

6 had a considerable number of members at its disposal. This self-imposed dual role, in which the motivation should be taken quite seriously, makes both initial success and the later failure of the Union quite understandable. In the same proportion as the "Triumvirat" gained the trust of the members, it lost the interest of the *Reichskommissar*. While the mass of its supporters was even prepared to regard rather dubious statements and actions on the part of the leadership as necessary and unavoidable "camouflage", as far as the *Reichskommissar* was concerned the "unity movement" was a write-off from the moment it refused to agree to every single step the occupying power was going to take. Even the pressures which the German authorities put on the leadership, in the hope of still being able to divert the Union into the desired course, no longer had the expected success and indeed often created (quite intentionally) waves of solidarity amongst those concerned.

In spite of this, however, the German measures did not release the leading officials of the Union from the self-inflicted vicious circle of increasing political corruption. The concessions and compromises before and even after the strike of February 1941 are clear evidence of this. However, the critical intensification of the domestic political situation due to the Amsterdam strikes and the increasing pressure caused by the military-political events in Europe accelerated the clarification process, which by now had become overdue, not only amongst the Union supporters, but in the relationship between the occupation authorities and the Union leadership.

Corresponding to this dualism in political behaviour, the basic ideological premises also show a characteristic ambivalence. The ideas of the Union on a new authoritarian, non-party order, on a corporate basis, as the conception for an independent state in the Netherlands after the occupation were to become elements in a later conservative resistance, just as, at the time, they seemed, to some extent, to be an opening for the nazification objectives of the German masters. The inability of the "corporationists" to develop any real definition of or concrete meaning for their ideas, which would have made them clearly distinct from national socialist and fascist concepts, left them highly vulnerable to the prophets and agents of precisely those concepts. The fact that there was no final ideological rapprochement between the occupying power and the Union seems then to have been caused less by those elements opposed to radical fascism in corporate thinking than by simple lack of interest on the part of those already firmly in power towards a programme proclaimed by a "movement" that had turned into an uncalculated risk, since it could possibly infringe upon their claims to unlimited rule.'

De Britse historicus M. L. Smith schreef in *History*, het kwartaalschrift van de *Historical Association* (72 (1987) 251-278), een overzichtsartikel over hetzelfde thema onder de titel '*Neither resistance nor collaboration. Historians*