

## The Great Victory of the Household Garbage

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### The Self-Abuse of Nolympics

In the course of 1984 the Amsterdam city council figured out that the city's image was so devastated that its economic disadvantages had become greater than its touristic advantages. Amsterdam, which had profiled itself in the early eighties as a place where you could behold the latest social contrasts with your own eyes on the streets, suddenly turned out to inspire physical disgust. The garbage along the streets, the dog doo on the sidewalks, the torn-up roads, the purse-snatching and car radio theft, the tens of thousands of unemployed, the parking problem, the heroin needles in the doorways, the sluggish bureaucracy, the grouchy Amsterdammers, the run-down houses, the epidemic graffiti, the blind violence of the rioters and other "persistent drawbacks" lost their folkloristic aspects and made living in the capital unbearable.

The "largest ad agency in the world" was hired to design a promotional campaign which would give Amsterdammers back their self-respect and would create the idea in the outside world that this lively city had everything to offer. The concept was summed up in the slogan, "Amsterdam has it", and the "it" was carefully not filled in even approximately. On the posters and in the newspaper ads a space was deliberately left white "to encourage reactions from the citizen; graffiti is fine." They were after positive contributions to Amsterdam, the Concept. The chief of garbage collectors summarized it like this: "By means of catchy slogans we're trying to get Amsterdammers to do their bit towards the big city clean-up." The city anticipated that it would take a five-year campaign before the population would again conform to and defend "social standards" on its own. The authorities also tried to organize spectacular shows with the proportions of a big riot to jack up the (inter)national style of the place. It started with "Amsterdam fashion city" and the regatta "Sail", but the people at City Hall soon got bigger pretensions. They applied for candidacy for the 1992 Olympic Games.

Squatters had experimented before with arguments against so-called "cityvorming"\*, literally "suburbanization", but really a word for the strategy of a mafiose coalition of city councillors and big capital to rebuild the inner city into one big hotel chain cum\* amusement center, with casinos, sex industries, tourist shops and canal bikes. Around the umpteenth imminent eviction at Singel 114 an "attack with high sensational value" was committed on "the tourist product Amsterdam." "At 2:23 p.m. the tour boat would be at the place we intended to deal with it. Shortly before that time everyone was ready with paint, smoke bombs, camouflage nets and tires, trying not to be too conspicuous, which didn't really come off in light of the heavy character of the action. A cable fixed over the canal ahead of time was pulled tight, so that the boat couldn't reverse, and scaffolding pipes were fastened vertically to the bridge so that sailing forward was also impossible. The moment that the tour boat stopped was the signal for the attack: the paint splashed all around and, more quickly than expected, great panic ensued among the captain and passengers. A few tourists crawled under the benches. An American woman screamed, 'So this is nice Amsterdam.' Tourist-hunting season got off to a turbulent start."

The tour boat action's effect was astonishing. A picture of the boat amid clouds of smoke made the world press. The residents of Singel 114 gave "international interviews" day in day out about the new phenomenon of anti-tourism. The "paint and smoke treatment" to the city's image proved to hit the mark infinitely harder than attacking objects belonging to the city or the speculators. A few more steps were undertaken along the same lines, yet despite all surprise people balked at consistently carrying this strategy through. On the one hand because they had nothing against tourists per se; they were regularly "tourist in their own city" (and elsewhere) themselves, and tourists and tourism were so

difficult to separate. On the other hand, these mediumistic actions took place on such an abstract level that the direct connection with one's own place and experience was already getting too tenuous.

The good old-fashioned method of throwing stuff was extremely attractive, but difficult to defend afterward. However concrete, the action remained too theoretical to bring up with people inside and outside the scenes. This sort of actions could have nothing whatsoever to do with a movement which is enlarged by sucking in outsiders. Tourist actions were aimed at keeping aliens away. The paradox of a movement which grows because people are deterred is unresolvable. This was a consequence of the classical dilemma that actions are always carried out according to the philosophy of preceding actions. After the death of movement, they were not yet up to assessing this new situation on its own value.

Thus it was up to a small group from outside the earlier movement to further work out the concept of an action which aims to prevent an event. The negative action is based on a great reverence for the existent. It seeks its beginning not in criticizing failing structures and past mistakes, but in rejecting a future which is being forcibly imposed upon it. This made it possible to respect the leftover unclassifiable "vague types" for their acquired attitude to living, but also to consider the bomb-brewers, dreaming of the big bang, as a lasting enrichment of the democratic landscape. It was not necessary that the meeting between the participants be brought about with great violence. They didn't have to arrange themselves under one political heading; being anti was sufficient. You only had to bring your own identity along as a sign of what you stood for. The very fact that the squat movement had gone under made the aura of failure around "the squatters" so strong that the image of success could be paired with it. The best weapon against the pep talk that things are going great for you is to indulge in shameless exhibitionism of your own fuckups. This is the concept of image pollution. The point of this is not to discredit the manager culture, but to propagate the beauty of non-esthetics. Around the Olympic candidacy, from outside the movement, a group suddenly discovered the power of failure.

Once the city had boarded the Olympic train, they immediately signed on some "communications specialists" to work on the population as well as the members of the International Olympics Committee (IOC). Under the motto "Together we can do it", enthusiasm had to be cultivated for a mega-project which no one had been consulted about or had had the chance to air an opinion on. A mandate was sought in order to sanction the bribery of IOC members. In times of budget cuts in every area, the population needed to be artificially primed for this grandiose frittering away of community funds. The promotion campaign needed to be an enlarged version of "Amsterdam has it", with the same sanitary objectives. While the slogan "Amsterdam has the Olympic fire" polished the image of the capital on the Dutch-language posters, the foreign posters trumpeted the vague phrase: "Holland wants the world to win". 3.5 million enclosures in bank mail, 3 million door-to-door circulars, 120,000 posters and brochure racks of various sizes, 1500 flags with the action symbol and 120,000 pound bags of Olympic candies worth fl 510,000 were implemented as a tactic. Olympic sports bags, centerpiece flags, paper and plastic shopping bags, toy buses with the Olympic logo, 20,000 glasses, buttons, matches, stickers and pins and "36 different textile products with an Olympic aura" were available too. The single with accompanying video, "Amsterdam wants the world to win", was performed by the Hilversum Pedagogical Music Academy. The total costs were reputed to amount to 20 million guilders.

Meanwhile the 88 IOC members were buttered up with the methods usual in such circles, varying from free trips to the host country and a videotape with accompanying VCR to gala dinners, buffets and other trips to gastronomic Valhalla. Persistent rumors also surfaced of gifts of jewelry inlaid with South African diamonds. The numerous preliminary rounds in the promotional battle among the twelve candidates for '92 offered plenty of opportunities not only for corruption, but also for goal-specific actions.

Once the candidacy was presented during the Los Angeles Games in July 1984, Amsterdam policymakers turned out to already have flung themselves into the devastating urban planning which was supposed to accommodate games, athletes and press. The first anti-group immediately appeared out of the districts which stood to suffer the most under stadiums, parking facilities, highways, temporary accommodations and security measures. The group rose up out of community work to become the official "No Olympic Games Committee". It organized a residents' protest and drew up an "anti-Olympics charter" which was sent to every national Olympic committee in the world. "A number of people are also involved in a somewhat more radical action group, which presents itself under the name 'No Bread, No Games'", it was reported elsewhere. This second group would take on all the unaccounted-for work.

Until October 17, 1986, the day of the IOC's deciding vote, a minimal group of activists would succeed in achieving the maximal media effect for at least two years. The fact that the administrators had been using the candidacy for image improvement, which by definition belongs in the media sphere, from the beginning, made it possible to slay them with mere media presence. If the city had put all its money on, for example, the stimulation of sports in Holland, such an exclusive media strategy would have been impossible. Besides, the Olympic Games had long been the equation of money + media, so interest in the sporting element only appeared in the form of prickings of conscience in certain managers with an athletic past.

So all attention could be focused on polluting the image. It is true that resistance to the Amsterdam Games '92 began in the neighborhoods affected, but at its climax it reached such a meta level that only media scholars were really aware of where the next effect could be realized. The success of "Nolympics", the collective name for all the anti-initiatives, lay in its troublesome presence on every occasion for which a link with Amsterdam and the Games was even suspected. Always more people hanging around with their banners at the hotels and conference centers where the Amsterdam triumph was supposed to take shape bit by bit - that spoiled the air of success for many an official. Their harness of businesslike optimism was gradually damaged by a ruined atmosphere that came to hang over Amsterdam's candidacy. One who fights his opponent in the media ring can only K.O. by availing himself of a total media package. This is expressed in the word "media" alone; they plied the local press with local arguments, wrote in heavier language in their own papers, used objections of national importance on radio and had mail on diverse letterheads delivered constantly to IOC members all over the world. One of the letters came from an attorneys' collective who referred to the violation of human rights in Amsterdam in connection with the death of Hans Kok. Naturally they did not neglect to show up at the compulsory hearing or on the letters pages in the daily papers.

Unscrupulously they copied all the methods and techniques of the enemy foundation: the organizers' personal gift to the IOCers is followed by a bag of marijuana, received in the mail, with a letter signed by mayor Ed van Thijn: "After the South African diamonds, we're sending you something with which you can clear your mind. The Dutch Olympics Committee would like to acquaint you with one of the products of Amsterdam. We hope in this manner to exert a positive influence on your decision. Our national product can be obtained in 500 legal sales outlets. Please don't be bothered by increasing opposition in Amsterdam."

When it was made known through the slip of a councilperson's tongue that every IOC member had received a free video recorder, the committee requested to institute a criminal investigation against van Thijn for attempted bribery. At the same time the committee put out its own well-made video film. An Olympic torch-bearer walked through Amsterdam, running up against local problems. After clambering over the traffic jams, he fell into some roadworks, landed in the middle of a squatters' riot, gave a light to a balaclava with a bomb, stumbled into the red light district and was robbed by a hash smoker, after slipping in the dog shit.

The official "bidbook" in which the city of Amsterdam presented its plans was countered even before publication with a "people's bidbook" in which the "Amsterdam Never" argument was supported. A press packet with the complete collection of clippings on the anti-actions was offered to the IOCers with English subtitles. It shows, among other things, that the municipality granted subsidies to the organizing foundation, but not to the anti Games committee, which had put in a request to annoy the regents. A small riot even broke out, generating much press interest, over the copyright on the five Olympic rings, which were used by Nolympics left, right and center. The committee so emptied the symbols of meaning that, even if they were meant to be cheerful and fresh, they were no longer capable of arousing any enthusiasm.

An example: the city parks department planned to contribute to the Olympic mood by planting a flowerbed along an access road to Amsterdam in the shape of five rings, the Amsterdam coat of arms and "1992". Harry, on none of the committees, reports, "We were driving into the city one night in a van when we suddenly saw the flowerbed. We immediately pulled over and tore it apart." The chance passersby then sent a report to the inside press with the announcement, "Once again tourism and other political-economic objects will be targeted." The action sparked inspiration in others. A week later the "propagandistic flowerbed" was restored with violets, and that night the "autonomous" activists returned, this time with shovels and a photographer, to thoroughly redo the work. The picture of the destruction shows a balaclava'd gardener in heated action, clods flying. A letter was printed next to the photo in the dailies: "This is the beginning of a long struggle, a seven-year war if necessary if it's up to us. The initiators of the money-guzzling promotional campaign will become targets in the creation of an unsafe climate in Amsterdam." No Bread No Games subsequently prepared a postcard on which two antis were spreading out a Nolympics flag in the ruined bed. A large print run of these was provided with the addresses of the IOC members and could be sent with a personal anti-arguments. The postage stamp was also pre-printed. After all this messing about, the flowerbed had to be put under the care of Beuker security.

However anonymous and bizarre the Nolympics actions were, the No Committee always had a respectable face handy for press and other authorities to get furious at. This was one Saar Boerlage, an amiable middle-aged lady who was well-known in political circles as a passionate advocate and an expert university instructor. She was one of the founders of the "No Olympic Games Committee" and remained its spokeswoman from beginning to end through unfamiliarity with the action traditions. It was a shocking fact that a framework inside which heavy actions were done had a frontwoman with a surname and face that before long all of Holland knew. She could thereby be the dumpster into which every journalist, manager and administrator could pour out their frustration and fascination. She embodied the self-abuse of a nation. Because who would take on the thankless task of consistently pushing the bumblebees of Holland Inc. in the faces of the leaders of the "We are the champions" feeling and refuse to be flustered by all the bad press, as over the course of the action it becomes more and more focused on herself? In media actions a central hostess is essential. And what could be more exquisite than a matronly type, who can bullshit any spluttering journalist into a corner?

The actions were concentrated on businesspeople's two Achilles' heels: humor and confusion. The imagebuilders knew they were gambling, and they felt slightly ridiculous to begin with when required by business life to beg for money. In such a situation every joke hits like a sledgehammer. Moreover, one splotch on a three-piece suit is more effective than 100 good arguments. Thus, the International Sports Federation was invited to hold its conference in Amsterdam, so it might be favorably impressed by the sporty city. The invitees were on the way to a dinner with mayor van Thijn in the Maritime Museum and had walked from their hotel to a waiting tour boat. There, from a bridge, 100 demonstrators pelted them with paint, eggs and rotten tomatoes. The police charged down the canal, first to drive away the throwers and then to keep the livid sports guys in check. The president of the federation: "If the vast majority of the Dutch people stands behind the Games, then we have obviously

met the small minority tonight."

Other sports events too got a visit. The night before the first 67th International Open Golf Championship in Noordwijk three holes were completely dug up. The participants of the world baseball championships had the honor of walking through a "Nolympics triumphal arch" on the way to their reception in the Historic Museum and picking up a leaflet with the counterarguments. And the night before the World Women's Hockey Championship in the super-guarded Wagener Stadium in Amstelveen, the Astroturf was decorated with the Nolympic rings. Right before it was finished three of the five artists were picked up. The Nolympics argument that Holland could not sufficiently guard its sports events against attacks was hereby confirmed.

A spokesperson for the No Olympic Games Committee said he found the action "spectacular" and "playful". "They're just asking for it. They never wanted to take their opponents seriously. Now van Thijn is trying to squelch the opposition by playing so-called hardball. Naturally it's rotten for the people who are locked up, but what's happening now is showing the true face of the Olympic Games." After two days in a police cell, Piet, one of the arrestees, immediately filed two complaints. One for "unlawful imprisonment" (they were not allowed to detain him longer than six hours for vandalism) and one for "mistreatment by seven police officers". He wanted fl 50,000 damages.

Along with all this digging and scribbling the official No Committee persisted in being annoyingly present at IOC meetings. At the 90th session in East Berlin, with Erich Honnecker as speaker of honor, the opponents showed up again. Saar Boerlage, the only Dutch person who had managed to get across the border, handed out leaflets and spoke with the promotion teams from Paris and Brisbane, "who were very interested in my arguments." Her posters were illustrated with the Olympic Games logo, except one of the five rings was replaced by a bomb, which was supposed to point out the danger of attacks during the Amsterdam Games. When she called an international press conference by the fountain under the Fernsehturm, she was arrested by the Kriminal Polizei and after six hours of interrogation expelled from the country. A letter-to-the-editor writer took this up: "When the DDR made things impossible for Saar, van Thijn should have quit his activities. Now he has continued in his outlandish activities, which are doomed to fail anyway, under the protection of a totalitarian state." Another letter writer responded under the heading "Letdown in Berlin is Godsend for Amsterdam": "Many Amsterdammers will have registered the clumsy presentation in East Berlin with approval."

The group visited Lausanne, where the IOC had its seat, several times. In December 1985 all the candidate cities gathered in the Palace Hotel for a first round. "Two demonstrators forced their way into the leading hotel, wrenched themselves out of the desperate grip of the Olympic press representative and before the eyes of the shocked company unfurled their banner 'Nolympics in Amsterdam'. At a signal from the IOC president the hotel staff interfered and the demonstrators were ejected into the street. The calamity, however, had already occurred and in the next few hours the news of the Amsterdam demonstration raced around the world." The group also took advantage of the opportunity to take photographs which would later turn up everywhere. Always with that same one, neat banner held up by two people: in front of the Palais de Beaulieu, next to a burly statue, before Lausanne-Palace. The last photo summed up the strategy: it showed a crouching photographer snapping three officials smiling at the camera, while at the back to the right, before the columns of the hotel entrance, the duo with banner stole the show.

Gunnar Ericsson visited Amsterdam as a "senior IOC inspector" and was treated early in the morning to the banner and a bit of music by 30 people. "We did that to wake up the three IOC inspectors." Ericsson spoke with Saar and finds it "an amusing breakfast". At the end of February 1986 Nolympics were back in Lausanne, where Amsterdam was offering its bidbook. "Two demonstrators, all told, chilled to the bone, stood by the IOC headquarters, the Chateau de Vidy, waiting for the delegation

from the capital. The two were even allowed inside to present the IOC chairman with 'the people's bidbook'."

The more the deadline approached and the banner frequency increased, the more irritated was the organizers' reaction. In every interview they had to comment on the Nolympics actions. Ed van Thijn: "Naturally we're easy as hell to blackmail. Every Amsterdam citizen we lock horns with can threaten that he's going to approach the IOC." Embroidering on the reasoning, "Spain has its Basques; we've all got something," van Thijn kept presenting his opponents as proof of "the power of Dutch democracy". The face of the daft right wing in Holland, the fat regent Vonhoff, sat on the presidium of the advocates. He too briefly tried to hold himself back: "Holland without activist groups? That's like Holland without tulips, wooden shoes and windmills."

But while the ringleaders acted as though nothing was wrong, at the lower levels of the organization the promoters were starting to stress out and develop an allergy to the press. In Seoul, which lay outside the range of Nolympics, a last presentation was in the works. Amsterdam's act was a flop; they had forgotten to bring the scale models of the Olympic city and tried to entertain the crowd with an "amazing magic show by world champion Ger Koppers." For this Van Thijn was described as "the one who has to clean up the mess, trying to poke up the feeble Olympic fire a little bit." The critical press was revolted just by the mountains of exclusive comestibles. "The kind of things on those tables would eventually have to come out the nostrils of even the most spoiled gourmand."

Back in Amsterdam they decided to keep completely silent about the anti-Olympic actions, and the papers obediently followed suit. Nolympics reported: "When we wake up the whole Amstel hotel early in the morning, because IOC member Jao Havelange is staying there, the police are there, almost laughing. Whatever you do, keep things calm, is the policy these days. Every riot is to the advantage of the Nolympics movement, they figure. If the Olympic tram is pelted with paint bombs, there is no publicity about it. That's a lot different from their hysterical reaction when the tour boat was the target."

But then something happened that could not be kept quiet. On the night of August 21st, 1986, two bombs exploded, destroying the front door of the Olympic Games Foundation building and the only satellite dish antenna for telephone traffic in Amsterdam. The attacks were claimed by the "Out of the Blue Revolutionary Cells Command". At this "important link in the propaganda for the Olympic Games" a bomb was placed in the heart of the dish antenna, but the most damage was caused by a chemical liquid which was sprayed in the cable channel and destroyed the internal wiring. Signs were found at both locations reading, "Warning - explosives - do not approach". In the press statement, which was found in a garbage can at the squatted complex De Binnenpret, it says, "With these attacks we mean to inflict direct damage on the polished-up image of the city of Amsterdam." A poster was attached on which Ed van Thijn, with a fanatical expression, is personally pressing the button on the explosive box with which the dish was blown up, with the caption, "Olympic fire in Amsterdam". Hordes of journalists promptly phoned up Saar Boerlage to note down her denial of involvement. To their amazement, a "hurrah mood" prevailed on the No Committee. Saar in the media: "We would never have thought of something like this ourselves, but we're happy with the way it went. This incident is making the world press and that's unfavorable for Amsterdam. We'd be crazy to commit attacks; if a court found out we were behind it, we'd be sentenced to pay for the damage. This is one more blow for the organizers. They're trying in a boorish way to lure the Games to Amsterdam and give opponents no chance to propagate their objections. The authorities are encouraging violence that way." This reaction proved the superiority of the media strategy. The multiplier effect worked: others' planting bombs did not act as a restraint, but strengthened the strategy of dragging down the own image. So the committee could wonder astonished why "we didn't think of it ourselves" and they could use the attacks as an extra argument against the Games. This watertight reasoning had to be

adopted by whiny journalists. The new argument was now: "More attacks expected if Games come to Amsterdam". Saar Boerlage remarked, "Those boys and girls were not after anyone else's life or property. Of course, the authorities will have to pass judgment on this. But not in terms of serious crime, as van Thijn has done."

Two weeks later there was a last incident before the caravans left for Lausanne to witness the IOC vote. The annual floral procession, which travels from the Dutch bulb-growing area through Amsterdam, was dominated by the Olympics. For this reason the police had mobilized extra manpower, such as arrest squads. As the floats moved past the Binnenpret, activists with sandwich boards attempted to walk along with the procession. The texts read, "Mexico 1968: hundreds dead", "München 1972: hostages burned", "Montreal 1976: the people are still paying", "Amsterdam 1992: out of the blue?" The police chased the demonstrators out of the parade, and they got on their bikes and headed for the Dam under police escort to go hand out leaflets.

After the bombings things were as tense as they had ever been. The plan was to bring the tension to a climax in Lausanne. First Saar and her committee would arrive with the famous banners. A secret weapon was concealed for later in the week: the savage hordes who would come to confirm Amsterdam's bad image. "From Amsterdam a bus trip is being organized that no tour operator can touch. The trip will take four days and cost about 90 guilders. Accommodations will be available." "Because the No Committee had needed no membership file or broad base for their work in the media, certain circles were now being warmed up for a nice outing. It appealed to the target group and they understood what was desired of them. Two punk bands went along to provide a musical touch. The last-minute tickets for this "wonderfully planned vacation" were distributed at trusted addresses.

The special Olympic train of officials had already left. A private enterprise by the supporters, sponsored by the firm Sorbo (kitchenware manufacturers), also presented itself, setting out for Switzerland in vans. In Lausanne the activists' coach (decked out with slogans like "No Way Eddie!") and the Sorbo vans came across each other the first night. Flip: "Those vans drove very close alongside us and we kicked some dents into them."

The group of action tourists was received in the Martin Luther King center, "the only wreck in Lausanne". It sat beside a river which emptied into the lake of Geneva. Large tents were set up on the grass next to the building. The presence of "van Thijn's household garbage" in the place where he needed it least was enough to cause total culture shock among the assembled world press, the Swiss police and the officials. "Saar Boerlage's greasy hangers-on" not only wore their leather jackets, army boots and Nolympics t-shirts, but left behind mountains of refuse wherever they went. They were constantly yelling, jumping, tugging at fences and hitting between the railings with bars so that a godawful racket rang out. They danced in the planters. They carried around slogans that even by their own standards went over the limit: "Amsterdam supports apartheid", "No games No bombs", "Manchen '72 = Amsterdam '92" and "Manchen can be repeated - Amsterdam fights!". Two opponents from Barcelona also appeared in Lausanne at one point with their own banner, were filmed by Spanish TV and to their surprise were allowed to join up with the troop from Amsterdam.

In the clean, sterile environment of Lausanne it seemed as if the barbarians had invaded civilization. The action style was based on the SPASSGUERRILLA logic based on knowing what the adversary hates most to hear or see about itself, and going that one better. But at the same time something else happened: it suddenly sank in to the Amsterdam squat experience how extremely clean and respectable the world is. Amid the giggles that set in, the insight flashed up of how wonderful their own filth was. Up until then the unclassifiables had had no interest in others' rejection of their appearance. Now they understood that tidy people just couldn't take so much gunge.

Flip: "The noise demos in front of the gate always go according to the same pattern: jumping out of the bus, making a racket for an hour with whistles, rattles and horns, handing out pamphlets, waving banners and then back on the bus, back to our base." The travel organization followed a Spartan regime in order not to miss a single opportunity to give act de presence. The group was already awake at 6:00 to be able to ruin breakfast in the Calgary Palace Hotel around 7:30. The outings were totally aimed at the world press, who were walking around frustrated too since the IOC members were completely unavailable. They only flashed by in buses and plush cars. The police remained friendly, so as not to bring Lausanne a bad name under the watching eye of the reporters.

The night before the vote they set off again, this time to the hotel where the gentlemen were sleeping. Flip: "An enthusiastic horde jumps out of the buses again, runs down the street where to heighten the action's effectiveness the bus of IOC members is just driving up. To get into the hotel they have to pass the roaring crowd." This was the only time that the dignified gentlemen made bodily contact with the rabble. "This was the demo that did it. A few hysterical activists started to accost the Mercedeses. Some idiot with his face bright red with agitation wouldn't stop crying 'fuck you capitalist bastard' and jabbing his middle finger in the IOCers' faces, picking fights in passing with other activists who didn't like it. The fun idea came up to slap stickers onto the IOC members' backs. A fossil of an IOCer almost had heart failure and had to be propped up by his chauffeur. People seemed more and more capable of becoming wild with rage just at the sight of an IOCer." Joop: "The story that we threw beer bottles is nonsense. Someone accidentally dropped a bag with a few bottles in it. That's all. At most somebody hit a bus." Flip: "The prince of Monaco got a gob of phlegm in his face, that was funny. This action became completely successful when the riot police was sent after us. They came running over the whole street, they made a better-organized impression than our own riot police. So, we broke up quickly, beat a chaotic retreat in the flush of victory. Now the press was happy too." Betsy: "We were stopped again by the cops because there was so much junk in the street; I believe people started to pick it up." Joop: "It was a typical Amsterdam demonstration at the hotel in Lausanne. But for the IOC members it would have been the hot topic of the evening at dinner." That night the company amused itself at a benefit concert held in a youth cultural center.

On D-day, after the first demonstration at 8:00, a "lawn meeting" was held before the Palais de Beaulieu, where the decision would be made. The question was what to do when the result was made known. Before they knew it, they had landed in a tactical debate. A small group around Piet and Hein, "who had otherwise kept pretty aloof from the big group", thought that this was a nice opportunity to bring down van Thijn. Sandra: "They wanted to play leader. Everyone thought the proposals they made were too heavy considering the Swiss riot police's action the night before. The police had come at us like it was Brazil, with vans that looked like they were from an exterminators' team. Their clean approach and their marching made it unclear what they planned to do. Did they just want to chase us away or really get us?" Piet and Hein's faction still hadn't figured out that they had landed in a media action and the strategy of being "simply unclassifiable" was heading for a resounding success.

Things came to a head around the question where and how many smoke bombs should be set off. The compromise was an "Olympic smoke torch" which was carried by the "living work of art" Fabiola. The "dying torch with the Amsterdam Olympic fire" was lit at the entry gates, at exactly the moment that the assembled IOC was being photographed on the steps. The smoke floated beautifully through the group portrait.

Shortly after it was announced that Barcelona had won, and that Amsterdam had already lost in the first round with the lowest number of votes of all the cities (5 of 130). At this the group boarded the buses, cheering, to go back home. "The best part might have been the hilarious feeling about how all those inflated Dutch delegates were degraded to almost nothing. 'Five votes!' everyone was yelling all day. For the elite the world was briefly reversed. The people from Nolympics became world news. In



contrast to the official delegation, who were reduced to extras and got very little international press."

The strategy of constant presence was now taken to the extreme. The Nolympics buses were back in Amsterdam quickly enough to arrive at the same time as the disappointed returning delegates. They were to give a last press conference in the World Trade Center. A segment of the Nolympics traveling association, it is true, felt more like going straight home, but they were dropped off in front of the office complex unasked. Another banner was made: "No way, ha ha!" and "4 million guilders per vote". When the delegation arrived at the trade center on the Olympic train's final run, the regents had to walk from the station over the public road to the building's entrance. On the street they bumped into the same Nolympics group that had tormented them to exasperation in Lausanne. This was too much for most of the officials. Now it was their turn to physically approach the enemy. They pushed the activists aside and tried to fly into them, but the latter reacted nimbly and vocally. The fat Vonhoff got spit in his face. In a rage Vonhoff dragged the activist to the nearby police officers to have him arrested, but the activist was freed by his comrades. Once inside Vonhoff demanded to mayor van Thijn that the boy be arrested. When a new load of police arrived, they arrested him. He was released the same evening.

The excitement in the press over this incident had already reached unheard-of heights. In one fell swoop "Saar Boerlage and her hangers-on" got all the blame for the city's tremendous flop in front of the world. An activist asked afterward, "What's so awful about spit anyway? How is it so much more radical than a pie? Spit is so awful because it comes from the human body. And that's something the elite don't want to be. They aren't bodies, they are Order."

Amidst the mudslinging which continued for a few weeks, a newspaper published an interview with Saar and her No Olympic Games Committee. Saar: "Our last message to the members of the IOC is that we think Amsterdam is a lovely city. We have said that we want to keep it that way." Question: "Mayor van Thijn said over the weekend that No Olympics was responsible for the loss of seven to twelve votes in Lausanne. What do you think of that?" Answer: "Let's hope so. That would be a great honor for us."