

*and the problem of the Nederlandse Unie*'. In het eerste gedeelte van zijn opstel hield hij zich bezig met de historische ontwikkeling van de organisatie, in het tweede met haar geschiedschrijving.

- 6 'Given the *Unie* position as a mass movement during the first part of the occupation together with the undoubted influence, even centrality, of many of its activists in post-war Dutch society, it is a matter of some surprise that it has, as yet, received so little analytic study. This is not to say that its existence and the basic facts of its history have been denied or swept under the carpet. Rather, there has come to be something of a bypassing of the history of the movement as a topic to study.

This pattern is one that was set in the early period after the liberation by the proceedings of the Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry whose brief was to examine the whole spectrum of activities relevant to the history of the Netherlands during the war. In the 19 volumes and nearly 4,000 pages of the Commission's report, precisely 16 pages were given to a summary of the *Unie*'s history, concentrating exclusively on the circumstances of its formation. Just one paragraph was allowed for assessing the movement's importance. It might be argued that the Parliamentary Commission felt that the *Unie* had already received sufficient attention in that its affairs had been examined by another body, the Schermerhorn Commission in 1946. But this tribunal had been convened to examine the specific accusation that the *Unie* had been guilty of aiding the German occupation regime. Important as his charge was to a full understanding of the *Unie* it covered only some aspects of the movement's full history, and cannot, therefore explain the Parliamentary Commission's reticence. In particular the collaborationism perspective had essentially to focus on the leadership and its acts and intentions in regard to the German authorities. It excluded, *inter alia*, consideration of the *Unie* as an organisation or the significance which the membership might have attached to the movement and its ideas whether in 1940-41 or at the liberation. In any case the pattern of bare recognition persisted in subsequent historical reviews either of the whole occupation experience or of particular aspects of Dutch political life during the war. Louis de Jong's magisterial multi-volume history of the war years devotes, it is true, around 130 pages in five separate sections and across two volumes to the matter of the *Unie*. He, too, was one of the first historians to pay substantial attention to the deeper roots of the political and social discussion that went on during the war. Yet, even in his consideration the *Unie* is never brought to the centre of the stage. De Jong presents it largely in relation to other movements: the NSB or the National Front (neither of which attracted in the war a fraction of the *Unie*'s membership figures), or in terms of the way it handled particular problems – the question of Jewish membership, for example.

In short, a broad assessment of the *Unie* seems to have slipped through