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### Cinematic Rotterdam: the times and tides of a modern city

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## CHAPTER 14. CONTAINER CONTAINED / STRIKING DEVELOPMENT

### § 1. the composition of growth

In order to stabilise social-economic development, the government decided each year how much wages could grow by (i.e. *geleide loonpolitiek*). Unions respected these rules. The post-war period, directed by the social-democratic (PvdA) Prime Minister Drees (1948-1958), was thus characterised by collective agreements in order to rebuild the country and to enable progress<sup>1570</sup>. Over the course of the 1960s, workers experienced increasing welfare, but their relative position worsened. They had no direct share in the profits, while they were confronted with unstable conditions. Moments of economic change, for the better or the worse, are a reason for workers to strike (Van der Velden, 2000: 288). There is more to it in this case. In a period of rapid, but unpredictable development, brokers arranged temporary labour contracts, which reduced the risks for companies. In this way, temporary workers, among them the foreign *gastarbeiders* ('guest workers'), could be easily fired, but they could earn more, irrespective of their skills. Permanent personnel began to protest against this competition. It resulted in so-called 'wild strikes', without the union, in the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam in October 1963, which was reported by the NTS JOURNAAL<sup>1571</sup>. Workers demanded higher salaries, but that was prevented by the *geleide loonpolitiek*. Unions thought that its abolition would weaken the position of the workers in the long run<sup>1572</sup>. In 1965, wild strikes took place at the shipyards of Wilton-Fijenoord and Verolme. In the *Zwarte Nacht van Wilton* ("Black Night of Wilton") workers occupied the firm, which was not reported by television, but only by radio<sup>1573</sup>. Against the will of the employers association, private agreements were made by the companies. Higher wages had become a goal in itself, and as such the cause for the protests moved to the background<sup>1574</sup>. The conditions remained the same.

The lack of attention from television might have played a role here in the maintenance of the status quo, when compared to the heavily mediatised events of the 1970s. In retrospect, the absence is striking since the events of 1965 set the tone for those to come. It might have had two reasons. At the moment of the strike the news was dominated by another strike in Rotterdam, by taxi-drivers<sup>1575</sup>. It made the one in the port seem unimportant, since it was relatively small and concentrated on particular firms, but that was exactly the point. The nature of the protest had changed and firms did no longer obey to the general agreements and procedures. The fact that the JOURNAAL operated from outside Rotterdam, played a role too. The developments seemed to be a local affair, but in fact it was a sign that the Dutch social-economic system was about to change.

In the port of Rotterdam, these changes were accelerated by containerisation, as addressed by Sjaak van der Velden (2005: 20). The container largely replaced the labour intensive piece-good handling. It affected the overall conditions in the port, and as such it has been one of the reasons, within a complex web of factors, that caused the strong labour protests in

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<sup>1570</sup> Immediately after the war, various strikes took place (Sjaak van der Velden, 2004: 117). A relatively quiet period followed, with only occasional protests (see also: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 94-95). An example was a strike at Wilton-Fijenoord in 1951 (Sjaak van der Velden, 2004: 123) and a harbour strike in Rotterdam in August 1955 – see: JOURNAAL (NTS, 1955-08-16). Whereas unions respected the agreements, the employers took also care for social issues, which they also expressed through film – see e.g. *KIJK UIT!* (1955, Nol Bollongino) and *WERKERS AAN DE HAVENKANT* (1962, Ronny Erends), both made for *Scheepvaartvereniging Zuid* (SVZ); cf. *ACHTER HET NIEUWS* (VARA, 1967-08-31).

<sup>1571</sup> JOURNAAL (NTS, 1963-10-26 and 1963-10-27), cf. Nas, 2001. Both ports had a tradition of labour protests. For reflections upon this tradition and its reasons, see: Van der Velden, 2000: 187.

<sup>1572</sup> Nas: 2001 (a.o.).

<sup>1573</sup> This is particularly striking since *Wilton-Fijenoord* and *Verolme* were engaged with film and television practices. For radio, see *RADIOKRANT* [nr. 70] (NCRV-radio, 1965-02-18); comment: P.G.J. Korteweg, reporter: Henri van der Zee [B&G: 82252]; *NIET BEKEND* (VARA-radio, 1965-02-19), 5'40", reporter: Kees Buurman [B&G: 5104] with an explanation of Chairman I. Baart of the trade-union ANMB.

<sup>1574</sup> Nas, 2001.

<sup>1575</sup> See a.o. JOURNAAL (NTS, 1965-02-12)

the 1970s (cf. De Goey, 2005: 55). Within this framework of economic and technological change, the policy of the unions became outdated, and unable to direct tensions. The economists Alfred Kleinknecht and Ro Naastepad (2005) have argued that instead of collective agreements characterised by wage-moderation, offensive trade-unionism is the best strategy for a small country with an open economy<sup>1576</sup>. In moments of change, companies should not opt for temporary measures, but develop new strategies and visions. In this way, labour movements are important factors for growth, which force the social-economic and technological system to innovate itself. Paul van de Laar (2005) has emphasised the significance of this argument, especially within the current debate on technological innovation and the knowledge economy. I would consider the role of media here as well, as part of this complex.

Concerning the press, Van der Velden (2000: 89-90) has also addressed that it is one of the players within the event of a strike, although it remains a brief remark that needs further investigation. His assumption (concerning the period 1830-1995) is that the press has generally been negative towards strikes, and that strikers had little to expect from it. Whether this vision is correct remains to be seen. The tendency to reject the strike was indeed present in various media reports, but it might actually have empowered the strikers. For the 1970s, I would, in my turn, stress the role of television, as the main public medium, to channel claims and views, and to enable exchange between the different agents. By 1970, television was able to provide immediate feedback. As such it became a prominent factor in the discussions. Especially important was the JOURNAAL. Over the course of the 1960s it established itself as the main Dutch news medium – I will often refer to it by especially marked footnotes: (\*”).

The absence of the JOURNAAL in 1965 was soon compensated, during the wild strikes of the tugboat personnel (\*<sup>1577</sup>). It was the onset of an era of mediatised social-economic changes, and a different picture may come to the fore than the one suggested by Van der Velden. Media monitored the events taking place, and displayed opportunities. A cross-connection can be drawn here with the role of public space, as built structures enable events to take place (cf. Tschumi, 1994 [1983]: 140). Media and urban space made up the public domain that enabled an exchange of views. Whereas the media landscape had radically changed due to the emergence of television in the previous fifteen years, public space also changed its character in Rotterdam, due to the changes in the port. Piece goods handling in the harbours in the city, started to be replaced by container transshipment west of the city. Its space is archetypical for what is now known as the ‘space of flows’ and ‘non-place’ (Castells, 1996; Augé, 1992), but it is, as we will see, still related to the social-cultural structures of the city, the empowering of particular urban sites, and to media practices. Within the framework of urban development, social action, containerisation, and the media are interrelated, but indirectly. In this chapter, I will *interchangingly* discuss the development of container transshipment and its connection to film and television, and similarly the role of media vis-à-vis the major strikes in the port of Rotterdam in the 1970s<sup>1578</sup>.

<sup>1576</sup> Cf. review by Van de Laar (2005) who finds this hypothesis the most relevant to test the role of trade-unionism in the economic-technological development of post-war Rotterdam.

<sup>1577</sup> As shown by the JOURNAAL (NTS, 1968-01-02); the first strike was led by syndicalist Leen van Os. He had a reputation as a union member (EVC); in 1948, in opposition to the communist leaders of the EVC, he was an important factor in the reorganisation of transport unions (see: Nas, 2000; ‘Wederopbouw’). Another strike took place that year; the JOURNAAL (NTS, 1968-11-11) showed strikers gathering in neighbourhood centre ‘Odeon’ in Het Oude Westen. More reports followed, e.g. BRANDPUNT (KRO, 1969-01-03), with speeches by Leen van Os e.a., and an interview with Chairman Alink of the Union of Transport Personnel (NBV). At the same time reporter Wibo van de Linde (JOURNAAL, NTS, 1969-01-03) interviewed harbour deputy H.J. Verhoef, who did not see a serious threat yet. Some ships moored by themselves, while others went to the port of Amsterdam, like the Greek ship Ellines (images by Pim Korver). The next day Van de Linde spoke with Van Os (JOURNAAL, 1969-01-04), as a board was established to represent the strikers (cf. JOURNAAL, 1969-01-07).

<sup>1578</sup> This research on the way strikes have been reported on television has largely been based on information provided by the database of B&G (up to 2008). Many reports are only studied through their *written transcriptions*: there is only a limited number of reports available on viewing copies, and practice limits full access. The archive material concerns mainly 16mm reels, which was the common format for reports; 16mm reports have usually been preserved, but it might

## § 2. container contained I – the scenario of ‘process architecture’

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 1961, the NTS JOURNAAL reported on the American container ship ‘Warrior’ visiting the port of Rotterdam, with shots of the ship unloading and then loading again. The young entrepreneur Frans Swarttouw (1932-1997), who was the director of Quick Dispatch, a company for bulk transshipment, had done a traineeship in the United States a few years before, where the first container crane was put to service in 1959<sup>1579</sup>. Swarttouw saw possibilities for Rotterdam too<sup>1580</sup>. In October 1965, he announced a plan to construct a container terminal together with *Thomsens Havenbedrijf* and the Dutch Railways (NS), which would be located at the site of Quick Dispatch at the Eemhaven<sup>1581</sup>. During the next year, three other companies joined the venture. In the meantime, more container ships came to Rotterdam, which was also shown on television<sup>1582</sup>.

The container accelerated automation, which demanded a different organisation of the port and its labour forces. Van Driel and De Goey, who have written on the history of cargo handling in Rotterdam, speak of a ‘regime-transformation’<sup>1583</sup>. The port authorities accommodated and promoted this change in several ways, for example by the exhibition ‘Nedex 66’ in Ahoy’, on container transportation. The exhibition was also reported by the NTS JOURNAAL (1966-10-25), which as such became an extension of it.

One day earlier, on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October, an agreement was signed by Frans Swarttouw and others to found the Europe Container Terminus (ECT)<sup>1584</sup>. This enterprise needed promotion in order to execute its plans. It succeeded. In August 1967, the first container ship moored at the ECT at the Eemhaven, which was the ‘Atlantic Span’ of the Atlantic Container Line (ACL)<sup>1585</sup>. Whereas containerships had visited Rotterdam already before, the real news for the JOURNAAL (NTS, 1967-09-05) was, the ride of the first container train (from the Margriethaven).

Containerisation was also discussed in television programmes. One of the first was *HIER EN NU* (NCRV, 1967-10-10), which addressed the need for innovation, but also its consequences for employment, since it put existing labour structures under pressure<sup>1586</sup>. That was also recognised by the elaborate AVRO-documentary *VRACHT IN BLIK; GROEI CONTAINERVERVOER* (“Canned Freight; Growth of Container Transport”, Philip Bolhuis, 1969-03-03). It briefly draws the history of containerisation: it got a major impetus in the 1950s through the efforts of the American entrepreneur Malcom McLean (the founder of Sea-Land)<sup>1587</sup>. Transport through standardised steel containers turned out to be efficient, but it demanded high investments, and

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be possible that some reports have been lost, which have therefore been omitted in my text. On the other hand, not all the preserved material has actually been broadcast, but only some excerpts, which is not always exactly clear. Furthermore, live-broadcasting has often not been registered, which include certain introductory comments and concluding remarks, and (possibly) certain studio discussions. I have tried to keep these complications into account, and I do not expect that eventual omissions in this respect won’t make substantial changes in the general picture that I have drawn.

<sup>1579</sup> Kingma, 2002.

<sup>1580</sup> See also: Van der Velden, 2005: 20.

<sup>1581</sup> Dierikx, 2005.

<sup>1582</sup> E.g. the documentary *RIDDERS VAN DE GROTE WEG* (“Knights of the Big Road”, KRO, 1966-03-08). Among various modes of transport it showed containers being loaded on board of the British ship ‘Pool Fisher’ in Rotterdam; it is followed on its way to England, where the containers are transhipped to trucks.

<sup>1583</sup> Van Driel & De Goey in: Kingma, 2005; see also: Lintsen, 2002.

<sup>1584</sup> Established by Quick Dispatch, Thomsen, Müller-Progress, PHM, NS; Van de Laar (2000: 515) emphasises the active role played by F. Posthuma (*Gemeentelijk Havenbedrijf*) in the foundation of ECT.

<sup>1585</sup> [www.ect.nl/](http://www.ect.nl/) ‘History ECT’ (website visited: 2006-04-03). The ACL was established as a joint-venture, in which the HAL, for example, held a share of 20% (Van de Laar, 2000: 515).

<sup>1586</sup> Cf. *TECHNIEK, JE VRIEND OF JE VIJAND* (“Technology, Your Friend or Enemy”, AVRO, 1968-01-20). The title is rhetorical; this impressionist documentary actually highlights world-wide technological achievements, like automated production processes, truck and aeroplane developments, traffic monitoring systems, the state of the art of monorail and metro engineering (with test rides in Rotterdam), and container transshipment in Rotterdam.

<sup>1587</sup> Cf. De Goey, 2005: 53-54.

only in the 1960s it became profitable. It caused a fierce fight in America between employers and employees, who feared unemployment.

Journalist Frans van Houtert shows the situation in New York – ‘the container capital of the world’. He visits the office of the Atlantic Container Line, with large panels and computers to manage the operations; after all it had been the development of new communication technology that enabled container transportation<sup>1588</sup>. Transportation by aeroplane is addressed too, but it requires specific containers. It is mentioned that it takes only seven hours to fly goods from New York to Amsterdam’s Schiphol Airport, and seven days to ship them to the port of Rotterdam. Air cargo, it is predicted, might therefore increase in this way, but for now it is shipping that is most important<sup>1589</sup>.

Van Houtert leaves New York and arrives at ECT in Rotterdam, which is the largest container terminal of Europe. Eighty percent of the containers delivered here have their eventual destination abroad. The film shows in detail the work that is carried out. A crane driver is asked how many people are involved with unloading a container ship. The answer is fifteen, against one-hundred-twenty for the same freight in the traditional way; however, he adds that behind the scenes many other people are needed to enable this, for example regarding container transport by rail. This means that there is still a lack of personnel. The documentary finishes with the remark that the prospects for the Netherlands are promising.

The interrelated transportation modes strengthened the development of a new overall system of international logistics and economic progress. It is reflected by promotional films of other companies made in collaboration with ECT, such as CONTAINER UMSCHLAG MIT TECHNIK VON SIEMENS (Siemens-Filminformation, see: ECT), on the production and use of automatic systems for container handling, and FOCUS ON DAF-TRUCKS (DAF, see: ECT), in which trucks are used for container transport by road. The container connected different industries, driven by a common attractor, which was articulated by film. As such, film was part of this complex system, as an aspect of industrial production, and driven by the same attractors.

Swarttouw, supported by the Rotterdamsche Lloyd (a.o.), attracted large container companies to Rotterdam<sup>1590</sup>. He turned ECT not only into Europe’s largest, but also its most innovative container terminal. While in the USA containers were stored on trailers, ECT developed a method for stacking (Kingma, 2005). ECT was able to maintain its position since Swarttouw had reinvested the profits<sup>1591</sup>. The developments went fast. By 1968, the port of Rotterdam handled around 65,000 containers. Ten years later, this was already more than a million, and it would continue to grow<sup>1592</sup>. To that end, Swarttouw conducted a sophisticated media campaign, which was produced by Albert Tromp and his company All Art. He designed the company’s typography, created its publications, organised its marketing and produced various films, which were made together with cinematographer Eddy van der Enden<sup>1593</sup>. In one of these promotion films, Rotterdam is called a ‘point of impact’, which is also the film’s title. It refers first of all to the ECT headquarters: three large buildings, built in 1968 by Hugh Maaskant<sup>1594</sup>. This complex, including the ‘control terminal’, is an architecture of connections. It links up with the container terminals, shown in the next shots, which exemplify rationalist planning and logistics. The terminals are connected to the mainland by railway and highway; impressive aerial

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<sup>1588</sup> Cf. Van de Laar, 2000: 514.

<sup>1589</sup> This is also addressed in RIDDERS VAN DE GROTE WEG (KRO, 1966-03-08).

<sup>1590</sup> On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1969, the *Rotterdamsche Lloyd* had become the main shareholder of ECT.

<sup>1591</sup> Dierikx, 2005.

<sup>1592</sup> By 1971: 250,000 containers (= TEU). By 1986: 2 million. ‘1966 - today: The arrival of the container’ (2006-04-03). [www.portofrotterdam.com/organizations/UK/CompanyInformation/History/1966-today.asp?ComponentID=55150&SourcePageID=60029](http://www.portofrotterdam.com/organizations/UK/CompanyInformation/History/1966-today.asp?ComponentID=55150&SourcePageID=60029)

<sup>1593</sup> Information by Van der Enden in an interview with FP, 2008-12-19.

<sup>1594</sup> Provoost (2003); see also: [www.bonas.nl](http://www.bonas.nl) (2007-03-24); address: Margriethaven, Rotterdam; Reeweg 25, Rotterdam.

shots show junction Kleinpolderplein to underscore that Rotterdam is a major hub. Such an environment has given rise to an industrial landscape and skyline of, what we may call, 'process architecture'<sup>1595</sup>. The container terminals are a city in themselves, almost devoid of people, consisting just of modular spaces as envisioned only by the most radical modern architects of the 1920s.

### **striking development I – the metal and harbour strike of 1970**

The container affected logistics, the organisation of labour, and the industry. In 1970, for example, the WILTON-FIJENOORD JOURNAAL reported that the yard received a commission to extend seven ships. Each was cut in two pieces, and a large section was inserted. Things were done quickly, which was emphasised by fast-motion images and slapstick music. With RDM it also built three new containerships for 'Sea-Land'. 'Yes, we had plenty of work in the machine factories, but to persevere, people must be there. In order to face up the burdensome lack of personnel, Wilton-Fijenoord has, for the first time in its existence, employed the woman in professions that were previously exercised by men only. To contract female crane drivers was a national scoop'<sup>1596</sup>. There are shots of women driving cranes. The commentator says that they needed little time for orientation, and 'now they are fully accepted by their male colleagues' – in the canteen they play cards together. Not mentioned was the fact that Wilton-Fijenoord made also use of brokers.

By 1970, an estimated six-hundred brokers operated in the port area. They had contracted about 7,000 workers, who received 25 guilders extra per week<sup>1597</sup>. Permanent workers began to protest against it (\*<sup>1598</sup>). After three weeks, on the morning of Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> of August, the workers council of Wilton-Fijenoord blamed the directors' evasion of the collective labour agreement<sup>1599</sup>. About 3,000 workers of the yard in Schiedam began to strike. It was not mentioned by the WILTON-FIJENOORD JOURNAAL. The report just pointed to the low attendance for the workers' council election, to stress that workers complain instead of exercising their formal power. However, workers of other yards joined the strike (\*<sup>1600</sup>), next to dockworkers of *Thomsens Havenbedrijf*. The latter was the main harbour company in Rotterdam, and actively involved with the container terminals. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, the union of transport personnel (NBV) expressed its claims to the employers.

The strike grew day by day. Aerial shots in the JOURNAAL (1970-08-28) emphasised that the whole port was out of order, while in Amsterdam workers started to strike as well (\*<sup>1601</sup>). After five days, 20,000 metal workers and 14,000 dockworkers were striking in Rotterdam<sup>1602</sup>. It was again shown by aerial shots of Hook of Holland where ships waited to enter the port (\*<sup>1603</sup>). While negotiations went on, a protest meeting took place at Schouwburgplein, where speeches were held to address the demands of the strikers (\*<sup>1604</sup>). After a week, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, there were still strong discussions between the union and the employers, but the next day the employers association *Scheepvaart Vereniging Zuid* (SVZ) agreed that workers would get 25

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<sup>1595</sup> It is not just a matter of logistics, but also of industrial architecture. In the same perspective, Kingma (2005) has argued to consider the, until now, underexposed history of cranes in terms of engineering and design.

<sup>1596</sup> Original quote: 'Ja, wij hadden volop werk in de machinefabrieken, maar om dit te kunnen volhouden moeten er mensen zijn. Om het hoofd te kunnen bieden aan een nijpend personeelsgebrek heeft Wilton-Fijenoord, voor het eerst in haar bestaan, de vrouw ingeschakeld in beroepen die voorheen slechts door mannen werden uitgeoefend. Het aannemen van kraanrijdsters betekende een landelijke primeur.'

<sup>1597</sup> Nas, 2000. In 2002 the rate between Euro and Guilder was 1: 2.2.

<sup>1598</sup> NOS-JOURNAAL, 1970-08-02.

<sup>1599</sup> This CAO was made in February. The use of brokers also caused protests at W-F in 1965. See: Nas, 2000.

<sup>1600</sup> Of RDM and *Nieuwe Waterweg N.V.*; JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-08-26); of Thomsens in the night of 1970-08-27.

<sup>1601</sup> JOURNAAL (1970-08-29).

<sup>1602</sup> Nas, 2000.

<sup>1603</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-08-31); strikes at shipyards in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Flushing.

<sup>1604</sup> NOS JOURNAAL and NCRV's HIER EN NU, 1970-08-31.

guilders extra per week. However, it was gross and the workers wanted it nett. The strikers held a protest march through the city centre (\*<sup>1605</sup>). Due to earlier agreements, the union could not support this demand and withdrew. The workers sought for others to lead the strike and found the small communist group 'KEN (ml)'<sup>1606</sup>. It founded the committee *Arbeidersmacht* ("Workers Power"). KEN-member Wouter ter Braake, only twenty years old, became its spokesman, since he had some experience as such due to his involvement with resident actions in Het Oude Westen earlier that year<sup>1607</sup>.

Instead of 25 guilders, *Arbeidersmacht* suddenly demanded 75 guilders extra. It was made clear in a massive demonstration and through television reports (\*<sup>1608</sup>). HIER EN NU (NCRV, 1970-09-04) showed strikers gathering in district Feijenoord before marching through the Maastunnel. It became a symbolic event: one moved from Rotterdam Zuid, the labour district, to the SVZ building (1920-1922, arch. W. Kromhout). The tunnel became a gateway for social-economic appropriation, and literally a communication channel to transmit the message *25 nee, 75 ja*. Media reporting on it functioned as 'amplifiers', as extensions of the megaphones that became typical for the protests of the 1970s. When the crowd arrived at SVZ, people sat down on the road and read their claims. A delegation of three was admitted access to the building. The negotiations resulted in an offer of 25 guilders nett and 100 guilders twice incidentally<sup>1609</sup>. It was accepted by a number of metal workers<sup>1610</sup>. A meeting was held at the Rivierahal of Blijdorp Zoo, which was similarly turned into a medium, and reinforced as such by the NOS JOURNAAL (1970-09-05) that reported on it. The majority of the workers decided to continue the strike. Interestingly to note, this decision was supported by 83% of their wives<sup>1611</sup>.

The JOURNAAL (1970-09-07), next to HIER EN NU and ACHTER HET NIEUWS, showed groups of strikers posting in front of firms; those who were willing to work again were hooted. The next day KRO's BRANDPUNT (1970-09-08) also showed protest actions, while Mayor Thomassen gave his comments<sup>1612</sup>. His party PvdA feared that too much radicalism would alienate the electorate from the social-democratic ideas. He emphasised that the strike was led by Maoists, who got their instructions from Albania. Certain journalists, among them from the *Rotterdams Nieuwsblad*, also expressed such views. Although there might have been connections with Albania and China indeed, such imputations actually had a counter effect, since it only raised the interest in the protests, especially among students. Moreover, the attitude of the press became even subject of a forum discussion between press and dockworkers, which was broadcast by NCRV<sup>1613</sup>. It is an instance of the delicate role of media, and it exemplifies a complex dynamic of, as Luhmann (2000) would have it, first- and second-order observations, with the observer being observed, which is observed again.

Meanwhile the employers offered 37,50 guilders. The JOURNAAL (1970-09-09) showed *Arbeidersmacht* discussing it internally. The workers decided to continue the strike and their

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<sup>1605</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-09-02): demonstrations of dockworkers at the *Holland America Line* in Rotterdam.

<sup>1606</sup> i.e. *Kommunistische Eenheidsbeweging Nederland – Marxistisch-Leninistisch*. It had emerged as a splinter from the *Communistische Partij Nederland* (CPN) shortly before. Its involvement with the strike has been told by Ter Braake in the series *ANDERE TIJDEN* (VPRO-tv/website, 2001 – reporter Karin van den Born). Important figures, next to Ter Braake and behind the scenes, were Nico Schrevel and Daan Monjé (Meeus, 1999). Monjé, according to Van den Born, used his contacts with student organisations to set up collections; he coordinated food supplies and printing matter.

<sup>1607</sup> Ter Braake in the television programme *VERGETEN VERHALEN: HAVENSTAKING 1970* (2005, Harm Korst).

<sup>1608</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-09-03).

<sup>1609</sup> Nas (2000).

<sup>1610</sup> Dick Nas (2000) mentions the 4<sup>th</sup> of September as the official end of the strike in the metal industry.

<sup>1611</sup> Source: Marianne van Es & Wilbert Dijkers, 1970; edited reprint of questionnaire in: Van der Velden, 1970: 39.

<sup>1612</sup> For the (social-democratic) ideas of Thomassen, see also the extensive television interview: *MARKANT: WIM THOMASSEN* (NOS, 1979-10-04), which was broadcast when another major strike took place (see ch. 14 § 3).

<sup>1613</sup> HIER EN NU (1970-09-12). The discussion was organised by 'Universitair Instituut Vormingswerk Bedrijfsleven'.



wives supported them behind the scenes<sup>1614</sup>. But, in the end, *Arbeidersmacht* could not reach an agreement. The *Communistische Partij Nederland* (CPN), which hitherto had stayed at a distance, finally got involved in the person of Fré Meis. He managed to increase the wages with 50 guilders, as announced by SVZ-chairman Jan Backx in the NOS JOURNAAL (1970-09-14<sup>1615</sup>). Strikers gathered at Odeon to discuss it. The next day, at another meeting in the Rivièrahal, *Arbeidersmacht* proposed to continue the strike, but it had come to an end (\*<sup>1616</sup>).

The strike lasted for three weeks and with 35,000 participants it was the biggest in Rotterdam in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1617</sup>. In an evaluation of the events, *Arbeidersmacht* criticised the attitude of the media, including the NOS JOURNAAL. Considering the actual reports of the NOS, and several other broadcasters too, one may wonder if the strike could have been continued for such a long period without media attention. The media enabled a particular discourse to take place, which helped to delineate the development possibilities. This continued during the following years.

Within the overall social-economic development, the policy of gradually growing wages was on its return. However, in December 1970, wages were frozen by the government to control inflation<sup>1618</sup>. It caused protests all over the country (\*<sup>1619</sup>). On a Friday (1970-12-11), the JOURNAAL announced that a brief general strike would take place next Tuesday – it was valuable publicity, and a matter of ‘projective reflexivity’. That Tuesday (1970-12-15), the JOURNAAL spent much attention to the ‘one hour strike’, with shots of striking television workers in Hilversum (apparently not the cameramen), next to shots of still public transport in Rotterdam, and a quiet port (cf. KRO’s BRANDPUNT). The government had to undo its measures, while it had unintentionally strengthened the will to protest. More strikes followed. On the 31<sup>st</sup> of January (1971), the JOURNAAL announced a strike of tug boat workers the next day. The announcement was again an instance of television being an active force in the carrying out of the strike (\*<sup>1620</sup>).

In their turn, the strikes reinforced the connection between Rotterdam and Hilversum, and hence the position of Pim Korver as a local correspondent. This became especially clear in 1972, when a wave of protests took place. It started with the *Nederlands Vakverbond* (NVV) distributing a call for a 24-hour strike, which Korver reported (JOURNAAL, 1972-02-03). The next day Van Rhijn filmed the strike at Wilton-Fijenoord, while Korver showed workers of RDM playing football<sup>1621</sup>. The ‘24-hour strike’, would finally last for more than two weeks (\*<sup>1622</sup>).

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<sup>1614</sup> An uncredited factor might have been the fact that Feyenoord then played the finals of the world cup football: on the 26<sup>th</sup> of August against Estudiantes de la Plata, in Argentina (2-2), and on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September the return match in Rotterdam (1-0). It was party time, while the winning mood might have strengthened the self-esteem of the workers.

<sup>1615</sup> Backx was the director of *Thomsens Havenbedrijf*, which played a major role at the beginning of the strike. See also: Van den Born, 2001.

<sup>1616</sup> At Odeon, Leen van Os, leader of the tug-boat strikers, gave a speech in order to motivate the workers to continue to strike (JOURNAAL, 1970-09-14). Rivièrahal: speech by Wouter ter Braake, JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-09-15). KRO’s BRANDPUNT would broadcast a last report in connection to the strike on 1970-10-27.

<sup>1617</sup> Cf. VERGETEN VERHALEN: HAVENSTAKING VAN 1970 (Harm Korst, TV Rijnmond, 2005-11-29).

<sup>1618</sup> See: [www.vakbondshistorie.nl](http://www.vakbondshistorie.nl) (2010-02-02); [www.parlement.com/9291000/modules/g09er8v0](http://www.parlement.com/9291000/modules/g09er8v0) (2010-02-02)

<sup>1619</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-12-11), e.g. a strike at Cincinnatti in Vlaardingen and at Wilton-Feijenoord, Schiedam.

<sup>1620</sup> The next day the JOURNAAL (NOS, 1971-02-01) broadcast a speech by Hulsker for tugboat personnel, after employers made summary proceedings against the unions. Tugboats are kept aside, while the 165 metre MS Krugerland moors by itself. Cf. HIER EN NU (NCRV, 1971-02-01; ACHTER HET NIEUWS, 1971-02-03). The strike continued till February the 5<sup>th</sup>, with daily reports by the JOURNAAL. Afterwards the situation remained agitated (NOS, 1971-03-01 and 1971-03-12), and strikes in other branches began as well, at Chrysler Rotterdam: JOURNAAL (NOS, 1971-04-01) and at dredging companies: JOURNAAL (NOS, 1971-04-13). For a year things stayed quiet, but discontent remained; the media kept reporting on it and tried to frame the reasons: LINKERWANG – RECHTERWANG: ROTTERDAMSE HAVENSTAKING EN ARBEIDSETHIEK (IKOR, 1971-06-13).

<sup>1621</sup> In Amsterdam workers were striking too at NDSM, cf. ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA, 1972-02-04), which also showed strikers at Verolme (and Verschure in Amsterdam).

<sup>1622</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1972-02-07); see also: JOURNAAL (NOS, 1972-02-10, 1972-02-14; 1972-02-16; 1972-02-21). In the next years more strikes would follow, see e.g. JOURNAAL (NOS, 1973-03-22 = metal industry; 1973-06-09 = port).



Others became involved too, like the tug-boat workers of Smit. At the same time, Korver also made promotional films for Smit and other companies, like SKILL AGAINST PERIL (1971, Korver) and THE SMIT LLOYD STORY (1974, Korver)<sup>1623</sup>. Whereas the protest actions damaged Smit's image, film was used to show its reliability.

The strike affected other film productions too. The young filmmaker Ferri Rontelap, for example, took the issue of a strike as a subject for his fiction short VERWACHTINGEN (1971) – which was shown at Film International: a husband and wife work for the same firm; he takes part in a strike and she does not, which causes tensions between them.

The strike can be framed within a much broader social-cultural tendency. Historian Van der Velden relates the strike to a general protest movement (\*<sup>1624</sup>). Earlier that year, residents of Het Oude Westen had protested against their abominable housing conditions, among them metal worker Gerrit Sterkman, and the spokesman of the strike and 'KEN (ml)' member Wouter ter Braake<sup>1625</sup>. They gathered in neighbourhood centre Odeon, which also played a role in the harbour strike. The communist splinter party 'KEN (ml)', quickly grew and unexpectedly became a success<sup>1626</sup>. It was initially helped by the Dutch central intelligence agency (BVD); to divide and rule, it infiltrated in communist parties – another example is the Maoist *Rode Jeugd*, which was responsible for a – thwarted – bomb attack on the Bank of America in Rotterdam; the bomb was eventually defused (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1972-10-16)<sup>1627</sup>. Although this party got dissolved, the BVD lost its control over the 'KEN (ml)', after the board discovered the infiltration.

Finally the *Socialistische Partij* (SP) emerged out of the 'Ken (ml)', in 1972. It paid much attention to publicity, which is exemplified by the film SOCIALISTIESE PARTIJ (1976, SP). It promoted its activities, like those of *Arbeidersmacht*, which the SP had extended to other cities too. Remi Poppe and the later SP-leader Jan Marijnissen also addressed the pollution in the port. Since the SP was part of a broad critical movement, it enabled others to make films as well, by borrowing its equipment. In this way, Bob Visser made the subversive essay J.A. DEELDER'S STADSGEZICHT (1977)<sup>1628</sup>.

### § 3. container contained II – the choreography of modular spaces

In the television reports on the strike of 1970, ECT was not mentioned. Strictly speaking, the firm was not involved in it, but the events cannot be disconnected from containerisation handling. Rather, Frans Swarttouw and the ECT knew how and when to approach the media, and to provide facilitary conditions to them. In this way it appeared only positively in various reports<sup>1629</sup>.

ECT also commissioned films itself, like MOVE (1970, Jan Wybe van Dijk). This 'film impression of ECT', had no voice-over; it was an artistic essay, a choreography of containers, accompanied by experimental sound<sup>1630</sup>. Director Van Dijk contributed to the music score by playing flute, giving the film an atmospheric, dreamlike touch. It is reinforced by some long takes at twilight that render objects into mere shapes. The film is characterised by strong compositions

<sup>1623</sup> Next to that, Korver also made news reports on Smit such as the towing of an oil-rig (JOURNAAL, 1975-11-05).

<sup>1624</sup> As such one can also consider, for example, a one-hour strike against air pollution in the Rijnmond area, at the yard of Gusto in Schiedam (NOS JOURNAAL, 1971-09-21). Another example is the refusal of dockworkers in Rotterdam and the labour union NVV to unload the copper transport of the Chilean ship Birte Oldendorff; the Chilean division of this US mining company had been nationalised by Allende, but the US headquarters wanted to have the ship load attached (NOS JOURNAAL, 1972-10-16) – both reports by J. van Rhijn. See also: IISG, arch. Vervoersbond NVV, nr. 1124.

<sup>1625</sup> Regarding Sterkman, see: Van der Velden, 2000: 157)

<sup>1626</sup> Meeus, 1999.

<sup>1627</sup> Van Nimwegen, 2007: 37.

<sup>1628</sup> Mentioned by Bob Visser in an introduction to his film, on the occasion of the presentation of the book *Dromen van een metropool* (Van Ulzen, 2007) at bookstore Donner, Rotterdam (2007-02-09). Visser also made spots for the SP, see: Schmidt, 1978: 19.

<sup>1629</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1970-04-27), on the occasion of the official opening of the container harbour by Princess Margriet; Polygoon e.g. KANGEROESCHIP TILLIE LYKES (1974). Documentaries, e.g. WEET JE WEL (2) DE ROTTERDAMSE HAVEN (AVRO, 1975-12-06), with container transshipment and aerial shots of the terminal.

<sup>1630</sup> By Max Berg and Peter Vink and music by Enrico Neckheim.

and quiet camera movements that show container ships and cranes installing the containers on 'automatic guided vehicles'. At a certain moment a minibus appears, shot from above, and men get out: the crane drivers. One of them is followed while he climbs a staircase. It is a rare instance of human presence, since the whole area appears like a moving sculpture of ships, cranes, containers and trucks. Most images are crane shots (literally), which show the subject from a distance. The end is again a composition at twilight. The film, articulating sense perception, is a matter of corporate branding. It deals with container transshipment in aesthetic terms, to enhance the image of ECT, and to set a discourse away from social-economic conditions.

Besides such an impressionist film, ECT also commissioned films with outspoken acquisitional aims, like POINT OF IMPACT (1970s, ECT – All Art Productions)<sup>1631</sup>. But notwithstanding its conventional voice-over providing business information, this film had also an obvious artistic ambition. It starts with four women dancing on a beach, which is interchanged by shots of containers, to emphasise the choreographical aspect of container handling. The dancers play with a big ball that is thrown high in the air. In the next shot it falls down on the map of Europe to indicate Rotterdam – the 'point of impact'. ECT presented itself, through Rotterdam, as the spider in a web of modern infrastructure, including information networks. A woman sits behind a computer. The narrator tells: 'Inside the peace of ECT's control terminal, which sends the containers, one can easily dream of countries and places ['Italy' appears on the computer screen] where trains and trucks take or bring the containers'<sup>1632</sup>. At the Plaza San Marco in Venice, dancers appear again with the ball, to indicate another 'point of impact'. Similarly, the woman visits Germany and France. At the end the dance reaches its climax. Crane drivers and engineers join the dancers in their geometrical choreography amidst containers, juggling with the 'point of impact'. This playful presentation was again a deliberate attempt to distract the attention from the political juggling that continued throughout the 1970s (\*<sup>1633</sup>).

### striking development II – the February strike of 1977

In the 1970s, labour in the Netherlands had become relatively expensive and companies moved to third-world countries. Unemployment was the result, which caused worry among the unions and the government. To avoid a recession, the government moderated the wage growth in 1976. It temporarily did not allow the *automatische prijscompensatie*, which otherwise offered workers a compensation for inflation. A short strike took place in May 1976. It was not reported by the JOURNAAL, but only by the VARA, which maintained close connections with the PvdA in the bench of the Mayor and Aldermen<sup>1634</sup>. Six weeks later, the strike got a follow up, by crane drivers and tugboat workers, which was reported again by VARA, and by the JOURNAAL (1976-07-01). In the second half of 1976, modest compensations were accepted again.

Early 1977 the national employers association VNO wanted to get rid of the *automatische prijscompensatie* altogether. It upset the trade-unions, which therefore prepared actions since there was enough willingness to protest in the metal industry and the port of Rotterdam<sup>1635</sup>. Even the employees in the oil industry, in particular those of ICI Holland and Cyanamid in the Botlek area, which had no tradition of protesting, were willing to participate,

<sup>1631</sup> Other examples are STRONG LINKS and THE THIRD WAY (on container transport over the Rhine to Switzerland).

<sup>1632</sup> 'Binnen in de rust van ECT's control terminal, waar de containers worden aangeleverd of afgehaald, kun je makkelijk dromen van landen of plaatsen, waar treinen of trucks de containers halen of brengen.'

<sup>1633</sup> After the February strike of 1972 there were, for example, a couple of spontaneous protest actions, like in February 1973, when a general strike took place in the Dutch colony Suriname and solidarity demonstrations took place in Rotterdam (JOURNAAL (NOS, 1973-02-17), and one month later, with a strike in the metal industry, in particular at RDM (JOURNAAL (NOS, 1973-03-22).

<sup>1634</sup> VARA's ACHTER HET NIEUWS, 1976-05-20; the next one referred to is 1976-07-01.

<sup>1635</sup> VNO = *Vereniging van Nederlandse Ondernemingen*. The unions wanted repair of the *automatische prijscompensatie*, a general wage increase of 2%, and to use profits for more employment (Scheele, 2006).

including the process-operators, who knew how to stop the processes<sup>1636</sup>. It was an important sign to the employers that even employees in the labour extensive and capital intensive petrochemical industry were willing to strike, which would quickly result in high losses.

From the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, the unions put down different branches according to a national ‘spearhead strategy’. After several reports on television about the negotiations, the JOURNAAL (1977-02-07) showed union members distributing pamphlets calling for strike, which the JOURNAAL thus amplified. That night VARA’s ACHTER HET NIEUWS showed striking dockworkers and a meeting with their leader Nico Sannes: due to its economic interests the port of Rotterdam was a spearhead. Moreover, the dockworkers were ready to strike, which motivated others. Another spearhead was the public transport in the main cities (JOURNAAL, 1977-02-08). This spearhead strategy was also a media strategy, in which television brought the necessary publicity. On the third day, the JOURNAAL (1977-02-09) reported actions all over the country; in Rotterdam the workers of the petrochemical industry ICI put down the work indeed.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, the employers association VNO (i.e. Chris van Veen) negotiated with the unions of NVV (i.e. Wim Kok). A preliminary agreement was made, which was discussed internally by both parties (\*<sup>1637</sup>). Two days later, after a session of twenty hours, when the meeting was postponed in the late morning, the JOURNAAL took the opportunity to approach the leaders. Kok explained that besides the *prijscompensatie*, they agreed upon profit returns for the workers and their participation in decisions that would affect their jobs. Van Veen was asked if he had lost, but he said that Minister Boersma had provided the missing money (\*<sup>1638</sup>).

Although the *prijscompensatie* had thus been guaranteed for 1977, the strike went on for the other claims, supported by 500,000 people across the country. Even the graphic industry went on strike, which prevented newspapers from being issued. This absence was compensated by radio and television that together broadcast more than one hundred items on the national strike<sup>1639</sup>. Polygoon gave summaries of what happened, explaining the spearhead strategy of the unions<sup>1640</sup>. They also addressed the legal objection against the food industry to strike. In the second week, Polygoon showed a march in Rotterdam (16<sup>th</sup> of February), with 25,000 people marching to the Coolsingel<sup>1641</sup>. In front of the town hall, union chairman Kok emphasised that not only compensation was needed, but a true increase of wages. The march was also filmed by the *Gemeentearchief Rotterdam*, with shots of Mayor André van der Louw and Alderman Wim van der Have<sup>1642</sup>. While the main function of the archive was to preserve documents, the thing to be preserved here was thought to be the event, as a live manifest. It is a particular take on media and its subject, which is history.

An impasse followed (\*<sup>1643</sup>). At a moment that little news was to be reported, cameraman Pim Korver made a remarkable, dramatic shot; moving by boat through the port he shot a desolate, immobile industrial landscape (JOURNAAL, 1977-02-21). On Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> of February, the JOURNAAL finally reported on agreements, which was told to the dockworkers by an emotional union leader Piet van Keulen, in the rain, in the Sparta football stadium<sup>1644</sup>. He

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<sup>1636</sup> Scheele, 2006. The process operators worked in four shifts (6 hours p/d, 7 days p/w), which meant that they worked 42 hours per week. They complained that their biological rhythm got disturbed by irregular working hours, which also affected their leisure time, while they had also little free days in the weekend. Instead, they wanted a five-shift service (*vijfploegendienst*), which would reduce their week to 33.6 hours, with more free days in the weekend.

<sup>1637</sup> See: JOURNAAL (NOS, 1977-02-10 and 1977-02-11), interviews with Wim Kok and Van Veen.

<sup>1638</sup> Cf. JOURNAAL (NOS, 1977-02-14).

<sup>1639</sup> Information extracted from the database of Beeld & Geluid, 2006.

<sup>1640</sup> STAKINGSACTIES OP VELE PLAATSEN (Polygoon, 1977-week08).

<sup>1641</sup> HAVEN- EN BOUWSTAKINGEN DUREN VOORT, SOLIDARITEITSMARS IN ROTTERDAM (Polygoon, 1977-week09)

<sup>1642</sup> I.e. DEMONSTRATIEVE STAKINGSOPTOCHT (1977, Max van Essen); cf. 8mm version, shot by various people (anon.). They walked from Marconiplein, along the Maastunnel and through the Nieuwe Binnenweg to the Coolsingel.

<sup>1643</sup> The union CNV was willing to end the strike (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1977-02-19), but the FNV wanted to continue (JOURNAAL, 1977-02-21).

<sup>1644</sup> Piet van Keulen was chairman of the *bedrijfsgroep havens, vervoersfederatie NVV (FNV)*.

explained that after a long night of discussions, agreements were made concerning the *automatische prijscompensatie*, initial wage increase (1.8%), and the possibility for early retirement at the age of 63<sup>1645</sup>. After his speech, the workers, sitting with red flags on the tribune, began to sing the ‘International’, with Van Keulen joining them. Reporter Frits Bom explained that Minister Boersma took the financial responsibility for early retirement, after Prime Minister Den Uyl had been consulted that night<sup>1646</sup>. On Monday work began again, as the NOS reported.

#### § 4. container contained III – the peace treaty

The February strike caused film director Rudolf van den Berg and producer Ireen van Ditshuyzen to make the documentary *DE VREDE VAN ROTTERDAM* (“The Peace Treaty of Rotterdam”, VPRO 1977-11-06). The main characters are the ECT-president Frans Swarttouw, the chairman of the employers’ association SVZ, Ludo Pieters, and crane driver Willem Baris. Much information is left implicit; the film builds on previous news reports, and atmospheres. Van den Berg opens up a space for individual motivations. In the style of the VPRO-school, he asks questions casually, with the camera following gestures and facial expressions, often in close-up, while keeping an eye on the décor too<sup>1647</sup>.

First shown is the control chamber of the *Havendienst*, followed by a container ship at the Nieuwe Waterweg. Van den Berg visits Swarttouw at home, who sits in an easy-chair, while being filmed from the back. Next to him are his wife, daughter and dog. Van den Berg asks offscreen if the dog accepts Swarttouw’s leadership. His wife confirms it. While Swarttouw attends a meeting of the SVZ, as a member of the board, a voice-over tells that in 1889 the first big strike took place in the port when complaining workers were replaced by countrymen. In the 1910s, workers protested against the introduction of the grain elevator that caused unemployment. However, socialist Domela Nieuwenhuis argued that machines had to be used to improve conditions, and that workers needed to be organised. In response to this red force, the employers founded the SVZ. In the meantime we see the meeting, chaired by Ludo Pieters.

Pieters is subsequently followed home. Van den Berg asks if he had aspired to this function. He replies that it is not something to be aspired to; there is always struggle, since there are too many interests. As Pieters is also chairman of the “Rotterdam Arts Council” (RKS), the subject turns to arts. Pieters writes poems himself. Van den Berg finds them romantic. Pieters recalls that writer Gerard Reve, who shortly lived with his family, found him too leftist.

In the car Van den Berg asks Swarttouw, who is from a dynasty of harbour entrepreneurs, about authority. Swarttouw is glad that management has been professionalised. His name, he thinks, has helped him at first, but now his authority is based on prestige. Van den Berg asks if he is a ‘harbour baron’. In some sense, he says, but without hereditary possessions. Next is a quiet sequence of containership ‘Tokyo Express’, with the camera placed on it. The ship enters the port and moors. Containers are handled. Crane driver Willem Baris tranships twenty containers per hour at the ‘fully continuous’ terminal of Unit Centre. At home, next to his wife and child, he tells that he was previously a dockworker carrying loads on his back; now he works with the computer and his head. Van den Berg asks if he still makes friends, which is not so; he sits alone in a cabin whereas before he worked with others with whom he discussed personal problems. Van den Berg asks ‘Are you average?’ His wife says that *Jantje Modaal* earns 26,000 guilders a year, while he earns 40,000. ‘In that case’, Baris says, ‘I move in the direction of the VVD’ [conservative liberals]. As he hears that Pieters votes PvdA he says: ‘So he votes red, well, that surprises me.’

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<sup>1645</sup> In the following decades the *automatische prijscompensatie* would nevertheless disappear from most CAOs.

<sup>1646</sup> According to Van Hasselt (*ANDERE TIJDEN*, VPRO, 2004), Minister Boersma had a meeting with NVV chairman Kok. Afterwards, while going home, he decided to go to The Hague, to discuss the crisis with Prime Minister Den Uyl. He improvised to co-finance an experiment for ‘early retirement’ (VUT) – like in the building industry.

<sup>1647</sup> Cinematography by Jochgem van Dijk and Jules van den Steenhoven.

While moving with a boat through the port, Pieters says that many dockworkers have become programmers and process controllers. Talking about power, he explains his dilemmas; as a member of the PvdA he agrees with distributing wealth, but he recognises that high taxes withhold foreign investors. Pieters doubts if he has power, but at least he has many relations. A broad network can be drawn indeed. With Pieters being a member of the PvdA, links existed with the Mayor and Aldermen, and the national government. After this documentary was produced, furthermore, VPRO's commissioning editor Hans Keller became the director of the RKS<sup>1648</sup>.

The film returns to Swarttouw. He says that the works council can definitely influence the firm's policy; a manager has to give account to the workers too. He states that too much power leads to nothing, but control in advance is also no good, as it obstructs quick decisions. He wants to pay responsibility afterwards. Meanwhile we see a meeting of the ECT works council. Van den Berg thinks that Swarttouw controls it, but he tells that there is too much opposition within it, also between unions (FNV and CNV). The council even refused to have the camera present that morning when the controversial topics were discussed. We hear a council member saying that they had reached the point where they had agreed upon filming until, and he puts a hand on the lens.

In the end, Pieters and Swarttouw visit a congress in Düsseldorf, to promote the port. It emphasises the connection between them, which is mediated by the film too. When they are asked about the future, Swarttouw says that the government should not push business to the point that it then needs to support it. This echoes the wish to abolish the *automatische prijscompensatie* as proposed by the Dutch employers association VNO (with Swarttouw as a director), which led the negotiations in 1977. Pieters (as a member of the coalition party PvdA) says that together they have to solve it. The film ends with Baris being wakened by his wife early in the morning.

Swarttouw considered himself left-liberal and a 'streetfighter' concerned with social issues<sup>1649</sup>. ECT was presented as a progressive enterprise, for example by the film *PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN* (ECT, 1978)<sup>1650</sup>. It says that the success of ECT is the achievement of the employees, for whom the firm provides good facilities – illustrated by sports games – while they can participate in the works council. It also says that Rotterdammers are vital people who do not complain, but just work. That was wishful thinking.

### **striking development III – the harbour strike of 1979**

The 'Peace Treaty' lasted two-and-a-half years, but it was never quiet (\*<sup>1651</sup>). On Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1979, a long lasting protest began, an 'ideal' wild strike, as Sjaak van der Velden has classified it (2000: 159). Things started when employees of Smit got their pay slips, which confirmed the new collective labour agreement. It did not match their demands of a wage increase of 30 guilders per week, 25 holidays per year and the possibility of retirement at 60<sup>1652</sup>. Since the FNV (former NVV) could not support these claims, workers anticipated a wild strike.

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<sup>1648</sup> Within this network other connections were established. A month after this documentary was broadcast, the VPRO showed the television debut of Bob Visser, who was also linked to the RKS, and who had invited Hans Keller to come to Rotterdam and convinced him to broadcast his film (Visser in: Schmidt, 1978: 20). Visser would later make the film *KLASSESTRIJD* (1983), shot by Jules van den Steenhoven, who was a cameraman of *DE VREDE VAN ROTTERDAM*.

<sup>1649</sup> Dierikx, 2005.

<sup>1650</sup> It is actually a slide show on film, with only a moving dog of the security guards of ECT, by way of surprise.

<sup>1651</sup> E.g. protests at plastics firm Ferro Holland (JOURNAAL, NOS, 1978-05-15+17), protests by civil servants (TELEVIZIER, 1978-12-07, AVRO), protests at the City Cleaning Department (JOURNAAL, 1978-12-08), and by bargemen concerning regulations to divide freight, with a tumultuous shipping-exchange and policemen protecting non-strikers (JOURNAAL, 1978-08-17, 1978-12-15, 1979-01-02+08+09), and a strike at Verolme (JOURNAAL, 1979-04-06 and 1979-06-12).

<sup>1652</sup> The employees of Smit demanded a wage increase of 50 guilders. Hooiring e.a., 1979: 15, 18. Cf. [www.rodemorgen.nl/krant/krantsel.htm](http://www.rodemorgen.nl/krant/krantsel.htm) 'Wat valt er nu te leren van de havenstaking van 1979?' (2006-04).

The next day 500 employees of Smit moved their tugs to the headquarters at the Willemskade<sup>1653</sup>. The NOS was alert and sent out its cameramen: Drost to take images of Smit personnel, Koekoek of the harbour, and Korver, who had just completed another promotion film for Smit (GIANT CARGO, 1979), to shoot the port from the air, with ships at sea waiting to enter it. Another ‘developing composition’ began: a complex story told by various narrators<sup>1654</sup>. It helped the protest to grow, even when criticised, as it was indeed the case with many of the newspapers<sup>1655</sup>. But also through television, critiques were expressed. On Friday, BRANDPUNT invited FNV economist Drabbe, who had been furious when the strike had started. He warned that when the strike would rapidly spread and affect other sectors too, it would seriously harm the Dutch economy. During the television interview he had already calmed down, which those supporting the strike interpreted as a retreat<sup>1656</sup>. Instead, the *Communistische Partij Nederland* (CPN) took a leading role<sup>1657</sup>, and workers applauded communist Cor van der Zanden’s call to strike, which was broadcast by TROS AKTUA (1979-08-25).

The JOURNAAL (1979-08-25) reported that Smit brought sixteen strikers to court for a summary proceeding<sup>1658</sup>. Two days later it showed strikers, in the rain, on their way to the court to hear the verdict: prohibition of a strike. But the sixteen men were held back by their colleagues<sup>1659</sup>. The reports helped to mobilise workers from other sectors, especially the piece-goods branch. According to their leader Bertus van der Horst, the jobs were dangerous, exhausting and with great responsibility, particularly for the transshipment of heavy barrels and chemicals<sup>1660</sup>. Moreover, the sector felt the pressure of the container. However, also the container sector was in turmoil, for the demand to replace a 4-shift by a 5-shift service (*vijfploegendienst*).

On Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of August, 10,000 workers were striking. The JOURNAAL showed them marching towards the employers’ office SVZ where a delegation entered, while aerial shots showed the still port and ships at sea<sup>1661</sup>. VARA broadcast comments by Van der Zanden and other leaders, while FNV chairman Kok stated that the employers had been too passive<sup>1662</sup>. Images of the protest were followed by a long tracking shot along an empty quay with ‘frozen cranes’. It remained VARA’s only television report on the strike<sup>1663</sup>. It simply avoided difficulties for its political backbone, the PvdA.

In the meantime, more groups had joined the strike. The communist party (CPN), together with the *Socialistische Partij* and others founded the *Gezamenlijk Actiecomitee*<sup>1664</sup>. It included workers from each firm. It held a daily mass-meeting at 9 a.m. at the Afrikaanderplein, a square in the working class neighbourhood Afrikaanderwijk. This square had a rich history; football club Feyenoord played its matches here in the 1910s, while after WWII it was also used

<sup>1653</sup> Cf. Kok Kraayeveld, chairman of the council of Smit and the leader of the protest, in: Onnink, 2004.

<sup>1654</sup> Many of the people involved here were real storytellers; correspondent-cameraman Hans Koekoek, for example, was also a novelist and a director of fictions films.

<sup>1655</sup> Cf. Homma & Hoeksema, 1979: 14. The only paper that supported the strike was the communist *De Waarheid*.

<sup>1656</sup> *Ibid*, 16.

<sup>1657</sup> The CPN founded (1978-11-27) the *Comité Rotterdamse Havenarbeiders*, as suggested by Fré Meis after the strike of 1970, cf. Homma & Hoeksema, 1979: 35.

<sup>1658</sup> The strikers are supported juridically (throughout the period of the strike) by the lawyers Bernard Tomlow and Sjoerd Brunia of the Socialistische Partij, see: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 10-11.

<sup>1659</sup> For more details about this strategy, see: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 10.

<sup>1660</sup> In: Onnink, 2004.

<sup>1661</sup> Erik Boshuyzen asked J. Schoufour (SVZ) and J. van Eldik (FNV) about a possible new CAO. The employers association and the union decided to talk to one another.

<sup>1662</sup> VARA-VISIE (1979-08-28). Wim Kok and FNV-transport chairman Jan Schroër were invited to the studio. The FNV did not support the strike, but Kok (as said the day before in the NOS JOURNAAL) understood the workers, who expressed their solidarity. The employees did not listen to the arguments of the union. Kok proposed to negotiate again.

<sup>1663</sup> According to the information provided by the B&G database, 2007.

<sup>1664</sup> Also involved with the *Gezamenlijk Actiecomitee* were KEN (ml), *Rode Morgen* and other communist and syndicalist groups (cf. Hooiring e.a., 1979: 22).

for meetings of the communist party<sup>1665</sup>. Now it again became a forum, for news exchange and speeches<sup>1666</sup>. These daily meetings were also broadcast by the NOS JOURNAAL (\*<sup>1667</sup>). Although television was also criticised by the leaders of the strike<sup>1668</sup>, the JOURNAAL operated like a moderator. The strikers understood the need for publicity and set up a *Solidariteitskomitee*<sup>1669</sup>. It made and distributed pamphlets, posters, and banners; it arranged sound equipment, and organised benefit concerts, since the union treasure was kept closed<sup>1670</sup>. It also supplied food, and asked support from lawyers and people like clergyman Hans Visser<sup>1671</sup>. Women organised themselves in special groups, as shown by AVRO's TELEVIZIER (\*<sup>1672</sup>). All this inspired more people to strike (\*<sup>1673</sup>).

The union finally negotiated again and set the employers an ultimatum, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of September. On that day the protesters, among them many women, marched through the Maastunnel – which recalled the success of 1970 (\*<sup>1674</sup>). A group occupied the office of the joint port enterprises (*Samenwerkende Havenbedrijven*), to prevent its 'reserve workers' to do their jobs. The union and the employers agreed upon a wage increase of 28,50 guilders per week, early retirement at 62, and twenty-three holidays per year<sup>1675</sup>. The next morning, at Afrikaanderplein, this proposal was rejected. In the evening sixty-eight tugboat workers occupied the offices of Smit<sup>1676</sup>. The Mayor had previously refused police actions against strikers that held back their colleagues, but now he called the riot squad (M.E.). At night it cordoned off the building and in the early morning of Thursday the 6<sup>th</sup>, it was cleared. The JOURNAAL was not present, but it did report the clearing of the office of the *Samenwerkende Havenbedrijven* the following night. There, the police expected a group of three hundred people, but only ten men were left, who got arrested (\*<sup>1677</sup>). The following night, one hundred and eighty policemen, with sixteen assault vans and assisted by boats, broke into a blockade of strikers at Seaport Terminals. Loads of citrus fruit needed distribution. Twenty-nine trucks, protected by the police, came to take it away.

<sup>1665</sup> See e.g. the film report CPN 1 MEI 1949 (1949, Ed Millecam).

<sup>1666</sup> After a few days, since 1979-08-30, the meetings followed a particular order, with speeches by respectively George Klaassen, Flip Schults, Bertus van der Horst, Jim Stavinga, see: Homma & Hoeksema, 1979: 33.

<sup>1667</sup> The first one was at 1979-08-29. It also contained an aerial shot of the harbour. The 8 o'clock news presented more aerial shots of the port (until sea); the report also showed strikers in Amsterdam (cf. JOURNAAL, NOS, 1979-08-30).

<sup>1668</sup> See, for example, Homma and Hoeksema, 1979: 30.

<sup>1669</sup> Archief *Solidariteitskomitee Gezamenlijk Aktiekomitee Havenarbeiders* (Rotterdam); Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, [www.iisg.nl/archives/en/files/s/10769950.php](http://www.iisg.nl/archives/en/files/s/10769950.php) (2006-04-06). Cf. Hooiring e.a. 1979: 26.

<sup>1670</sup> I.e. 300,000 guilders in total from all over the country, see: [www.rodemorgen.nl/krant/krantsel.htm](http://www.rodemorgen.nl/krant/krantsel.htm) 'Wat valt er nu te leren van de havenstaking van 1979?' (visited: 2006-04-06).

<sup>1671</sup> Janssen, 1999/7.

<sup>1672</sup> I.e. 1979-08-30. One also interviewed strikers, union representatives, H.I. Möller (SVZ), Alderman J. Riezenkamp (port affairs), information officer J. Bax (*Gem. Havenbedrijf*), and E. Peereboom, economic editor of *Het Parool* (who said that 'the tug's strike is just a matter of communist interests'). On 1979-08-31 the JOURNAAL reported strikers posting at firms; KRO's BRANDPUNT asked opinions of employers (Schoufour, SVZ), unions (Van Eldik, FNV) and those supporting the strike: Frank Buys (KEN-ml), Hans van Hooft (SP), Jim Stavinga and Siem van der Helm (CPN). Meanwhile a 24-hour strike had begun at ECT (cf. Homma & Hoeksema, 1979: 53).

<sup>1673</sup> In the 8 o'clock JOURNAAL (1979-09-03) a.o.: fierce speech by Schults (Afrikaanderplein, cam.: Koekoek), workers voting for a strike at the *Graan Elevator Maatschappij* – which was important for the food industry (it became a 24-hour strike, see: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 31).

<sup>1674</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-04). The FNV now actively supported workers in the container terminals, see: Bosma, 2004. / JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-05). Leaders also gained support in Amsterdam: JOURNAAL (1979-09-06). In the 8 o'clock JOURNAAL (1979-09-06), FNV leaders spoke about a possible strike in the petrochemical industry. Cf. TELEVIZIER (AVRO, 1979-09-06). Women got their own organisation, headed by Ellie Stavinga (wife of strike leader Jim Stavinga) and Nel le Noble, see: Hooiring, e.a. 1979: 41.

<sup>1675</sup> But not on the 5-shift service, cf. Bosma, 2004. See also: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 39.

<sup>1676</sup> Another office, of the firm Rijsdijk, is briefly occupied too (Hooiring e.a., 1979: 41).

<sup>1677</sup> JOURNAAL (1979-09-07). Riot squad = ME.



On television, politicians criticised the strikers (BRANDPUNT, KRO, 1979-09-07)<sup>1678</sup>. The port made losses; ships went abroad. The TROS, which first broadcast the enthusiasm of the strikers, now paid attention to those willing to work, while the evangelical EO was simply against the strike<sup>1679</sup>. The written press was also critical<sup>1680</sup>. The strikers were aware of it; on Sunday, the tugboat workers saved a chemical tanker that ran aground. The *Smit Finland* and the *Smit Rusland*, the ‘action centre’, went out to prevent a catastrophe with the dangerous pyrolyse-gasoline load of the tanker. The strikers used it to stress their difficult and responsible work.

The JOURNAAL continued to show the meetings at Afrikaanderplein<sup>1681</sup>. There, on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, after a speech by Jim Stavinga, a group of strikers, headed by Paul Rosenmöller, occupied the office of FNV-Transport at the Westzeedijk<sup>1682</sup>. The FNV refrained from calling the police, to avoid escalation (\*<sup>1683</sup>). In fact, the action caused friction among the strikers themselves. Moreover, workers struggled with their finances, and many wanted to work again, but the hard core prevented them to do so, eventually with violence. The atmosphere worsened.

While employers reproached Mayor Van der Louw for not being neutral, strikers blamed him for the three successive police assaults, and expressed it during a march through the city centre towards the town hall (\*<sup>1684</sup>). The strikers, accompanied by the JOURNAAL and AVRO’s TELEVIZIER, called him nevertheless to mediate<sup>1685</sup>. When strike leader Cor van der Zanden entered the room of the Mayor, he did not want any journalist to be present, since the press criticised the strike too much, especially the *Rotterdams Nieuwsblad*<sup>1686</sup>. The Mayor refused to mediate, but proposed to call the different representatives to talk again. That was no option, according to SVZ-chairman Ludo Pieters. The labour expenses were already too high, especially for the piece goods branch. The next day (1979-09-13), strikers undertook harsh actions against colleagues who wanted to work. The police did not act. The strikers also prevented journalists from working. They grasped the cameras of photographers and took out the films, while others were threatened<sup>1687</sup>. Further, the NOS was unable to show the events, and it could also not follow the negotiations that were hidden from the media.

On Friday the 14<sup>th</sup> of September, after three weeks of striking, a meeting was organised by the strikers to vote on the earlier proposal (28,50 guilders e.a.). They looked for a large location and found Stadium Feyenoord, but only 2450 people showed up. Journalists were not welcome. However, a vote was organised as to whether NOS-television was allowed to report, and the majority agreed, because the JOURNAAL had announced the meeting the previous evening<sup>1688</sup>. In any case, the NOS had also arranged a helicopter, for cameraman Koekoek to make aerial shots, in case they would not get access. The majority of those present voted to continue the strike, and radicalised (\*<sup>1689</sup>). In the meantime, employers offered strikers advances on a new labour agreement. A large number of them accepted it, which raised the anger of the radicals. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, hundreds of strikers went from garden village Heijlplaat

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<sup>1678</sup> Interviews with police officers from Rotterdam, politicians V/d Doef (PvdA), R. de Korte (VVD), M. Engwirda (D66), Van Zeil (CDA), V/d Meulen of the union CNV, and economist Prof. N. Douben.

<sup>1679</sup> TROS AKTUA (1979-09-08) showed it by the case of Bas Blaak and his wife Willy. TIJDSEIN (EO, 1979-09-11) presented an interview with the anti-Marxist and reactionary economist Prof. Dr. A. van Doorn.

<sup>1680</sup> E.g. Rotterdam Nieuwsblad, in: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 17.

<sup>1681</sup> See a.o.: JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-10 and 1979-09-11).

<sup>1682</sup> See: Hooiring e.a., 1979: 47.

<sup>1683</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-10); interview of journalist Erik Boshuyzen with FNV leader J. van Eldrik.

<sup>1684</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-12)

<sup>1685</sup> AVRO’s TELEVIZIER (1979-09-13) interviewed Mayor Van der Louw, as to why he refused the request of employers to offer police protection to non-strikers; both strikers and employers asked his support.

<sup>1686</sup> Hooiring e.a., 1979: 53.

<sup>1687</sup> Hooiring e.a., 1979: 54.

<sup>1688</sup> Hooiring e.a., 1979: 55. NB this went without a report.

<sup>1689</sup> Cf. BRANDPUNT (KRO, 1979-09-14); Joost Middelhoff made an engaged portrait of striker Sjef Lang and his family – with discussions at Afrikaanderplein, a fence of a company’s lot being rammed to stop non-strikers, and the final poll. JOURNAAL: [blocking roads] (1979-09-16); [radicalizing strikers] (1979-09-17 and 1979-09-18).

towards Unit Centre at Waalhaven<sup>1690</sup>. It was the largest container firm after ECT, and the strikers wanted both companies to put down, since that would have a major impact on the traffic in the port. For this reason the firms were already under permanent police protection for a couple of days.

The riot squad halted the strikers, with dogs, horses and water cannons. Strikers threw stones, but the police squad countered the attacks. The leaders Schults and Stavinga escaped, but Rosenmöller, Van der Horst, and seventeen others got arrested, who were picked out by police infiltrators<sup>1691</sup>. During their actions, the police wanted the journalists to move away. The JOURNAAL showed a photographer being pushed aside, and subsequently the NOS cameraman himself. This aggression raised the critique of Mayor Van der Louw. He replied, to the JOURNAAL, that the strikers had gone too far, by trespassing and vandalist acts. The next morning, two hundred strikers yelled in front of the town hall and demanded the release of their colleagues<sup>1692</sup>. Journalists of the *Rotterdams Nieuwsblad* (Hooiring, e.a., 1979: 66), remarked that ironically enough, one hundred metres further, in cinema Oscar at the Meent, the premiere took place of Rotterdam's new port promotion film (CROSSROAD ROTTERDAM, Kees van Eijk & Werner Jansen).

The strike approached its end. At Afrikaanderplein, on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Flip Schults called the strikers to work again (\*<sup>1693</sup>). Instead, the petrochemical industry started to strike, supported by the unions, after they had warned the employers in the JOURNAAL (\*<sup>1694</sup>). Surprisingly it began at Shell Chemistry. Its white-collar workers marched through the city towards the town hall. This unique protest was closely monitored by television (\*<sup>1695</sup>). At the same time one still followed the tugboat strike, which went on as Smit rejected the general agreement. Since other branches operated again, much work was waiting, and the pressure on Smit increased. The wives of the strikers marched to its headquarters to talk to the management, but it only wanted to talk to the unions. The women said: 'When you have a fight with your wife, do you always go to your mother-in-law?' (\*<sup>1696</sup>).

The same day something else happened. When tugboat *Smit Duitsland* went out for its job, it was chased and entered by forty strikers. They beat the non-strikers, who escaped to police boats. The strikers brought the tug back to the Willemskade, where colleagues were waiting, and the NOS reporters too (\*<sup>1697</sup>). But the riot squad loaded its carbines and drove the others off the quay. The next day, seven 'hijackers' were arrested. Their wives protested in front of the jail (JOURNAAL, 1979-10-08). Two men were released in the afternoon, and the others at night. The Mayor eventually mediated, and he and Smit director Scheffer finally announced a solution (JOURNAAL, 1979-10-11). They made a deal with the port authorities to increase the wages with 28.50 guilders plus a one-off payment of 1000 guilders<sup>1698</sup>. Two days later Pim Korver, for the JOURNAAL, filmed the workers releasing their tugs; with loud hooting they began to work again.

The strike had a long echo<sup>1699</sup>. It caused Joost Middelhoff, of KRO-television, to make the documentary ROTTERDAMSE HAVEN NU (1979-11-27), in which a background was drawn to the events of that year, by investigating the overall situation and the labour conditions in the port

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<sup>1690</sup> Hooiring e.a., 1979: 64, mentions 300 workers. Bertus van der Horst, in: Onnink, 2004, mentions 2000.

<sup>1691</sup> Hooiring e.a., 1979: 65.

<sup>1692</sup> See: Homma & Hoeksema, 1979: 118-119.

<sup>1693</sup> JOURNAAL: [arrests] (1979-09-19); [Van der Louw] (1979-09-20); [employer's offer] (1979-09-20); [suggestion to end] (1979-09-21; 1979-09-22); [back to work] (1979-09-22 and 1979-09-24).

<sup>1694</sup> Announced by action leader Piet Scheele (JOURNAAL, 1979-09-20); E. Schwarz of Shell defended the need for a 4-shift service, since it lacked personnel. Scheele replied that it was due to Shell itself, since it had just closed its school.

<sup>1695</sup> See: VARA-VISIE, 1979-09-25; JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-09-26 + 27 + 29); JOURNAAL, 1979-10-02.

<sup>1696</sup> JOURNAAL (1979-10-03). [www.rvu.nl/archief/per-saldo/archief3/deezenijnbrood/deezenijnbrood.html](http://www.rvu.nl/archief/per-saldo/archief3/deezenijnbrood/deezenijnbrood.html) (2004-04-06), 'Commentaar: Buigen of barsten – De wilde havenstaking van 1979'. Cf. Hooiring e.a. 1979: 81.

<sup>1697</sup> JOURNAAL (NOS, 1979-10-04).

<sup>1698</sup> [www.rvu.nl/archief/per-saldo/archief3/deezenijnbrood/deezenijnbrood.html](http://www.rvu.nl/archief/per-saldo/archief3/deezenijnbrood/deezenijnbrood.html) (2004-04-06).

<sup>1699</sup> Cf. Van der Velden, 2000: 157: n49.

as a whole, and what the workers actually earned – which was usually more than average. In April the next year, VPRO television showed the documentary *GROETEN UIT ROTTERDAM* (1980, Rijneke & Van Leeuwen<sup>1700</sup>), which included recordings of a punk rock concert at Kaasee to support the strike (1979-09-15). The event was initiated by the singer of the radical left Rondos, Johan van der Weert. In the film we see him together with his father, who took part in the strike, watching the 8 o'clock *JOURNAAL* of the 19<sup>th</sup> of September, about the fights between the riot squad and the strikers, and the reaction of Mayor Van der Louw. It is an instance of television showing television providing feedback that reinforces the development at stake. Finally, Bertus van der Horst, a leader of the dockworkers, began to present the leftist *VRIJHEIDSJOURNAAL* (“Freedom Journal”) of the cineclub *Vrijheidsfilms* in Amsterdam, whose director, At van Praag, had been a freelance cameraman for the *JOURNAAL* and various news magazines<sup>1701</sup>.

### § 5. implications

Whereas Kleinknecht and Naastepad (2005) have argued that offensive unionism forces companies to innovate, I have extended the argument to media, and framed it explicitly in the perspective of containerisation. I have done so by pointing to the two sides of the same coin, of protest and prospect. They existed parallel to one another; the issue of containerisation was rarely addressed by the media reports at stake, just like the corporate films did not speak about social consequences. Yet, television and film were part of the larger social-economic and technological complex, as addressed by Van der Velden (2005).

Innovation needs a critical mass. The film frame, as the modern ‘container’ of the container, reinforced its value as a vehicle of progress. The film content became a double abstraction: a choreography of movement that was directed by the attractor of industrialisation.

At the same time offensive unionism needs a critical mass too. To that end media have been crucial, especially television as the main public medium. We can link it to the theory of Luhmann (2000 [1995]: 65). He has addressed that mass media guarantee the level of so-called ‘first-order observations’ that feed the ‘public opinion’. Whereas Luhmann considers the main functions of mass media to be information and entertainment, in my view the main functions are monitoring and feedback. They actively shape what Luhmann calls ‘the inferences one can draw about oneself or others’, or the observation of the observer, which he calls ‘second-order observations’ (ibid). News programmes started to invite ‘experts’ to discuss the events. In this way, media got to play an active role in the politics at stake. Luhmann says (ibid): ‘behavior is “political” when participants react to how they are being observed.’ In the case of mass media, by following their observations, employer and employee observe one another, and everyone else may get involved too. In this way power relations are settled through what Luhmann understands as public opinion. This is ‘not an aggregate of psychic system-states, but rather a product of a specific communication that provides the starting point for further communications’ (ibid).

The question moves beyond traditional political divides, which were emphasised by strikers and commentators. Certain reports might be considered true by either party. Yet, by observing tensions and tendencies, and by amplifying them, the need is expressed to explore new directions. Media function as catalysts for change.

In terms of ‘public domain’, media are a matter of ‘augmented space’ (Manovich, 2006). It concerns particular places, often carrying a history related to the labour movement, such as the Maastunnel, the Willemskade, the Afrikaanderplein, the Rivièrahal, the Feyenoord and the Sparta Stadium, and the Coolsingel, which became means for protests and demonstrations, speeches, discussions, marches, traffic blockades, and battles. Next to that, the borders of ‘public space’ were explored, by occupying company offices and lots. Media served as ‘audiovisual amplifiers’

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<sup>1700</sup> I.e. Part 3. HUIZE SCHOONDERLOO, broadcast on 1980-04-20.

<sup>1701</sup> O.a. HIER EN NU (NCRV), ACHTER HET NIEUWS (VARA) [www.cineclubvrijheidsfilms.nl/overons.htm](http://www.cineclubvrijheidsfilms.nl/overons.htm) (2006-04-11).

of the way one used and marked the environment. The 'public domain' enabled the workers to express themselves and to communicate with each other, which in turn attributed (controversial) meanings to the environment as well as the media. Places and images reinforced one another as references of a collective memory, and as markers of collective ambitions.

For national television, the port of Rotterdam was a measure for the country's social-economic development. Through feedback, the port was also affected by television. Alternatively, the changes that were monitored affected media practices too, strengthening and renewing the connections between Hilversum as *Standort*, and Rotterdam as *Tatort* – and gradually as *Stand Ort* too. Positions sometimes moved from journalism to promotion and sponsorship, back to journalism, like monitoring and feedback that enable *poiesis*.