Gerard Termorshuizen and Coen van 't Veer, *Een groots en meeslepend leven*.

Dominique Berretty Indisch persmagnaat. [with cooperation of Sjoerd Meihuizen]. Walburg Pers, Zutphen, 2018. 287 pp. ISBN 9789462493155, price: EUR 19.95 (paperback).

On December 20, 1934, the Dutch airplane *Uiver*, on its way from Amsterdam to Batavia, crashed in the Syrian desert. One of the passengers heading for the Dutch East Indies was Dominique Berretty (1891–1934), a most remarkable personality. His death was as spectacular as his turbulent life: a humble clerk at the post office who became a wealthy and powerful press magnate with a flamboyant lifestyle. He had innumerable love affairs and married six times, although he was only 42 when he died. Such a person deserves a biography, and now he has one, written by Gerard Termorshuizen and Coen van 't Veer. The former is a well-known literary historian who wrote a magnificent history of the press in the Dutch East Indies in two hefty volumes. He also published a biography of one of Berretty's closest friends, the journalist Herman Salomonson. Termorshuizen's collaboration with Coen van 't Veer has also resulted in an anthology of Salomonson's columns.

Dominique Berretty, originating from a humble Eurasian ("Indo-European") background, never tried to hide his ethnicity when he was rich and famous. On the contrary: he took his mother, who hardly spoke Dutch and dressed in *sarung* and *kabaya* like indigenous Indonesians, to parties in the upper circles of the Batavian establishment. As a young man he was clever and good-looking, with a pleasant demeanor. Working at the post-office, he drew the attention of his superiors by performing all his tasks unusually well. Always eager to learn, he took great interest in the technology of the telegraph cables that connected the Dutch colony with the rest of the world. In 1910 he became an aspiring young journalist at the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, where he distinguished himself with his perfect command of the Dutch language. After three years he became editor at the *Java Bode*, a more conservative newspaper than the former one.

He did not sympathize with the developing struggle for Indonesian independence, and as this movement took on more significance, he chose the side of the ruling class. In 1915 he founded his own weekly, *The Reflector*. The content was sensational, satirical, and sometimes pornographic, and his employees were all Indo-European. His first trip to the United States in 1916 opened his eyes to the huge opportunities offered by modern technical developments. The use of airplanes fascinated him. In the meantime he had married for the first time. The relationship did not last long; he was always searching for the ideal woman. In this biography, his family life and love affairs are dealt with in detail.

BIJDRAGEN TOT DE TAAL-, LAND- EN VOLKENKUNDE

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His main claim to fame was the founding of his own press agency *Aneta* in 1917. He succeeded in gaining a monopoly over all news telegrams from all over the world, making every newspaper in the Dutch East Indies dependent on him. His first trip to the Netherlands took place in 1918; it was the beginning of his successful efforts to cooperate with Dutch newspapers. In 1922 he started another entertainment weekly, *De Zweep* ('The Whip'), again full of satire, and sometimes antisemitism, and in opposition to the nationalist movement. It later became *d'Orient*. *Aneta* made him a wealthy man, but was also the source of a lot of conflict. Furthermore, Berretty played a main role in the development of radio contact with the Netherlands. He indulged in buying expensive cars, and had an enormous villa built for himself near Bandoeng, which still exists. He made several trips to Europe, Asia, and the US. The financial crisis hit him hard, and when he suddenly died, he was deep in debt. His death was an enormous shock, in the Indies, in Holland and elsewhere, which demonstrated how famous he had become.

This biography discusses the life and work of a unique personality, set against a background of the immense changes that took place in the twenties and thirties of the last century. It is a well-written study that will provide a lot of insight in the period in which he played such an important role. Much information came from Berretty's descendants. The authors do not try to excuse his reactionary behavior, nor do they indict him by applying present-day mores to the time in which he lived. Some of his many conflicts with adversaries are perhaps discussed in too much detail, but as a whole the book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the colonial world.

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