that the Provos White Bicycle Plan should be a "White Helicopter Plan". He characterized Robert Jasper Grootveld's Anti-Smoking Temple as an "anti-functional space", a place where function no longer reigned, but was replaced by play and the

pursuit of “useless activity”. Constant likewise viewed the Provo happenings at the Lieverdje as an enactment of his vision of New Babylon on a miniature scale.

It was his belief that automation would endanger capitalism by throwing too many workers out of work and, further, that socialism in the Communist nations was better able to handle the phenomenon of automation. However, he did make one accurate prediction. Writing in 1966 he predicted that by the year 2000 the Netherlands would merge into “a greater entity”, which turned out to be the European Union.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nieuwenhuys, Constant. “Opstand van de Homo Ludens”. [Revolt of Joyous Humanity] Bussum [Netherlands]: P. Brand, 1969.

“Het slechste uit Provo: een bloemlezing uit alle verschenen nummers van het tijdschrift Provo”; samengesteld en ingeleid door Roel van Duyn. [The Worst of Provo: an Anthology from all the Published Issues of the Magazine “Provo”, edited and introduced by Roel van Duyn] Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 71-79, 151.

APPENDIX 2 :: DADA INFLUENCES

Dadaism originated in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916, in the middle of the brutal First World War, at a “nightclub” called “Cabaret Voltaire”, when a group of expatriate artists who had fled from various countries, organized a series of outrageous and provocative anti-cultural manifestations that served as a desperate but total protest against a senseless war that engulfed almost the whole of Europe, protesting at the same time against what they felt were the obsolete art forms of European civilization. Indeed, the only adjectives fit to describe these presentations (as well as other activities of the group) are “dadaistic” and “surrealistic”, words that take their name from the two movements

that grew from the activities at the “Cabaret Voltaire”. Surrealism was a direct descendant of French Dadaism and surfaced in Paris in 1924. Somewhat ironically it should be noted that Vladimir Lenin lived across the street from the “Cabaret Voltaire”. At the time he was a Russian revolutionary living in exile, shortly before he was to emerge as the architect of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Like the degrees of latitude that diverge from Greenwich, England, Zurich would prove to be a Greenwich in the future history of revolutionary vision, as the revolution took a different form in Russia than it did in the arts of Western Europe. Although the Bolshevik Revolution was a huge success, at least initially, it didn’t embrace the vision of Dada. Laughter and success were unable to mix in revolutionary politics. In a sense this is why Provo died: they refused to take the fun out of success.

The history of Dadaism is well known. (See Hans Richter, “Dada, Art and Anti-Art”. New York, 1961, for example). Dadaism had a tremendous influence on almost every form of what might be called modern art. It was the exemplary avant-garde movement of the 20th century. En route it gave rise to the Surrealist movement and it still appeared as fresh as the day it was conceived when it resurfaced amidst receptive artists and intellectuals in the 1950’s. Among the art forms it influenced were happenings, theater of the absurd, sound poetry, concrete poetry, performance art, collage and mixed media in general. Dadaism also imparted a strong sense of irony to much of modern art. It might be said that Dada supplied the alphabet for much of the innovative artistic thought of the Western world at mid-century.

The Dada manifestos from 1916 through the 1920’s find their echo in the social sentiments of the 1960’s neo-Anarchist movements, Provo among others. Dada was totally anti-authoritarian, and ruthlessly so. The freedom of the individual was highly prized. From this perspective Dada can be seen as the artistic corollary of Anarchism.

Roel van Duyn had written in a campaign leaflet for the City Council elections that Provo was impossible to explain, for it was one of those rare historical phenomena, comparable (in his words) to the teachings of Socrates, the invention of printing, Halley’s comet or Dadaism. Admitting that this was putting it bombastically he asserted that the comparison with Dadaism was at least historically defensible. He notes that the Dadaists use terms such as “provocation and “to provoke” so frequently that he was surprised that they didn’t come up with the term “Provo” themselves. Significantly Van Duyn dedicates an entire chapter, of great length, the 5th of 9 chapters in his book, “Het witte gevaar” (The White Danger) to the history of Dadaism, with generous quotes from Hulsenbeck, Hugo Ball, Tristan Tzara, Hans (Jean) Arp, Raoul Hausmann and Theo van Doesburg, who were major figures in the Dadaist movement. Almost any Dadaist text gives one the sense of a spirit that is quite close to Provo.

By far the most direct Provo descendent of Dadaism was Robert Jasper Grootveld. His activity vividly recalled the Berlin Dadaist Johannes Baader, the self-proclaimed “Ober-Dada” (Supreme Dada) of the early 1920’s, and the language of Grootveld’s manifestos is close to much of the Dutch Dadaist Theo van Doesburg’s Dutch manifesto, “Wat is Dada”? (What is Dada?) of 1923. Van Duyn called Baader a

prophetic monomaniac who proclaimed himself to be Jesus Christ, returned to Earth. He wrote letters to the Kaiser (the Emperor of Germany) and to the French government. He was arrested at the outbreak of World War I because he was considered to be a danger to the State. In 1917 he was an unsuccessful candidate for parliament and in 1919 he broke up a meeting of the parliament in Weimar when he threw pamphlets over the heads of the astonished legislators, an incident that made headlines in the German press.

In the pamphlet, entitled “Das Grune Leiche” (The Green Corpse), he asks the German people if they are willing to give the Ober-Dada a free hand. He promises to bring them Order, Peace, Freedom and Bread. Earlier, in November 1918, he caused an uproar in the Berlin Cathedral when he yelled out in the midst of the service that Jesus Christ was a sausage. Pandemonium broke out and charges of blasphemy were brought against him.

Theo van Doesburg is best remembered as the founder of “De Stijl” group (pronounced “Style”, exactly as in English), the Dutch version of the Bauhaus. De Stijl’s best-known member was Piet Mondriaan, noted for his beautiful primary color paintings of black-edged rectangles in red, blue, yellow and white. Van Doesburg, who also painted, designed interiors and did architectural work in this style. At the same time he tirelessly attempted to introduce Dadaism into the Netherlands, with the assistance of German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters (who was not considered “Dada” by other German Dadaists). Van Doesburg and Schwitters toured the country in a series of riotous performances, during which Schwitters barked like a dog to substitute for his lack of knowledge of the Dutch language. (See Robert Motherwell. “The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology. New York, 1951, pages 275-276, for a delightful account of two of these evenings, written by Schwitters, which gives the flavor of the simultaneously charming and outrageous Dada soiree.). Van Doesburg also smuggled Dadaist poetry into the pages of “De Stijl”, the movement’s magazine of the same name, under the pseudonyms of I. K. Bonset and Aldo Camini. (See Joost Baljeu “Theo van Doesburg”. New York 1974 and K. Schippers “Holland Dada”. Amsterdam, 1974 (texts in Dutch and German) for more complete accounts of Van Doesburg). Van Doesburg’s most appropriate Dada text was the 14 page manifesto, “Wat is Dada?” Its language often recalls Grootveld’s manifestos that were delivered at the K. Temple and the Lieverdje, as well as Simon Vinkenoog’s manifestos from the happenings. It seems inconceivable that Van Doesburg, who died in 1931, would be unknown to the people who animated both the happenings scene and the Provo movement.

Van Duyn devotes a page to him in his own book, “Het witte gevaar”, with quotes from “Wat is Dada?” Van Doesburg declared that Dada didn’t think that life, art, religion, philosophy or politics had any spiritual content, but relied solely on publicity and the power of suggestion. He felt that people let themselves be manipulated by symbols that were repeated so often that they left an indelible impression: that religion was represented by the Cross, Nietzsche by his thick mustache, Oscar Wilde by his homosexuality, and so on. Dada realizes, he said, through experience that anyone can win over the masses for

anything, as long as one appeals to their atavistic instincts, through the powerful suggestion of publicity.

According to Van Doesburg Dada viewed every dogma or formula as a nail designed to keep afloat the sinking ship of Western civilization. Noting the falseness of everything, he says that Dada declares the world to be bankrupt, and identifies Dada as the international expression of collective experience for the past ten years, a reaction, obviously to the wanton destruction of human life in World War I. He added that Dada was “the most immediate expression of our formless times. Dada does not have any aspirations for immortality”. Or else, “Dada has always existed but was only discovered in our times”.

A comparison of the two movements shows that Dadaism was probably a model that influenced Robert Jasper Grootveld, but a model transcribed so masterfully by the Smoke Magician to the locale of Amsterdam and the time of the Sixties.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baljeu, Joost. “Theo van Doesburg”. New York: Macmillan, 1974. pp. 131-135.
- Duyn, Roel van. “Het witte gevaar”. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 103, 116-117, 121.
- Motherwell, Robert. “The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology”. New York, 1951. pp. 275-276.
- Richter, Hans. “Dada, Art and Anti-Art”. New York, 1965.
- Schippers, K. “Holland Dada”. Amsterdam: Querido, 1974. pp. 56-58.

APPENDIX 3 :: ANARCHIST ANTECEDENTS IN AMSTERDAM

Anarchism is a difficult political movement to define. The Anarchist tradition, long obscured by the more dominant tradition of Marxism, was a tradition with which the new spirit of the Sixties found easy identification because of its anti-authoritarian stance. Anarchism has its own greats: Proudhon, Kropotkin and Bakunin, as well as Thoreau, Tolstoy, the original Diggers of 17th century England, the Anarchists of Spain, Oscar Wilde, Sacco & Vanzetti, Gandhi, and much of the New Left of the Sixties, such as the Provos and the Enrages of Paris in May 1968.

In popular thought Anarchism is synonymous with chaos as a figurative term and visually equated with wild-eyed bomb throwers as a political stance. A dispassionate analysis of the history of Anarchism would show that politically it should be equated with Cooperativism. Anarchy as a political theory stands opposed to the concept of the State; indeed to any authoritarian power structure whatever. The New England town meeting, the later Count Tolstoy or Gandhi would be closer to the Anarchist idea than either the Weathermen of the late 1960's or the numerous assassins of the 19th and early 20th centuries, who fit the popular stereotype of Anarchism. Indeed, the later Diggers of the Haight-Ashbury hippie scene in San Francisco serve as a good American example of the "New Anarchism" or neo-Anarchism. Rudolf de Jong, a Dutch Anarchist historian, wrote that Anarchism is anti-Messianic, in that man must liberate himself from any authority, domination or prejudice, and not rely on a Redeemer, a Party, a group, or any other individual.

The confusion about Anarchism is due to the fact that there are two major strains of the movement: the cooperativist one, as symbolized by Kropotkine, and the individualist-terrorist one represented by Bakunine. These two Russians were the major Anarchists of the late 19th century, both of whom lived in exile in Western Europe. In the United States Anarchism was never a major political tradition or banner that people might easily recognize, such as was the case in Europe. The 1960's saw a somewhat romantic revival of the "Wobblies", the old I. W. W. (International Workers of the World) in the United States. Anarchist ideals and politics were put into practice, but often without full political or historical awareness of what was being done. In the Netherlands it was quite different, and in Amsterdam even more so.

Amsterdam has a rich Anarchist tradition, going back almost 100 years from 1965, so that it was no stranger to the city as a viable ideological orientation. It was possible for the Provo youth to be self-consciously Anarchist, aware as they were of their city's own past history. Robert Jasper Grootveld's father was an Anarchist and Grootveld, Stolk and Van Duyn might be called initiators of Dutch neo-Dadaist Anarchism.

Amsterdam had three great Anarchist revolts that never faded entirely from popular memory. First was the Palingproer (the Eel riots) of 1886, that grew out of an attempt by the police to ban the popular bare-handed eel fishing contest, waged by men standing unsupported on boats in the canals of the Jordaan quarter. The games were illegal. As a result of the police breaking it up in 1886 there was a spontaneous uprising. Comparison with police suppression of the Lieverdje happenings in 1965 is inescapable. In fact Van Duyn makes that same comparison. It was, on the face of it, a spontaneous, non-political uprising, but one rooted in the terrible poverty of the Jordaan at that time, coupled with bitter popular hatred of the police. The police came down hard on the people of the

Jordaan, but initially they were driven out of the Jordaan that Sunday by the inhabitants of the quarter. However, they returned in greater force the next day, which resulted in 26 deaths and more than 100 injured.

In 1917 the Aardappelreletjes (Potato Riots) erupted after the neutral Dutch government exported potatoes to both warring Britain and Germany during World War I at a handsome profit, but at the expense of the poor people of Amsterdam, whose staple food was potatoes (recall Vincent Van Gough's famous painting, "The Potato Eaters"). Fighting broke out once again in the Jordaan quarter and quickly spread throughout the city. Ten people were killed and 114 wounded, but the riots succeeded in putting a stop to the export of potatoes.

In 1934 there was a spontaneous revolt against the reduction in welfare payments, in the midst of the Depression. Again the revolt began in the Jordaan and spread swiftly to the other working class districts of Amsterdam, as well as to other Dutch cities. In Amsterdam barricades were thrown up in the streets and for six days the workers held out against the government in protest directed at both hunger and the police. Then "order" was restored. There were six dead and 120 wounded. Van Duyn calls these revolts "Anarchistic" rather than "Anarchist" because there was no consciously Anarchist group involved.

The great "classical" Anarchist leader in the Netherlands at the turn of the 20th century was Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis (1846-1919), who is still referred to by his middle name, Domela. He was, in sharp contrast to Anarchist theory, a strongly messianic figure greatly revered in his own lifetime and still widely honored at present. Although there were a great number of Anarchist groups and personalities in the Netherlands at this time Domela's charismatic career has tended to overshadow other Anarchist figures in popular memory. He began his career as a Lutheran minister, but soon changed vocation and published a newspaper "Recht voor Allen" (Justice for All), in 1879. In 1886 he was held accountable for the Palingoproer (Eel Riot) and arrested that same year for lesemajesteit when he wrote that the king "does not pay much attention to his job". He was imprisoned for seven months, in 1887, until widespread protests finally set him free. He later helped form the Social Democratic League in the Netherlands and became its first member in parliament. However, he soon grew disgusted with parliamentary socialism and eventually became an Anarchist. The great railroad strike of 1903 almost brought the country to the verge of an Anarchist revolution, with Domela Nieuwenhuis among the many leaders of the strike. But at a critical moment the Socialists broke with the striking workers and the government was able to crush what had grown into a revolt. Domela was worshipped as a saint in his own day and even in 1969, when students at the University of Amsterdam seized the Maagdehuis (the Administration Building) they renamed the university Domela Nieuwenhuis University. For a good biographical and analytical sketch of Domela in English see Rudolf de Jongh, "Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis: Anarchist and Messiah", in "Delta (Amsterdam) vol. 13 (Winter 1970-1971), pp. 65-78.

There were a number of interesting Anarchist movements in the Netherlands after Domela's death in 1919. One of them had a newspaper, "De Moker: opruiend blad voor jonge arbeiders" (The Sledgehammer: Inflammatory Newspaper for Young Workers), published in the 1920's. Van Duyn notes that in their manifesto they state that although they are few in number they will crush each segment of the chain of Capitalism "with a sledgehammer in our fist. We shall pulverize everything: the State and the factories, and the entire organization of this society that is based on crime and lack of character. We have been fooled for 2,000 years by Love and Meekness. We shall incite people to hate, to vengeance, and to destruction"!

Another group was the I. A. M. V., the Internationale Anti-Militaristische Vereniging (1904-1940), the most successful movement in the Netherlands. Its international name notwithstanding, it ended up being a totally Dutch organization. It was not actually Anarchist but pacifist, organizing a campaign against people volunteering for military service and advocated independence for the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). One of their campaigns was reminiscent of Grootveld's "kanker" (cancer) campaigns in pre-Provo Amsterdam. The I. A. M. V. pasted skulls on the recruiting posters of the Indisch Leger (Dutch East Indies Army), that showed a happy soldier cycling in the tropical sun, with the word "Handgeld" (spending money) running across the poster, which they pasted over with a different word, "Bloedgeld" (blood money).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

De Jong, Rudolf. "Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis: Anarchist and Messiah". Delta (Amsterdam) vol. 13, #4 (Winter 1970-1971), pp. 65-78.

Duyn, Roel van. "Pre-Provo Anarchisme". Het slechste uit Provo Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1967. pp. 44-65.

Duyn, Roel van. "Het witte gevaar". Amsterdam :Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 33-37, 44-45.

APPENDIX 4 :: PROVOS IN THE PROVINCES

Although Amsterdam was the birthplace and metropolis of the Provo movement and remained the heart and head of the phenomenon throughout its two year existence the movement spread rapidly through the Dutch language area during the fall of 1965, making its appearance in every major and even some smaller cities in both the Netherlands and the Flemish areas of Belgium, including Brussels, the bilingual capital of the Belgians. However, Provo failed to materialize as an international movement, due, I believe, to its isolation in the Dutch language. Events were simply moving too fast for the necessary translation of its message and thoughts into other languages.

Almost always present in these fledgling groups was a small offset Anarchist “underground” paper, whose name was usually synonymous with that of the local “Provo” group. As always, the printed newspaper served as the nucleus of these loosely organized little groups. Along with their happenings the papers were the most distinct manifestations of each of the local movements. Another characteristic common to the various provincial groups was an ersatz Lieverdje, for the happenings of each of these groups were organized around an appropriate local statue.

These little newspapers were always published in “Nederlands”, called Dutch on one side of the border and Flemish on the other. This rapid conflagration or contagion, which the right wing sensationalist press called the “Lieverdje Sickness”, halted instantly at the linguistic frontier, even though it easily crossed the border into Flanders. Belgium however, is politically and socially a radically different country from the Netherlands and had, at the time, surprisingly minimal contact with its immediate neighbor to the north. Brussels illustrates the linguistic isolation of Provo quite well. Although the city had an active Provo group among the Flemish, a French language group failed to materialize, even though there were plans to publish “Provo” in French for distribution in Brussels and Paris. There was contact with England and Germany, which likewise got nowhere. Self-proclaimed “Provos” even raised their heads in the United States: Los Angeles, Berkeley and Davis, site of a University of California campus, among other places. One legacy of this “invisible” heritage is Provo Park (formerly Constitution Square) across the street from the Berkeley City Hall. Unfortunately Provo short-circuited before it could effectively transmit itself into an international phenomenon. Probably the life-spark of the Provo impulse had spent itself too quickly before the necessary process of translation could get under way.

Probably the most interesting and most original group in the Dutch provinces was “Ontbijt Op Bed” (Breakfast in Bed), in the city of Maastricht, in the extreme southeast corner of the Netherlands, the provincial capital of Dutch Limburg. They grouped around a magazine of the same name. Van Duyn calls them “the most creative Provo group outside of Amsterdam”. He contrasts Ontbijt Op Bed with Provo, implying that they were more violent in the tenor of their statements. The Wit Wham-Bom (White Wham!-Bomb) idea, which he quotes at length from “Ontbijt Op Bed” #5, is more sharply edged in its tone than are the Provo declarations and its humor is of a darker shade.

“The White -WHAMMM!!!! Is the booby trap under God’s ass”. It would, as the manifesto further states, be the bomb under the pulpits and the altars, the policeman’s cap, NATO tanks and jets, a bomb to be found in the keel of battleships, under the Dutch throne and in the beds of corporate presidents. The manifesto calls for the destruction of the homes of the authorities, as well as of churches and automobiles; further, it calls for destroying Rembrandt’s paintings and indeed, all “Great Art”. “Strike down the concerts of Mozart, the Gregorian chants. Bach is dead, Bach is dead, Bach is dead!!! Crack open the Earth, crumble it up, open an abyss for the presidents and prelates, the flag and the fatherland. Burn, White-WHAMMM!!!! Anyone can make a Deluxe-Bomb. Everyone his own white Whammm!!!!”

Aside from *Ontbijt Op Bed* there was a second more “orthodox” (as Van Duyn calls them) group of Provos who staged happenings around the local Geis statue, beginning in April 1966. These events were never covered in the local press because of an agreement between the press and the police, not to furnish the movement with any publicity. However, Van Duyn notes that such secrecy came to an end when the police took the Geis statue from its pedestal and locked it up. In September 1966 a second Provo magazine appeared in Maastricht, called “Lynx”, and had the same name as the Provo paper in The Hague. Note that “Lynx” is usually meant as a member of the cat family that inhabits Canada. It made its appearance among the Provos only as a pun on the Dutch word “links”, meaning “Left”. Van Duyn stated that it was more politically oriented than *Ontbijt Op Bed*.

Van Duyn specifically identifies other Provo groups in Utrecht, Leeuwarden, Vaals, Amersfoort, Leiden and Dordrecht, among other Dutch cities. He also notes smaller groups abroad, in Stockholm (Skyt), London, Manchester, Oxford, Paris, Milan, Prague (many arrests, as he notes), New York, Chicago and Philadelphia.

In Brussels there were two favored sites for Provo activity, the Place de Brouckere at the northern rim of the city center and the Porte Louise, the “official” southern entry to the center of the city. Happenings always took place at the same time, 5:00 P. M. on Saturday afternoon, every week, regardless of the weather. The police made more than 50 arrests at a dozen happenings in the peak period, from October 1966 to the end of the year. In a particularly Belgian variant of the happening the Belgian Provos hung up a white flag bearing the word “Provo” on the steps of the Church of the Peres Carmes in Brussels. A bale of straw at the foot of the steps of the church was then set afire in order to attract public attention, as a Provo speaker urged the crowd that gathered to demonstrate against the war in Vietnam. The speaker opposed Cardinal Spellman’s (of New York) declaration that called the American military “Soldiers of Christ”. The gendarmes (Belgian police) arrived shortly. The Provo in charge of keeping an eye on the fire was put under arrest, as were two others who were passing out leaflets. The speaker fled into the church, but the gendarmes dared not follow him. Finally, they entered the church in order to arrest him, causing a commotion because they failed to remove their caps. The Provo orator quietly left by another door. Frustrated, the police arrested a dozen people in the crowd on the front steps of the church

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Duyn, Roel van. “Het witte gevaar”. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1967. pp. 213-215.

Vassart, Christian et Racine, Aimee. "Provos et provotariat: un an de recherche participante en milieu provo. Bruxelles: Centre d'Etude de la Delinquance Juvenile, 1968. (CEDJ publication no. 21) pp. 41-43.

APPENDIX 5 :: THE KABOUTERS (1970)

On June 3rd, 1970, a new Dutch Anarchist group, the Kabouters, the Dutch equivalent, more or less, of Leprechauns (pronounced: Ka-Bow-Ters) attracted international attention overnight when they won 5 of the 45 seats on the Amsterdam Gemeenteraad (City Council) as well as winning two seats each on councils in The Hague and Leeuwarden and one seat apiece in Arnhem, Alkmaar and Leiden. Their parliamentary "leader" in Amsterdam was Roel van Duyn, who was actually being re-elected to the single seat originally won by the Provos in 1966, a seat that was held on a rotating basis of one-year terms, a practice peculiar to the Provos. Van Duyn's turn finally came in 1969, as he was #5 on the Provo list in 1966.

When Roel van Duyn took his seat on the City Council the Provos had been reincarnated, in a fashion, in a group called Oranje Vrijstaat, the Orange Free State, a double pun of sorts on the royal Dutch House of Orange and the South African Boer Republic of the 19th century, as well as the Kabouter name for the “liberated zone” of the new Anarchist communes and cooperative businesses that were now operating in the Netherlands. Van Duyn wrote a council memorandum to create the “Volksuniversiteit voor Sabotage Teknieken” (Peoples University for Sabotage Techniques).

One objective of the Kabouter movement, founded in January 1970, was to set up an alternative society based on Van Duyn’s ideas as stated in his recently published book, “De boodschap van een wijze Kabouter” (The Message of a Wise Kabouter). The “Krant van Oranje Vrijstaat Arnhem” (Newspaper for the Orange Free State of Arnhem) said that Van Duyn’s struggles as a Provo were based on despair, but that this changed when he read Kropotkine. The article identifies the Provo movement as “Bakunist” Anarchist, based on terror and violence, and the Kabouters as cooperativist Anarchists, based on the work of Kropotkine.

The Kabouters were primarily visible in Amsterdam but had membership in about 35 Dutch cities. At the peak of the movement’s activity, around June 1970, about 500 people were attending the weekly open meetings, where plans and policies were discussed. A year later membership had dwindled to 20 people.

The Amsterdam movement published 12 issues of the “Kabouterkrant” (Kabouter Newspaper) in 1970. It concentrated on information about meetings and local Amsterdam activities, rather than discussing political ideas, historical background, or current issues such as Vietnam and Angola, as had been the case with “Provo” magazine. There was little discussion of broader issues. Indeed, entire issues of the “Kabouterkrant” make no mention of international affairs. Physically the “Kabouterkrant” was more “professional” in appearance, in tabloid format, numbering about 12 pages per issue, with many photographs and a self-conscious layout that seems too “heavy”, sometimes creating a visually trying page full of story headlines. Ink is more evenly distributed than was the case with “Provo”. Every letter of every word is visible, again, in contrast to “Provo”. The color of the ink varies with each issue: An entire issue might come out in purple or olive drab or brown. Issue #9 was printed in black on orange paper, greatly hindering the legibility of the texts.

The Kabouters were organized into various “departments”, which roughly corresponded to government ministries and acted as the shadow government for the alternative society of the Oranje Vrijstaat. The departments included Bejaardenhulp (Help for the Elderly), Cultuur, Voedsel (Food), Huisvesting (Housing), Onderwijs (Education), Alternatieve Banen (Alternative Jobs), and Sabotage. Bejaardenhulp was the strongest department and survived the collapse of the Kabouter movement, having existed prior to the movement. The Kabouters were an outgrowth of the ecological platform of the Provo’s White Plans and featured “Groenen Planen” (Green Plans”, such as Roel van Duyn’s idea to have plants growing in boxes on top of automobiles and, if possible, to have the automobiles drive on sunken roadways so that pedestrians would

only see a procession of moving greenery. The idea, which seems (characteristically) facetiously provocative, was to bring greenery into the city. Van Duyn actually introduced this plan as a motion before the City Council.

The Kabouter members of the city councils considered themselves to be ambassadors to the Netherlands from the Oranje Free State collectives, for the Kabouters viewed themselves as outsiders. The word “Klootjesvolk” (See Chapter 3) was replaced with “Trol” (Trolls), who were the polluting “bad guys”. The fairy tale and elfish imagery of the Kabouters proved quite irritating to a number of people. Rob Stolk, who was now active in the Nieuwemarkt neighborhood activist program in central Amsterdam, felt that the Kabouters were not negative enough in their outlook.

The Kabouters most famous activity was “kraken”: they “cracked” or squatted empty buildings by the dozen. The Netherlands has been the most densely populated country in the world for about five centuries, with the situation aggravated by the high percentage of water and soggy reclaimed farmland suitable only for agriculture. People waited for years before getting married because they had to continue living with their parents until they could find suitable housing of their own. Therefore the action of “liberating” unused empty buildings from speculative absentee landlords was supported by Dutch public opinion. The police and municipal officials often (but not always) came down hard on these activities.

The Kabouters fell apart as a movement primarily because of internal dissention, according to Roel van Duyn. The main issue was whether to participate as a party in the national parliamentary elections, in May 1971. The movement split down the middle on this issue. Many Kabouters felt that the electoral process was not Anarchist and consequently they entered the elections divided and failed to make gains. The electoral loss served to collapse the movement overnight. There was also disagreement among the five Kabouter members on the City Council. Two of them were strong advocates for the legalization of marijuana and smoked it in chamber sessions. Van Duyn disagreed with their tactic and also felt that it was not an important issue. These same two people threw a stink bomb during a City Council meeting, forcing the chamber to adjourn for an hour.

There was also a “ludic” element in the Kabouter movement, particularly among the members from The Hague. In the 1970 municipal election campaign the 23 Kabouter candidates for the 45 council seats in The Hague posed in the nude in the Haagse Bos (The Hague Woods), in a campaign poster group portrait. This poster was perhaps the most famous single manifestation of the Kabouter movement. Nudity was a constant feature of The Hague Oranje Vrijstaat. The group put on a witches play at a national Kabouter picnic in Amersfoort that ended with the cast throwing off its costumes, climaxing literally in fornication. However, this tenor of behavior did not reflect the conduct of the national movement as a whole. Another ludic action was the “Jericho Actie” (Jericho Action) in which several hundred Amsterdam supporters of the Kabouters marched seven times around the huge building of the Nederlandse Bank, an unpopular new “skyscraper” recently built in the old center of Amsterdam. However, they were not

successful in causing the building to collapse. In attempting to ape Joshua, the Old Testament prophet who used this method to collapse the walls of the fortifications of the ancient city of Jericho they failed, the probable cause of such failure being the missing ingredient of Divine intervention.

Provo would prove to be a hard act to follow in any circumstance. Almost everyone felt, however, that something had to be done to follow up on Provo. Robert Jasper Grootveld and several people from *Ontbijt Op Bed* (Breakfast in Bed), from Maastricht, set up a group called Delta in 1968, with some offbeat ideas. Rob Stolk was an Anarchist activist in the Amsterdam working class district of the Nieuwemarkt, and the Kabouters were probably the best-known attempt at a revival of a Provo-like movement. However, only a few of the original Provos participated in the Kabouter movement, such as Roel van Duyn, Luud Schimmelpenninck and Hans Tuynman.

Comparison with the Provo movement leaves the Kabouters coming off a poor second. The marvelous Provo sense of punning was almost totally absent. The Kabouter ideas were more mundane and their sense of humor more anodyne. If there was a single major ingredient lacking it was Robert Jasper Grootveld. The Kabouters were sorely in need of a “magician”. Their scope of operation and thought was almost completely limited to local issues, which circumscribed their political horizon. Perhaps the main problem for the movement was its homogeneity: young middle class Anarchists. There was no fruitful fusion of other groups. The nozems or another equally provocative equivalent was lacking. The emphasis of the Kabouters was more political than artistic. In the political arena the student groups tended to be hostile to the Kabouters, often leaning towards the Dutch Communist Party. To many the Kabouters seemed to be reformed flower children of the Sixties playing at social work.

However, in all fairness to the Kabouters it must be said that they did make an impressive showing: 40,000 Amsterdammers voted for them in June 1970 and they appeared to be serious in their attempt to set up an alternative citywide communal society in Amsterdam. They acted to coordinate many unaffiliated alternative groups and seemed headed for some measure of success. The Kabouters operated many stores, alternative clothing factories, farms and other economic and social endeavors that bore fruit. Their newspapers and activities compared favorably with what was happening in the United States. Perhaps the idea of setting up an alternative society within the confines of an already existing society, even with the best intentions, was doomed to failure.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alverson, Charles. “The Kabouters Are Coming! Good Scenes and Bad in the Amsterdam Summer”. *Rolling Stone* Oct 15, 1970. pp. 29-31.

Grey Fox. “The Dutch Kabouters” [Interview with Roel van Duyn, in English] Roots (Ecology Action East, New York) #2 (1971), pp. 3-13.

Kabouterkrant (Amsterdam) # 1-12 (1970).

Regtien, Ton & Boehmer, Konrad. Van Provo tot Oranje Vrijstaat. Amsterdam: Socialistische Uitgeverij, 1970.

Vrij Nederland (Amsterdam) June 13, 1970, p. 5.

APPENDIX 6 :: SARTRE’S CONCEPT OF THE FUSED GROUP (Analytical Applications to the Neo-Anarchist Groups of the 1960’s)

Jean-Paul Sartre’s “Critique of Dialectical Reason”, originally published in French in 1960 and subsequently in English in 1976, is a landmark book of great theoretical potential in many areas of social and political thought. The influence of this book has yet to be fully felt, due to several factors: Sartre’s political independence, often viewed as political unreliability, as well as the opaqueness of the philosophical text.

Sartre's "Critique" is an existentialist re-evaluation of Karl Marx's Marxism, as opposed to the Marxism of the various Communist parties, an exercise that attempts to place Marxist thought in an historical context that simultaneously sets it in philosophical opposition to Kantian analytical thinking, to emphasize anew its close relationship to Hegel's thought, as well as to disavow what is now labeled as "vulgar Marxism" and the polemical stance of the late Soviet and other Communist parties. This approach has the effect of re-situating Marxism in the mainstream of Western intellectual thinking rather than in the shallow and mechanistic 19th century so-called "scientific" mode adopted by the various Communist parties. One significant effect of Sartre's re-examined theses has become apparent: his 1960 opus proved to be prophetic for that which occurred in the late 1960's on an international scale, perhaps best exemplified by the May 1968 revolt in France, or again, in the Provo movement.

The various Sixties movements, whose history vindicates Sartre's methodology, can be characterized as neo-Anarchist. These movements (or groups) were usually conscious of this identity and applied the term Anarchist to themselves. Among the movements were the May 1968 revolt in France, the Haight-Ashbury Diggers of San Francisco, the Yippies and the anti-Vietnam War movement, both in the United States, the Provos and Kabouters in the Netherlands, Gli Indiani Metropolitani in Italy, the S.D.S. in (West) Germany, the rank-and-file takeover of the labour movement (Trade Unions Congress) in Great Britain, and the Zengakuren in Japan. The "Critique" provides an intelligible model of explanation for what happened, as well as for what did not happen, in the various movements of the 1960's. The "Critique" also provides the possibility for future Anarchist movements to consider as an analytical tool for modifying Anarchist courses of action in the future.

2. May 1968 and the Provos

The many neo-Anarchist movements that surfaced in the Sixties tend to show similar structural affinity in spite of predictable differences stemming from their varied cultural and national backgrounds. The French revolt of 1968 and the Provo movement offer examples of such a modality of shared characteristics: spontaneity, rejection of the Sartrean "Pledge" (i. e., the adherence to an institutionalized organizational structure), rejection of political Marxism, an awareness of the Anarchist tradition, a strong measure of art and humor, no expectation of great success (that each movement enjoyed to a great degree), and the swift rush of events once these movements made their impact felt, bringing the country involved close to the brink of a civil war, and a momentary glimpse of the impossible dream of total revolution, through an unexpected alliance of youth and labor ("For a brief moment, France tasted life beyond alienation", as Mark Poster wrote), the resistance of official union hierarchy to any spontaneous revolt, the opposition, in no uncertain terms, by the Communist parties where they existed. Many of these characteristics were also present in the United States, in the peace movement, though sometimes diluted, probably because the workers and the "students" remained polarized on political issues. The point to be made is that the Dutch and French examples set up a

typology for Sixties Anarchist revolt, for which Sartre's analysis of social groups, and most particularly of the "Fused Group" serves as an excellent tool for understanding what had occurred.

In his book "Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser", Mark Poster traces the events of May 1968, saying that no one anticipated what was about to occur. In the course of the revolt people overcame social alienation. French people began to talk to one another and tap the creative potential that had lain dormant. The passive daily existence of meaningless work and consumption "gave way to an exhilarating, joyous festival". Poster calls the May Revolt in France a classical Fused Group. The Provos, too, might be considered as such.

The revolt had been the result, albeit a result unforeseen by anyone for its spectacular success, of an unusual tactical ploy by "March 22nd", the Anarchist group of Daniel Cohn-Bendit at Nanterre University in suburban Paris, that of provoking the university authorities of the Sorbonne to call in the police onto the "sacred grounds" of the university, a place where the police never went, by tradition. Arrests were made and the students who happened to be there as bystanders and witnessed what was occurring, began to battle the police themselves, similar to what had occurred in Amsterdam. The "battle" at the Sorbonne on May 3rd, 1968 quickly escalated into a civil war. In Sartrean terms the student bystanders witnessed the "other" when they saw their fellow students being loaded into police vans. What Mark Poster describes as the formation of "groups-in-fusion", or a spontaneous reaction, took place when the students tried to prevent the arrests from taking place, thereby breaking the atomic seriality (or existence) present in everyday life.

Poster points out that the Communist Party denounced the student uprising as a frivolous adventure, much as the Dutch Communist Party had done two years earlier with respect to the Provos. These neo-Anarchists were also far more playful than the grim, old-line Marxists: "Proletarian revolutions will be festivals, or they will not be, for the life they herald will itself be created in festivity. Play is the ultimate rationality of this festival, living without boredom and enjoying without limitation are the only rules to be recognized". (from "De La Misere en milieu etudiant"). This same joyful concept existed in the Netherlands, where the title of Johan Huizinga's famous book. "Homo Ludens" (Latin for Man-at-Play) became a battle cry of the Provo movement.

However, "in the end, the action committees didn't seize state power and they were charged with anarchic spontaneity" (Poster, p. 375). A strong effort was made to form a central organizing group, but this failed through the divisiveness of the various groups. Much the same thing happened in the Netherlands, both with the Provos and with subsequent Anarchist groups, in the period 1966-1970. Both Sartrean and Communist critiques of the French revolt and other Anarchist movements would cite the refusal to institutionalize as the prime cause for the failure of these revolts. In Communist phraseology it would be that the student groups didn't rightly represent the workers.

The great battle cry of the May 1968 revolt was “Autogestion” (Workers Control), which was the student’s “notion of free choice of one’s destiny in collective action...” (Poster, p. 385). This would, however, have become reformist if private ownership of capital were to be left intact. Later Dutch Anarchists, such as the *Kabouters*, tended to withdraw into smaller, insular alternative economic units, such as communes, “free stores”, and cooperative printing shops, more like the American model of communes and were likewise isolated, surrounded by a dominant society that failed to collapse in the face of such collectivist opposition. In France the non-Communist Left was confused, which resulted in a power vacuum. President De Gaulle cleverly stepped in and reaffirmed his hold on state power.

By understanding Sartre’s concepts of the Fused Group (the spontaneous Revolt) and the Pledge (but here in the refusal to take it by institutionalizing a party bureaucracy) there can be an understanding of these neo-Anarchist movements, for this decade marks the first historically conscious employ of dialectical circularity on a reversible basis, less evident in France, than in the Netherlands, where the *Provos* voted themselves out of existence, or in San Francisco, when the *Hippies* created a funeral service for the *Haight-Ashbury* district in October 1967.

3. The Fused Group and the Pledge

Sartre’s “Critique of Dialectical Reason” consists primarily of a single first volume entitled “Theory of Practical Ensembles”, which is a phenomenological investigation of the various modalities or forms of social formation. As a foregone given, material scarcity exists throughout human history. Therefore mankind has banded together in larger or smaller groups in order to better realize whatever stated practical aims the members of the group wished to accomplish. Scarcity likewise produced alienation of man from himself as he had to surrender much of his life to the maintenance of economic sustenance. And so another goal of social groups becomes the struggle to banish alienation from their ranks. However, an inescapable contradiction comes into play, for Sartre will maintain that the very modality of the social group in which alienation is not to be found, the Fused Group, is so unstable (is lacking in ontological essence) that it must reintroduce alienation in order to maintain itself, although this is always done unwittingly. Individuals join the groups in order to become more numerous, but there has to be group discipline to some degree in order for the rebellious group to survive.

What eventually emerges when a Fused Group does succeed in maintaining itself are those group modalities known as the Organization and the Institution, that are the

antithesis of the Fused Group and yet are the practical means of organizing and realizing the tangible aims of some of the original group's revolutionary ideas.

The Fused Group springs out of the alienated seriality (atomized existence) characteristic of most human groupings, for which Sartre gives the example of people waiting in line at a bus queue in order to be transported to their various places of work. He calls it the basic type of sociality. These impersonal gatherings are also called collectivities in Sartre's terminology. Historically (or temporally) one does not take precedence over the other; their relationship partaking rather of the nature of a reversible reaction. He does state, however, that "groups constitute themselves as...negations of collectives". (Sartre, p. 348) However, in the Sartrean dialectic the group can relapse into a collectivity, such disintegration being predictable beforehand.

Sartre seeks "to explain the transition of oppressed classes from the state of being collectives to that of revolutionary group praxis" (Sartre, p. 349) This transformation occurs when an oppressed group is pushed to a limit where life is no longer possible under conditions that the oppressors have imposed upon those whom they oppress. The oppressed group identifies a situation in which they perceive a common danger to themselves and define themselves by a common objective that in turn identifies a common praxis (course of action).

Sartre's classic example of the Fused Group, taken from the pages of the French Revolution, occurred when the revolutionary mob from the district of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine in Paris stormed the Bastille prison on July 14th 1789 under duress of threat from the royal militia. He notes, "In this way it [the militia] helped the gathering to perceive its own reality as an organized being". (Sartre, p. 356) Much the same operation was repeated on May 3rd 1968 when the police moved into the courtyard of the Sorbonne to arrest Daniel Cohn-Bendit and his Nanterre colleagues, immediately creating a Fused Group, and, in a very real sense, the student revolt that was to cripple the French nation; or again, in Amsterdam, when various police attacks transformed four dozen amateur Anarchists into a national political force.

So it is in a dialectical opposition between alienated, serialized individuals and an antagonistic police force of the State that a fusion of people takes place in what Sartre calls an "apocalypse". Indeed, no better word can be found for describing how the May 1968 Revolt and the Provo movement sprang so spectacularly into existence. "And this group, though still unstructured, that is to say, entirely amorphous, is characterized by being the direct opposite of "alterity" (alienation). (Sartre, p. 357)

Groups form as a result of a dialectical negation and not as a result of praxis, so that the repressive arm of the state, the police, can be interpreted as being the principle catalyst in forming revolutions, better than any professed program of a dedicated cell of revolutionaries.

Sartre observes that the aim of the Fused Group is usually reformist. He cites a strike of the silk weavers in Lyon who were not combating alienation and exploitation,

but were rather opposing a reduction of their wages, that is, what Sartre calls a restoration of the status quo. He then goes on to say that their action negated such a restoration because society was no longer the same after the revolt.

In this context one can recall the peace movement in the United States, which opposed an illegal and unconstitutional war being fought in Vietnam. Likewise both the May Revolt and the Provo movement were stigmatized by the Communist parties of their countries as being reformist. In fact Anarchist activity is traditionally based on the improvement of existing conditions rather than establishing a “dictatorship of the Proletariat”.

However, the Fused Group is unstable: “A group is not(...the more beings or inert materiality it contains): it constantly totalizes itself and disappears either by fragmentation (dispersal) or by ossification (inertia)”. (Sartre, p. 407) Which is to say that, once the mob or group accomplishes the immediate goal on hand, it disintegrates. This tended to be the paradigmatic characteristic of the movements of the Sixties.

To counteract this tendency the members of the group take that which Sartre calls the “Pledge”, in which the individual subjects himself to the discipline of the group, thus limiting his own personal freedom in order to act as a guarantee against dispersal. Thus the members of a spontaneous mob of a hastily formed Fused Group now become a membership. Sartre defines the Pledge: “When freedom becomes common praxis and grounds the permanence of the group by producing its own inertia through itself and in mediated reciprocity”. (Sartre, p. 419)

And this moment in the dialectical historical process, which Sartre is describing, is important, for it is here that Anarchists stop and at which almost all the movements of the Sixties have balked. They refuse to take the Pledge. Traditionally the Anarchist does not surrender his individual personal freedom to the larger entity of the group, an action that was reaffirmed in the movements of the Sixties. As already noted the Provos voted themselves out of existence and the Hippies of San Francisco held their own funeral. They were refusing to become institutions or commodities. Sartre has stated that the permanent Fused Group is an impossibility. The Sixties was predicated on just this declared impossibility as a first principle. The result was dispersion. But again, this dispersion, total as it was, was a negation of the bureaucratization that followed in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. A Soviet-like regime was something that the Sixties neo-Anarchists wished to avoid at any cost. Analytically, Sartre’s model of the Fused Group with its inexorable march, via the Pledge, towards Organization, Institution and Alienation, is correct, but it was theoretically rejected by the neo-Anarchist Left as a possible dialectical *modus operandi*.

4. Sartre and Neo-Anarchism

Sartre's "Critique", supplying as it does, an excellent tool for the 1960's, and Sartre's own generous statement of support for the May 1968 revolt seem initially to indicate a reconciliation of attitude between neo-Anarchism and Sartrean or Existential Marxism. However, it is more likely that this similarity exists on the level of praxis (practice) than of theory. A number of factors contribute to confusion on this issue. First, Sartre would not, and this was consistent on his part, oppose the action of a Fused Group: he was not one to blow an ideological whistle on a mob attacking the proverbial Bastille. His endorsement of May 1968 was an endorsement of praxis as it occurs in the dialectical moment of the Fused Group, but was not an endorsement of the rebellion's neo-Anarchist theorizing. However, Sartre modified his concept of Need in terms of material scarcity. He wrote, "The consciousness of the intolerable character of the system must therefore no longer be sought in the impossibility of satisfying elementary needs, but...in the consciousness of alienation..." (Sartre (1974), p. 125) This important modification in his theory brought him somewhat closer to the conditions of the neo-Anarchist outlook. Secondly, Sartre and the neo-Anarchists became part of the spectrum of the non-Communist Left in France and other countries. Sartre spoke of the irreconcilable differences that existed between the Communist parties and any Fused Group.

Sartre's own view on Anarchism, as expressed in the "Critique", sees it as an historical moment whose time and contributions have passed. He did credit with contributing to the initial growth of French syndicalism (the union movement). He evidently viewed the May 1968 Revolt as Anarchist, for he wrote, in response to a question about May 1968, "It is obvious that Anarchism leads nowhere, today as yesterday". (Sartre (1974), p. 60)

In his enthusiasm for May 1968 and for what he terms "Existential Marxism", Mark Poster tends to push the case for reconciliation too far, although such eventuality cannot be completely ruled out. The major practical problem of reconciling the Anarchist refusal to take the Pledge, with the large presence of social and political phenomena which "rest" in institutionalization remains to be resolved. This question was left unanswered by the various Sixties movements. Future generations of rebels will need to find a creative solution to the problem. Sartre wrote, "...this is where the problem lies. We are confronted with reaction, with strong and complex capitalist rule, which has an ample capacity of repression and integration. This demands a counter-organization of the class. The problem is to know how to prevent that counter-organization from deteriorating by becoming an 'institution'" (Sartre (1974), p. 130)

He further adds, "It is undoubtedly true that a theory of the passage to socialism is necessary". (Ibid, p. 130), but adds: "While I recognize the need of an organization, I must confess that I don't see how the problem which confronts any stabilized structure could be resolved". (Ibid, p. 132, also see pp; 60-61)

What we might find is that New Left groups of the future will constitute themselves as movements on an ad-hoc basis, designed to solve a specific issue, or to initiate a specific crisis, then disband upon the completion of the task.

By storming the Olympian pinnacles of early 19th century philosophy in order to give mankind this rich sutra of the “Critique”, with its diamond-sharp logic, Sartre has proved himself something of a Prometheus. The neo-Anarchists, in attempting to reverse an inexorable dialectic, have thus far re-enacted the myth of Icarus, who flew too close to the Sun. Until future history should prove otherwise the myth of the reversible Fused Group will indeed be the myth of Icarus.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Poster, Mark. “Existential Marxism in Postwar France: From Sartre to Althusser”. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977, c.1975. pp. 369-376, 379, 383-387, 392.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. “Between Existentialism and Marxism”. New York: Pantheon, 1974. pp. 60-61, 119, 122, 125, 127, 130.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. “Critique of Dialectical Reason. I. Theory of Practical Ensembles”. London: Verso/New Left Books; New York: Schocken Books, 1982, c. 1976. [Originally published as: “Critique de la raison dialectique”. Paris: Gallimard, 1960.] pp. 247, 348-350, 356-357, 360-362, 401-402, 407, 419, 422, 426, 680-681.

Stack, George J. “Sartre’s Dialectic of Social Relations”. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (Buffalo) vol. 31 (March 1971) pp. 394-408.

MISCELLANEOUS BIBLIOGRAPHY

“C’est demain la veille: Entretiens avec Michel Foucault [etc] Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973.

(Interviews, including one with Roel van Duyn. In French)

“City Council’s Beatnick”. *Holland Herald* vol. 1, #5 (1966) p. 15.

Clay, Mel. “Jerry Rubin (Yippie) Meets the Dutch Kabouters (Radicals)”. *Los Angeles Free Press* Nov. 20, 1979. p. 5.

G. D. “Amerikanen en builenpest”. *Gandalf* (Amsterdam) #21 (unpaged) (1967?)

(An interview with Huib Bronkhorst, father of the Provo Peter Bronkhorst)

Dalny, Jacques. “Playful Provos”. *Atlas* vol. 12 (Oct 1966) pp. 25-27.

(A dyspeptic putdown of the Provos, claiming that they got all of their ideas from the Situationiste Internationale.

Davidson, Steef. “Subway Culture in Amsterdam”. *Ins and Outs: A Magazine of Awareness* (Amsterdam) #2. (July 1978) pp. 5-12.

(Excellent article on the Nieuwemarkt resistance to subway construction in the early 1970’s. Rob Stolk was active in this neighborhood)

Duyn, Roel van. *Message of a Wise Kabouter*. London: Duckworth, 1972.

(Translation of “De Boodschappen van een wijze Kabouter”

Duyn, Roel van. *Schuldbetekenis van een ambassadeur: nota’s, beschouwingen, manifesten, artikelen en vragen van een ambassadeur van Oranjevrijstaat in de Gemeenteraad van Amsterdam*. [Guilty Confession of an Ambassador: Notes, Reflections, Manifestos, Articles and Questions of an Ambassador from the Orange Free State to the City Council of Amsterdam] Amsterdam: Meulenhof, 1970.

(Van Duyn’s first year on the City Council, serving as a member of the Kabouter Party)

Elseviers Weekblad (Amsterdam)

(A conservative Dutch weekly news magazine, closely modeled on Time Magazine. Particularly useful for following events in 1966. In the course of covering the Provos and the anti-war movement the magazine gradually moved to a more supportive position.)

Gadourek, Ivan. *A Dutch Community: Social and Cultural Structures and Process in a Bulb-Growing Region in the Netherlands*. Leiden: H. E. Stenfert-Kroese, 1956.

(A classic study of the effects of social segregation fostered by the Zuilen system, as seen in a typical Dutch town. Text in English.)

Ginneken, Jaap van. *Over de samenstelling van het gezamenlijk “Provo” Archief van het Seminarium voor Massapsychologie, Openbare Mening en Propaganda en de Universiteits-Bibliotheek*. Amsterdam: Universiteits-Bibliotheek, [1968?]

(Catalog of the Provo Archives in the Handschriftkamer (Rare Book Room) of the Amsterdam University Library)

Grey Fox. "The Kabouters Demystified". *Roots* (New York: Ecology Action East, 1974), #3 pp. 29-47.

(Includes interviews with Van Duyn and other Kabouters. Also note another interview with Van Duyn in *Roots* #2 (1971), pp. 3-13.)

The Hague. Gemeentemuseum. *New Babylon* (een projekt van Constant Nieuwenhuys). Den Haag: Haags Gemeentemuseum, 1974. illus.

Jacobs, Leo. *Kleine Kaboutergids*. (AO-Reeks Boekje, 1319)
(Small-format brochure on the Kabouter movement)

Jong, Rudolf de. "Provos and Kabouters", in *Anarchism Today*, edited by David E. Apter and James Joll. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1972.
(Good chapter in English by a Dutch historian of Anarchism, pp. 191-209)

Jorion, Paul. *Quelques considerations relatives au phenomene "Provo"*. Bruxelles, [1968?]
(Unpublished stenciled study of the movement, with much information and many Dutch texts translated into French)

Kultermann, Udo. *Art and Life*. New York: Praeger, 1971. (An essay on the spirit of the happening. Translation of *Leben und Kunst*)

Lambrecht, Jef. *Anarchisme bij Provo* (Amsterdam 1965-1967). Leuven: Department Sociologie, Fakulteit der Sociale Wetenschappen, Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1974.

(Doctoral dissertation from the University of Louvain. Text in Dutch. Not seen)

Lammers, Hans. "Vertrek van een burgemeester". *De Gids* (1967) pp. 369-374)
(A prominent member of the Dutch Socialist Party disagrees with the manner in which Van Hall was fired)

Lastig Amsterdam [Bothersome Amsterdam], edited by Rob Kroes. (Uitgave van de Nederlandse Sociologisch Vereniging, #25) Den Haag, 1968.

Licht, Henri J. *The Dutch Provos: An Experiment in Political Activism*. Melbourne [Australia], 1971.

(An unpublished stenciled seminar paper)

[Nieuwenhuys], Constant. "New Babylon". *Randstad* #2. pp. 127-138.
Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, [1965?]
(Text in Dutch)

Nieuwenhuys, Constant. "Opkomst van de avant-garde". *Randstad* #8.
Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, [1968?]

Nieuwenhuys, Constant. Von Cobra bis New Babylon. Munchen [Munich] : Galerie Heseler, 1967.

(Catalog of an exhibition, including a text by Constant in German translation)

Nuis, Aad. Wat is er gebeurd in Amsterdam? [What Has Happened in Amsterdam?] Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1966.

Poppel, C. B. P. van. De Amsterdam Provos uit de jaren 1965-1967. Amsterdam, 1968.

(Unpublished manuscript)

Amerongen, Martin [et al]. De prinses die kiest een man. [The Princess Who Chose a Husband] Amsterdam: Polak & Van Gennep, 1965.

(On Princess Beatrix's courtship and marriage)

Propria Cures Jaargang 77, no. 29 (May 27, 1967) "Special Issue for English-Speaking Visitors to the Magic Centre of the World".

(An English language issue of the student newspaper of the university of Amsterdam. A tongue-in-cheek guide to riots in Amsterdam: where to find them and where to find legal and medical aid)

Ratio: Literair Maandblad. (Amsterdam) #13 (January-February 1965) "Dit nummer is een happening". [This Issue is a Happening]

(Special issue on the happenings, of *Ratio*, a Literary Monthly, including "Een warning" [A Warning], by Grootveld and texts by Vinkenoog and Posthuma.

Rumoer '66: een serie overdrukken uit de Haagse Post. Amsterdam: Haagse Post, 1976.

(Articles on the late 1960's, reprinted from the news magazine *De Haagse post*, on the tenth anniversary of the June 14th riots. Includes articles on the Provos)

Schierbeek, Bert. The Experimental Artists. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, [196-?]

(A short lively essay on the Cobra artists by a Vijftiger poet)

Schoolenberg, Hans & Zee, Jasper van der. De Provobeweging. [The Provo Movement] Werkstuk in het kader van de S. O. Groep, "Waarom D'66, PPr en DS 70?". Amsterdam, 1975.

(Typewritten manuscript on liberal splinter groups from the conservative political parties and on the Provo influence in this development)

Schoondergang, Huub. ...Een toen kwamen de Kabouters: Van jeugdbeweging tot bewogen jeugd. [... Then Came the Kabouters: From Youth Movement to Troubling Youth] Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1971.

(On post-war youth in the Netherlands)

Shetter, William Z. *The Pillars of Society: Six Centuries of Civilization in the Netherlands*. [imprint information wanting]

(Chapters 2 and 14 give an interesting summary of the impact of the Sixties on the traditional values in Dutch society)

Stokvis, Willemijn. *Cobra: geschiedenis, voorspel en betekenis van een beweging in de kunst van na de Tweede Wereldoorlog*. {Cobra: History, Introduction and Significance of Post-World War II Art Movement} Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1974.

(Monograph on the Cobra movement. Much information on Constant Nieuwenhuys)

Stansill, Peter & Marrowitz, David Zane. *BAMN (By Any Means necessary): Outlaw Manifestos and Ephemera, 1965-70*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971.

(An excellent anthology of leftist activist manifestos from Western Europe and the United States, with an appendix of texts in the original languages. For the Netherlands, see chapters 1, 3, 11 and 12)

Tegenbosch, Lambert. "Een avondje in December". [An Evening in December] *Raam* (Amsterdam) vol. 4 (January 1968) pp. 6-12.

Thoenes, Piet. "Rebels from Affluence: The Provos of Holland". *Nation* vol. 204 (April 17, 1967) pp. 494-497.

Van Provo tot Groenevelt: tien jaar verandering zoals geregistreerd in *De Nieuwe Linie*. Samenstelling: Joos Arts [et al] Amsterdam: De Nieuwe Linie/Van Gennep, 1973.

(Articles reprinted from *De Nieuwe Linie*, a leftist newspaper. Includes articles on Van Duyn, the Maagdehuis seizure and a debate between Van Duyn and Ton Regtien)

Voeten, Teun. "Dutch Provos". *High Times* (January 1990) pp. 32-36, 64-66, 73.

(Interesting review, in English, of the Provos)