

Step 5 – 09-03-09

Today I continue with the analysis of Maartje Janse. I discussed the first half in last week's WorldLog. I have also included the story in my new book "The Equality of Animals, The Happiness of People" (Het gelijk van de dieren, het geluk van de mensen) that was released on Sunday, 8 March. The following is a report on the book presentation.



*"The 19th century abolitionists tried to gain a respectable reputation by acquiring the support of well-known Dutch citizens. They asked Ministers, poets, philanthropists, professors, lawyers and Members of the Lower House to join the party list. They also disseminated horror stories about the suffering the victims underwent to shock people into political action. Stories of torture, executions and incestuous slave abuse, about how the daughters of drunkards ended up in prostitution and committed suicide and about starving and sick Javanese deeply affected public opinion. Novels such as Uncle Tom's Cabin by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Max Havelaar by Multatuli played a crucial role in creating laws to end slavery (1862) and the cultural system (1869 and 1870) that exploited the Javanese.*

*There is therefore no other conclusion that Thieme is working to this method proven in the 19th century. One half of the Party for the Animals candidate list was made up of famous Dutch citizens. The support afforded by the intellectual elite clearly showed that "this is not a party for the foolish" as Thieme enthusiastically explained during her first reaction to the election results. The Party for the Animals filled the air time given to*

*political parties with shocking images of animal suffering in factory farming. Kees van Kootens wrote in rhyme how they are innocent, and yet must suffer. The Party for the Animals resembles its 19th century counterparts in the positions it takes: It wishes to remain a party for action, ensuring that animal welfare is set high on the Lower House's agenda. The Party for the Animals does not start immediate political negotiations, but prefers to adopt an absolute stance against animals suffering for human gain or pleasure. This does not disqualify Thieme from being a political player. (...) "She simply focuses on a different phase in the political decision making process: she prioritises getting the issues on the agenda and consciousness-raising over negotiations and compromise. The Party for the Animals is unique in that it brings this early stage of the political game back into parliament when it normally happens outside its walls and falls within the scope of pressure groups and or lobbies. There is however no rule that forces Members of Parliament to set immediately to negotiations with other parties. Anyone who then points to the rules of "the political game" often forgets that politics is always changing. People who publically display their outrage about animal suffering in a civilised society set themselves apart morally and have to fend off ridicule with the argument of moral superiority. They are challenging the political establishment. Those who posit that this is not "real" politics because there is no mention of negotiation make an absolute of today's modern politics."*

Next week I will talk more about the way in which we determine the parliamentary agenda for animal rights and animal welfare.