

## The Kedichem Dike

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»More and more I am convinced that mentalities spring from mass experiences. But are people responsible for their mass experiences? Don't they end up in them without any protection? With what should one be equipped to be able to protect oneself against them? Should one be able to form one's own crowds to be immune against others?«

*Elias Canetti, The Secret Heart of the Watch.*

### The Kedichem Dike

On March 29, 1986, in the BETUWE, a hotel where two right-wing splinter parties were attempting a reconciliation burst into flames. The Center Party had held one seat in the Lower House since 1982, on a platform which presented itself as antifascist and antiracist, but which made a case for the »protection of Dutch cultural values,« a modern form of racism in which foreigners in particular are blamed for the housing shortage, unemployment, environmental pollution and overcrowded roads. After a faction seceded from the party, Holland's far-right parliamentary organization seemed about to die a quiet death. Ten days before »Kedichem,« for the first time in postwar history, a »fascist« from the Center Party was elected to the Amsterdam city council. He was to be sworn in on April 29, and inside the antifascist movement, discussions over how to prevent this were in full swing. With the Lower House elections ahead on May 26, the rivalling CP factions decided to call a meeting to end the internal disputes and patch things up. The violent disruption of this conciliatory meeting by antifascist activists prevented the formation of a reunited far-right party, and would keep them out of the House for the next three years.

The media coverage got across in detail the atmosphere of heavy violence the activists had managed to evoke around the parties. The photograph which summed up the whole occasion as a media event depicted the CP Member of Parliament, a sorry sight, fleeing the smoking remains of the scene of the disaster, and would later be designated Press Photo of the Year. The motto of the action had been, »Fascists may never be permitted to organize; their meetings must be disrupted. We must deter fascists from becoming active in the CP.« The activists correctly observed afterwards, »Kedichem had this effect.« As far as positive results and publicity were concerned, the action had been a complete success. That Dutch organizational life distanced itself, condemning the methods used, put the satisfaction over the smashing of the meeting into a respectable framework.

Since 1981, a broad antifascist movement of local committees, foreigners' organizations, the former resistance, women's groups, and youth organizations had been growing. At the same time the activist segment of the population was coming into confrontation with thugs, angry rednecks, »discos«, football hooligans and skins, who were summed up as »rising fascism.« Both groups were strongly divided over the question of whether the CP, as the political expression of this trend, ought be banned and how action against it should be taken. What the two groups had in common was their appeal to the antifascist attitude and the resistance in World War II. In all actions and documents there recurs the desire to reshape the memory of the horrors of fascism, which is still at the forefront of Dutch education, media and literature. The activists wanted to shape it on the existential level of bodily confrontation, because they had come up against »the fascists« as a direct assault on their way of life. The committees, however, found political consciousness-raising about »everyday racism« and demonstrations after incidents with right-wing groups more useful. Their fear of violent actions is owed to the fact that a mass antifascist movement would, in principle, include the entire Dutch population. This imaginary mass can actually only get smaller, since its dimensions are already maximal. Even the Center Party recognizes this. Their commentary on Kedichem was, »They didn't

do the antifascist committees any favor, because quite a lot of honest people are on them.« The differing perspectives on the imagined allies and opponents guarantees a permanent lack of understanding on both sides between the »political« and »existential« variants of Dutch antifascism.

A research tradition into the wheelings and dealings of far-right and fascistic individuals and groups in Holland has existed for some time. During investigation, it was discovered that the reconciliatory meeting of the right-wing faction was set for Saturday, March 29, but the location was kept secret even in CP circles. On Thursday the 27th 75 activists met. The topic of discussion was the crucial importance of disrupting the merge and how this disruption would take place. A small group of experienced activists had taken the organization of all this upon themselves, and there was no discussion over the plan of action, apart from a vague reference to the »Boekel model.«

Two years before, the last CP convention had been held in the village of Boekel, in the province of Brabant. Activists from all over the country had entered into heavy confrontation with the 300 party members. The »Boekel model« now consisted of surrounding the conference room, demanding the departure of »the fascists« and, in the case that the demand was not met, »smoking them out« with tear gas or a smoke bomb, in which case the CPers were offered an escape route via which they could piss off. In practice, there was a big difference in Boekel between on the one hand the »demonstrators,« who wanted to protest against the CP in a nonviolent way to mobilize public opinion, and on the other the heavy faction that sought direct confrontation and was prepared for it, arriving with helmets, leather jackets, clubs and smoke bombs »in self-defense.« Because this group was the first to arrive at the still secret meeting address, their strategy was immediately put into effect: windows went in, a tear gas grenade flew inside and in the street there was heavy fighting between the CP thugs, »heavies,« and the newly-arrived demonstrators, who took the knocks. There were major disagreements among the activists afterwards, but shortly before Kedichem it all seemed to be forgotten. It was assumed that everyone knew what the »Boekel model« meant. Now it was time to take action; quarrels were put off until later, in line with Dutch action tradition: act first, talk later.

The group who found each other that Thursday evening in Amsterdam included every branch of the movement. Johan: »Time after time you see that people do get back together. I think Hans Kok made it clear that despite all the different currents, if something gets you good and mad, you still have a lot of things together. It's logical that you seek each other out to fight the CP. Everyone was VOOR ZICH mad at the fact of Kedichem and the danger that the CP might get into the House. We all felt like it could be of decisive significance.« The lowest common denominator of the movement had become the reaction. In the days after Hans Kok's death the assessment was that the instant reconciliation between the scenes, cliques and sympathizers would not last: »In the fires, when the rocks are flying through the windows, during a serious demonstration, all the differences between us don't count. In our anger over Hans' killing we can find unity for a weekend.« Nonetheless, five months later, on the eve of Kedichem, it was apparent that the mutual trust had not yet vanished. The active forgetfulness which is the basis of reconciliation constituted sufficient guarantee that they could again collectively carry out an action.

At 9:00 a.m. on Saturday morning, the 29th of March, about 300 activists from all over Holland assembled in an old squatted hospital in Utrecht. Since it was unknown where the CP meeting would be held, this central location had been chosen. It was known that a number of CP members were to gather at the Utrecht soccer stadium. They were secretly followed by people on motorcycles who regularly called up the meeting point to pass along how many fascists were on their way and where they were going. Not until 2:30 p.m. did it become clear where the fascists had assembled.

During the long hours of waiting on Utrecht there was not one collective discussion about what exactly was going to be done. Only the near-magical phrase »the Boekel model« bounced about. »In the sea of time and the relatively pleasant atmosphere in Utrecht it was explained insufficiently and too hastily what our intention was,« Tineke conclude afterwards in the autonomous weekly Bluff!. »Was it fear of differences of opinion within the group and heated arguments right before the action? Was everyone already occupied with their own fear of violence and expecting to be outnumbered by the fascists we thought we'd be up against? I could kick myself, I was just spacing out too, while in the back of my mind I had a vague feeling that a lot of things weren't quite right.« Kasper said, »In the rumors in Utrecht there got to be more and more fascists. And we went and got more and more beer and drank, because it really took a long time. Your nerves were on edge the whole time. For three hours all those people were waiting in those halls, drinking and getting stoned. And then we finally got on our way.« Johan: »The fact that at a meeting point with so incredibly many people we were told that about 100 far-right types armed to the teeth were waiting for us, I call false information. After that you start to really doubt, if they saw it wrong or if they were trying to freak us out on purpose.«

Among the waiting crowd in Utrecht there was already a clear distinction between those who were sublimating their fear into a worthy demonstration and the »heavies« who were cultivating their anger into an attack high. That the mob didn't interfere at all with the organization was because it came across as extremely professional. »The organization had a mafia-like, secret service style,« says Kasper. »Motorcycles were going all over the country, people were tailing the fascists, everything was running smoothly, it all looked like a well-oiled machine. Everything was taken care of, you could hand that to them.« It was comforting that the power was delegated; in an activism culture which recognizes no organization, the people in charge are those who take on the practical details beforehand. In case of trouble afterwards, they will also get all the blame heaped onto them. The crowd will always declare itself innocent; for the crowd only the fascination of being among so many counts. Ronald: »When I went to get sandwiches I saw that the center of Utrecht was swarming with people in leather jackets. It was really insane.« The security of belonging to a crowd makes it possible for individuals to concentrate exclusively on their own emotions; making collective decisions therefore falls outside the field of vision.

At 2:30 the message comes through that the fascists have assembled in the Hotel Cosmopolite in Kedichem. Ernst: »I picked up the phone because I happened to be standing next to it. Where? I said. I had them spell the name and wrote it down on a piece of paper.« Since the hotel was so small, the motorcyclists thought it was a preliminary meeting point. It was therefore decided that the activists would first gather at the station in Leerdam, a town near Kedichem. Finally the waiting crowd was allowed to move. Barend writes: »There's cheering when we hear the word Kedichem. I dance with joy. Everybody gets moving. To the vans. People are yelling. We still have to arrange things. Who's the speaker here? Different people come forth. One of them wins. He arranges a car to drive ahead and case things out. He says a couple more things have to be done, like 'entering the scanner frequencies.' No one asks what that means. I don't ask anything myself but I think it'll be OK. Then a message comes that only 18 CPers are inside. But no one listens to that. The message is too unclear anyway. We'll see in Leerdam.«

At this point almost 100 cars and rented vans left Utrecht. In Leerdam the procession posted itself in a long line before the small station. In front was the leaders' »commando truck« which was crammed with scanners for listening in on police radio. The vans of the »heavies« grouped around it, to be sure not to miss anything. When a police car drove by and the scanners indicated that more police were on their way, and when a message came from Kedichem that the Cosmopolite was indeed the meeting place of the CP, the front car decided to leave immediately. There had hardly been any contact between the separate vans, and no one knew the geographical outlay of Kedichem. Barend, in Bluff!: »Suddenly we have to leave. Who gave the signal? That's unclear. We'll see in Kedichem.« In the

waiting crowd in Utrecht, something like an expectation of command had set in: the people's forced apathy could only be broken by the signal that they had to leave. The leaders' order was a relief.

The road from Leerdam to Kedichem is eight kilometers long. The touristic experience brought about the »We sensation« which goes along with such an outing of »the movement.« Ronald: »A long line of vans left for Kedichem, we made a mess of the traffic, ignored traffic lights and began to drive through the polder landscape, like a caterpillar on those dikes. It was an incredibly pretty route. You drove out on a very narrow dike along the river Linge, where no oncoming traffic could pass. Halfway there we came across a cop car parked in a parking lot in which two startled cops were babbling into their mobile telephone. We weren't driving on a straight canal, but a winding dike road, so you saw the procession ahead of you and behind you the whole time.« Betsie: »It was a real caravan, a convoy.«

Coming from Leerdam, the Hotel Cosmopolite is situated on the left side of the dike, with the village of Kedichem on the right. From the dike a road leads down into Kedichem. When those in front arrived at the hotel, they checked out the situation and parked so that they would be able to leave quickly in a different direction than they'd come from. As they were getting out the vans at the back were still about a kilometer from the hotel. Once these arrived, much later, the long procession parked along the road on the dike and the people began to walk towards the hotel. There was a heavy wind.

The events in front of the hotel unfolded at terrific speed. Kasper was part of the group up front who had decided on a direct confrontation with the CP members: »When we got out we put on our balaclavas, first half on, then all the way on. We saw a lot of cars still driving up. We all had sticks and clubs and quite a lot of adrenalin and everyone ran towards the hotel. We waited for each other so there would be a lot of us. There were about 40. There was a cop car in front of the hotel.« Ronald: »The cop car said we had to remove ourselves or 'force would be used.' We were all bent over laughing, of course; three or four hundred people with clubs and helmets and one police car.« The conservative newspaper De Telegraaf quoted a party member: »We hadn't been in Hotel Cosmopolite for ten minutes when two policemen came in. 'We have some unpleasant news,' they said. 'About 200 thugs are on their way and we can't protect you.' The policemen left immediately and at the same moment the first bricks came through the windows.«

Kasper: »We started to yell, 'Fascists fuck off,' and 'Fascist pigs!' Then the hotel owner showed up in the doorway and the police said, 'Let's keep it down.' The owner said they weren't fascists and we should leave them alone, he just wanted to make some money. But people started to throw stones at the owner and yelled at him that he was a fascist collaborator and he should fuck off. The windows were smashed and all kinds of things were thrown in. The police had gone away by then, up the dike, because they couldn't control it. More and more people showed up and windows kept shattering and people were beating on the windows with clubs. Empty beer bottles went in. Ashtrays from the bar downstairs were flying around our ears. We also heard a lot of screaming inside, those people were really scared.« Ernst: »I was standing with Piet staring in through the windows, when bricks and paint started flying over our heads through the windows.« Ronald: »You couldn't see who was inside, the curtains were closed and the lights were off. You only saw shadows. Then the smoke bombs went in.«

»More and more smoke kept coming out of the front,« Kasper continues. »We had no strategy, only to smoke them out. So we thought, we'll just throw in a smoke bomb, shall I do it? But everyone wanted to throw in a smoke bomb. There was too much ammunition, I think. And too much adrenalin from waiting all day, the bottled-up aggression. Then one smoke bomb got stuck in the curtains, I saw that too.« Ronald: »If there's throwing during a riot, everyone has to do their part. The pavement went to pieces right away, and the parking lot on the side of the hotel too with those handy cobblestones. One smoke bomb got stuck in the curtains. It was probably an old one that got damp; they combust with a

flash. Suddenly the white smoke got a little darker and the flames shot out of the building.« Ernst: »I saw two smoke bombs and an orange pipe going in. It started to burn instantly. Piet and I looked at each other and went, 'Let's get out of here.'«

Kasper: »When we saw that the hotel was on fire we went to the back. I said to the person I was with, 'Let's check if they can get away, this is really getting heavy.' Then we saw that nobody was coming out, but also that nobody could get in, because we did still want to beat up some fascists. We only got scared when we realized that they couldn't get out of the hotel. I thought, there's water behind the hotel, they can jump in there of course, but still...It turned out later there was another exit. I was pretty worried. Then I went all the way back to the other side of the hotel to see if they were getting away there. In the beginning I was only thinking, if they get away we can really kick their ass with those clubs. When we saw those flames coming from the first floor we thought, this isn't going to work, those people are all going to die in there.«

Barend saw it like this: »All the windows are smashed out. You see the room already full of smoke, look inside, some shadows are walking around in the back. But the throwing of smoke bombs doesn't stop. Huge whoppers are thrown in. In the panic - or is it enthusiasm? - everyone wants to get rid of their stuff. You think: this is enough. But you're part of the stream, can't say anything anymore. Your yelling is drowned out. And then: white smoke becomes black smoke. Suddenly fire is crackling. I yank my helmet off my head, throw away my club and start to run; I don't want to have anything more to do with this.«

Panic is always fear of murder: the murder which can be committed against you or the murder you commit yourself. The group of attackers behaved like a classic baiting crowd. Cannetti says about this: »the baiting crowd forms with reference to a quickly attainable goal. The goal is known and clearly marked, and is also near. This crowd is out for killing and it knows whom it wants to kill. One important reason for the rapid growth of the baiting crowd is that there is no risk involved. There is no risk because the crowd have immense superiority on their side.«

The waiting crowd in Utrecht was not out for murder, but was preparing itself for a confrontation with shadows. How many, how strong, all unclear. But when the front ranks formed on the Lingedijk, they had one goal in mind: »In the van we'd talked the whole time about fascist thugs, we expected that. We were all really raring to go and we wanted to get the fascists. Everyone was 'in the mood for killing.' But there was nobody to fight with, nobody showed themselves.« (Kasper) When they came near the hotel (and parked as close to it as possible) and found out that they were far in the majority, there was no restraint to prevent the group from turning into a baiting crowd. The people had concentrated on their individual fears of being hit and on their desire to hit back, but not on the collective experience which awaited them. While they themselves were going into attack, their thoughts revolved around the imaginary crowd waiting for them. They had protected their bodies with leather coats and helmets, but they were not protected against the crowd they would form themselves. All the mass experiences from previous actions were forgotten. For the group on the dike no danger existed; they proved much stronger than what they were attacking. The danger lurked in the crowd itself; as individuals they suddenly recoiled from the act which the crowd committed.

The crowd was still innocent at first: a white mass. When the smoke turned black the change came: guilt spread over the mass, and it turned black. That guilt was the panic: the awareness of being responsible for the murder made the crowd a group of individuals who only wanted to get away from the scene of the crime. And they were able to get away, since their cars were free and within reach.

They all escaped, as individuals. Ernst: »I couldn't find my van because they'd all been rented from the same company and my driver was clever enough to put on a balaclava. Then I just got into some van and we were out of there.« Kasper: »We wanted to save our butts, threw away our gloves, balaclavas off and back to the car. I didn't see the other people after that. We heard all these sirens and the police car came again and tried to drive into us, but then people threw bricks in the direction of the vehicle. In the car we took off our black clothes, they were too conspicuous, and we turned on the radio to listen. We raced home like that. Every time we passed another exit I felt more relieved, because we were incredibly worried, at least I was, about what had happened to those people in the building. I was thinking of babies sleeping upstairs in the hotel.«

To the group who came behind the attack group, the demonstrators, things looked a lot different. Harry: »We got lost on the way. When we arrived in Kedichem, we parked the van in the town and climbed up the dike. I walked towards the hotel. It started to smoke more and more, the closer you came the more smoke. From a distance that's a pretty sight, you know. But I had no idea what was going on there. I'd thought it would be some kind of occupation, that you go inside and expose the CP members. Actually we arrived much too late for the action. When the flames came from all sides of the building we heard, 'Back to the cars!' I was still going forward when others were already running back. 'Take it easy, take it easy,' people were yelling.«

Betsie: »I was in the middle of the procession. I had the idea that it was a demonstration. After a while we stopped and walked to the hotel. Then I heard glass shattering, I saw smoke and stuff. But I didn't get close up. Suddenly everyone started to run back: get away! I saw a cop car driving criss-cross through it all, he didn't know what he was doing either. Back at the car, we waited first till the others were back. Then the car turned around on the dike, it was really chaotic. All the cars were driving around in front of each other, you couldn't get out. It was heavy, in the distance you saw all those clouds of smoke, it's pretty, really. I thought, there's no way to get off this dike, there were no side roads. I thought going back was stupid, straight ahead was better, but almost everyone was turning around.«

The demonstrators who had been waiting all day were initially strongly attracted by the fire from which the attackers had fled. They had not yet come to a discharge as a crowd; they had not yet reached that point at which each individual in the crowd feels equal to all others. When they learned that for them the party had come to an untimely end, they had to turn back, but against all common sense they formed into a flight crowd which by definition has danger behind it. Only as a flight crowd could they experience that desired discharge. But forming a flight crowd was for them the only possibility to avert the panic which they were part of, but which they did not understand. And they had to cope with that panic (although they knew nothing of any possible murder): »The incoming wave which was threatening to crush the building suddenly turns around. On top of the dike is a tangle of vans trying to turn around. People are gesticulating and yelling. Two vans bump into each other. A van which is still empty tells two refugees to find their own van: you don't belong here. Meanwhile some of the townspeople have stopped staring; they start to move towards some of us. A few of us catch telling blows, but no one does anything: it's every man for himself.« (Barend)

It was not only panic which determined the behavior of the fleeing demonstrators. Harry: »Our car wouldn't start, on top of everything. We were pushing the car. Meanwhile we were being harassed by locals who were holding their lighters near our gas tanks. They said, 'What have you done? You set the place on fire!' When we'd been the last to arrive. It was a shot in the dark on their part that we had done it.« The fact that the flight crowd didn't feel responsible for the fire they had to get away from proved to be fatal: it resulted in the return of the passivity which had anesthetized the waiting crowd in Utrecht.

After the chaotic reversing the procession drove back to Leerdam. But, »After a while a cop car came and sat straight across the road, we all had to stop. Nobody knew what was going on. There were a lot of cars ahead of us. Then we all got out. We were standing there for an hour, we were closed in, front and back. If you wanted to you could still get away through the pasture, but I thought, we're in the middle of nowhere.« (Betsie)

All the people from the cars were arrested and transported to Leerdam in a police wagon. There was no resistance. The vans stayed behind on the dike and were later towed away by the police to the yard behind Leerdam Headquarters. One person who had crept away into the reeds along the river and hid there until 9:00 p.m. managed to get away by joining a group of Turkish boys who were paying soccer on the dike. All the others who managed to reach the Leerdam station were arrested on the directions of the locals from Kedichem. Harry had already been picked up in Kedichem itself: »We were running behind the car we were pushing, the police came off the dike. The moment the cops were two meters behind us the engine started. The cops busted us and those locals who were interfering got another person. It was funny; the car drove away and we were the first to be caught.« The police car in which the three handcuffed detainees were locked blocked the dike when the fire department came. The car had to be pushed to the side of the road, which kept the fire engines a few minutes longer from reaching the hotel. When they arrived it was already ablaze. Over the police radio the detainees heard that a woman's leg would have to be amputated. It was not mentioned who.

The CP Member of Parliament Janmaat, who had called the meeting, told de Telegraaf about the leg: »I was fleeing with my secretary, Mrs. Corselius-Schuurman, and some other people up the stairs. From the window we could see the flames and some other people running outside meters below. Within three minutes everything was on fire, including the stairs. We tied sheets together. I was the first to climb down, to see if it would work. The sheets were too short and I had to jump. My secretary came after me. But she swung from the sheets straight through a large window and crashed to the ground. She was bleeding terribly. I tried to help her. But later her leg had to be amputated. Awful, a disaster. In this same suit, full of bloodstains, I will ask questions in the Lower House: Why were our people not protected against this ruffraff?«

The arrestees, of whom the majority would be detained for four days and eventually only a few would be sentenced to three months' imprisonment, would not be allowed to keep their clothes; after they had thrown away their helmets and caps, the police in Leerdam took all their other clothes away for laboratory examination for gasoline traces. Harry wouldn't even get his back; ten days later he ended up in the street in Dordrecht in his underpants. All those who eventually were not sentenced received f150 per day compensation, f200 per day for the first two days. That could reach an amount as high as f4000.

The group of attackers returned unharmed to their home base: »We drove back with the group to a squat bar. We didn't run into any cops and there was no beer left either. Back in the bar we heard no one was dead, that a woman was injured and it really made us laugh. We also heard about the 72 arrestees and we all thought that was really shitty.« (Kasper) At home the attackers got over their panic immediately: the murder had not been committed against people, but against a leg. The relief over this was expressed in a laughing fit. Ronald, who had gone back to another bar: »We turned on the 5:30 news and only then we heard that there were all those arrests and a number of seriously injured people. There was only really a damper on things after that. Anyway, you can argue about whether it was such a clever action, but it really was an awesome kick to see a hotel burn down like that.«

At the same time a press release made the news, by the »Radical Anti-Fascists« (RAF), which suggested that they had organized it all. The phrase in the statement that »the events in Kedichem could be repeated« was associated instantaneously and by everyone with The Leg. The interpretation was that they would not shrink from inflicting more serious casualties in the fight against fascism. What was shocking about this statement was that the »organizers« did not shrink from recognizing »the murder« and thereby suggested that the panic had been planned. And this while the majority of the activists, now they were home, were exerting themselves, by discussing the effect and the strategy, to eliminate the panic of the action in themselves.

Ronald went immediately into politics, first by organizing attorneys for the arrestees, and a day later in a press group which was formed »because nobody liked the sound of the RAF statement. After that press release we didn't see any of the leaders, the organizers, again. We tried to salvage what there was to salvage.« The first goal of the press group was to distract attention from The Leg, which had begun leading its own life in the media. »A news program on TV had an interview with the woman, in bed, without her leg. And that hotel owner was ranting too. Our aim was to explain that it hadn't been our intention that a leg had to be amputated. Besides that, we wanted to bring forth our own arguments about why we'd done the action, and subtly incorporate into it that we were critical of how it had gone.«

This press group too sent out a statement, signed »the activists of March 29,« which said, »We literally smoked out the fascists. That the Hotel Cosmopolite went up in flames was not intentional. If any non-fascists were injured, we regret it.« In this way, the kick and the panic were written out of the Kedichem story. But while there was no longer any panic in the story for the big media, in the inside media a culprit for the panic was explicitly fingered. One was quickly found, since the RAF had already claimed themselves that panic had been part of their plan.

In Bluff! Barend wrote about the RAF spokesman, »I think he's an incredible bastard. But I don't want to imply that he's the only one guilty. After all, we're all responsible.« And he continues about the RAF: »They're people who decide as a very small group that Holland is ripe for terrorist attacks, but are too spineless to do it themselves. People who trample others playing terrorist, they can be burned at the stake as far as I'm concerned.« And he concludes, »We have much more important things to think about. We will have to learn to discuss and organize things together, otherwise the movement will be ruled by crafty crazies again soon.«

In Barend's analysis of the relation between the individual and the crowd, the individual is declared innocent of the crowd's actions. He sees the crowds of Utrecht and Kedichem as victims of those who knew how crowds react and how to direct them. In order to prevent the rise of this sort of evil leader, he proposes forming an »own,« »good« crowd which through discussion and democracy will be capable of withstanding devious leaders. The search for a panic-free form of action calls forth the desire for an organization of mass actions in which unforeseen circumstances can be ruled out. The discipline of the activist necessary for this was just as radically in contradiction with the rule, still active in '86, that only spontaneous, chaotic actions done without rigid organizational form lead to the most bizarre and contagious break-ins and holdups without thereby deteriorating into terrorism.

Barend's characterization of »crafty crazies« does speak of respect for these leaders. But he does not ask why the Utrecht crowd delegated power to them. Why did they let themselves be seduced into inertia? And why did the attack group let themselves be worked up to the extent that they were prepared to kill? Barend circumvents this question by talking directly about »the perspective of the movement«; since he is not able to conjure up his own crowd in non-organizational terms, he comes no further than declaring panic a taboo once more.

The very fact that the activists in Kedichem panicked proves that they were no fascist horde themselves. There is no panic in fascism. Fascist gangs and bureaucrats did not shrink from murder. The planning of the panic by the leaders was dictated by the calculation that it would allow them to get away quickly. This could get them accused of having terrorist tendencies, an accusation Barend does make. But terrorists do not need a crowd to be able to operate; the term is introduced only so that this group can be excluded next time. The only thing the organizers can be accused of is that they possessed knowledge of what crowds are and how they function, and applied this knowledge after taking the organization in hand from the beginning.

Barend's dilemma was that, if one accepted the activism tradition of the 1980s, it was impossible to exclude groups from actions: that is only possible inside a continuous organization which is prepared to establish order patrols and mentality police. A movement which does not wish to disappear will eventually find turning into such an association unavoidably necessary. All those who, with or without secret amusement, dissociated themselves from the RAF and in so doing held onto their own myth of mass activism as a spontaneous and chaotic event within an unorganized structure, denied themselves the possibility to pad their strategic knowledge of actions with insights about how crowds function. But precisely because of this, they remain liable on future occasions to end up »unprotected« in a mass experience. Active forgetfulness is the charisma which protects radical naiveté from all danger.

Afterwards the sons of the owner of Hotel Cosmopolite told a newspaper, »Two years ago we also had a fire in our home furnishing shop in Leerdam. By now it's almost been rebuilt. We've almost finished the job. We thought we could start to take it easier now. But we can't because of this fire in Kedichem. It was an unexpected blow. For me and my brother it only means about f200,000 material damage. But for our father it goes much deeper. He feels it as an attack on his life.«

Two months after this attack, which had happened Easter weekend, March 29, 1986, the movement in the Kedichem case came to a standstill. »The 62-year-old owner, Mr. P. In Den Eng, according to the police, had purchased a secondhand mechanical shovel to take up the demolition of the Hotel Cosmopolite himself. The facade of the building had already been pulled down by the local authorities for fear that it would collapse, and on Saturday the owner wanted to remove the remains by himself. Since the old machine didn't want to start he had placed pedals between the right front and rear wheels, with a separate battery, whose wires he had to connect to the starter inside the machine. As soon as the connection was made, the heavy machine - whose shovel could hold a few tons - unexpectedly started to move. In Den Eng, whose path was obstructed by the pedals, was unable to get out and was run over full-length. He died instantly. The machine, dragging away a crush barrier, crossed the dike, piercing an iron bar through a window across the dike and then, thanks to its security system, came to a standstill.«