

tion of PvdA, VVD and D66 under the premiership of social democrat Wim Kok was called, introduced a fervour into politics in the Netherlands, in which much of D66's drive for change was recognizable. In *Paars II* the relationships seemed to have deteriorated too far for much more to be achieved.

In 2003 D66 stepped into government again, this time as junior partner in the Balkende II cabinet of CDA and VVD. It was a mixed blessing. D66 ministers lost credibility by supporting the hard right policy on immigration. The elected mayor perished in sight of the finish. The electorate was no longer interested either: in the 2006 opinion polls D66 were briefly down to 0 seats. Van Mierlo wondered aloud whether it wasn't 'enough after forty years'.

Under the present party leader, Alexander Pechtold, D66 has become a significant factor once more. Pechtold wants his party to behave responsibly, even if it's not in government. He doesn't vote against the plans of the Rutte government, and by negotiating with them ensures that D66 exerts influence on the policy. At the same time he is the fiercest opponent of the extreme right PVV leader Geert Wilders in the Second Chamber.

In the last municipal, European and provincial elections the party made gains overall. While all political parties in the Netherlands are experiencing a fall in membership numbers, D66 is on the rise. The party is led in a very professional manner, is involved in a number of local and provincial authorities, and has many representatives among the top civil servants. D66 has become part of the establishment - the only one of the new parties to do so. If that is what the founders had in mind in 1966, then their aim has been achieved.

ARIEJAN KORTEWEG

Translated by Sheila M. Dale

The Tong Tong Fair

The Biggest Eurasian Festival in the World

The Dutch word *Indisch* has nothing to do with India, but with the former Dutch colony of Indonesia. It was here that the Eurasian or *Indo* culture began, a mestizo culture with characteristics of East and West. Indonesian independence in 1949 sparked an exodus of the approximately 350,000 Dutch Indonesians, most of whom had a mixed Indo-European background (which could usually be traced back to a European man and a Javanese woman). The bloody war of independence and the nationalisation of foreign businesses made it impossible for them to remain in the young Indonesian Republic. These people were moreover Dutch citizens.

At the end of the 1950s, the Tong Tong movement began in the Dutch seat of government, The Hague. At its heart was the Eurasian journalist, writer and activist Tjalie Robinson (1911-1974), a pseudonym of Jan Boon. Robinson believed passionately that the Dutch public knew far too little about Indo-Dutch people and their culture. He argued that the Indo culture was an inseparable part of the Dutch cultural heritage, and in his magazine *Tong-Tong* (1958) he exhorted his readers to continue writing about it. In 1959 he founded the Indische Kunstkring Tong-Tong (IKK - Tong-Tong Eurasian Artistic Society) and a short time later, together with Mary Brückel-Beiten, he launched the Pasar Malam Tong-Tong fair as a fund-raising vehicle for the IKK.

The first Pasar Malam Tong-Tong (literally 'Tong-Tong evening market') was held in The Hague from 3-5 July 1959 and was an immediate hit. The event drew around three thousand visitors, most of them with an Indo-Dutch background. This was the first time since their lives in the Dutch East Indies that so many Indos had gathered together in one place. This gave the event an emotional charge which left an indelible impression that lasts to the present day.

The Pasar Malam Tong-Tong has changed its name twice: in the 1970s it became the Pasar

1 See *The Low Countries*, IX, 2001, pp. 296-298.

Malam Besar (literally 'great evening market'), and in 2008 it was renamed the Tong Tong Fair. By including a reference to the Tong-Tong movement, the organisers were seeking to make their ambitions clear, although the Tong Tong Fair is known above all as an exotic shopping spectacle (with large numbers of merchants from Southeast Asia) and as an enormous culinary festival, it also serves as a sort of directory of Indo-European *culture*. The present organisers, who include Tjalie Robinson's grandchildren, have continued to devote unwavering attention to that culture, which has continued to develop even without the existence of the Dutch East Indies. That culture can be seen in the themed theatres that have been added to the commercial and culinary activities of the Fair, where a varied cultural and educational programme unfolds each year.

The Tong Tong Fair, which still takes place in The Hague, has acquired an educational function because of these cultural programmes. The Dutch education system almost totally ignores the colonial past of the Netherlands, but anyone wanting to know about Indo-European cultural history will find it at the Tong Tong Fair in the form of lectures, debates, exhibitions and musical, dance, theatrical and literary performances.

In addition, the fair continues to fulfil a social function. It is a setting where Eurasians can be themselves, they do not have to choose between East or West, but can simply be Indos. Its combination of social, cultural and commercial functions gives the Tong Tong Fair the air of a small town.

Over the course of more than half a century, modern Indonesia has also found a place at the Tong Tong Fair. In the 1960s, relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia were still strained, and the bloody war of independence and forced exodus had wounded (Indo-) Dutch people (too) deeply. This began to change slowly in the 1970s, and today the Tong Tong Fair is filled with music and dance from modern-day Indonesia, with the organisers constantly seeking out new combinations of art and culture from East and West. By never losing sight of its own mixed roots, the Tong Tong Fair has even become an important podium for world music and dance. The British music journal *Songlines* and *The Rough Guide to World Music*, both internationally recognised as the most authoritative publications on world music, have written about the role of the Tong Tong Fair as a European world music podium that fuses East and West.

There was a certain inevitability about it when this Grand Old Lady of multicultural festivals, and the biggest Eurasian festival in the world, received an award. In 2007 the Fair was awarded the National Events Grand Prix, the Dutch events 'Oscar'. The Fair was twice opened by the former Queen Beatrix.

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The next Tong Tong Fair will take place in The Hague from 28 May to 5 June 2016 inclusive (see tongtongfair.nl).

