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**Dutch Hegelianism:
'THE CEMENT OF SOCIAL LIFE'**

As we all know, Hegelianism played a major role in Italian intellectual and social life. The efforts of the Spaventa brothers are a clear illustration of the way in which Hegelianism became an essential part of Italian culture. One of the few Dutch Hegel specialists, the biochemist and materialist Jacob Moleschott, left his home country disappointed, since he had come to the conclusion that the Dutch were not very interested in philosophy. From 1861 until his death in 1893, he lived in Italy. Here he not only found a new home country, he also encountered a lively philosophical and intellectual climate that tuned in well with his own controversial nature. His complete opposite, however, the Hegelian philosopher and anti-positivist Gerardus Bolland, also showed an interest in Italian idealism. His correspondence with the followers of Spaventa - Gentile and Croce - is proof of this. Apart from these two philosophers, there were hardly any contacts between the Dutch and the Italian idealists. The reason for this lack of interest lies not in the indifference of the Dutch, but in the complete absence of pure Hegelianism in the Netherlands during the nineteenth century.

Intellectual life in the Netherlands had its own characteristics, and Hegelianism could not flourish here largely on account of the revival of Spinozism, having prevented the development of rival systems of thought. It was not Hegel but Spinoza who gave direction to the intellectual and social debate. Dutch philosophical life during the nineteenth century did not bring forth Hegelians of the left and the right, but Spinozists of the left and right. This does not mean that Dutch philosophers did not read Hegel. Spinozists such as Johannes van Vloten and Petrus van Limburg Brouwer understood Hegel quite well, but in their writings they seldom discussed Hegelian themes. Van Vloten, however, the most important propagandist for Spinozism during this period, did make use of Kuno Fischer's post-Hegelian interpretation of the history of philosophy. Fischer, the spokesman of Hegelian pantheism, accepted this particular German brand of idealism as marking '*the end of philosophy*'. Van Vloten also adopted this conclusion, but according to his own convictions. It was not Hegel but Spinoza who had to be regarded as the final philosopher, finally, human beings were able to create their own history - "*a heaven on earth*" - built upon Spinoza's *Ethics*. It was time to bury the old religions and metaphysics, and to celebrate the *New Age*.

Round about the turn of the century we find another mixing of Spinozist and Hegelian arguments in the philosophical debate. The Spinozist Johannes Diederik Bierens de Haan - not a positivist like Van Vloten but a passionate idealist - constructed a liaison between Hegel's Idea and Spinoza's Substance. He regarded the Idea not as a formal abstraction, maturing as the life of the world progresses, but as identical with the cycle of life. The ever ongoing circulation of life itself is the unfolding of the Idea. It is not the process of becoming which interests him, but being itself: it is this perennial invariable which constituted the centre of his thinking.

The works of Van Vloten and Bierens de Haan may be seen as a typical Dutch variant of Hegelianism, advocating as they do that Hegelian thoughts should be studied within

a Spinozist context. Since no pure Hegelianism took shape during the nineteenth century, Abraham Kuyper, the leading intellectual of Calvinist theology, could maintain in 1892 that "*any professor who taught Hegelianism today would be nothing less than an anachronism*". The same view was expressed by the psychologist and philosopher Gerardus Heymans, who was perhaps the most original Dutch thinker of the period. He was of the opinion that the generation which had cherished post-Kantian idealism had become completely extinct.

A decennium later, the Kantian Arthur Josephus de Sopper in his *Hegel Today (Hegel en Onze Tijd)*, published at Leiden in 1908, took note of a remarkable revival of Hegelianism in the Netherlands. In his book he drew up an inventory of the Hegelian movement: in 1896 the universities had acquired their first Hegelian professor, as Leiden had appointed Bolland to the chair of philosophy; intellectual life had become dominated by Hegelian writers, jurists, historians and theologians; in political life "*Crypto-Hegelians*" could be heard; finally, Hegelianism had given birth to a whole generation of female-philosophers ("*Hegelaressen*"). This unexpected revival is without doubt the most spectacular feature of this episode in the history of philosophy in the Netherlands. It therefore raises the question of how was it that Kuyper and Heymans, by no means sideline intellectuals, could have been so mistaken about the buoyancy of Hegelianism?

I now want to focus upon four central arguments put forward during this sudden revival of Hegelianism in Dutch intellectual life. In the discussion that follows, we should be able to find out whether this development is typical of the European Hegelian movements of the time, or whether it is an anomaly.

1 The affirmation and criticism of our civilisation

The roots of Dutch Hegelianism are not to be found in the universities, for here it was the neo-Kantian approach which was dominant, but in social and cultural life at large. Since the middle of the century, secular freemasons and liberal freethinkers had established a philosophical infrastructure based upon associations and journals. Middle class citizens exchanged thoughts on the philosophy of life, because they were aware that the results of the natural sciences and the decreasing importance of religion called for an alternative view of the world. At first, it was naturalism and Spinozism which set the tone in these circles, stimulated by the utilitarian idea of progress finding its spokesman in the Netherlands mainly in Van Vloten, this optimistic generation hailed philosophy on account of its secularist objectives. Since these circles were drawn to all-embracing speculative systems of thought, it is not surprising that Spinoza should have been revived within the national and liberal context of the nineteenth century. Rembrandt and Vondel also regained popularity, thanks to what Eric Hobsbawm has called '*the invention of tradition*'. In academic life, however, there was hardly any sympathy for post-Kantian idealist systems of thought. The most well known Dutch philosophers of the time - Opzoomer, Pierson, Bellaar Spruyt, Van der Wijck and Heymans - were in the main empiricists, and they regarded their neo-Kantian experimental approach as the only one permissible in the age of modern science. And it was indeed around 1900, that positivistic science reached a new climax, perhaps comparable with that of the seventeenth century. The Dutch universities displayed a remarkable enthusiasm for positivism, and their successful attempts to compete with German, British and French scientists gave rise to a worldwide recognition of the

importance of Dutch intellectual life. In 1901, the chemist J.H. van 't Hoff was honoured with the Nobel-prize. Two years later the physicists H.A. Lorentz and P. Zeeman received the same award, followed in 1910 by another Dutch physicist, J.D. van der Waals. In mathematics Dutch scholars also attained worldwide recognition, through the work of L.E.J. Brouwer, G. Mannoury and D. Struik.

In the wake of this development, however, a lively tradition of criticism began to develop. Science and progress became subjects of philosophical interest, as the old 'post-Masonic' movement became more critical of the potentialities of empiricism - which in the first instance had been hailed on account of its ability to liberate. Many had reached the conclusion that positivism had done away with philosophy and with contemplation. In their view, rationalism, scientific optimism and empiricism had given birth to the "*homo oeconomicus*" who showed interest only in a contemporary society wholly preoccupied with the pursuit of profit and pleasure. Society had become simply a setting for economic, bureaucratic and business relationships, its scientists and politicians disregarded anything that could not be measured or weighed. The 'death of God' created a vacuum with no spiritual aspect, and rationalist concepts were installed in His place. In Brabant, for example, quite a few influential and religious farmers, who had formerly joined the priests every year in celebrating Harvest Festivals in church, became presidents of modern style insurance companies. In 1909 local-time was abolished and throughout the Netherlands people for the first time co-ordinated their clocks and got to work at one and the same time. At a philosophical level, however, industrialization, urbanization, ecological disturbances and the division of labour were criticized. According to De Sopper, the nineties were dominated by "*agnosticism, which is now the main theme of spiritual life, which is attracted to the here and now, and which therefore contributes to the fact that the spiritual world is slowly fading away*". He accused Kant, Spencer and Comte of helping on the demise of contemplative thinking by reducing metaphysics to mythology. Modern man was completely governed by "*exactness*", he could only think in economic terms, instead of being a "*world ruler*" he had become a "*world slave*". De Sopper defined the modern Dutchman as "*an extension of the machine, completely dependent on mechanical clock work*". The modern division of labour had created people with fragmented identities and with only one purpose: to produce. A man's value could only be measured by the value of his work: "*Millions of people today are reduced to a thing, to a cog in a wheel*".

As De Sopper concluded, agreeing with Von Hartmann, that the positivist panegyric of facts and definitions had created a mechanical world in which all relationships were "*mediated*". The result was a highly strung society, built on economic and scientific advance but indifferent to such subsidiary phenomena as spiritual and contemplative aspirations. In 1908 De Sopper argued in a Nietzschean prophetic way that contemporary society was nothing other than "*a comedy which could easily switch over into a horrible cultural tragedy*".

This critique of civilisation and science was expressed in the main by two extra-academic circles, which sometimes overlapped. On the one hand there was the cultural and political generation of '*The Eighties*' ('*Tachtig*'), with such influential spokesmen as Albert Verwey, Frederik van Eeden and Bierens de Haan. On the other hand there was the landscape of the occult, inhabited by utopian spiritists, theosophists, artists, colonists and anarchists. Unfortunately, little research has been done on this field, characterised as it is by the complex inter-relationships of a classless, extra-

ecclesiastical and religious-aesthetic sociability. This 'pillar' (zuil) of society preferred a centre path between positivist empiricism and ecclesiastical religion. These circles were a completely heterodox amalgam. Around the turn of the century, however, public opinion recognized them as a coherent group. Bierens de Haan, the main philosopher of The Eighties, defined it in 1907 on the occasion of the launching of the *Journal for Philosophy (Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte)* as "*the philosophical movement*". Personally I prefer to refer to it as the "*affirmative movement*", since this new generation of layman-philosophers distinguished themselves from other social and cultural groups by affirming the spiritual energy they had available in the immediate present. Thinking should not be adapted to a goal far away in the future - the socialist Utopia or the Christian Paradise. Thinking had to be affirmed practically in lived experience. 'Affirmation' was also the concept cherished by Nietzsche. It was used in order to define a practical lifestyle in which, on the one hand, thinking and acting, and on the other hand, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, had become a whole. In the Netherlands, this idea was further developed by Gertruida Kapteyn Muysken in her book *Affirmation (Affirmatie)*, published at Amsterdam in 1908, and such ideas were taught at the International School for Philosophy in Amersfoort. She had lived in London during the last decades of the nineteenth century, where she had influenced contemporary thinkers such as George Bernard Shaw, Edward Carpenter and Peter Kropotkin, whom she had known personally.

In the Netherlands we notice a remarkable interest in affirmative ideas. Spiritists, theosophists, freethinkers, artists, colonists and anarchists praised philosophy, and gave expression to a spiritual and cultural atmosphere which, if France is not taken into consideration, is unique in Europe. In 1914, the theologian Pieter Daniel Chantepie de la Saussaye noted that there were over five hundred active members in the theosophical lodges - the same number as in the whole of France and more than five times as many as in Germany. In 1980, the essayist Anton Constandse pointed out that in respect of the number of adherents of anarchism, the Netherlands was only outstripped in Western Europe by Spain. Typical of this affirmative moment in Dutch cultural history was, therefore, a severe criticism of modern civilisation, and the explicit use of philosophical argumentation. As well as criticizing, this generation wanted to start straight away on its reconstruction of society. Its saloons, lodges, philosophical schools and courses, worker- and community houses, small communal libraries, and utopian colonies gave expression to an 'immediatistic' way of life. People met each other face to face, they cherished the arts and philosophical conversations as instruments of sociability, and experimented with different lifestyles. Many of them thought of themselves as "*the New Nobility*" (Nietzsche), opening up a new age. This extra-cultural development, this withdrawal from main stream culture, can be seen as having been typical of Dutch spiritual and intellectual life. Earlier, in the fifties and sixties, Spinozism had spread in the Netherlands in the same extra-cultural way. In 1843 for instance, Petrus Hofstede de Groot - theologian of the Groningen School - warned against a threatening phenomenon in Dutch culture. According to him, the revival of interest in philosophy had resulted in a series of closed social groups, and he deplored the development of a society in which groups of people were communicating only with themselves. Hofstede was afraid that these "*discoursing beasts of prey*" would contribute to a loss of the community spirit in society. Around 1900, however, a new generation of discoursing laymen-philosophers argued that an increase in the number of communicating groups was necessary, in order to re-establish community spirit within a mechanized society.

2 Lay-philosophy and proto-Hegelianism

One of the problems that accompanies the affirmative approach to philosophy is the proposed cohesion of thinking and acting. The affirmative movement depended heavily on strong personalities who lived a colourful life. These personalities had an enormous propagandistic and organisational value for the loose and local structures of the extra-cultural circles. A lodge or a philosophical association was usually dominated by a charismatic figure whose affirmed lifestyle was of great importance to the members. Certificates were not required, and descent was not important. In Amsterdam, the theosophist *'Madam de Neufville'* became an almost mythical personality. The Spinozist and freethinker Willem Meijer was called by his pupils *'Meyer-Spinoza'*, an appellation designating both a messenger and a prophet. Kapteyn-Muysken referred to her inspirer Helene Mercier as *"a contemporary Saint"*, and the leading Dutch anarchist Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, even appeared on play-bills as a modern Jesus braving the waves. If we employ the social and political categories traditionally used by historians, we have to say that the philosophical audience was very heterogeneous. In the winter of 1901-1902, Frederik van Eeden held a series of ten lectures in Amsterdam and Hilversum on spiritual life and contemporary culture. Over five hundred were present, and Van Eeden was surprised by their heterogeneity. He counted *"extreme freethinkers, materialists, theosophists, religious Catholics, orthodox Calvinists, modern Protestants, liberal Catholics, persons without religious convictions, social democrats, free socialists, Christian anarchists, liberal democrats and bourgeois capitalists"*.

This vibrant climate gave an enormous impulse to philosophical life in the Netherlands. Around the turn of the century more books, brochures, journals and controversies appeared than ever before. Philosophy became fashionable. It was particularly those journals associated with The Eighties - *De Nieuwe Gids*, *De Kroniek*, *Tweemaandelijksch Tijdschrift* and *De Beweging* - that provided *the* media for contemporary philosophical controversies. We must not forget that at this stage Dutch intellectual life had not yet given rise to a purely philosophical journal. It was only in 1907 that the first journal, dedicated exclusively to philosophy, *Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte*, was founded, and its launching was a direct result of the increased attention paid to philosophy in other journals. According to De Sopper, the readers enjoyed *"philosophizing and indulging in profundity"* (*"philosophigheid en diepdoenerij"*). As we have seen, this new audience was consisted of laymen who *"until very recently had been completely innocent of philosophy"*. Their having recently broken with their churches, and their hostility to modern mechanized society had dissolved their former certainties. They felt that *"the cement of social life was gradually dissolving"* and that philosophy could provide new materials for restoring the foundations of western civilisation.

It was in this sultry but fertile atmosphere that the Hegelian Gerardus Bolland appeared on the scene. He had begun his career by teaching English at Batavia in the Dutch East Indies, but influenced by journals such as the freethinkers' monthly *The Dawn (De Dageraad)*, he had developed an interest in philosophical themes. This journal, founded in 1856, and one of the first to devote itself to philosophy, cultivated an interest in Spinozistic, naturalistic, pantheistic and materialistic themes. Bolland turned out to be the absolute mirror image of the positivist philosopher Jacob Moleschott - in those days the champion of the Dutch freethinkers. In 1888 he started a series of articles for *The*

New Guide (De Nieuwe Gids). Before him, it had been Marius Lotsy, an adherent of a positivistic Spinozism of the Van Vloten kind, who had written the main philosophical and political articles in this journal. His being superseded by Bolland gives us an early indication of the waning of positivistic Spinozism and the rise of idealist Hegelianism. I do stress this development very firmly here, for it was not Bolland who created a philosophical movement, it was a philosophical movement that made the appearance of Bolland possible.

3 Bolland: the 'self made philosopher'

Gerardus Bolland was born into a humble and impoverished Catholic milieu, and established himself as a philosopher by self-tuition. At first he was attracted by the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, and it was at this intellectual stage of his life that he was appointed as professor of philosophy at Leiden in 1896. His inaugural lecture made an enormous impression upon those who cherished the affirmative approach to philosophy. The poet Albert Verwey wrote of it in a lyrical way: "... never before have I seen the unpersonality of the written word so disappear in the personality of the spoken word. Bolland combines passion with authenticity, honesty with self assurance; he represents a new age at an old university".

Two years later (Leiden 1898) he published *Hegel. An Historical Investigation (Hegel. Eene Historische Studie)*. In 1899 he started with the publication of Hegel's most important works. These activities were the prelude to the birth of a neo-Hegelianism in the Netherlands. His most important contributions to international Hegel-studies were in the fields of the philosophy of nature and the interpretation of the Gospels. However, the way in which he came to adopt Hegelianism is still unclear, and we can only hope that his Willem Otterspeer – whose biography of Bolland will be published soon - will provide us with more insight into the precise nature of his intellectual development. According to some of his contemporaries, one might make particular mention of the remarkable idealist E. van Dieren, Bolland was struck by Hegel in a matter of two days, as if in a sort of mystical experience - and we must not forget that Bolland defined himself as "mystic" and a "desperate sceptical agnostic" ("*een vertwijfelende agnosticus*"). According to Van Dieren, although Bolland detested clericalism, he never gave up his typically Catholic imaginativeness. Bolland's pupil Gustaaf Adolf van den Bergh van Eysinga observed in 1932 that it had taken his master two weeks to grasp everything Hegel had written. Both remarks suggest that Bolland was struck by Hegel as suddenly as was his audience at the turn of the century.

Through Bolland, Hegelian philosophy became Dutch philosophy. Around the turn of the century, notions such as "*Hegelen*", "*Hegelarij*" en "*Hegelaressen*" were adopted into the Dutch vocabulary. The affirmative movement expressed its thankfulness by attending his public lectures in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Utrecht, Delft, Groningen, Nijmegen and even in Belgium. Bolland was an excellent orator, and in many Dutch articles we find it observed that in order to understand Bolland, one had to see and hear him. As I have already said, however, I consider this 'immediacy' to be a crucial characteristic, not only of Bolland and Hegelianism, but also of the affirmative moment as a whole. While attending Bolland's lectures, the Dutch not only learnt about Hegel, but were also provided with an unique opportunity for examining the "*mouldering foundations*" of modern society. In his most important book, *Pure Reason. A book for the Friends of Wisdom (Zuivere Rede. Een boek voor vrienden der wijsheid)*

published at Leiden in 1904, Bolland summarized his antipathy to the idea of progress, which he defines as an illusion, responsible for the destruction of genius and the crippling of society.

Although never before in Dutch history had a philosopher attracted so much attention, Bolland found himself completely isolated in Leiden. He was at odds with women, Jews, democracy, socialism, division of labour and positivistic science. He considered himself to be the only real philosopher on the European continent. His controversies with Dutch empiricist philosophers such as Heymans and Jelgersma turned out to be a complete failure. Gentile and Croce, in Italy, were irritated by the phone grandeur of his correspondence. Bolland's dogmatic and 'mystical enlightenment' had in fact made philosophical *debate* impossible. In his own conception of pure reason, reason had become conscious of itself; this consciousness was the exclusive expression of the absolute truth that can be derived from transmitted written texts such as the Gospels. This is why pure reason has the absolute character absent in other philosophical systems, which have to be regarded, according to Bolland, merely as single opinions devoid of any claim to constitute truth. In his view, although most people have opinions, he himself was in the possession of "*the certainty of the Notion*".

In the Netherlands, Bolland was highly successful in his efforts to explain the dogmas of Christianity from a philosophical point of view. The Bible offers us "*sentimental images*", which are transmitted into a Biblical language, in order, finally, to change our beliefs into knowledge. Historical dogmas are in fact symbols of archaic and traditional philosophical truths. Pure reason was constructed as a key for unlocking these archaic truths - revealing the Logos behind the dense curtain of symbolism. Following Hegel, he suggests an evolution in thinking which progresses from images to symbolic meanings. He therefore promulgates a spiritual hierarchy: at the bottom there is the primitive world of images as expressed in the arts, then there is the level of the symbolic order as expressed in the religions, the top being reserved for philosophy, or more precisely, for pure reason - an intense sense of meaning completely liberated from images and symbols. Bolland also affirmed this hierarchy in daily life. In 1916 he refused to become a member of the committee of the International School for Philosophy, because one of the members was a poet. He also forced conflicts with pupils who were not yet thinking rationally enough. In 1911 one of his most talented students, Clara Wichmann, ended her philosophical relationship with him since she did not want to give up her involvement with the arts.

On account of Bolland's coercive hierarchy, the study of pure reason seemed to be a knock-out race, and students who succeeded in finishing the courses got the feeling that they belonged to a new aristocracy. I have the very distinct feeling that the route to pure reason was a kind of initiation ceremony. Controversies with the master were not possible, so after 1910 the circle around Bolland seemed to be a closed sect or a cult rather than a philosophical faculty. According to Ferdinand Sassen, the Dutch historian of philosophy, his pupils worshipped him in a gushing way never seen before in Dutch intellectual history. Hegelians, like Clara Wichmann, who blamed Bolland for using Hegel for his own purposes, started an independent circle of Hegelians of the left. They found each other in journals such as *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*. According to Wichmann, the "*mother hen Bolland*" had also hatched some "*duck eggs*". For these "*ducks*", the study of Hegel's dialectical method became the core of philosophical activity.

Those who were loyal to Bolland understood that he had spoken not for the masses, but for the small elite able to understand pure reason. The masses had to be governed by the images of arts, figures, emblems, lights and flags, and the symbols of passionate religions. Art and religion had no single philosophical meaning, but were still good enough for the primitive beliefs of the masses. After Bolland's death in 1922, his inheritance was cherished by Hegelians of the right such as Jacob Hessing and Jannes Gerhardus Wattjes, who formed the Bolland Association (Bolland Genootschap).

4 System building

On account of his personality, Bolland succeeded to bringing more unity into the diverse and heterogenous affirmative movement. Many freethinkers, ethical socialists, anarchists, Rosicrucians and theosophists were converted to Hegelianism, or more precisely, to Bollandism. The phrase '*In Holland people speak Bolland*' was very popular at the time. Rival systems of thought had to adapt their programs to Hegelianism in order to prevent their members from leaving. In 1907-1908 for example, the Amsterdam Theosophical Association invited the German philosopher Rudolf Steiner to organize a curriculum on '*Theosophy and Hegel*'.

The popular appeal of Bolland's bold philosophy can be explained from the fact that although his followers did not discover Hegel through the study of philosophy, they did discover a philosophical way of life, into which they were initiated by Bolland and Hegel. According to De Sopper, since these Hegelians were characterized by a lack of philosophical knowledge, an all-embracing and overall system of thought seemed to be an attractive alternative, for they were essentially ex-ecclesiastical laymen. Van Eeden and De Sopper had indeed noticed a weariness with regard to discussion and debate in the late nineties. Although debating had been very popular among freethinkers and socialists, it always ended in for and against, and therefore lacked the ability to formulate clear methods for dealing with contemporary problems. Typical of the turn of the century was the quest for a philosophical bridge able to put an end to the structural dichotomy dominating intellectual and positivistic life. Bolland's pure reason fulfilled precisely this end: it was a mental instrument "*for solving the greatest problems by means of just one long-winded philosophical exercise*" (De Sopper). It is, therefore, not an anachronism when we define Bolland as a '*Guru*', since, as I have already observed, this new generation of philosophers needed living examples, and many had been introduced to Buddhist and Hindu ideas before they exchanged this kind of esotericism for Bollandism. Their Spinozist forerunners in the fifties and sixties had also defined themselves as being '*Yogi*' or '*Sankhyi*'.

Enthusiastic admirers of Bolland could be recognized on account of their strongly idiosyncratic use of the Dutch language. Bolland was the champion of the enrichment of vocabulary, since he was convinced that a Dutch philosophy had to be expressed in Dutch. In some journals and articles, however, we find many complaints concerning the use of these new and strange Dutch notions and definitions. Some deplored the fact that Dutch Hegelianism had contributed to the lessening of communication among people. The social philosopher Joop van Santen even maintained that Bollandism was "*actually the source of a primitive presumptiveness*". In the journal *De Dageraad*, someone by the name of Overstra criticized the language of Bolland in a humorous manner. I shall quote the first sentence in Dutch since a translation seems impossible:

"Onbeacht het parasunetische uwerd suppositie, als zouden wij ons als materialisten poneren, in welken waan gij uwer acerbe adgressie richt tegen ons".

According to traditional historiography, Bolland's pupils were left in serious dislocation after his death in 1922. A split had already been taken place earlier, however, as we can see in the case of Clara Wichmann. After Bolland's death Dutch Hegelianism seemed to continue in at least three different directions. There were the activities of the Hegelians of the left, for instance, the circle centred on *De Nieuwe Amsterdammer*. Some of the productions of these activities - the works of Bart de Ligt for instance - became the focal point of theorizing concerning pacifism and criminology. It is still worthwhile for contemporary historians to consult De Ligt's interpretation of the works of Erasmus. The majority of Bolland's followers, however, clung to a Hegelianism of the right, and they used the Bolland Association as their platform. This wing provided another Hegelian professor - Jacob Hessing - and tried to continue Bolland's efforts to further the development of this kind of philosophy. There was a smaller third category consisting of a fundamentalist anti-democratic faction which shared Bolland's anti-Semitic and anti-modernist criticism of contemporary culture. One might mention in this connection, Hugues Sinclair de Rochemont and the Catholic anti-democrat Emile Verviers. After 1922, both of them turned out to be the founding fathers of Dutch fascism. In 1923 they were involved in the founding of the Union of Actualists (Verbond van Actualisten), the first organized fascist party in the Netherlands. There were also more prominent Hegelians of the right, such as Hessing, S.A. van Lunteren and Balthus Wigersma, who played a large part in the philosophical legitimising of anti-democratic views. This group was involved in the notorious journal *The Balance (De Waag)*, and wrote the disreputable brochure *The Philosophy of the National-Socialist (fascist) State (Nationaal-Socialistische (fascistische) Staatsleer)*, published in 1933.

In a recently published article on the way in which historians have viewed Dutch philosophy, Michiel Wielema has pointed out that Dutch historiography is characterized by many prejudices. Although most earlier historians have been of the opinion that Dutch philosophy has always been eclectic and not dogmatic but characterized by the absence of sects and cults, the enormous interest in Hegelianism and the popularity of Bolland between 1900 and 1945, show clearly that at that time at least, this was certainly not the case. Hegelianism was only successful because it was dogmatic and esoteric. The unique position of Bolland in Dutch intellectual history was a paradox in that it was a climax and a fiasco at one and the same time. Never before in Dutch history had philosophy become so popular in cultural life. For many, the study of philosophy provided a sense of spiritual belonging in a rapidly changing mechanized world. On the other hand, never before in Dutch history had philosophy become such a triviality, never before had it been used in order to legitimise such disreputable racial, social and political theories.

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