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ANATOMY OF A MERGER.
A STUDY OF THE MERGER PROCESS
IN BRITISH TRADE UNIONS,
WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
THE CASE OF THE GMB/APEX
MERGER OF 1989

SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY
FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM.

BY

JOHN CREABY MBE MIPM

MARCH 1995

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14 NOV 1995

ABSTRACT.

John Creaby

"Anatomy of a merger: A study of the merger process in British Trade Unions, with particular reference to the case of the GMB/Apex merger of 1989"

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy from the University of Durham.

March 1995

The historic context, characteristics, effects of social and industrial determinants and the tendentious factors of trade union mergers are explored. The literature on trade unionism, its history and merger trends and styles, is reviewed with special reference to the relationship of staff and manual workers. The hypotheses developed concern the reasons for mergers, the capital / labour nexus, merger styles, and the effects of both internal factors (trade union movement and individual trade union culture) and external (industry and societal) factors. This is then related to the particular merger of APEX/GMB: the significance of a staff union amalgamating with a general, ostensibly manual, union. The hypotheses are reviewed against the historic development, characteristics, structural changes and, more particularly, the culture of the unions. Reviewing the developed themes of culture changes, the actual merger details are analysed, drawing upon interviews of a relevant selected group of senior lay and full-time officials and internal documents. This case study also considers the earlier merger of the Boilermakers' Society and the General & Municipal Workers Union: itself significant in bringing together a craft and general union. Among other conclusions, it is asserted that the future development is the amalgamation - friendly style, managing change as part of the trade union critical application to merge, and the "Super Union", which is "conglomerate" in character. There is no monocausal determinant, however there are interdependent factors. This gives direction to probable development for the 1990s. Although concerned with the developing British trend it also points to the factors' relevance to a broader arena of the trade union centre, the TUC and Europe.

(None of this work has previously been submitted for any other degree.)

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Abbreviations

ABT	Association of Building Technicians
ACAS	Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service
ACTSS	Association of Clerical, Technical & Supervisory Staffs (TGWU)
AEEU	Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union. (see AEU & EETPU)
AESD	Association of Engineering & Shipbuilding Draughtsmen (see DATA)
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union (amalg. with AUFW, CEU and DATA to form AUEW)
APAC	Association of Patternmakers & Allied Craftsmen (merged into TASS)
APEX	Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical & Computer Staff (amalg. with GMBATU to form GMB.)
ASBSBSW (or ASB)	Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths & Structural Workers (amalg. with GMWU to form GMBATU)
AScW	Association of Scientific Workers (amalg. with ASSET to form ASTMS)
ASE	Amalgamated Society of Engineers (Founding union of the AEU.)
ASPD	Amalgamated Society of Painters & Decoraters(merged into UCATT)
ASSET	Association of Supervisory Staffs, Executives & Technicians (See AScW)
ASTMS	Association of Scientific, Technical & Managerial Staffs. (amalg. with TASS to form MSF.)
ASW	Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers (merged into UCATT)
AUBTW	Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers (merged into UCATT)
AUEW	Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (amalg. with the EETPU to form AEEU)
AUFW	Amalgamated Union of Foundry Workers (see AEU)
BIFU	Banking, Insurance and Finance Union (formerly NUBE)
CAWU	Clerical & Administrative Workers Union (formerly NUC, became APEX)
CEU	Constructional Engineering Union (see AEU)
COHSE	Confederation of Health Service Employees (amalg. with NUPE & NALGO to form UNISON)
COPPSO	Conferece of Public & Professional Service Organisations
CPSA	Civil & Public Services Association
CSU	Civil Service Union (now part of NUCPS)
DATA	Draughtsmen & Allied Technicians Association (formerly AESD - merged with AEU to form AUEW above then demerged with ASTMS formed MSF)
D of E	Department of Employment
EESA	Electrical & Engineering Staff Association (EETPU)
EETPU	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications & Plumbers Union (ETU & PTU)
EMA	Engineers & Managers Association
EPEA	Electrical Power Engineers Association
ESRC	Economic & Social Research Council
ETU	Electrical Trades Union (merged with PTU to form EETPU)
GMB	Formerly GMBATU, merged with APEX & NUTGW
GMBATU	General, Municipal, Boilermakers & Allied Trades Union (formerly GMWU)
GMWU	General & Municipal Workers Union (formerly NUGMW)
IMS	Institute of Manpower Studies
IPCS	Institute of Professional Civil Servants
IPM	Institute of Personnel Managers
IPMS	Institute of Professional & Managerial Staffs (formerly IPCS)
IR	Industrial Relations

IRIS	Industrial Research & Information Services
ISTC	Iron & Steel Trades Confederation
JCF	Jim Conway Foundation
LCC	London County Council
LRD	Labour Research Department
MATSA	Managerial, Administrative, Technical & Supervisory Association (staff section of GMBATU)
MEA	Municipal Employees Association
MSF	Manufacturing, Science & Finance (formerly TASS & ASTMS)
NALGO	National & Local Government Officers' Association (merged with NUPE & COHSE to form UNISON)
NAS/UWT	National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers
NATSOPA	National Association of Operative Printers, Graphical & Media Personnel
NCU	National Communications Union
NEDC	National Economic Development Council
NGA	National Graphical Association
NHS	National Health Service
NUAW	National Union of Agricultural Workers (amal. with TGWU)
NUBE	National Union of Bank Employees (now BIFU)
NUC	National Union of Clerks (became CAWU)
NUCPS	National Union of Civil & Public Servants (formerly SCPS & CSU)
NUCW	National Union of Corporation Workers
NUDB	National Union of Dyers and Bleachers (merged with the TGWU)
NUGMW	National Union of General & Municipal Workers
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees (merged with COHSE & NALGO to form UNISON)
NUR	National Union of Railwaymen (merged with NUS to form RMT)
NUS	National Union of Seamen (merged with NUR to form RMT)
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NUTGW	National Union of Tailors & Garment Workers (merged with GMB)
P & O	Port & Orient
PSI	Policy Studies Institute
PTU	Plumbing Technicians Union (merged with ETU to form EETPU)
PUM	Potential Union Membership
RMT	National Union of Rail, Maritime & Transport Workers (formerly NUS & NUR)
SCPS	Society of Civil & Public Servants
SIMA	Steel Industry Management Association (now part of EETPU)
SLADE	Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers
SOGAT	Society of Graphical & Allied Trades '82
TASS	Technical, Administrative & Supervisory Section (of AUEW)
TGWU	Transport & General Workers Union
TSSA	Transport & Salaried Staffs' Association
TU	Trade Union
TUC	Trade Union Congress
TWU	Tobacco Workers Union
UCATT	Union of Construction, Allied Trades & Technicians
UCW	Union of Communication Workers
USDAW	Union of Shop, Distributive & Allied Workers

Introduction

This thesis represents an investigation of trade union mergers in contemporary Britain. Mergers of trade unions in the 1980-1990s reduced the number of TUC affiliates from 112 (1979) to 68 (1993) creating new speculation as to the direction of change in British trade unionism. The scenario of new human resource management, "Japanisation", the "flexible firm", the shift in the profile of occupational structure of industry and the creation of a single European market all pose problems of a changed environment for trade unions. They add to the political circumstances of Britain with a Conservative government since 1979 continuing into the 1990s, which has had a programme of state intervention into the role and practices of the trade unions. In the main it has removed the long established social partnership between government, employers and trade unions. The issue of state intervention and approach is not new it merely differs in character.

The TUC has always examined the changing profile of trade unions as a result of mergers and has, emanating from the General Council statement adopted at the 1987 Congress, undertaken to make a "detailed examination" of structures. This interest and attempt to reform trade union structures has surfaced previously at times of change and increased merger activity in 1926-1927, 1944-1946, and 1962-1965. However the TUC has always maintained the stance that the trade unions have the "right ultimately to determine their structures and practice in the light of their own needs and experiences" (TUC 1966). So, with no central direction, change is driven by what appear to be complex elements.

Undy et al. in their notable study had a conceptual model involving the interaction of change

agents, the decision making structure and leadership as definitive determinants of the "needs and experiences" of the trade unions. This model aligned to the question of amalgamation, but had a broader concentration ; to comprehend internal and external changes of trade unions. (Undy 1981) Their model leads to other considerations of intra - trade union factors that favour or inhibit amalgamations and the extra- trade union factors which impact on the equation. These main potential causation of any trade union merger , therefore , include a wide range of components.

In the following Chapters key issues will be delineated, the changed environment identified and consideration given to the historical background to trade union characteristics. Rather than attempting a comprehensive coverage of amalgamations, the focus will be on a particular merger, the GMB and APEX. This was a most important merger cutting across the boundaries of the present and previously perceived future structural characteristics.

From the foregoing , the work will relate to knowledge about tensions, action and reaction that mergers bring about. To support this, cross reference will be made with other amalgamations past and present. Detailed comparative data is drawn particularly from the AEU (later to become through amalgamation with the EEPTU, the AEEU), MSF (an amalgamation of TASS and ASTMS), TGWU and the public sector unions, NALGO, NUPE and COHSE (recently amalgamated to form UNISON) .

In introducing the debate on the GMB/ APEX merger at the GMB 1988 Congress John Edmonds, GMB general secretary stated that he believed there would in the future "be only four major unions in Britain and each of them will have well over a million members..." and went on to add... "We need new members and we need good amalgamations, the sort that strengthens the union by opening up opportunities for further recruitment ." (Edmonds 1988)

The following Chapters will identify the factors shaping the attitudes of trade union members to forge "good amalgamations" and the perceived and expected results . In this work, mergers of trade unions refer to all amalgamations and transfers of engagements. However it must be recognised that "amalgamation means each union loses its identity and becomes merged into a new union ...", "transfer of engagement is a transfer of the obligations of one union (transferor) to another (transferee) and an assumption of those obligations by the latter. Members of all unions involved in a proposed amalgamation should be given the opportunity to vote, but in the case, however, of a proposed transfer of engagement the voting is confined to the transferor union." (Jones & Morris 1982). In most cases reference will be to mergers, however where there is specific need to establish detail, reference may be made to the merger being an amalgamation or a transfer of engagements.

Chapter one will examine the changes in characteristics determined by what is termed the socialisation effects of the capital / labour nexus. It will also consider the effects of density and trade union growth by analysing the statistics of change whilst considering the changed industrial and commercial environment. Chapter two will assess the practical and tendentious factors affecting individual union mergers. The case study research methods are described in Chapter three. The results of which are contained in Chapters four and five. The situation that prevails post- merger is considered in Chapter 6.

Chapter four illustrates the historic character, background and parallel development of the two unions, whilst Chapter five records in detail the process and motivations of the merger itself Chapter six considers the post - merger situation as it applied to the leadership, activists and internal structures . Finally Chapter seven relates the concluding analysis which will include two

conceptual maps of the model developed from the research and the portends for the future of amalgamations .

Characteristics affected by socio-historic determinism

In this Chapter we will examine macro-factors relating to the mergers. It is evident that structural characteristics, as effected by socialisation, have a direct influence on the trade union merger process. This qualitative examination is compounded by the quantitative analysis of size, growth and density. As these determinants affect actual and potential membership of the trade unions, they are important points of departure in the study of trade union mergers.

Trade Union Structural Characteristics

Present structural characteristics of trade unions are a direct result of historic determinism. Whilst commentators often talk of the British Trade Union Movement, it cannot be perceived as an organic whole; each union has evolved independently often embodying different priorities and sets of practices. Nevertheless most documents on trade union organisation distinguish four basic types of union: craft, industrial, general, and non-manual or staff. However, as the initial map of change outlines in Table 1, there are intra and extra factor which show changing characteristics. These traditional trade union structure classifications have often created constraints on change and particularly on mergers. Nevertheless, with pressure from the socio-historic determinants, they are important points of departure in the study of trade union amalgamations.

Intra - and Extra - Factors which Affect Trade Unions Table 1	
INTRA - FACTORS CHARACTERISTICS TRADE UNION STRUCTURES	EXTRA - FACTORS CHARACTERISTICS POTENTIAL UNION MEMBERS
Traditional to Conglomerate Manual > Craft Industrial > Sectoral General Non-manual > Staff Conglomerate Open or Closed	Social Stratification Actual > Assumed Industrial > Sectoral Demographic Changes Imagery > Perception New job territory

Characterisitcs affected by Socio-historic determinism

Craft unions : skilled workers' social closure.

From the craftsmen and Guilds of the 18th Century, using their bargaining powers, with scant regard to those outside their craft or skills and no reference outside their district, these workers combined to form unions. With the advance of the Industrial Revolution and the growing strength of these craft based unions, the state intervened with laws (Combination Acts 1799 & 1800) to forbid the combination of workers , if they were established to improve wages and conditions.

These Craft unions , as they became known , reflected the societal changes taking place and various attempts were made to form a universal trade association with a federal basis of sectors based on trade or locality in the years that followed the repeal of the Combination Acts, 1824 . (Engels 1844 : Thompson 1968)

Industrial Unions : Craft Unions Extend.

What was achieved , however , was moves to establish a number of national Craft / Industrial Unions. The important features of these unions was size and geography , a national/centralised administration and identity which reflected in the process of their activity , giving the ability to hold out against employers and the state obstructions. They also reflected industrialisation . By merger of small engineering craft unions , the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, established in 1851, typified the form of polity that crafts believed they required to protect their interests . The membership was drawn from a social stratum determined by themselves i.e. workers from a sector of particular acceptable skills. (Jeffrey 1971)

This is what Allen termed the socialisation influence : the fact that trade unions do not operate independent of society, but respond and contribute to its change. As he outlined

"It is not possible for unions which arose in opposition to the dominant

Characteristics affected by Socio-historic determinism

effects of capitalism to operate within the system as permanent bodies without taking on some of the characteristics of the system itself." (Allen 1966)

General Unions : Open to All Workers.

The craft / industrial workers' standard of living and job security was not enjoyed by the unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the new sweated industries. By the end of the 19th century, trade union membership extended outside the restrictions applied by those elitist unions. Trade unions now encompassed a mass membership of gas workers, dockers, tram workers and shop assistants. These employees had previously been seen as transient in terms of their relationship with their employer, therefore permanent trade union membership was regarded as impracticable.

This "New Unionism" was General in character and ethos, differing from the craft / industrial unions in a number of ways. Not only was it a quantitative difference, with a larger potential membership area of recruitment across occupational spheres, geographic areas, industrial sectors and women, there was also a qualitative difference which changed the perspective of the union. It recognised that industrial society was not divided by sectional interest of occupation, but the overriding factors were between Capital and Labour. (Kapp 1989 : Thorne 1925: Clegg 1954 & 1964: Radice 1974)

These general unions were to have a major impact on trade unionism. These more open - general trade unions had a constant tendency to merge, thus came into being the two giant unions, the Gas & General Workers and the Dockers and Transport Workers, forerunners of the GMB and TGWU. Moreover the success of the general unions provided an incentive to the craft / industrial unions to form stronger national identities and amalgamate to include many types of craftsmen and skills in adjacent trades. For example, the ASE became the base for the amalgamation of ten unions to form the AEU in 1920 and the acceptance of some unskilled

and the semi-skilled (however not women) into membership. These unions now took on some of the characteristics of the general unions whilst still maintaining the industrial / craft base. (Clegg 1954: Pelling 1967: Jeffrey 1971: Kapp 1989)

Non-Manual or Staff Trade Unions : Into the Offices.

In industries, services or the trades circumscribed within the state or public bodies, a different form of trade union developed which was neither "general" or "craft / industrial" ; there evolved the Occupational, Sectoral and Staff unions. They evolved out of the increasing complexities that the growth of production brought, the expansion of banking and finance, the new ethos of sales / purchasing in companies and the emergence of a public service sector. These trade unions whilst having "declared themselves to be bona fide trade unions with the express purpose of bettering the economic position of their members", were "unwilling to submerge themselves in larger unions with predominantly manual-worker membership." (Lockwood 1966)

An example of this trend was the National Union of Clerks (NUC) established in 1890, forerunner of APEX . Although the NUC was basically a general occupational union catering for office staff, the general element related only to its cover of many sectors of employment. However , most occupational unions took the form of sectoral or industrial basis. Lockwood's classic study of clerical work organisation and unionisation gives a good appreciation of these developments. Later consideration will be given to his argument that although bureaucratised these work situations have not proletarianised the workers. (Lockwood 1966 : Marsh 1978)

The foregoing gives a brief appreciation of the historic and internal factors which established the traditional classification of trade unions. Whilst these classifications are imperfect , they do give a base from where to start. It must be noted that most, if not all , literature relating to the

trade union movement covers these classifications in various levels of detail.

Turner in 1964, referring to trade union structures, noted the "inadequacy of the classifications commonly used to describe the diverse external forms it may assume," and using his analysis from the empirical study of the textile unions suggested a different typology, that of open or closed unions. The open unions imposed no restriction on entry, they organised and recruited all workers and were generally expansionist. The closed unions restricted entry through the nature of occupational skills and qualifications and often the apprenticeship system. Although stating that "the frontier between open and closed unionism is not rigid or permanent", he contended nevertheless that it "pretty adequately explains not merely the cotton unions' external structure, but the general pattern of British trade union organisation". (Turner 1964)

Turner's model has in recent years been criticised by other writer, including Undy. Undy et al. showed that there were "more and more exceptions in the contemporary situation" to this notion and that unions were never "quite closed or open". In fact Undy cited the NUR and NUM as "unions that confine themselves to a single industrial sector (that) will change their job territory in line with changes in that industry". Compounding this analysis, the present merger wave in the 1990s has the NUM discussing terms with the TGWU and the NUR amalgamated with the seamen's NUS to form the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT). Undy understood that this could happen for even these industrial unions if their "strategic position is threatened or they become so small as to be unviable administratively" would break out of their industrial sector. (Undy et al 1981) Indeed given the complexity of trade union characteristics, no classification model is finite. However, we will see the importance of classification in later Chapters as it effects the tendentious factors of merger style and individual unions' culture.

Socialisation: the change to characteristics

SOCIALISATION EFFECTS CAPITAL\LABOUR	
THE CHARACTERISTICS of TRADE UNIONS	
Capital	socialisation
Table 2	
Capital	Labour
<p>INDUSTRIALISATION Capital changes led by Technological change Family firm</p> <p>Capital confined to local boundaries</p>	<p>CRAFT Trade unions contained by craft Exclusive social strata of potential union membership. "closed union". Labour confined to local boundaries</p>
<p>INDUSTRY Factory System</p> <p>Industry based capital Capital confined to national boundaries</p>	<p>CRAFT--INDUSTRIAL Industrial unions extended in industry Amalgamation within skill spheres Exclusive strata of potential union membership : " closed unions New General /sectoral/ occupational trade unions: "open unions " . cater for new potential membership</p>
<p>TRANSITIONAL PERIOD Developing Technology led change Taylorism ...Fordism. Professional management controls differs ownership Merger of companies mainly in the same or near sectors Internationally mobile</p>	<p>GENERAL TREND All trade unions have general approach. Social strata of potential trade union members extended Merger of trade unions taking account the tendency to general trends Closed unions becoming more open</p>
<p>CONGLOMERATES Structural Changes Merger of Companies non sectoral into different industries & services Capital internationally concentrated New industrial cultures</p>	<p>CONGLOMERATES Structural Changes Merger of unions from all groups including manual & non - manual Social strata of potential union members extended to all employees.</p>

As already shown earlier , socialisation affects the characteristics of trade unions and puts

Characteristics affected by Socio-historic determinism

pressure upon them to accept change. An Illustration of the Capital / Labour nexus through socialisation is outlined in Table 2 . This shows a direct effect on the characteristics of trade unions by the changing phases of industrial capitalism.

During the period of industrialisation and the development of an industrial society, by the mid 19th century , the system and hierarchies impressed its image on society. The craft unions and their leadership reflecting these changes, discovered

" that capitalism was not a temporary catastrophe , but a permanent system which allowed some improvement , had altered the objectives of their struggle. There were no socialists to dream of a new society. There were trade unions, seeking to exploit the laws of political economy in order to create a scarcity of their kind of labour and thus increase their members' wage"

(Hobsbawm 1969)

Littler clearly exposes , in his historical analysis of the labour process, craft/ industrial worker having a "co- domination" role with the employer and their concern was often " to limit the collective power of the unskilled and semi -skilled" as contractors of this labour. (Littler1986)

Industry developed a corporation capitalism, which was to replace the individualistic family factory system in this new phase of capitalist development.

"It does not matter what we call it ('corporation capitalism ' 'organised capitalism ' , etc.) so long as it is agreed - and it must be - that combinations advanced at the expense of market competition , business corporations at the expense of private firms , big business and large enterprise at the expense of smaller ; and that this concentration implied a tendency towards oligopoly. This was evident even in so powerful a fortress of old- fashioned small - scale and medium competitive enterprise as Britain ". (Hobsbawm 1987)

The major shift in proprietorial control was in the period 1919 - 1939 to the extent that " by

1939 , Britain had as high a concentration of capital as any other Western society". (Littler 1986) So the increased mergers of companies cut across industry, services and even established new sectors. Machine technology assumed more and more importance with a rapid growth in engineering and new products such as cycles , cars and the rubber , chemical and energy sectors. The trade unions needed a more competent structure, a bureaucracy to meet this challenge. At the same time, this new era required more and more workers in the unskilled or semiskilled occupations .

To meet the challenge , as indicated in Table 1 , characteristics of the unions changed : craft unions amalgamated within their skill spheres, general and occupational unions amalgamated and developed to cater for the potential members ignored by the "labour aristocrat" industrial craft unions.

This early period of the 20th century brought further transitional economic developments , the shift to consumerism and the new methods of production introduced by the American car manufacturer, Henry Ford . This included the growth of " scientific management" techniques to control labour power. developed by another American, Frederick Winslow Taylor. He believed that for management to be effective, it had to have absolute control of the labour process in every detail. The classic Chaplin film (1936), "Modern Times", in the opening sequence, satirises in its central theme, the effects of automation on the workers' lives. Here was ridiculed the big corporation , the regimentation and control of the workers, work speed-up and eventually Chaplin inside the machine, a human cog. Indeed, industry was now structuring into large corporations able to benefit from the "cost saving" and more particularly, the control propounded by the human resource "behavioural analysis" schools of thought. (Taylor 1967 : Littler 1986) The analysis and research into these systems in Britain , during the inter war years, do not specifically relate to the restructuring and mergers of trade unions ,

however they provide a foundation for recognising the industrial changes which clearly effected British trade unions.

Trade unions in Britain amalgamated to meet the challenge of the new order. Particularly the amalgamation "aggressive" TGWU, formed in 1922 by mergers, was, during the following 25 years, to have 33 unions amalgamate with it. Industrial / craft unions again consolidated within skills, as did, to a lesser degree, occupational / sectoral unions. The bureaucratic form of industry that prevailed at the time had an hierarchical infra structure which was rigid. However this transitional period created the emergence and growth, not only of the managerial professional, but also administrative employment. (Bain 1967 : Lumley 1973)

For the trade unions, this was a significant potential union membership shift to the white collar, black coated worker or salariat in the 1960s through to the 1980s. This led to sections being established in some manual unions for staff employees apart from the occupational / sectoral unions. The TGWU had formed its clerical section, ACTSS, as long ago as 1924 but had only stimulated activity in the late 1960s. The GMB formed its section, MATSA, much later in 1972. Industrial /craft unions attempted to cater for those members promoted to foreman, for example the AEU with its Section (Rule) 13 member, with some success.

Nevertheless, the manual unions lost the competition, to some degree, to the white collar unions and particularly to the recruitment and amalgamation aggressive ASTMS, itself an amalgamation of the foremans' union ASSET and the scientific workers' union AScW in 1968. White collar trade union growth and mergers in the period 1960 - 1970 are well documented, as is the prognostication on its continuation. (Bain 1970 : Undy et al 1981 : Jenkins & Sherman 1979a : Child 1975)

Another group, although not affiliated to the TUC yet representative of employees, was establishing a higher profile, media attention and academic research, the staff association .

Trade unions viewed them as management inspired, management aided and thus management controlled. This was not the complete *raison d'être* as many reasons were given as to why these associations were formed. Some were sweetheart organisations set up by management to stop trade union encroachment into Office areas , however others had elements of what Blackburn termed unionateness . This concept of unionateness was measured against seven characteristics :

1. *It regards collective bargaining and the promotion of the interests of members , as employees, as its main function , rather than , say professional activities or welfare schemes.*
2. *It is independent of employers for the purpose of negotiations.*
3. *It is prepared to be militant , using all forms of industrial action which may be effective.*
4. *It declares itself to be a trade union.*
5. *It is registered as a trade union.*
6. *It is affiliated to the TUC.*
7. *It is affiliated to the Labour Party.*

(R. M. Blackburn 1967)

TUC affiliates were perceived, by this new potential membership, as anti - management, anti - change and not able to fit the company culture with which they identified. So Staff Associations were established . Trade unions questioned their ability to provide equal benefits or have their resources and , at this point in time, be part of the direct discussions with the Government.

"Small organisations have increasingly found it impossible to cope with the exigencies of modern collective bargaining and their own servicing and cash flow problems. They have neither the expertise nor the money to buy in the expertise". (Jenkins & Sherman 1979b.)

Characteristics affected by Socio-historic determinism

This was an oversimplification as many staff associations had developed structures, bought in expertise and, although house unions, had most of the unionateness characteristics and approaches of TUC affiliates. The issue of unionateness will be revisited in Chapter 3, when considering the culture of trade unions as a factor in mergers and then in Chapter 5, referring to the later differentiation of society unionateness and enterprise unionateness in the 1980s. (Prandy, Blackburn & Stewart 1982.) Nevertheless, in the 1970s, the trade union qualitative resources argument was used successfully by the TUC unions in amalgamation discussions with staff associations.

Amongst the staff associations membership were employees who related to the heterogeneous title of manager, organised in particular companies where numbers determined a need for collectivism. Bamber in 1985, reviewing the growth and development of manager trade unionism, clearly emphasised this amalgamation attraction of TUC affiliated trade unions for these organisations. (Bamber 1986)

During the 1960s and 1970s the earnings of manual and some staff were comparable. Also, as Lockwood found in his classic study of clerical workers, their market situation had been deteriorating since the 1930s, whilst the work environment had become bureaucratised. This resulted in trade union membership to protect their interests. Later, with Goldthorpe and others, it was again argued that the level of earnings is not sufficient to create any commonality. The affluent manual workers join trade unions for purely instrumental reason of advancing their economic interests at the workplace. Unlike the staff worker, they did not adopt middle class patterns of sociability or community identity. They accepted there was a shift from "solidaristic collectivism" to an "instrumental collectivism" and that this was also the reason given for white collar workers joining trade unions. (Lockwood 1966 : Goldthorpe et

al 1968: 1969)

This academic conceptualising , whether or not there was evident proletarianisation of white collar workers or embourgeoisement of the manual worker, continued throughout the late sixties and seventies. (Marcuse 1964 : Goldthorpe 1980: Westergaard & Resler 1980) However , in the workplace , attitudes developed from the need for economic protection and advancement through collective bargaining produced a convergence of values. There was a move to staff status from manual workers and the removal of those conditions of employment which categorised an office worker. The staff unions reciprocating by claiming better wages to reduce what was seen as a differential in favour of the manual worker. At the same time, in the latter part of the 1970s , embryonic joint unions' single table bargaining and Single Union Agreements with employers were being agreed . It was "easy to exaggerate the differences" between manual and white collar workers, but when organised in their union they "are not fundamentally dissimilar". (Bain, Coates & Ellis 1973)

In the amalgamation equation , this convergence manifested itself in the manual unions' merger discussions with white collar union to match the conglomerate development in industry. However, the concept held by academics and expounded in the media , that social stratification affected the relationship of workers, and the belief in traditional structural characteristics , led to the prognosis that white collar unions would amalgamate only with other white collar unions. This had a direct effect on the merger discussions direction.

Also at this time scientific management developed in the factory was now being applied to the office. Braverman , in 1974 , identified in a perspicuous manner its profound impact upon the structure of American office labour, arguing that the present office staff bore no relationship to those of pre-monopoly capitalism. In this empirical study , which opened up

what has been called the "labour process debate" , he produces incisive evidence of how clerical labour "an intermediate stratum" was enlarged into mass employment divest of privilege by developed capitalism assisted by technical innovation. This raised the whole question of de-skilling and mechanisation in the offices, the gender division of labour and , from this analysis , an increasingly homogeneous working class across manual and non-manual employment. Although the debate had detractors , the effect of the changed labour process of the office environment affecting the character and composition of labour has not been denied. The shift can readily perceived in the

"rise of tertiary employment - white collar and professional employment - producing a new form of labour aristocracy which identify with the middle class [...] modern technology increasingly created a stratum of professionals and technicians separately recruited from outside rather than promoted from those with workshop experience". (Hobsbawm 1989)

Reinforcing this, there has been a major reassertion of managerial control which is due, in no small measure, to micro technology, increasing unemployment and a Conservative Government intervention (from 1979) providing laws which restrict trade unions. This established an assertiveness which assists, and sometime succeeds, in marginalising the unions. This has assisted increasing the convergence of manual / white collar attitudes and values. The "affluent (manual) worker" studies in the 1960s, relevant at that time, were merely a snapshot of what prevailed.(Goldthorpe et al 1968 : 1969) What is now the reality thirty years later, is a convergence that is both internal (in the workplace) and external (in the community, home and socially). Socially the effects of the recession had changed the life gains of both manual and staff. As Fiona Devine noted "conducting the research in Luton entailed 'revisiting' a town with a different economic and social structure from that previously described by Goldthorpe and his colleagues. In the intervening period between the Luton team's research in

1961-2 and this research in 1986-7, the town experienced economic restructuring - industrial and occupational shifts and their gendered and spatial consequences - as well as recession". (Devine 1992)

As Braverman points out

"the term 'working class' properly understood, never precisely delineated a specific body of people, but was rather an expression for an ongoing social process. Nevertheless, to most people's minds it represented for along time a fairly well - defined part of the population in capitalist countries. But with the coming of broad occupational shifts, and a growing consciousness of these shifts in recent decades, the term has lost much of its descriptive capacity." (Braverman 1974)

The Conglomerate Union

The trade unions again face the question of amalgamation to meet all these changes. Amalgamation, as a necessity to meet change, relates to achieving a profile that will create the organisation which most relates to the membership, and the potential membership. Of recent time both membership density and development into potential membership has been of great concern.

"Smaller unions have increasingly tended to amalgamate into bigger ones, but while these amalgamations could be seen in the first half of the present century as a step towards Industrial Unionism, in the past twenty years they have looked increasingly like the formation of new conglomerates of the general union type". (Hobsbawm 1989)

As the old divisions of labour become technologically obsolete the distinct competence to provide benefits will more and more be balanced alongside the union's capability to meet change by being particularly structured. As John Edmonds, GMB General Secretary, underlined in the debate on the, then proposed, APEX /GMB amalgamation at his unions Congress, echoing Hobsbawm, "It is clear that the Super Unions will have a particular nature. They will be large general unions, some would say conglomerates". Trade unions have never

evolved as inevitably as historians or hindsight would suggest (or often as unions would like), the indications are apparent that conglomerate trade unionism is the probable pattern for amalgamations.

The pressure to amalgamate is often seen to be a direct result of the growth or decline in membership. As we will see later this is too simplistic. However the questions of recruiting potential members, more often in employing organisations outside the sectors of high trade union density, the incline or, as of recent time, decline of membership, are important pressures.

The Question of Size and Density

Their growth or decline has exercised the mind of trade unions, as it has others, for many years. The reason for the increased interest is the level of recent decline. The extent of decline, the causation which provoked the TUC in 1988 to produce the document "Meeting the Challenge" which promulgated a new role in the structural, organisational and recruitment process, hardly needs stating: statistics, nevertheless, are a stark indicator of what created this attitudinal shift. (TUC 1988)

The decline in membership stimulated ideas of change. The need was underlined by the period of rapid incline of membership, in the three decades prior to 1979, and the immediate steep decline following as shown in Table 3.

GROWTH INCLINE PERIOD of the TUC : TABLE 3			
YEAR	MEMBERSHIP (000s)	CHANGE (000s)	CHANGE %
1940	4, 887	---	---
1950	7,883	2,998	61
1960	8,128	245	3
1970	10,002	1,847	23
1979	12,173	2,171	21
1980	11,601	-572	-5
1986	9,243	-2,358	-20
1990	8,193	-1,050	-11
1993	7,298	-895	-11
Source TUC Report			

The decline of membership continues, the steep decline being in the first five years after 1979 : 2.9 million members lost between 1979 and 1986.

MEMBERSHIP of UNION by SIZE 1981--1986 : TABLE 4.1						
per cent						
SIZE/YEAR	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Under 100 mbrs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
100 - 499	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
500 - 999	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
1000 - 2499	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8
2500 - 4999	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.7
5000 - 9999	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.0
10000 - 14999	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
15000 - 24999	2.9	3.1	3.6	2.7	1.9	1.8
25000 - 49999	5.0	4.7	4.9	6.0	7.5	8.6
50000 - 99999	7.9	8.4	8.6	8.9	6.1	5.2
100000 -249999	17.9	16.1	18.6	22.3	22.8	25.2
250000 +	62.2	63.7	60.9	56.5	58.4	55.6
All sizes	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total membership at end of year (000s)	12106	11593	11236	10994	10821	10539
Source : Dept. of Employment Gazette .Vol.96 May 1988						

Characterisitcs affected by Socio-historic determinism

Significantly, all reviews of trade union membership show that although there is decline, the largest share of membership still remained with the large union. As can be seen from Table 4.1, throughout the 1980s, the unions with 100,000 and above membership continue to constitute the biggest percentage of the total membership even during the period of greatest decline.

In 1986 there were 24 unions with 100,000 or more members with 80.8% of the total trade union membership by 1993 the number of unions in this category was 16. Although the Dept. of Employment data referenced their trade union definition (includes non - TUC affiliations), Table 4.1 has a direct bearing upon the TUC debates, as most unions in that category can be found amongst its affiliates, the only exception being the RCN. The growth / decline of the large unions, therefore has the greatest impact on the politics of change in the structural and organisational tergiversation within the TUC and, more particularly, its affiliates.

This has been the case throughout TUC history. After the rapid membership increase up to 1920 (an increase of 4.5 million in ten years) the membership of 6.5 million declined to 4.9 million by 1925 and continuing to decline into the late 1930s. The 1924 --1927 TUC Congresses debated restructuring and merging of unions; the central theme being Industrial unionism expounded by the then large unions, the industrial and Craft unions. As we have seen socialisation was to create the new large unions, the General unions. To this effect, the 1927 TUC General Council Report on organisation stated that it was "impossible to define fixed boundaries of industry" and that it was "impracticable to formulate a scheme of organisation by industry that can apply to all industries". When the debate was reopened in the mid -1940s under the debate title "Trade Union Structure and Closer Unity", consultations had been thorough.

Characteristics affected by Socio-historic determinism

Membership Changes : Affiliates of the TUC : Table 4.2								
Membership over 100,000 in 1955 to 1990								
membership in thousands								
Descending Order '90	1955	1965	1975	1980	1986	1988	1989	1990
TGWU	1239	1447	1856	2086	1378	1313	1270	1224
NUAW	135	135	85 }					
GMB	787	796	881	967	814	864	823	933
ASB		-	122	136 }				
APEX		49	83	136	151	83 }		
NUTGW	124	111	109	117	76	76	73 }	
NALGO *1	-	349	625	753	750	756	751	744
AEU	823	1049	1205	1218	858	793	741	702
MSF * 2						653	653	653
ASTMS			374	491	390 }			
TASS			140	201	241 }			
NUPE	175	248	584	692	658	635	605	579
USDAW	344	349	327	470	382	396	376	362
EETPU *3		216	283	420	420	336	-	-
UCATT*4	196	374	278	347	249	250	258	207
COHSE			167	213	212	218	203	203
UCW	161	175	185	203	192	198	202	201
BIFU			102	132	159	168	170	171
NUT		263	282	249	184	172	172	169
SOGAT * 5	142	225	195	206	199	183	176	166
NCU			124	126	156	154	157	155
CPSA	144	146	225	224	150	143	128	123
NGA			107	112	126	125	125	123
NAS / UWT				122	124	118	118	120
NUCPS * 6						118	116	113
RMT *7	371	255	180	180	125	110	103	118
ISTC	104	120	105	104	104	66	65	64
NUM	657	446	262	253	---	77	59	53

NOTE. *1 NALGO affiliated to the TUC in 1964.
*2 MSF; merger of ASTMS & TASS
*3 EETPU; 1955 figures ETU only. After 1965 merger with PTU; 1988 expelled from TUC
*4 UCATT; 1955 figures ASW only. After 1965 merger of 4 unions.
*5 SOGAT; 1955 figures NATSOPA only.
*6 NUCPS; 1987 merger of SCPS & CSU
*7 RMT; Figures to 1989 for NUR only. In 1990 NUR & NUS merged to form RMT

Source: TUC Congress Reports

Again the large General unions, aided by occupational unions, were to assure the drift away from industrial trade unionism in line with the need to meet the challenges of change in industry. The issue was revisited in 1963 with the conclusion that

"no single form of organisation was suitable in all industries and that the diversity of circumstances between industries and within some industries made necessary diversity of union methods and structure". (TUC1963)

George Woodcock, the General Secretary of the TUC (1960--1969) stated that "without exception every trade union we have met resisted the idea of industrial trade unionism". This inevitably led to general trade unionism ethos spreading to all the large unions as considered in later Chapters.

The large trade unions, as can be seen in Table 4.2, addressed the question of merger not only from the aspect of maintaining size, but also the need to obtain access or better profile in what was perceived to be the growth job territories. The other unions looking to gain the security of large organisation. This changed the trade unions' merger approach or style. (see next Chapter)

There was a recognition that the fall of membership was also accompanied by a decline in union density. However, as Table 4.3 shows, the effect on density was much less evident, in the heavy decline period (1979 - 1986), than the overall loss of members.

Therefore, trade union recognised from this the need to develop in new job territories and different employment contract sectors and this could be enhanced through mergers.

The influential survey of workplace relations, 1980-1984, by Millward and Stevens, undertaken through collaboration with industrial relations agencies (DE; ESRC; PSI; ACAS) had as its main core the question of density. They concluded that the structural changes in the

Trade Union & TUC Membership and Density .				Table 4.3
1970-86.				
Year	Trade Union Membership (000s)	TUC Membership (000s)	Trade Union Density (%)	Trade Union Density B (%)
1970	11178	10002	49.9	48.8
1975	12026	11036	53.2	50.7
1979	13289	12173	57.3	54.1
1980	12947	11601	57.9	52.6
1981	12106	11601	56.1	49.4
1982	11593	10510	55.0	47.9
1983	11236	10082	53.2	46.4
1984	10994	9855	51.2	44.5
1985	10716	9586	49.5	43.0
1986	10539	9243	48.5	42.5
1992	9048	7303	35	32

Notes: Column 1 : Trade Union Membership as per the Certification Officer details
Column 2: TUC Congress Reports
Density A. Total trade union membership divided by civilian employees in employment
Density B. Total trade union membership divided by civilian employees plus unemployed

Source: John Kelly 1988
Jim Conway Foundation 1989
Dept. of Employment 1994

manufacturing sector was a major contribution to the decline in membership. (Millward & Stevens 1988)

Furthermore, information from the Certification Office , 1992, showed that the relative size of the workplace had a direct bearing on trade union membership decline, "especially as highly unionised industries are falling" . These statistics showed that trade union membership fell more sharply when employment levels were falling , than in the period 1984 - 1990 , when the employment levels showed some increase, mainly in the service sector. However

" in most years the fall in membership was greater than the fall in employment levels in production industries , then the number of union members in the service sector must have been falling even as employment levels were rising "

Characteristics affected by Socio-historic determinism

(Dept. of Employment Gazette June 1994)

Therefore a further portentous affect was the changing workplace characteristics with job growth transferring from the unionised to the new non-union service sectors , with most growth in these sectors being part-time workers. In the same period , we could see a pattern of full-time jobs in the unionised sector declining, whilst part-time jobs grew in the non- union sector. A significant factor was the need to recruit more women members. Despite the statistical analysis by sex for 1989 - 1992 , Certification Office data on this was not available for periods before 1989, showing that female membership increased to 40% , it showed a reversal of the growth pattern. The female membership figure dropped for the first time.

(Dept. of Employment Gazette June 1994)

Unionised sectors were the most affected by redundancies. Differing from previous periods , the trade unions in the public sector showed decline . Government policy, and action taken, to reduce labour overheads prior to the privatisation sale , reflects dramatically on the membership figures of the industrial unions in the previously public sector , as shown in Table 4.2 (NUR , NUM , and ISTC are particular examples.)

Another element of change comes under the terms of flexibility. The Atkinson model , which suggested the development of a core work force , relatively better paid with good job security and a peripheral work force of sub contract, trainees and casualisation, has been heavily criticised by other studies . (Atkinson / IMS 1985 & 1986 Pollert 1987 ; MacInnes 1987 ; TUC 1986) A much broader concept of flexibility , as outlined in an ACAS report, showed various forms of working arrangements, which were now widespread and developing. (ACAS 1988) Therefore , from the late 1980s and in the 1990s , flexibility had become a major negotiation subject for unionised workplaces . More particularly , it was an important human resource management tool of new inward investment both into low and high union density

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sectors .

The relevance to the union decline debate, and therefore to the question of trade union amalgamations, is three - fold . The emergence of a dual labour market would obviously produce new bargaining cultures which may be inherently different to previous collective bargaining. As has been seen above, there will be the need for a well resourced approach to manage change . All, of this will require trade unions large enough to cope with the transient nature , in both the length of contract or job geography , of the peripheral work force. Furthermore it has created the need for more joint union collective bargaining arrangements. The decline was also due more precisely to the management policies, attitude and government action affecting on recruitment and retention. Special reference was made to the government and employer attitude to recognition of trade unions , noting the demise of the assistance given by the legislation in the incline period . (Bain & Price 1983) In the Chapters that follow, it will be shown that this has had an effect on the culture of the trade unions and the nature of mergers , breaking out of the traditional trade union characteristics.

Trade unions have always also been the subject of academic research. However in previous research , it was noted that although reference is made to amalgamations , it is more in passing than a specific analysis.

Undy had opined that mergers were important factors to be considered and referred to varying styles (see next Chapter). Referring to the situation in 1981 , he stated that the "most important struggle may be over APEX" whilst also making a similar point about the ASB. The prognosis made was that APEX will probably merge with ASTMS (a white collar sectoral union amalgamation) and the ASB with the AEU (a craft union amalgamation). This was in keeping with the historic background of characteristics of both the unions and potential

membership. (Undy et al 1981) Both APEX and ASB merged with the GMWU, a general union, now the GMB. There was a need, therefore, to consider the tendentious factors that effect the raison d ' etre of union mergers, as the network of change to characteristics in Table 1 has developed. In the Chapter that follows, these practical elements will be analysed.

On the crest of a wave.

This chapter will be concerned with the practical elements effecting mergers at the individual union level. The potency of the wider characteristic and historic changes referred to previously should be borne in mind as the continuing back cloth to the processes we are now going to consider. It is important to do so because, despite influential pressures at any given time which give lead to mergers, they are, nevertheless, inevitably affected by the overall pattern created by these change factors.

These factors alongside faster technology-led change and the impact of legislation coextensive, with a shift in value priorities in the 1980s, have created a new merger wave. But merger waves have occurred in the past both at times of membership growth and decline. In the mid 1970s and early 1980s, research concluded that company mergers and industrial trends changed the occupational nature of union amalgamations; unions seeking "powerful partners rather than one in a contiguous trade" with merely a passing glance at the impact of financial pressures. (Buchanan 1974 & 1981) A further study in 1988 revisited the analysis of the "waves of intensity in trade union mergers", but gave more consideration to a further *raison d'etre*, the ability of expanding a recruitment base without increased cost. This study by Waddington pointed to other elements; the impact of legislation and changes in the collective bargaining process. (Waddington 1988)

These "intense periods of merger activity" have been the subject of much research. In 1987 the

Industrial Relations Review & Report (IRRR) pointed to the "scale and pace of proposed merger activity" paying particular attention to " APEX which in many ways exemplifies the current position (of mergers) in British Trade Unionism." Updating a previous review (1984) it made a thorough , if brief, examination of specific unions, six TUC affiliates and two non-affiliates. We will return to this argumentation when considering the factors which relate to these "merger waves". (IRRR 1987)

A year later , Druker posed the question , "Unions in the '90s - Fewer but Fitter?" She concentrated on the creation of MSF (merger of TASS & ASTMS 1988) and the "likely merger of APEX & GMB". She also considered the saliency of the AEU and EETPU talks, reflecting on the courtship of both in respect of APEX. This will be expanded upon in some detail later. (Druker 1988)

By 1989 the IRRR opined that there was a "Union race to merger." The report noted the reduction in TUC affiliates in the "Thatcher decade" from 112 in 1979 to 80 in 1988 stating that

TENDENTIOUS FACTORS THAT EFFECT THE RAISON D' ETRE OF UNION MERGERS Table 5	
INTRA- FACTORS	EXTRA - FACTORS
MERGER STYLES	IMPACT of LEGISLATION
FINANCIAL STATUS	COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CHANGES
INDIVIDUAL UNION CULTURE	COMPANY CULTURE
DECISION MAKERS & TAKERS	INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION CHANGES

"prompted by [...] membership loss [...] declining revenue, the move towards mergers has become a rush". However all these reports and studies merely alluded to the tendentious factors profiled in Table 5.

MERGER STYLES.

In the previous chapter it was established that the changing structural characteristics, which the potential union member perceived was aligned to a union's competency to provide benefits and service, is advanced by mergers. So the "waves of intensity" of trade union mergers: 1918-1924; 1944-1946 and from 1988 shows "merger style" has a great bearing upon progress. Waddington, whilst accepting the importance of the Undy et al concept of merger styles, questioned selective case studies being indicative of all mergers. (Buchanan 1981: Waddington 1988)

Undy et al, in their study, established a line of analysis that, UK unions' response to change since the 1960s could be seen through three trade union styles to their approach to mergers. These were defensive, consolidatory and aggressive. They deduced that most unions merger conditioned by either the need to consolidate a shared position in a given industry or occupational area (with particular reference to the AUEW), or aggressively move to expand and develop sometimes in quite new job territories (ASTMS & TGWU were linked as specific general unions, staff and manual which took this approach) or act on defensive considerations and are attempting to forestall extinction or some lesser, but still adverse, eventuality of being unviable either in membership or in a corporate sense (the changes of structure which eventuated in UCATT). (Undy et al. 1981) In the 1980s the merger styles have become effected by the socialisation outlined in the previous chapter (Table 2) These can now be considered in turn.

CONSOLIDATORY MERGER STYLE.

The "consolidatory" merger style of the AEU (formerly the AUEW and now part of the AEEU) was described by Undy as being based on "craft roots", but this was to be undermined by its technical and staff section (formerly DATA) leaving the amalgamated union and its federal rule book.

AEEU

Between 1944 and 1965 the AEU consolidated its position in engineering by six mergers. To contain its one union in engineering and shipbuilding policy, it agreed a federal system with the foundry workers (AUFW) in 1967, the construction engineers (CEU) and draughtsmen (DATA) in 1971. The discussions with DATA fitted that union's advocacy also of "one union in engineering". Since its establishment as a craft-based organisation in engineering and shipbuilding, as the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen, it had drawn a number of its members from the skilled apprenticeship. Its General Secretary at the time of the merger with the AEU, George Doughty, stated that they had "always recognised the ultimate need for one strong union to cover all engineering workers". However as a staff organisation with a clear occupational identity, it was "more concerned with maintaining its autonomy than the other sections" of the amalgamated union. The three sections had their own rules, benefits, policies and more important, their own finance budget. DATA had become the staff section of the AEU, but to all intent and purpose remained independent. (Doughty 1973)

The AUEW / TASS, as the staff section was known, developed differing policies and political stance to the left of the engineering section of the amalgamated union. The break up in 1984 was

inevitable. Policy and the culture of the unions was to have its effect and the amalgamated union found, as others have, that federal structures have no commonality. The tendency to merge requires more than this consolidatory factor. Having left the amalgamation the draughtsmens' union retained the title TASS. (see below)

The break up was sealed by the transfer of engagement of the Foundry and Construction Sections with the Engineering Section of the AUEW , thus removing the federal rules and changing its name back to the AEU. (AEU 1986; see also Chapter 5) This concept of one engineering union was also inherent in the merger proposals put to APEX in 1986. Again the policy and culture of the AEU had a major effect on this dialogue and will be discussed later in this chapter and Chapters to follow.

Finally the amalgamation in March 1992 with the EETPU to create the 1 million strong Amalgamated Engineering & Electrical Union achieved the breakaway from the restrictive and declining job territory of the engineering industry. This inability, in the past, to attain a positive merger style led to the AEU being overtaken by NALGO as the third biggest union in the TUC. (TUC 1990 : Table 4.2.) We will see later that the merger of public sector unions in 1993 , including NALGO , to create UNISON , establishing the largest union .

UNISON

This was a large "consolidatory" merger which although not directed towards a conglomerate union certainly established a "super union" in the public sector. The merger discussion and "closer working arrangements" as a prelude to the amalgamation of NUPE, NALGO and COHSE started in 1988 with "a brief interim report to the NUPE and NALGO conferences in 1989". In

the same year," COHSE agreed to explore the possibility of joining such a New Union "... and ... "joined the talks as a full and equal partner in the autumn of 1989". Progress was pursued with the decision - makers, the Executives, outlining the issues, the arguments for and the process of change to the decision - takers, the activists and members, in four documents produced to coincide with the Unions' Conferences 1990:1991:1992 (2). This created this public services union, UNISON, with 1.4 million members. The reasoning documented to the unions' respective memberships included the combined bargaining approach to negotiations with the "same employer", combined financial resources for a wider range of services, and to be better equipped to face competition from merged and "super" unions". It claims to be ideologically outwith what it calls, but undefines, "the disadvantages experienced by the general unions who straddle many industries". There are still some hurdles , on policy , culture and the financing of the structures and organisation , to be overcome. (NALGO NUPE COHSE 1989:1990:1991: 1992 a/b)

DEFENSIVE MERGER STYLE

In this style there was a clear indication that all action was influenced by the need to guard against extinction.

UCATT

Undy et al. made reference to the "defensive" approach of UCATT, underlining the point that federal structures had little effect in respect of commonality. In the construction industry the federal structure had been liquidated and replaced with the amalgamation of the construction related unions, as a protection against declining membership and financial difficulties. As a defensive measure, particularly to provide resources and services , the federal system had some

worth. However, in the face of financial problems, and the inability to consolidate further in the specific craft or trade, due to decline in employment or job territory, the federation looked to greater security in merger.

UCATT is again the focus of attention in this 1990s merger wave. This time the list of suitors were the AEEU and the general unions MSF, TGWU and GMB. (Construction News 1990) Its financial instability has continued and merger seems inevitable; discussions with the TGWU, in 1994, appear to favour its eventual assimilation into that union's Building, Construction and aligned sectors Trade Group. Its financial instability is still the major question for any suitor to take on board.

Federations as a defensive measure:

Roberts, in his major work on trade union government and administration in the mid 1950s, showed the difference between collective bargaining federalism and policy, benefit and service based federalism. Since then history has shown that the latter is a recipe for a future merger scenario. It is, therefore, somewhat surprising that the federal defensive approach is being argued by a "professional employees" union, IPMS (formerly the civil service union IPCS).

Brett, General Secretary of IPMS in 1989, "urged other specialist unions to come together as a federation". He argued that the "growth of generalist super unions within the trade union movement, and demands for new services, create an opportunity for realignment among small unions." However in the same press release he informs that "three staff associations are balloting on a merger with IPMS", the main 'marketing' platform being "political independence." (IPMS 1989)

RMT

A recent defensive merger was the amalgamation of the NUR and NUS which merged in September 1990 to form the RMT with a membership of 125,000, a culmination of four years of talks. At the outset of discussions the NUS considered the TGWU. This was a direction towards a "consolidatory" merger in the transport sector. Even though the TGWU offered "industrial independence" as a trade group in 1988, this was to have less attraction than the feasibility of creating a brand new transport union through a merger of the NUS and NUR. The pressure on making a decision was enhanced, in 1988, by the sequestration of NUS funds and assets imposed by the High Court, because of secondary action in the P & O Ferries industrial dispute. This added to the problems of its declining membership. The NUS was to resolve its problems by merging into a "specialist union that understands the needs of maritime and other transport workers." The General Secretary, McCuskie, stated that this was the only alternative "to going it alone but having to make such drastic cutbacks that it would be virtually impossible to carry out the task of protecting and representing members properly". (Mc Cluskie 1990) Although a defensive amalgamation it had all the aspects of a sectoral consolidation in transport.

Consolidatory and defensive amalgamations, as perceived by Undy et al., have been affected by the socio-industrial changes referred to in the previous Chapter. These major merger styles are effected by the emergence of the trend to conglomerate trade unionism which has changed the direction of the search for the best 'defences and consolidating'.

A major factor in all pre-merger debate is the retention of the culture and traditions of both the amalgamators. This also affects what Undy et al. termed the aggressive merger style.

AGGRESSIVE MERGER STYLE.

The whole industrio-political environment of the 1970s provided impetus in the merger wave for certain large unions to pursue amalgamations. The TGWU and ASTMS pursued mergers "more aggressively than other major merging unions". Providing for those seeking merger for defensive reasons a levels of autonomy, these unions were able to "market" this sectional interest "provision" which was more important to these "smaller unions" than any ideology of "one union, in one industry."

TGWU

The TGWU continued the structural pattern of trade groups developed by Ernie Bevin, General Secretary of the TGWU, at the time of the great amalgamation of the 1920s. (Bullock 1960: Evans 1946) The autocratic and conservative style of Bevin and his successors Deakin and Cousins, was to change with the election of Jack Jones in 1968. Cousins, however began a crucial shift to strengthening the shop steward structure and a move to the left politically. (Goodman 1979) This created the window of opportunity for his successor to achieve further changes in attitude to amalgamation policy. Jones had and still has a personal ideology which created a great bond with the activists in his union. He had established his credentials as TGWU District Secretary in Coventry for 16 years until 1955 when he became the Midland Regional Secretary. His objective was to establish the major manual general union, restructured away from being only identified as the unskilled workers union.

Along with Hugh Scanlon, then president of the AUEW, Jack Jones played a major role in the

debates, and consultations, often to the extent of directly effecting, government policy. The union therefore saw growth being driven by mergers, and used the confidence of its power and role in the national arena of government and Labour Party to strengthen its appeal. (Jones 1986: cf. Crossman 1976 : Benn 1989.)

In terms of merger policy his period was fundamental. As Undy et al put it, there was an "about face over merger policy", the obstacle of "refusing amalgamations to unions in financial difficulties" was voted out at conference. Also the conference in 1967 passed a motion calling on the national Executive to give consideration to "removing any constitutional obstacles to attracting other unions to amalgamate with the TGWU". The significance of this move to aggressively approaching merger potentials was indicated by Undy et al. showing that "between 1951 and 1961 no unions merged with the TGWU and between 1961 and 1965 only 3000 members were added to the TGWU through mergers. Yet, following the rise to power within the union of Jones, the TGWU completed fifteen mergers between 1968 and 1975". (Undy et al 1981) To facilitate this new trade group sections were established to recognise the need for the identity of the amalgamating 'minor' union to be afforded within the established TGWU structure, particularly craft identity.

Again a cultural change was to assist progressive merger strategy. Jones successor, Moss Evans, General Secretary 1978, was faced with a totally different political environment, social and industrial change, declining membership and financial difficulties (see later this chapter). Aggressive style advanced by the confident union, of amalgamation within its terms, ended.

ASTMS

ASTMS formed in 1968 by a merger between ASSET and AScW. The latter's previous discussions with DATA had foundered on the "one union in engineering" principle (see earlier). ASTMS had designs on being the white collar general union. Undy et al indicated its successful expansionist approach 1969 -1976 in the staff sector including non-TUC affiliates. The reason for this period of expansion amongst white collar employees has been discussed in the previous Chapter. But it needs to be stressed that ASTMS because of its aggressive merger style, leadership and cultural stance, could and did take advantage of the time. Jenkins, General Secretary, could state "in the white-collar sphere the only general union is ASTMS" outlining the wide industrial, commercial, and "even wider skill range". (Jenkins & Sherman 1979)

Jenkins became General Secretary of ASSET in 1961 and subsequent to the merger, of ASTMS in 1968. The union originally held its membership eligibility to supervisory grades, technicians, and executives, concentrating its activities in engineering, chemicals and the metal industries. But the objective of growth through recruitment and mergers was manifest in its evidence to the Donovan Commission in 1966. In advocating "The Case for a Specialist Union" the stall was being set for a membership growth through acquisitions. (ASSET 1966) The growth from 15,000 in 1955 (ASSET) to 65,000 in 1965 and 491,000 in 1980 shows the participation in the growth period. This involvement in the white-collar element of the growth period is important as "between 1960 and 1970 as many as 500,000 trade unionists were involved in mergers and 125 unions vanished as a result with about a quarter being wholly white collar, accounting for 20 per cent of the total transferred membership." (Taylor 1980) The structure of autonomous groups, the persuasiveness of numbers, the appeal made to loosely defined white-collar occupational groups and the favourable political climate, was the method used by the union to aggressively

pursue unions both affiliates and non-affiliates of the TUC . After the merger in 1968 the targeted unions joined, for defensive or consolidatory reasons, the confident and expanding ASTMS.

In their study Undy et al. lists 16 unions that merged with ASTMS between 1969 and 1976 adding that others not listed "wound themselves up and joined en bloc rather than going through the transfer of engagement process." As with the TGWU , the socio -industrial and political environment change and financial difficulties in the 1980s altered the previous rationale of this merger style. (Undy et al. 1981) This shifted their style to one of defensive and in 1988 they merged with TASS to form MSF.

GMWU

The less merger aggressive GMWU made little progress during this merger wave periods and only sustained their position in the "league" by the recruitment activities of particular Regions of the union , the Northern and Scottish regions. (Undy et al. 1981) Changes in the 1980s was to move this union to be a principal advocate of the amalgamation - friendly style. This will be considered in detail in the case study.

AMALGAMATION - FRIENDLY STYLE

The present merger wave of the 1990s shows the "aggressive merger style" transforming into an "amalgamation-friendly" style. The effects of the socio-industrial changes outlined in the

previous chapter, amid a continuing fall in membership in 1990 among TUC affiliates, including the general unions, the need to merge and therefore to strengthen their recruitment job territory has changed the approach. The GMB was to develop this style as the major element of its merger strategy. This will be clearly exposed in the Case Study. To be amalgamation-friendly means the proposing union in the courtship producing a dowry which includes resources, retention of identity, sectoral profile, and financial stability.

The traditional classification of trade unions have played a part in the attitude to merger styles. However we have noted the shift to an amalgamation - friendly style which has developed through the factors outlined in Chapter 1.

COUNTING THE COST

All the reports have made reference to "the absorption of lesser unions by greater ones" however some are "fusions quite simply of achieving a critical minimum size, in order to remain economically viable whilst providing the necessary levels of service to members" as Coates and Topham put it in 1988. They went on to say that "as funds become less and less adequate mergers accelerate." (Coates & Topham 1988) More brutally four years earlier the Sunday Times in a major focus stated that unions were "looking for ways to stanch the haemorrhage of members and money." The article was dedicated to the fact that considering the 1983 accounts of 15 major unions as filed with the certification officer for "over half, expenditure per member grew faster than income" and further membership decline could further undermine union finance. (Sunday Times 1984)

Despite this, there has been little analysis of union finances in the UK. until the Dept. of

Employment produced Research Paper 62 in 1988. Based on data drawn from "the comprehensive returns" to the Certification Officer over the eleven year period, 1975-1985, this was the first systematic review since 1970. Recognising that unions "are not in existence to optimise their financial performance" and in fact "many appear from their action to accept considerable financial penalties in pursuit of policy objectives", it concluded that a "minimum level of net worth and solvency is necessary in order to maintain independent existence." Willman and Morris in this Research Paper considered data from 56 unions with more than 20000 members in 1984. (Willman & Morris 1988)

They noted that Layettes analysis of trade unions in the 1960s showed that the finances of many unions were weakening, but there was no subsequent evidence of financial failure. One explanation was that unions merged.

Declining membership is not the complete picture, as Buchanan found that mergers also occurred when membership was rising in the 1970s and at the beginning of the decline in the early 1980s. The merger waves relationship to finance is not simply attributal to subscription loss due to membership decline. (Latta 1972; Buchanan 1974 & 1981) The Research Paper noted for example that trade union growth was not the most significant factor in financial viability. It was difficult to define financial health as it showed in the analysis period, 1975-85, three unions, ISTC, NUR and NGA "were much richer in per capita terms than others". Apart from the NGA, "all have declining membership, all are manual."

The paper considered in detail the income/expenditure/membership of the twenty largest unions (membership 100 000) remaining with that status during the analysis period. In 1975 there had been twenty six, but in the decade that followed, six memberships fell outside the criteria. IPCS

Income, Membership & Net Worth: Largest Unions 1975-1985 TABLE 6				
UNION	MEMBERSHIP CHANGE	REAL INCOME CHANGE	NET WORTH 1985	REAL CHANGE IN NET WORTH
	(%)	(%)	(£000)	(%)
TGWU	-22.7	16.4	66 470	-12.1
AEU	-24.7	-19.6	20 236	-42.8
GMB	-6.2	12.8	33 632	-11.5
NALGO	20.3	210.4	34 422	193.0
NUPE	13.6	61.8	18 043	98.6
EETPU	-9.9	27.3	13 418	4.7
USDAW	2.2	33.9	10 290	19.5
ASTMS	11.1	31.8	4 596	31.4
NUM	-33.7	-16.5	18 647	-51.6
NUT	-10.9	100.8	9 709	-22.1
UCATT	-10.6	-30.0	4 881	-4.2
TASS	70.5	116.0	8 128	80.6
COHSE	27.4	171.8	7 442	344.7
SOGAT	8.9	173.4	16 441	128.5
UCW	5.0	88.3	8 911	104.5
CPSA	-34.8	35.2	8 641	61.7
BIFU	53.9	205.1	2 686	644.7
NUR	-28.2	-8.1	26 170	-45.3
NGA	21.2	173.2	22 474	-7.9
NCU	28.8	103.2	4 815	-17.0

N.B DESCENDING ORDER IS AS AT 1985. SOURCE: Willman & Morris 1988.

(now IPMS), SCPS (merged with CSU to form NUCPS 1987), APEX (Merged with GMB 1988), NUTGW (transfer of engagement to GMB 1991), and ISTC all fell below the threshold. The ASB merged with GMWU to form GMBATU (now GMB).

It would appear from Table 6 that membership changes had been relatively unimportant in

determining real income growth across the period. But most unions saw a greater rise in real expenditure than in real income. The result was that few unions were more solvent in 1985 than 1975. Several unions showed consistent decline in solvency ratio particular reference being made to AEU and APEX. The research makes the point that "the effects of mergers is of considerable importance, although it may have uneven impact [...] Both TGWU and GMBATU experienced improvements in 1982 and 1983 following the absorption of the NUDB and ASB respectively. The rationalisation of the AEU structure appears to have had no similar effect in 1984. The NGA and SOGAT merger with SLADE and NATSOPA respectively also improved their financial position."

Specific reference was made to the "financial plight " of the NUM, which due to the 1984-85 strike, saw its net worth halved and its investments reduced by three quarters. Across the decade it had been amongst the richest unions, even in 1985 it "still held over half a year's worth of expenditure in its funds". Since this research was undertaken the decline in the NUM has accelerated. At the start of the 1980s, membership was declared at 104 000. The union entered the 1990s with a membership of 65 000 and by 1994 it had slumped further to 18,227 . The year long dispute, sequestration in 1985 for failing to pay fines of £200,000 and the appointing of a Receiver by the Court , all affected the ability to maintain the fabric of the union. Alongside this is the dramatic decline in the mining sector of employment. It is known to be in talks with the TGWU.

Although the success in attracting merger candidates by the larger TUC affiliates is documented, the Research Paper particularly draws attention to these unions "benefiting not only from raised level of subscription income, but also asset inflow." Obviously it underlined the use to which assets are put in defining investment income.

Table 6 shows the changes in net

worth (i.e. assets less liabilities) and net worth per capita. Although the largest increases were by white collar unions, "the funds of the two general unions are equivalent to those of the six next largest".

From this sample of union funds, it stated that the most worrying situation was "faced by AEU, NUT and NCU, whose net worth per capita is low and are experiencing falls in per capita income in real terms. For the latter two, involvement in strike action may be the cause. However, for the AEU, it may be related to low per capita subscription return." Interestingly it also found that "low subscription unions have declined more rapidly than high subscription ones". (Willman & Morris 1988)

AEU

The AEU is a case in point. Speculation on the AEU's need to expand its membership and job territory was the main theme when Boyd became General Secretary in 1974. During the previous period the sanctioning of local strikes had "hit the union's assets very badly. The sum in the central fund dropped from £17m. in 1967 to £11.7m. in 1973". By the late seventies the position had improved by financial management, however inflation and arrears of subscriptions was to burgeon the union. (Taylor 1980) Mergers with the AEU have taken place, but as referred to in the previous section of this chapter, the consolidatory merger style was a constraint on projecting outside a declining manufacturing sector. It was in the dawn of the 1980s merger wave that "financial crisis struck more brutally. A drastic decline in AEU membership became apparent at the end of 1986 resulted in a decision to dispense with 200 full time officers". (Coates & Topham 1988) The union has by rationalisation, turned "a large deficit rising at one time to almost £3m." to the General Fund in 1988 showing "a surplus of £2,695,000". Again there was a reduction in

officers . "In 1985 the union had 226 full-time officers", by 1989 there was "only 166". (IRIS NEWS 1989) The AEU still required mergers to underpin the viability created by the streamlining and the "modern approach". The failure in the talks with APEX and the "off-on" discussions with the EETPU were effected by a further tendentious factor, union culture. We will consider this later in this chapter.

TGWU

Willman and Morris research noted that the membership decline in the TGWU (reduction of 36.7% Dec.1978- 1988) had taken its toll. Despite this decline income from membership rose by 154%, "even so there was a deficit of £3.2 m. which had to be met from other sources which produced a surplus" of £1.2m. (Willman & Morris 1988)

Therefore, the TGWU , it was reported , "has agreed to make savage cuts in its operations in an attempt to control an estimated £9 million deficit" in 1990, "more than double the £4 million it recorded in 1989." (Guardian 1990)

These financial difficulties resulted in the TGWU Executive Council commissioning the US-based union consultants , Klein & Co Inc. , to assist their working party , set up to determine the changes needed . Their report , which was submitted to the National Executive in May - June 1992 entitled "ONE UNION - T & G ", outlined the operating deficit (which had increased since 1990) and the need for major organisational and financial restructuring. This entailed merging certain Regions where "membership has shrunk to such a level where the region is no longer viable ". It looked to further rationalisation decisions, because "even with the contribution increases agreed .. there will be no surplus for investment for the future " (Klein 1992.)

Referring to the discussions , in the late 1980s between the TGWU and MSF, other research concluded that there was "no certainty that a merger between these two large unions would solve the underlying problems faced by them". (IRIS 1989) In the mid 1990s, it is further known that MSF is also being linked to discussions with the new amalgamation , the AEEU.

MSF

It was noted , however, that the MSF accounts " showed a deficit of £3,664 000 (1988), even after the sale of over £1million of assets. Its problems are far greater than those faced by the AEU, and seem to indicate that the merger of TASS and ASTMS created more problems than it solved." (IRIS 1989)

With regards the possible merger with UCATT , as referred above in the merger styles , its financial status is a difficulty . In fact , at the 1994 TUC Congress a temporary rule change was agreed to allow the union to attend.

"Given the severe financial difficulties facing UCATT , the General Council at its meeting on September 1 exercised its powers under Rule 15(a) to effect a temporary rule change to allow for the participation of the union in the 1994 Congress which would not otherwise be possible due to UCATT's non-payment of its affiliation fees" (TUC 1994)

Unison

In the section on merger styles reference was made to the financial difficulties and cultural problems that are surfacing in the consolidatory public sector merger. The financial difficulties were reported as being "a deficit of more than £5m ..." in 1994 and "may rise to £18m (the) next year". Furthermore 400 employees would be made redundant , a quarter of all staff. This was necessary to live within its subscription income". (Sunday Times 1994)

Conclusion:

Financial viability is therefore a major tendentious factor in the merger appraisal, however it must be recognised that other tendentious factors can play as important a role as that of finance. Although the trade union *raison d'etre* has not been merely or primarily to optimise their financial performance, potential and existing union members are paying closer attention to this, as an indicator of the professionalism of the union.

Willman and Morris summed it up in the concluding sentence of their Research Paper "if in the 1990s union membership continues to decline, the effective management of union financial resources is likely to become a bigger issue for union officials and members, and for employers and thus a topic worthy of further interest".

THE INHERITANCE

Finance is a major motivation in the T.U. amalgamation equation, as it is with mergers in business. But mergers are also all affected directly by the culture of the potential amalgamators. In trade unions, the culture consist of the values of the activist, officials and, through them, the membership. It is effected by the norms they follow, which affects the structure and organic shape they produce. Values are abstract ideals, that they "belong to" a particular union and identify with its style and/or the leadership. The norms are definite principles, the Rules. These provide the direction for conduct. So Culture is the whole identity of the union. It is not merely the written word, but also the collection of ideas, habits transmitted from generation to generation

of activists, officials and members. There is this inheritance of values and norms, which is learned and shared collectively, creating the totality of the organisation. The commitment to the traditional principles, of trade unionism and the labour movement, is also part of this heritage, or, is subsequently developed by the socialisation, referred to in the previous chapter. This is the ideological element of British trade unionism, that is, the legitimisation of ideals over and above sectional interests, 'unionateness'. Not only independence from employers in collective bargaining and representation of members, and being willing, if necessary, to use industrial action, but also affiliation to the TUC and, possibly, the Labour Party. (Blackburn 1967 : see also Chapter 1 reference to staff associations and Chapter 5 reference to "enterprise unionateness")

AEU

A good frame of reference was the AEU, which had as we have seen an established norm of "one union in engineering". In fact Rule 1:2 stated categorically that the union's objective is to bring into existence "one union for the foundry, engineering shipbuilding and kindred trades". Rule 14:3 stated firmly that "the Executive Council's hours of business shall be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with one hour allowed for dinner, Monday to Friday..." There were in fact rules for every eventuality. The union had (and still has in the new merged union, AEEU) this inheritance of its craftsman past. This effects also the values, the identification with the norm, the constitutional safeguards of the Rules, a state of almost permanent elections. All Officials, this includes full-time officials, from President and Executive Council to the District Secretary stand for election every 5 years. There is a rider that in the event of any officer "having completed successive periods of office, and being sixty years of age, or over, he shall not be required to seek election..."

Most action for change is, therefore, virtually always motivated to a greater or lesser degree by internal politicking. It often appears that one power group in the union, and not always on distinct political lines, is continually trying to dissipate the strength of the others. However the political grouping, of "left and right" does have a strong bearing upon the activities, not only of the groups, but also, on how any union is identified externally by other unions and potential members. Added to this is the autonomy of the District Committees in the AEU, protected in Rule. Any member can "raise matters affecting working conditions [...] at their Branch. These issues then go to the District Committee", this can cause some difficulties because branch membership is "organised on a (members') residential rather than workplace basis". This adapted constitution, the norms and values developed by the ASE over a century ago on the model of the American constitution has served the membership well. Nevertheless, it has created problems in an ever changing industrial environment and major difficulties for merger potentials.

This was also clearly exposed during the period of amalgamation in the early 1970s referred to earlier. DATA, the draughtsmen's union, in merging into, what was then called, the AUEW, apart from needing to retain its sectional identity, had other norms and values. These were encapsulated by Doughty when he stated that they "had always recognised the ultimate need for one strong union to cover all engineering workers". He then went on to say

"this was the reason for the breakdown of our discussions with the Assoc. of Scientific Workers in the mid-1960's. That organisation wanted to form a conglomerate union of white collar unions without a common industrial interest. They decided to join in ASTMS. They now organise doctors, nurses, lecturer" (Doughty 1973).

This was echoed by activists, and through them the members, that this was "occupational autonomy without industrial solidarity." (Doughty 1973) Furthermore both unions (AEU and DATA) were identified, at that time, as being on the "left". So in the aftermath of a political

change of leadership and orientation of the union in the engineering section , and factors referred earlier , there was an inevitability for the staff section , TASS, to leave the "federal constitution" of the Engineers union. That norms and values can change, will be further explored when considering the merger of TASS with that very same ASTMS to form MSF.

Furthermore , in rule, the AEU made a direct object of reference to membership of the TUC and Labour Party. In fact it outlines representational arrangements for national meetings and Parliamentary candidate panel.

EETPU

The AEU has always had a long links with another craft based union, the EETPU , the union created by the merger in 1968 of the electricians union (ETU) and the plumbers union (PTU). With the shift to the "right" in the AEU leadership, the links with the EETPU grew stronger.

The membership values in the EETPU developed out of the manipulative controls of the ETU , established by communists from the mid 1940s to the High Court Trial in 1961. (Byrne & Chapple v Foulkes & Others) At the trial leading national officers , all communists , were found guilty of ballot rigging in the election of officers. (Rolph 1962) Furthermore, the judge found that there was significant elements of control from the Communist Party . Although the issues had been drawn to its attention prior to any legal action, the TUC did little to bring these issues to the fore, nor did it give great assistance to those embittered at the time. (Cannon & Anderson 1973) This is not the place to develop any further on the details, suffice to say , that it has given the inheritance for the union of being distant from TUC mainstream and a bulwark against the "left". Furthermore , the EETPU had extended its job territory primarily through mergers as was

outlined in chapter 1. It had become a general union with a significant craft base.

This union was accompanied by the AEU, in the early 1980s, in its "flexible approach" to trade union legislation and the advocacy of single-union agreements/no strike agreements, often confronting the line of the TUC, even to the near expulsion of both. (TUC 1985) When considering this later we will see a difference between attitude to single union agreements in "green field sites", primarily that of foreign inward investment, as against the conversion of multi-union established companies. Furthermore, on a multi-craft basis both unions have extended into craft skill training.

AEEU

Throughout the late 1980s, therefore, the possibility of merger was always there, discussions reaching a close stage. This was dashed when, in 1988, the EETPU was suspended from the TUC in July and expelled in the October. At the Congress of that year the decision was taken, because the EETPU refused to "accept TUC General Council directives requiring the union to accept two Dispute Committee awards." It is not within the purview of this study to probe into the facts of this issue, nor the processes of the TUC detailed in the Special Report to Congress, interest here is with regards the effect on the values of the AEU. (TUC Special Report 1988)

The expulsion was to add to other concerns outlined in the Financial Times at that time: the role of the merged unions conference - the AEU wanting it to be binding, the EETPU insisting it can be overruled sometimes by a membership ballot: the full time official establishment - the AEU requesting all new officials be elected, EETPU favouring appointing for two years before election

and the leadership equation. On this latter item Hammond , the EETPU General Secretary, offered to stand down. This was to facilitate the establishment of a single president and two General Secretaries , with the EETPU electing their sectional leadership after the merger. (Financial Times 1988)

Although progress was being made, the policy making AEU National Committee voted unanimously in April 1989, to withdraw the rights of AEU leadership to consider merger with non - TUC unions following the expulsion. The decision reported in the newspapers outlined how significant the inherited values and norms prevail. (Guardian 1989)

However, to show that changes can take place, in 1990 , the National Committee surprisingly agreed unanimously to reopen amalgamation discussions with kindred unions, whether TUC affiliates or not, on the understanding that the amalgamated union would be affiliated to the TUC .

This was a definitive shift , but still retained clear aspects of AEU inheritance. There was still difficulties with the EETPU bullish style to recruitment and the links , or merger discussions , with breakaway unions such as the UDM, dissident members of the NUM , and the European Ferrymens' Association , dissident members of the NUS , who left during the P&O Dispute, 1988 . The latter is now a part of EETPTU. (The Seaman 1989) The AEU national bureaucracy was, however , anxious to establish changes to respond to industrial innovation and its financial difficulties . (IRIS 1990)

In this direction , the AEU instituted a new industrial structure in 1991 , establishing sectorised national industrial conferences which has direct input into the Executive Council. Further

discussions took place with the EETPU and , at the recalled National Committee in December 1991 , it was agreed to ballot the membership for merger. The EETPU had already obtained a positive conference decision on this matter . The membership vote of both unions was to be on two issues ; the merger and the name of the new union. The AEU , in all its documents, referred to the historic links of both the unions

.. " the first attempt (at merger) was in 1890 when the electricians tried to join the AEU, then the ASE , and were turned away by the Executive Council of the day on the grounds that they were not skilled enough! Instead they went away with the ASE minute book and set up their own union " . (AEU 1992)

It showed a common identity.

Progressing the issue , the AEU referred to the EETPU's "unrivalled staff section , the Federation of Professional Associations" , which was in many sectors and had many categories of staff in its ranks , "including the Institute of Journalists". Outlining the need , determined by the changes in industry , to strengthen and develop collective bargaining , reference was also made to the financial viability of the EETPTU . This gave credence to the claim , that a merged union would have strength , and the necessary structure , to meet the challenge of the recession and be able to withstand the difficulties of legislation. (AEU 1992) General Secretary , Gavin Laird argued that

" without amalgamation ... the AEU would have to cut the number of full-time officers to take account of the jobs and members lost as a result of the recession".

and that the membership had

"fundamental choice ... merge with the EETPU or we carry on as we are , diminishing as our membership declines to a second division union " . (The Journal 1992)

The unions had pointed to all the factors that give reason to merge. On March 4 1992 the new union came into being, the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union, the AEEU. Laird announced that the new union would recruit "wherever it could" and sign up "anyone that wants to join". (Guardian 1992) A shift from the "one union in engineering" stance.

In 1993, the retention of unionateness, which would be reflected in membership of the TUC, was tested, when the union balloted to decide whether the AEEU would apply to join the TUC. The AEEU Executive unanimously urged the membership to vote yes. In the statement sent to all members, the union outlined the benefits under the broad headings of the TUC being the organisation

: for campaigning on legislation and socio economic issues as the national trade union centre

: able to raise the profile of trade unionism by gaining public support: for the dialogue within Europe.

This latter item was emphasised in the statement that "in trade union terms, Europe deals almost exclusively with national trade union centres. In our case this means the TUC and its affiliation to the European TUC". This was a clear indication of the intent, however, the ballot paper contained a pragmatic approach. The actual statement voted upon was an addition to the union's objectives.....

"Rule 1 - Clause 2. Objectives. (addition)

To be an affiliate of the TUC provide that the terms of entry are approved by at least 75% of the AEEU Executive Council "

It was not to be unionateness at any price. The union returned to the TUC, the third largest

union with 835,000 members.

MSF

TASS was to take on a new approach and culture, having left the Engineering Union, and had mergers with craft unions as diverse as tobacco workers, goldsmiths, pattern makers, and sheet metal workers, establishing its position as a general union. In 1988 they amalgamated with ASTMS to form MSF, a cultural shift for both unions. This change, to the aforementioned values and norms, was hastened by what the joint Executives saw as a "drastic decline in the UK's manufacturing base..." and growth in "... sectors of the economy employing the computer - literate young whose skills fit them to work anywhere - in engineering, chemicals, the finance industries, the National Health Service, Universities and so on." (TASS / ASTMS 1986)

Once again the union, MSF, is considering the merger route in the late 1990s, with two unions appearing in the frame, the AEEU and the TGWU. MSF, faced with its financial problems, which it has seriously addressed, and, more particularly, the development of the "super unions" is once again revisiting its analysis of the situation as it has now changed.

TGWU

The TGWU has within its rule that the

"membership shall be divided into national trade groups and sections, including craft sections, according to the occupation of members of the Union". It has as its main objective :- " the organisation of all members and other persons qualified for membership, seafarers and employees in port, harbour, dock, warehouse, waterside, waterway, road, aerial, and other transport services, general workers, and such other workers as may be deemed eligible by the General

Executive Council of the Union..."

The trade group structure is an inheritance from the unions history enshrined in the rules. This was unique in its inception in 1922 . Whilst recognising regions / districts , the fourteen amalgamating unions were transformed into trade groups their executives into trade group committees and their General Secretaries into trade group national secretaries. This structure has continued and proved to be easy accessible for amalgamations. (Clegg 1964 : also see Chapter 4)

Earlier , when referring to the merger style of the TGWU , it was noted how further trade groups were added . It was able to break down the vehicle manufacturing craft elitism of the NUVB integrating through merger into Vehicle Building and Automotive Trade Group in 1972. This was in the words of Jack Jones, a merger which was "... one of the most significant in the history of trade unionism." (Jones 1986)

It created the basis for a craft identity , in what was ostensibly an unskilled / semiskilled union. Farm workers of the NUAAW and textile workers of the NUDBTW followed , all by assimilation , in the 1980s , into their respective trade groups. This adaption to changed circumstances needed not only rule changes, but also , the need for the lay activist in the trade group to be assured that there was no abandoning of its basic structural principles. The value frame of the TGWU continued to be the Trade Group.

Although there may be slight variations, at regional level the lay membership activist, usually a workplace representative, is delegated to a Regional Trade Group Committee, from and by which, is elected the Regional Committee. This is the presiding committee , which considers issues across trade groups regionally and all specific regional matters. However, each Trade

Group also has a National Committee of lay members, elected , by and from, each regional trade group. These national committees meet quarterly. The principal governing body during the period between Biennial Conferences is the General Executive Council. The G.E.C. is composed of both regionally elected members and National Trade Group members. All elected under rule, the norm being that all voting members are lay members " still at their job in industry". (TGWU 1986)

The TGWU, therefore, has a distinct "national / regional " profile. This is the quintessence of its norms and creates values which more relate to the "trade groups" than to the Region. The decision making determinants are clearly relative to this culture , and affect the perception of political profile, which is to the left. The decision of the NUS to reject the TGWU in favour of the NUR related to this perception of the political profile. The NUS chose to merge into a new union in the mainstream of the trade union movement, creating a competitor to the core TGWU transport trade group.

The Klein report on finance and organisation to which reference was made above, considered changes in the structure and the introduction of cost efficiency measures, but did not recommend any reduction in the number of trade groups. It did propose that ..

" the national trade group officers be 'clustered ' by industrial sector and that one of the national officers become the Union's lead officer in that sector.. (to) promote better strategic planning". (Klein 1992)

This move away from trade group to industrial sectors is significant . We will see later , in Chapter 7, that the GMB, in 1991, also developed a Sectional organisation on an industrial sector basis. This , most certainly assisted the opening of discussions for a major merger between the

TGWU and GMB.

UNISON

There was a challenge to the proposition that consolidatory mergers are not viable propositions by the amalgamation of NALGO, COHSE and NUPE to create UNISON. This "purpose-built, brand new public service union of 1.6 million members", was necessary, NALGO claimed, to establish a union that is "capable of opposing the destruction of public services."

All three unions took decisions at their Conferences which underlined the commitment to this objective. However there are still hurdles relative to cultures of the component unions of this "general" public sector union..

NALGO, a staff union in the public sector, had a vertical structure of membership from chief to junior and sideways through a heterogeneous collection of professions and occupations. It started out in the early part of the twentieth century as a fusion of "jealously autonomous guilds, in a service stratified into rigid castes," due to the "desire of a few chief officers for pensions, and the staffs of a few local authorities for a fuller social life". It was founded by "men who would have no truck with the trade unionism of their day". However the socialisation effects referred to in the previous chapter affected the organisation and it registered as a trade union in 1920. The establishment of a method of collective bargaining "Whitleyism" was to provide a vehicle for growth of membership in the years after the first World War. It was not until the Second World War and after, when a national machinery for collective bargaining in all parts of the public sector (certain municipal activities had been put into National Boards e.g. electricity and

Votes on NALGO 's affiliation to the T U C. TABLE 7				
	% VOTING	FOR (%)	AGAINST (%)	
1942	57.4	40733 (58.7)	28715 (41.3)	
1948	71.2	46200 (35.6)	83443 (64.4)	
1955	63.9	73151 (48.5)	77592 (51.5)	
1958	75.5	82618 (43.2)	108615 (56.8)	
1962	77.5	111489(48.7)	117312 (51.3)	
1964	77.7	138120(53.8)	118531 (41.2)	
SOURCE: R.Taylor "The Fifth Estate " Pan 1980.				

gas) that there was rapid membership growth. (Spoors 1955; Lockwood 1958) In the 1950 - 1960s workers entered white collar work with strong trade union traditions and had expectations not found in the first generation of NALGO members. This was to underline the distinction made by Blackburn, between a trade union attraction to potential members and growth (completeness) and unionateness. (Blackburn 1967)

In 1961 it adopted a strike clause in its constitution and for the next few years debated TUC affiliation . However, before being able to throw aside its approach values, as affiliation to the TUC was too strong a commitment to a body outside of what was perceived as professionalism , it supported an initiative of the NUT to establish the Conference of Public & Professional Services Organisations . This was an attempt to establish an alternative white collar TUC . The group was mainly non-TUC organisations, with the exceptions COHSE , LCC Staff Assoc., and AScW., with NUBE amongst the observers. (Undy et al 1981) The NUBE delegate to the 1962 TUC Congress , advising that his union had attended COPPSO as an observer , said that they left when they found "the conflict of loyalty with the TUC" and it was seen, by his union " as a sort of rival white-collar non-party political TUC ". However he did point to the need for the TUC to remain non-aligned in party political terms, this would aid the affiliation of NUT & NALGO. As

it was the government Incomes Policy, and its effect on the public and service sectors , that inspired the formation of COPPSO , it was to be that organisation's inability to be part of the tripartite (TUC / employers / government) bodies, particularly the NEDC , that led to its demise. It also provided further reasons for TUC affiliation. (TUC 1962) The battle for TUC affiliation in NALGO, resulting in a successful ballot in 1964, is shown below in Table 8 (Taylor 1980).

Furthermore, during the 1970s, the union sanctioned its first-ever strike , and has since maintained a solidaristic profile towards dispute requests. (Taylor 1980) This change gave an impetus to the left faction, NALGO Action Group. With this heritage of lay prerogative in leadership roles , this group changed the culture from a reactive organisation to one of campaign and selective action. With these developments in the 1960s and 1970s moves to a political profile was established. However, although it had an overwhelming majority vote for the inchoation of a political fund, affiliation to the Labour Party has always eluded the union. In many ways NALGO maintains a profile of staff unionism. (Taylor 1980)

The unionateness of NUPE has never been in question. In its inception . It has a near continuous affiliation to the TUC and the Labour Party. Membership was primarily local government manual workers, hospital ancillary staff, canteen workers, caretakers, nurses and ambulance staff (the latter enhanced by an amalgamation with the National Ambulance Services Assoc. in 1965) , although it had a very small number of staff members. Its commitment was always to be an industrial trade union "similar in pattern to the National Union of Mine workers.. confined to a public service, aimed to cover in its membership all, and only, the different categories or grades of men and women employed in that service". (Craik 1968) This to some degree was the continuing norm , until the appointment of Allen Fisher as general secretary in 1968, of seeking "always to

import its leading officers from other trade unions " - building worker, miner, and engineer. This obviously effected its value judgments. (Craik 1968) However, in the 1970s , the union also began to appoint full - time officers with academic background and , more often than not , those with a left political tendency. As with NALGO , there was a culture change from a reactive to a campaigning organisation using selective action.

COHSE was established in 1910 as a union specifically for mental hospital staff, as The Mental Hospital and Institutional Workers' Union . It merged with the National Union of County Officers in 1946, in response to the creation of the NHS, and retitled COHSE .

Its unionateness is shown in its long association with the Labour Party (affiliated 1914) and the TUC (affiliated 1924 "as the early pioneers felt the TUC was too right wing") . It was however up until the 1960s , still a union composed of employees in the mental health sphere, its job territory was to extended into the whole health service in the next decade . Membership increased particularly with the pay campaign and disputes in the early 1970s. Table shows that membership growth had been continuous, in all three unions until the late 1980s and the 1990s. The decline thereafter is inevitably due to the changing employment factors in the public sector. .

To pursue the establishment of the new union , later to be titled UNISON, all three unions produced a supplement to their house journals under the title "The Challenge of a New Union". These four page documents were similar in their portrayal of a commonality of bargaining sectors, sounder financial base, and the shift towards super unions.

However NALGO, in its supplement, made particular reference to the continuance of the

expressed commitment that had "been made, not to use the political fund for any party political purpose" which was provided for in its rules. It advised that separate political funds would be established "reflecting the existing unions' own arrangements and rules. In NALGO's case this would mean continuing a fund "expressly restricted to non-party political activities [...] under the control of elected members drawn from the former NALGO divisions of any new union". The rule book of the new union UNISON, states that there will be two political funds to "reflect the traditions" of the unions. So there is still this difficulty in both value and norm commonality in the amalgamated union.

A further change in their norm is shown in the development of a new general objectives in the merged unions' Rules.....

"To arrange amalgamations or transfer of engagements with other trade unions". (Rule B4)

It has lost its specific reference to merger with unions in the public sector and its inherent industrial trade unionism ethos, to that of a more general union. (NALGO, NUPE, COHSE; 1989; 1990; 1991; 1992 a/b; UNISON 1993) The clear differences in the cultural inheritance of the unions and attempts to provide the value basis through the rules has created the "wrangles that followed the merger". (Sunday Times 1994)

Conclusion

Therefore union culture is changeable. This has been seen in the DATA to MSF transformation, the AEU / EETPU discussions which led to their amalgamation and to a degree with the NALGO / NUPE / COHSE merger. Obviously, unions with a new strategic vision recognising the old adage, "history we inherit, the future we claim", know that they need to change, but

these value legacies, beliefs and ways of doing things, have an important impact. The inherent link of merger style and culture values are confronted by the socialisation of capital / labour nexus, the work force composition, and membership density equation, as outlined in Chapter 1. Added to this are the effects of the financial factors, whether or not a union has stability and viability. This has ensured a shift, by most unions, to extend their job territory, which provides input from a new membership source, unaffected by previous values. Therefore, the major factor to be resolved are the marrying of the culture; the rules, the identity, the special interests, the title and the leadership of the unions. It is obvious that a major effect on this cultural change lies with the decision determinant, the leadership.

FOLLOW THE LEADER

From all the foregoing, it is clear that leaders do not merely respond to the preferences, or appraisal of the membership, but also shape the preferences and appraisal of the situation. This is understandable, when one considers that in the industrial environment, with regards the every-day contact, an authoritative agent is the regional, district or national full-time official. When Robert Michels wrote his analysis of the nature of socialist political parties in 1911, which had a pessimistic view of bureaucracy, he nevertheless established the point that "democracy is inconceivable without organisation" and particularly that organisation will spawn the decision determinant, a representative system whereby "delegates represent the mass and carry out its will." But he claimed this founders due to the growth of the organisation, its administrative functioning, and the establishment of an elite of decision-takers. His pessimism concludes that this leads inevitably to what he termed, his "iron law of oligarchy". His identification of leadership traits is a sweeping generalisation, based on the particular parties studied, nevertheless it did

give expression to the fact that strong established culture can be effected by the leadership. In the introduction to the edition produced in 1962, Lipset specifically referred to trade unions, asserting that, although there was entrenched administration and leadership, "unions still fulfil their primary function from the point of view of their members". Michels' commitment, to socialist principles in his younger days, gave way to this belief in the inevitability of oligarchy and his later allegiance to Mussolini. (Michels 1962) However, in terms of the leadership effect, Michels' indicators to the role, power and objectives of bureaucratic leadership is a good starting point.

It is not the purpose of this study to consider the fluctuating opinions, on where lies the power in the trade unions. Undy et al showed in their study, a typology of union government portraying most clearly the centralised versus regional power structures, and factionalism. (Undy et al 1981) In this study reference has been made only to the power equation in the merger debate. We have seen that in all the cases above, the leadership has played a significant role and has been the driving force for change. It clearly underlines the Weberian concept of social power. There is in trade unions, as there is in most organisations, an acknowledgement of status with resultant esteem accorded to the "decision - makers", the leadership. The activist, and through them the membership, as the "decision - takers", often defer to the knowledge of the leadership.

However, it is not the power of command. The leadership, be it the National Committee of lay members and workplace representatives, the conference or the individual leaders, does have enormous influence on the phases of change. The bureaucracy, it must be recognised, has the channels of communication. Through this ability to disseminate its ideology, the leadership can shape the dynamism of the change, generate support, and alter the preexisting modes in thought,

so as to overturn the previously established order. The case study , later , outlines how decision involves choice and the accountability which acts as a balance of power.

The aggressive merger style unions of the 1970s , that had the major merger success , also had dynamic leadership. The personal charisma of Jack Jones in the TGWU assisted his clearly thought out approach to progress . From his background of fighting in the Spanish Civil War, a local Liverpool councillor in the 1930s to his election and ability as a full-time official , all was acknowledged and recognised by the activists in the union. This was crucial to achieve the changes necessary for progress and the ability to influence the "decision - takers " through the lay representatives on the Trade Group committees.

Similarly, although of differing characteristics , Clive Jenkins had a strong personality and a life style which, he contended , assisted in his objective of "Organising the middle classes" . Further, it was his directed democracy and personality that achieved the changes to allow for the "shrewd mergers and amalgamations". (Jones 1986 : Taylor 1980.) In the merger to establish MSF , the General Secretaries of the two amalgamating unions , Jenkins (ASTMS) and Gill (TASS) both had considerable credibility , but more important the lay representative executives also overwhelmingly supported the proposals put to the membership.

The establishment in NALGO of lay representative prerogative power, as referred to above, the full-time officials discharged their function in accordance with this established norm . This changed and some would say "threatened the nature of NALGO's traditional leadership, to some extent undermining its authority". (Undy et al. 1981) This found voice in the merger discussions to establish UNISON. The developed structures of lay participative committees on all aspects of

policy , at both national and regional level , was clearly an expression of this position . Despite this , due cognizance was accorded to the NALGO membership's rejection of Labour Party affiliation , as observed earlier, in establishing two political funds in the new union.

In the case study , it will be noted that individual leadership had an affect on the change factors. Even so , other leadership elements , in the decision making process, acted as a counterbalance to the inevitable ability of the individual leadership to pursue their aims and further the interests they hold .

Some factors , however , are outside the trade unions' control . For this we must turn to the extra, or external tendentious factors , the socio-industrial environment that presses in upon the union, and those that assist the process of change.

THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The relationship between the state and the trade unions is a subject of much analysis and research in its own right. By the state , as against any other definition , reference here is to the system , the bureaucracy comprising the centralised legislature , the government. Apart from the central executive power of Parliament , it also includes the administration , the hierarchy of civil servants and the judiciary. Trade unions have faced a long history of state antagonism and interference. This has often placed their legality in doubt and affected the development of trade union characteristics and attitudes. (Thompson 1968) However, leaving aside early legislation outlawing combinations and the treating of trade unions as a conspiracy against the state, modern legislation impacting on trade unions was concerned primarily with industrial relations and conditions of employment.

At present the impact on trade unions is not only concerning the role of law in industrial relations and the regulating of trade union action, but also regulating the unions' internal organisation. In this section we will consider the direct and indirect influence of legislation on trade union amalgamation .

The early legal position required the consent of two-thirds of the membership until the Trade Union (Amalgamation) Act 1917. This changed to 50% of the membership had to have voted, and the proposal for amalgamation secure a 20% majority of those voting . There was still with no ability for transfer of engagements . Despite these changes , it did not create the necessary facility for change , as "voting in large unions rarely reaches the 50% mark [...] the pre-1964 law mitigated against union mergers." (Undy et al 1981)

In 1963 discussions were initiated by the General Council of the TUC with the Minister of Labour, to repeal and replace the restrictive legislation. In the following year the legislation was introduced. The Trade Union (Amalgamation etc.) Act 1964 relaxed the law on mergers, as here summarised by the TUC :

"The main points of the Act are :

Amalgamations.

- a) If two or more unions wish to amalgamate they must first draw up an instrument of amalgamation and arrange for a ballot vote of their membership upon it. The information to be included in the instruments is set out in the Regulations.*
- b) Every member of each union must be given reasonable opportunity of voting and of receiving before the voting a notice setting out either the instrument in full or a summary of it giving the effects of the amalgamation. The instrument and notice must be approved by the Registrar.*

[Note. The Registrar of Friendly Societies role was taken over by the Certification Officer for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations established in 1976. This is

merely one of the responsibilities of this function (Jones and Morris 1982)]

c) The national executive of a union is empowered to make any arrangements it thinks fit for the ballot in order to comply with the provisions in the Act that every member is given 'so far as is reasonably possible a fair opportunity of voting'. However, unions may take away this discretionary power from executives by adopting new rules for the ballot - providing the new rules give all members a fair opportunity of voting.

d) The amalgamation resolution will be carried by a simple majority of those voting, notwithstanding anything at present in a union's rules which require a larger majority [...]

e) Members may appeal ... that the conditions of voting were not carried out [...]

Transfer of Engagements, made amalgamation ,

f) Where a union wishes to transfer its engagements to another which is willing to accept them an instrument of transfer must be drawn up and the first union must take a ballot in the same way as for an amalgamation [...]

g) The Act empowers the national executive of a union willing to accept the transfer of another to alter its union's rules in order to give effect to the transfer but a union may adopt rules to provide expressly that its executive shall not have this discretionary power. " (TUC 1964)

There then followed new provisions in respect of Political Funds, Changes of Names, and Northern Ireland. The Act does not apply in Northern Ireland and unions need to satisfy the requirements of earlier legislation with regards the province. For example in the GMB/APEX amalgamation (1989), both unions having offices in Northern Ireland, they were required to pass a resolution requesting the Registrar in Belfast to withdraw the Certificate of Registry and then applying for registration of the new union.

The Certification Office for Trade Unions and Employers' Associations provides a guide which explains that "the statutory procedures are to facilitate the process of merger and at the same time to safeguard the rights of the members affected...." The Office's role in approving "certain documents" is also outlined, ie. instruments of transfer or amalgamation, voting and registration procedures and dealing with complaints. Complaints can only be made on "grounds specified in the

statute". The guide, however, is "not to be regarded as an authoritative statement of the law", but does give the necessary guidance for merging unions.

(Certification Office for Trade Unions & Employers' Assocs. 1989)

There is no doubt that this Act intensified the tendency to merge, particularly through transfers of engagement. It did not change the nature of mergers, the aforementioned intra-union factors are still as relevant, however it removed significant obstacles which affected the merger waves. It must be acknowledged that the vote of the membership in an amalgamation is now probably the simplest part of the proceedings, if all relevant data, addresses etc. are correct, a formidable task for some unions. Therefore, this Act has had a direct effect on the ease of establishing a merger. There is need now to consider other changes to industrial relations, employment and trade union legislation which indirectly influences the merger equation.

During the period of the Labour Government (1974-1979) a different climate prevailed to that in the 1980s and 1990s. Employment legislation was intended to be beneficial to working people and trade unions and reduced, to some degree, the suspicion and distrust of the law in the workplace. It has been noted, that the 'special relationship' with the Labour Government of the 1970s, created an environment conducive to amalgamations. This close relationship with trade unions of the late seventies was undermined by economic problems, the voluntary incomes policy agreed with the TUC collapsed and a general election returned a Conservative government. (Coates 1980; Hobsbawm 1989; Coates & Topham 1988)

It is not the purpose of this section to consider in detail the variety of legal measures of the successive Conservative governments since 1979. These measures were said to be enacted

reverse , what they asserted to be the

*"heaping (of) privilege without responsibility on the trade unions, Labour have given the minority of extremists the power to abuse individual liberties and thwart Britain's chances of success."
(Conservative Party Manifesto 1979)*

In the 1980s, the whole concept of any trade union role in government policy formation or consultation was swept aside.

"In one sense , there was no point in ministers holding talks with union leaders; they were simply not prepared to trim their policies for , in Mrs. Thatcher's words 'there was no alternative' ." (McIlroy 1990)

The overall stance towards trade unions was also reflected in the Conservative government's unilateral decision , as the employer , to ban independent trade unions in the surveillance and monitoring centre, GCHQ in 1984 "without any warning , let alone prior consultation with the unions concerned." (Hain 1986)

The list of measures , which the union-based research organisation Labour Research Department noted was "at the rate of a statute almost every year", covered a wide front. With regards employment law , they include changes in protection legislation regarding unfair dismissal , and arrangements for maternity leave and pay made more complex . Also the provisions in the Employment Protection Acts (1975 and Consolidation 1978), such as those that provided for the extension of recognised terms and conditions of employment by compulsory arbitration , procedures to assist trade union recognition and other legislative support to collective bargaining, were removed to facilitate labour market deregulation. In the industrial relations sphere , there was a redefinition of what constitutes lawful industrial dispute and an extension of employers'

protection when dismissing an employee taking industrial action. The unions lost their immunities if they supported, or failed to repudiate, industrial action taken without a secret ballot. Further to this, procedures for a full postal ballot using external counting agencies, and the creating of new responsibilities on advising employers and notice periods, was established by the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act in 1993. Even after a secret ballot supports industrial action, the law classified it as unjustifiable for a union to discipline a member who does not take part in the dispute. All statutory support for the 'closed shop', or union membership agreements, was removed which made them, effectively, prohibited.

The internal practices, inherent in the culture of the union, were also changed by law. Requirements were established for union elections by secret postal ballot of the president, General Secretary and members of the principal executive committee. Also changes to the law on union 'immunities' meant union funds were now open to legal action. To help members to take court proceedings against their union under these measures, the Commissioner for the Rights of Trade Union Members was established, with discretionary powers to assist by paying for legal advice, representation and any costs awarded against the individual. Therefore, trade unions operate in a stricter legislative framework with a liability to damages. (LRD 1990: Dept. of Employment 1984 & 1988 : Wedderburn 1986)

British membership of the European Union has made the government conform to certain Regulations which enhance employee protection. The agenda is now set to promote new employment, industrial relations and trade union rights. The Charter of Fundamental Social Rights, the social dimension of the Single European Act 1987, was adopted by most member states of the E.U. The " Social Charter", as it became known, was rejected only by Britain.

Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that it will have a fundamental effect in Britain. (Wedderburn 1990 : TUC 1988 & 1989 : E.E.F. 1989 : T.E.C. Director 1990)

Conclusion

Suffice to say that these fundamental shifts in employment, industrial relations and trade union law, require trade union research and back-up resources that only large unions can provide adequately. This has given an indirect impetus to trade union mergers. A major point in the lead-up discussion has always included an analysis of the ability of the amalgamators, by joining together their technical departments or, in many instances, the large union alone, to manage these change factors

BARGAINING TRENDS AND COMPANY ORGANISATION/CULTURAL CHANGE

The impact of legislation in the 1980s and 1990s has also transformed, some would say undermined, collective bargaining. Also, company organisational and industrial - cultural changes have taken place outside, or peripheral to, any trade union dialogue. In the earlier part of this chapter, reference was made to Waddington's analysis of trade union mergers, stating that a primary variable of union structural development is the collective bargaining environment. (Waddington 1988) In this, he drew attention to the trade union theory of Hugh Clegg, who in 1976 advanced the collective bargaining theses of the Webbs. This created a standard work on the subject. His definition of collective bargaining is clear.

"Its subject-matter is terms of employment. It is collective because

On the Crest of a Wave

employees associate together normally if not invariably in trade unions, in order to bargain with their employer [...] Mere representation of views or appeal for consideration is not bargaining." The term is used "to cover both negotiations and the administration of agreements." (Clegg 1976)

There has since the beginning of this century been an acceptance that this was the best method of determining differences of interest in industrial relations. Broadly speaking two trends can be identified. Firstly, in the 1980s, due to the labour market shortages particularly in the South East, employers demanded greater flexibility, across crafts, skills and occupations. This trend, evident from the 1950's, has accelerated and applies now to all regions of Britain. Secondly, there is evidence, in the 1990s, of a growing number of companies, in a range of sectors, decentralising to the level of the business unit, profit centre or plant, a greater local focused management.

Added to this, privatisation, decentralisation and contracting out in the public sector has also had a direct effect, on these high density sectors of trade unionism. Such was the extent of this changed environment, during 1990 the TUC endorsed a programme of Regional Seminars on the general subject of collective bargaining. Attended by over 100 union participants, virtually all full-time officers, it was noted that

"many of the changes introduced by management were ad-hoc, [...] some more temporary than fundamental (and could be reversed as the economic and political climate changed) ... However there was a sea change...increased centralisation of strategy at enterprise level, while devolving operational responsibility (including bargaining) to establishment level, and an increased emphasis being given to performance of the company, the establishment and the individual. (These) were not being introduced in a vacuum, but in the context of broader economic, industrial and labour market developments." (TUC 1990)

Apart from multi-skilling, single employee status, and single union agreements, there has been a

reassertion of managerial controls. The systematic approach to these controls has come under the catch - all phrase , Human Resource Management. This has also , sometimes, been a hidden agenda of anti - union policy or , at best, a reducing of union influence.

The TUC produced a key document on the subject for the 1994 Congress. It recognised the need to respond to the challenge. Trade unions and workplace representatives , particularly, were now faced with the change culture, greater focus at line manager level and the move, often, to individual performance appraisal , the introduction of performance related pay and casualisation . (TUC 1994) This has challenged traditional collective bargaining and the well resourced trade unions, consequently , have redefined their strategy.

Alongside this, there were broader economic, industrial and labour market developments. The separation of ownership from control, which was seen as a fragmented share ownership dispersed amongst small shareholders, has lost to the effects of, what is often termed, the "corporate network". This is share ownership by financial institutions, pension fund management corporations, insurance and banking. Strategy is now closely linked to centralised ownership. Any concept of managerial social responsibility is offset by this centrism. Other small or medium sized companies are affected by the company culture of the larger enterprise, to whom they are supply tied .

Inward investment by foreign companies, especially to local economies faring worst from the recession, have further accelerated these changes. This has led to the packaged consultant-led search for excellence with many seminars, videos, tapes and literature to lead management to a panacea, "best practice", "close to the customer", "bias for action" also directed away from the

collective approach to industrial relations. (Peters and Waterman. 1982) In some unionised companies , this has been a catalyst when initiating management of change programmes ; innovative employee involvement through team briefing ; quality circles ; work organisation changes such as "just in time", short-runs and flexible manufacturing ; total quality management and continuously changing technology, and, particularly, the active approach to training policies (TUC 1994)

It is fashionable to believe that the inward investment by Japanese companies had a major effect in this redirection, termed "Japonisation". However it is now recognised that there are differing approaches by inward investors. Japanese or any other inward investor do not merely transfer external practices to Britain. They often merely advance current practices and always take account of prevailing industrial relation . British companies have had some difficulties in applying, without taking account of the prevailing cultures , the new practices as exemplified at Fords. (Wickens 1987 : Dore 1973: White & Treves 1983: JCF 1990 & 1993)

At the same time development arose in the public sector with public enterprises sold to private investors: British Steel, British Telecom , British Gas, water supply and electricity supply and generating, British Coal and British Rail. This established new commercial objectives and a move away from the national, industry-wide bargaining to decentralised and local negotiations. The process is being projected for other public sectors.

But a changing industrial environment, and the effects on collective bargaining, is not new and trade unions have had to meet the challenges in the past . (ACAS 1982) It must be added , all this did bring an impetus for change in employment relationships.

With the present situation, the trade unions have had to acquire a broader approach. In green field sites the development of single union agreements has taken place. These agreements have been surrounded by controversy (particularly regarding the EEPTU see earlier in this chapter). Most of the deals have been employer initiatives and the choice of union is related to many differing factors defined overtly or covertly by the employer. (cf Wicken 1988)

A survey of 76 single union deals in 1989 showed that

"they have largely been limited to four unions - the IGWU, the EETPU, the AEU and the GMB. There are at least as many UK firms as, for example, Japanese companies involved, but the unions see the issue, particularly among the domestic firms, as of diminishing significance." (LRD 1989)

A similar survey of 81 such agreements signed since then shows the same unions, however now including MSF, obtaining the major share. The AEEU had signed 53 agreements. (LRD 1994)

Gavin Laird, General Secretary of the AEU wrote in the union journal, that "the general unions abandoned joint approaches to several recent Japanese inward investors, not because they each wanted to grab the whole deal for themselves, but because they realised that no new employer was going to saddle themselves with a multi-union deal at a new site." (AEU 1990) It is interesting to note that he includes his union in the definition of "general union."

These changes have also generated new trade union methods of discharging their responsibilities. The term "corporate trade unionism" has been used to cover a number of differing approaches. At first this term was almost always pejorative. In spite of this, the prevailing situation to which trade unions have had to adapt, has required them to provide sophisticated benefits outside the

normal convention of collective bargaining, such as financial services package inclusive of discounted mortgages, personal loans and insurances; travel discount; legal assistance and consultation. In a modern context they echo the friendly society benefits of the early trade unions

Conclusion

As confidence returns to the trade unions in the 1990's, there is a recognition of the need to review organisational structure. The earlier LRD survey, referred to above, continued by outlined the development of collective bargaining at multi-union companies by single table bargaining. Whilst the 1994 survey concentrated on the recognition successes of unions. The need, therefore, is for mergers that can provide trade unions capable of meeting these challenges and the ever changing scenario, for collective bargaining is a major tendentious factor. As Waddington concluded "variations in the level of collective bargaining are at least concurrent with intense periods of merger interest." (Waddington 1988)

IN CONCLUSION...

This chapter underlined the fact, that to singling out one tendency or factor as the key to merger reasoning, is untenable. We have seen that there is an interplay of all inter-union tendentious factors and the extra-tendentious factors, through concrete cases.

The merger styles, consolidatory, defensive and aggressive, are interrelated to all the other tendentious factors, to the extent that there is an interaction due to the external "market variables" of government action, industrial and societal changes, a new bargaining environment and changed company culture. The merger - progressive union, which in the 1960-1970s had an

aggressive approach , now has to be amalgamation friendly. The union must show an ability to 'deliver the goods' : meet the needs of functional specialism through research , retention of sectoral profile and identity, perceived ability in the bargaining circumstance and show stability.

To ascertain whether a union has stability reference is made to its financial status. In this chapter, it has been noted that sound finance is neither an indication of a unions potential for growth , or fitted to other amalgamation friendly elements. Nevertheless financial viability is an important factor in appraisal of the necessity to merge, the appeal of the amalgamator, and long term prospects. It may even be a basis for a reasoned approach. It is , however only equal to other factors. In fact a major factor as underlined above is the culture of the union.

Trade unions are not monolithic entities, they exist on many different structured organisational levels, norms and values ; what has been termed the culture of a union . This has a major effect on the merger appeal, approach and acceptance. Although composed of diverse groups the heritage of a particular union unifies the membership. The merger style is closely related to, or enhanced by, the culture of the union. More particularly it is what 'may allow' a merger to take place. No unidirectional causality is to be assumed as the culture can change, as has been established. But the force of the culture is paramount . Changes to this rely often upon the decision makers and takers.

It has been shown that the leadership in a union is an important merger facet . It should not be assumed that the leadership determines the culture (it inevitably restricts the progress at times e.g. AEU) , or that cultural factors are always determinative of the leadership, be it a national committee , lay membership conference or individual leaders. The merger progressive unions do,

however, appear to have strong individual leadership. The social and trade union imagery of Jones (TGWU) and Jenkins (ASTMS) were cited as strong influence for change. It was also noted that, strong leadership was able to guide through, or restrict, the changes in culture, and make the necessary statements to extend membership and activists awareness. This process is not a desertion of democratic principle, but it shows that the commonality of the trade unions prefer authoritative solutions to important problems as a means to decision-taking.

External to the trade union organisation, other factors have added to the tendency to merge. The impact of legislation cannot be overlooked. The relaxation of the law which related directly to trade union mergers has assisted amalgamations. Laws with a direct effect on trade unions have had an indirect effect on the push to amalgamate. This also applies to the employment and industrial relations law changes which creates a need for further and better research back up.

In tandem with the legislative changes are the variation in company organisation and culture. The effect of these changes was to make collective bargaining no longer the unique method of job and remuneration regulation. It was noted however that within these trends some trade unions, those with the resources, were meeting the challenge. In terms of the appeal to potential merger partners, this ability to meet all the challenges is an essential element of the amalgamation friendly style.

All this linked to what was perceived as changes in industry- social perspective in chapter 1. Staff and manual employees cannot be polarised in terms of their image of society, industry or trade union. The direction is to establishing the conglomerate trade union with the 'ability to deliver the goods', with the research functional specialism and structure to meet change.

Any analysis which is over economic, or sets culture against structural factors, will not have a full picture of the network which is explored through this study . The case study that follows of a specific amalgamation, GMB /APEX , is particularly relevant to this network analysis .

A Case Study.... the Methods.

Background to the case study.

The point of departure, in processing this case study, was the importance noted by many sources that the amalgamation of the staff union, APEX, with whoever, would have a significant impact in the amalgamation scenario. It became even more significant when the merger was with a general, and ostensibly a manual, trades union, the GMBATU. This raised new perspectives of a *raison d'etre* of amalgamation. In addition, the previous chapters outline the network of change factors. This case study will be used to explore and build upon these factors, with a view to documenting and examining the process of amalgamation. The research into the specific intra-trade union factors will be augmented by reference to the extra-trade union factors as listed in Table 1 and Table 5.

Case Study Objectives.

The main objective is to assess the value judgment of the model developed in Table 1 and Table 5, by an overall perception of change in a particular merger. The focus is on change and the process of change. The key indicators are those outlined in these Tables and elaborated upon in Chapters 1 and 2. The case study is an objective measure of these elements. The central focus throughout will be to explore, explain and clarify the changing pattern of these elements. Most of the key factors will be specific to each union, but there will necessarily be the need to cross-refer. Other influences will be largely external in origin, for example industrial and legislation impact. Consideration will be made of the relative importance of each factor, but more particularly the symmetry of the model established by linking the factors of Table 1 and Table 5.

More specifically, therefore, a number of hypothesis will be tested. The major hypothesis is that the intra- and extra-factors of trade union amalgamation point to the eventuality of conglomerate trade unionism and the super union, achieved through the process of merger. Accepting that the aggressive style has metamorphosed into the amalgamation- friendly style, this will be explored. A related hypothesis is that the occupational, cultural and solidaristic profile are dissolving. Manual and staff, blue and white collar, skilled and unskilled, as identifiable reasons against particular mergers, because of the social and industrial relations gap, is being superseded. The body corporate of the unions, identifying the culture changes necessary to accommodate a broad coherent and single status commonality, is studied. This has been established in previous Chapters across a broad canvas, the case study will relate to the specific.

Access to Information Sources.

Access to information sources was in no way hindered, except by the limits of time and research resources. Assistance was sought from officials, lay members, research and information held at the GMB College, Manchester. As a senior trade union official, of both APEX and eventually the GMB, I was in a unique position to gain access to information.

Interviews were inevitably with those directly involved in the processing of the amalgamation (the decision makers), however a small number of members whose role was the eventual acceptance of this process (the decision takers) were interviewed. These however were, therefore, only a supplementary source of information. It was not possible to rely on a single method, in fact a composite picture was achieved by using a number of methods.

Case Study Design

Chapter four will briefly outline the history, structure and organisation of the two unions, APEX and the GMBATU. It will be noted that change has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and that there were similarities, and dissimilarities, in culture and job territory. Chapter five will consider in detail the actual merger, the motivation and the various negotiations. Due consideration is given to discussions APEX and GMBATU had with other unions, the mergers that created the two unions and the GMBATU development of the amalgamation - friendly style. In the process we will discover what both unions hoped to gain. Chapter six will look at the after affects of the merger in the new union, GMB. Due consideration will be given to the attitude of the decision - makers now that the decision had been made by the decision - takers. The opinions of the latter will be tested. Furthermore, any changes to organisation or structure will be analysed.

This will be an analytical consideration of the relationship between all the factors, and entails a detailed case study approach by a pliant enquiry, through three main data sources with supplementary sources. Although the case study will address the factors to each union, APEX and the GMBATU, there will also be the comparative focus also evident.

Data Sources.

Three main sources of data:

- a) Historical information.
- b) Documents.
- c) Interviews.

Secondary data sources used will include newspapers and specialist literature

Historical Information.

From a literature search it was established that there is material gathered, by a number of authors, which assist in developing a picture of the historical background to which reference will be made in the case study. However, there is little previous literature directly regarding mergers. Therefore, the starting point for this section was inevitably Clegg's important studies on GMB history, (Clegg 1954 & 1964); Hughes and Marsh studies of APEX history (Hughes 1953; Marsh 1978). With regards the actual merger there is little published information outside union documents. Obviously reference was made to relevant research.

Documents.

Many documents were analysed including policy statements: reports, some previously confidential: procedures: minutes of meetings: guidance documents: correspondence: union newspapers: Conference reports. In addition notes made by author at the time of the merger negotiations.

Representative Interviews.

Due to the constraints of time and resources and within the strategy determined, the interview respondents were selected in an attempt to cover a broad spectrum of experience and knowledge of the merger. Emphasis was placed on interviewing differing strands of opinion, whilst recognising that the merger had majority favour. Also the selection was made so as to deploy the

limited resources to meet the case study objectives .

Although not formally structured , the method used was the extended focus interviews. This was discussion headings focusing on particular elements of the merger, to facilitate the discovery of qualitative data. The discussion headings for those directly involved in the merger negotiations differed from those applicable to other decision makers, as the latter did from the decision takers. Anonymity where requested by individual respondents was strictly maintained. Recognising that the disadvantage of this method is that the interviewers can possibly effect the results by communicating their attitudes , the representative respondents were of a calibre that this did not occur. In fact this method allowed greater flexibility to probe for shades of meaning and avoid the seeking of 'non existent ' facts.

Added to the interviews , basically by questionnaire and open dialogue, the observation and analysis was assisted by the author's 27 years as a full time trade union official , the senior regional post of APEX at the time of the amalgamation . I was also one of the six APEX representatives on the joint committee with the GMB that considered government and structure of the proposed new union.

Conclusion

The three data sources - historical literature , documents and interviews was a cross referencing and a check balance to remove preconceptions or assumptions. This gave the qualitative data to assess the validity of the Intra and Extra Trade Union Factors which effect Amalgamations.

Parallel Development of the GMB & APEX.

In the period that historians term the "birth of new unionism", the last decade of the 19th century, the exclusiveness and social closure practices of the craft unions were challenged by the socialist ideology of the time. This was a period of political agitation, working class radicals were assisted by the Social Democratic Federation (SDF) providing an analysis, producing pamphlets and documents. New ideas were abroad. Great figures in the world of letters were springing to the side of the workers. At the centre stage were those workers who suffered from unemployment, some with the worst wages, but all suffering from a lack of organisation and disregard by the craft unions. It was at this whirligig of time; trade union membership growth, changing industrial characteristics and a period of prosperity for industry, that the two unions, the GMB and Apex, have their origin.

The formation of the National Union of Gas Workers and General Labourers, the precursor of the GMB, in 1889, along with the Dockers' & General Workers union, the precursor of the TGWU, in 1890, was to start the development of the continuing general trade unionism ethos. Clegg, in his short history of the NUGMW, points out that it is

"one of history's half-truths" to suggest that this "was only a movement of unskilled labourers". "The new unions therefore were not based on a single principle of organisation. Instead they tried to fill in the various gaps left by the existing forms of trade unionism" (Clegg1964).

The strength of these new general unions lay in the broadness of their appeal, to which Will

Thorne and Ben Tillett were inextricably linked. Both, in fact, were nominated to lead the Gas Workers, but it was to be Thorne who became the General Secretary. Thorne had been a member of the SDF almost from its inception and from this he gained great experience, support, confidence and leadership qualities. (Radice 1974) The well documented victory of Beckton gas workers for "the eight hour day" helped the union's rapid spread to other regions and other sectors. After six months the membership had reached 20,000 with 60 branches throughout the country. (Kapp 1989: Thorne 1925: Clegg 1954/1964: Radice 1974)

The Gas workers' dispute, the match-girls strike in 1888, and the great Dock Strike 1889, all have their place in the history books. Tillett was the leader in the dock strike, which was a turning point in advancing this New Unionism. However Thorne's "idea of one great union encompassing all sections of labour was rejected by Tillett", the latter consolidated the docker organisation and "set about organising other sections of workers in different trades and industries..." (Pelling 1967: McCarthy 1988)

The period was also fundamental to the birth of the clerks' union. Marsh noted that the labour market status of office workers had deteriorated, due to the fact that "the supply of clerks had far outstripped the demand, and the general standard of payment was very poor". (Marsh 1978) Wages were depressed and they had poor working conditions. However the discontent amongst office workers was passive for want of a coherent organisation. In May 1890, a union was formed primarily for London clerks, the National Union of Clerks, the precursor of APEX. Nevertheless from the beginning they looked to a national organisation being formed. (Hughes 1953: Marsh 1978)

During the initial year organisation of clerks appeared elsewhere in Britain, some were branches

of the National Union of Clerks. However, in Leeds a National Clerks Association had been formed in 1894, registered as a trade union, independent of the London organisation. They merged in 1897. Another organisation existed, as Hughes recalls in his personal history of the union,

"... a group of London city women founded an Association of Shorthand Writers and Typists in 1903 which took on a more definitely 'feminist' mentality and in 1912...men (who had been a small and diminishing factor) were excluded altogether, and the title became 'The Association of Women Clerks and Secretaries' ". (Hughes 1953)

The attempt to achieve merger between the N.U.C and the AWCS, and the eventual amalgamation in 1941, showed the difficulties of different cultures coming together.

The first decade and a half of the twentieth century was markedly a period of industrial conflict and labour unrest. It was also a period when amalgamation was a major polemic in the trade unions. Two "general worker federations" were set up, the Transport Workers Federation and the General Labourers' National Council. The Dock workers' & General Workers Union was in the former federation, whereas, the Gas workers' union was a member of both bodies.

"In July 1914, a joint meeting of the two organisations, at which thirty-one unions were represented, approved a common scheme of amalgamation. On the outbreak of war however, the [...] two bodies agreed to defer the amalgamation [...] the scheme was never taken up again." (Radice 1974)

Despite this, there were discussions and eventual amalgamation ballot between the two major general unions.

Amalgamation was now somewhat easier since the change of law in 1917 (see Chapter 2) and the

two unions had a commonality of members, traditions, history and recognition of the need to extend membership growth into new job territories. However in the ballot held in 1919, "not enough members of the Dockers voted to satisfy the legal requirement." (Radice 1974) The amalgamation would not have suited Ernest Bevin, the Dockers' National Organiser, who was effectively running the union and was Tillett's obvious successor. In the new union he would have come well down in the hierarchy. The Dockers had returned a good majority, but a low vote.

"In Bristol, by far the largest district and Bevin's stronghold, the proportion voting was down by 27 per cent. There can be little doubt that if Bevin had backed the scheme it would have gone through. Bevin at once launched another scheme for amalgamation based on the Transport Workers' Federation which brought the Transport and General Workers Union into being during 1921, with himself as general secretary." (Clegg 1964)

Thus the two great general unions of today divided at this crossroad in trade union history.

In this early wave of amalgamation, however, the merger direction of these general unions was to be significant.

The Gas Workers and General Labourers' Union was to amalgamate with National Amalgamated union of Labour (NAUL), established in 1889 as the Tyneside & National Labourers Union for the semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the shipbuilding and engineering sector. Its major membership was on Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside, but it had spread outside its regional base. Ironically, most early disputes were not with the employer, but with the Boilermakers' Society. At the time, the plater's helpers (NAUL members) were employed by the platers (Boilermakers' Society) and paid out of their earnings. It was a considerable advance when, in 1892, the Sunderland District obtained recognition from the shipbuilding employers. (Hyman 1971; Clegg 1954/1964; GMB notes.) This established the Northern regional base of the union.

Alongside the Gas workers union , groups of municipal authority workers joined together to form trade unions during the late nineteenth century. With mergers, the largest union in that sphere was the Municipal Employees Association (MEA) , a more aggressive recruiting trade union based on the London County Council , in 1894 , in direct competition to the Gas workers Union . However in the MEA there was to be , apart from the public battle with rival unions, a private internal battle which created a split and the formation of the breakaway union, the National Union of Corporation Workers (NUCW) , the precursor of NUPE. Both the NUCW and the MEA had many clashes with the general unions in recruitment campaigns and at TUC level. Nevertheless the MEA regarded itself as a sectoral general union and recognised the need to amalgamate with the new force in trade unionism, general unions. The NUCW had an ideology of industrial unionism, which continued in the culture of its progeny NUPE. (Dix & Williams 1987 : also see reference to NUPE in Chapter 2 : Clegg 1954/1964 .) The MEA was also to merge with the Gas Workers 'Union.

Women workers in the sweated and exploited trades also were finding expression in the Women's Protective & Provident League which was formed by Emma Patterson in 1874 , mainly middle class led. Although Emma Patterson was not the first to bring women into trade unions , as Goldman shows in the short biography of "trade unionism's forgotten woman " , she pioneered a lasting "and an enduring trade union understanding among women". In the formative years she , along with her husband, were active in the Working Men's Club and Institute where she gained experience of administration and organisation. In her brief life of thirty-eight years she was to introduce many women into the male preserve of the TUC .

Mary MacArthur was to become Patterson's successor as general secretary , having been

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introduced to the union by Margaret Bondfield, who was then an organiser for the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants (precursor of USDAW.) In 1906 she led a number of women's unions to form the National Federation of Women Worker , with Margaret Bondfield as Assistant Secretary. (Goldman1974) Membership grew steadily as the War had created the necessity to employ women workers which " not even the post-war depression could wipe out". and the NFWW "decided that the large increase in female membership in trade unions in general - from 433,000 in 1913 to 1,326,000 in 1919 - had rendered a separate women's trade union obsolete". (Clegg 1964)

Thorne's General Union right from its origination had a progressive approach and recruited women into membership . The first women's branch of the Gas worker's Union under the secretaryship of Eleanor Marx dates back to 1890. She had in fact been unanimously elected a member of its National Executive at their first Annual Conference in May of that year. (Evans 1982) So it was not surprising that when MacArthur planned to absorb her women members into this general union . It was agreed that she would be at the head of the 40,000 strong women's section , accompanied by Margaret Bondfield as a national officer. Unfortunately on the morning of the date designated for the amalgamation, January 1st 1921 , Mary MacArthur died and Margaret Bondfield took her place at the head of the women's section . She was to be Chief Women's Officer 1921-1936 and , having been sponsored by the union, one of Britain's first women MPs - 1923 - 1924 & 1926 - 1931, becoming the first woman Cabinet Minister as Minister of Labour 1929-1931. (Goldman 1974)

Another amalgamation of a general nature was taking place in Birmingham. In 1915 a local Gas worker, Brick makers and General Labourers Society merged with another Birmingham union,

General Unions' Membership 1920 & 1923 Table 8			
UNION	Membership 1920	Membership 1923	% Loss
All Unions	8,346,000	5,428,000	35
National Union of General Workers	490,000	221,000	55
National Amalg. Union of Labour	143,000	53,000	63
Municipal Employees' Assoc	65,000	41,000	37
Workers' Union	450,000	140,000	69
Transport & General Workers Union	430,000	307,000	30
National Union of Clerical & Admin. Workers	40,000	11,000	25
Association of Women Clerks & Secretaries	6,000	3,000	50
source Clegg 1964; APEX statistics; TUC			

the Birmingham District Municipal Employees Association to form the Amalgamated Society of Gas, Municipal and General Workers. This organisation continued to function as a local Birmingham based Union. By the end of the decade they realised that they needed to amalgamate with a major union and the obvious choice was the National Union of General Workers, bringing 50,000 members into that union. This also created a major region of the union.

In the summer of 1920 with the ending of the post-war boom unemployment grew rapidly,

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recovery was slow and trade unions suffered a decline in membership. The general unions being severely effected. The pressures to amalgamate in the face of the worst depression is shown in the membership figures in Table 8. In fact the NUGW total was assisted by the recent amalgamations of the NWWF and the Birmingham based ASGMGW referred to earlier in this Chapter. Without these mergers the loss would have been 60% and comparable with the other general unions.

During 1920 , a further plan of amalgamating the general unions was again hammered out and leading the discussions was the Gas workers union , now with the title National Union of General Workers (NUGW) . This again failed, but put pressure on others to amalgamate.

On 1st July 1924 , the MEA, the NAUL and the NUGW amalgamated to form the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (NUGMW)

In this period the membership of the NUC was also growing rapidly and were showing signs of their developing unionateness. In his study Lockwood disputed any proletarianisation of the clerical worker (and similar groups) , considering these workers in terms of their market situation, work situation and status situation. He concluded that although the status was changing, the other elements of market and work were still so particularly extrinsic as to facilitate their opinion of themselves as a different class from the manual worker. This will be further considered in this and the next chapter. (Lockwood 1966) Nevertheless even Lockwood recognised the manifest unionateness even in these early days which clearly effects the culture of the Union. (Blackburn 1967)

The union was now clearly a national organisation recognised in the trade union family and by the

government, giving evidence to Ministers and actively pursuing legislative issues. Having absorbed a number of very small organisations, however its progress towards collective bargaining had been slow. During the First World War this changed and Hughes (1953) relates the negotiations undertaken "some friendly, some acrimonious". Growth of membership was across all sectors, but significantly in manufacturing. Both Hughes and Marsh outline three factors, other than collective bargaining, which are significant in this period of growth: regional identity, guild sectionalism and the friction with the AWCS.

The eight regions always pursued their element of autonomy; comparable to that of the National Union of General Workers. The union had accepted that Area (Regional) Councils would be responsible for local negotiations and administration. Guild sectionalism, G.D.H. Cole's belief that trade unions must take the form of Guilds controlling production and services had much support amongst the NUC leadership.

"evolved by a group of middle class intellectual socialists, particularly at the universities, who attempted to adapt the idea of syndicalism to the conditions of British parliamentary politics...and replace capitalism and the capitalist state by Guild Socialism in which each union would take charge of its respective industry...This movement, confused as it was, did for a time win the support of many militant trade unionists and socialists." (Morton & Tate 1956)

Eventually, it outlived its favour with the activists, and was restricted "to the formulation of their industrial claims". (Marsh 1978) Nevertheless it did establish the acceptance of industrial sectoral needs, by then already accepted in the general unions.

Friction between the NUC and the AWCS was continuous mainly in London. Nevertheless the latter had a membership of under 900 in 1906 which "rose to a peak variously estimated at 7,500

and 8,500 in 1920". (Marsh 1978) They registered as a trade union in 1916 and formally accepted into the TUC in 1919 on "the understanding that discussions would be opened with a view to the amalgamation of the two organisations". (Hughes 1953) It was to take a further twenty years to end the friction .

During the 1920s, unemployment grew rapidly , the trade unions had to then face the action of employers seeking to force down labour costs to recover their profit margins. Thus disputes occurred across the whole industrial front including a national lock-out by employers in the coal and engineering industries . The latter was to have an effect on the finances of the craft , the general and the clerks' unions . However it was not only the financial effects that affected the general unions,

" a further factor pushing the unions towards amalgamation was the conversion of the powerful Amalgamated Engineering Union (created in 1920 by the amalgamation of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers and several smaller craft unions) to the cause of industrial unionism. Early in 1923, the Engineers wrote to the General Workers to terminate a previous agreement not to recruit unskilled workers". (Pelling 1967)

Furthermore , in 1926 the General Strike called by the TUC to compel attention to the injustices suffered by the miners, was supported by all affiliates , including the NUGMW , the NUC and the AWCS. Within the compass of this work there can be no attempt either to indicate the extent of the miners' grievance or give account to the self - sacrifice of miners' and other trade unions' members . The period has been the subject of much research , analysis and local studies including the effect of the nine days of National Strike, as the TUC General Council preferred to call it , on the trade union movement. The Strike ended unsuccessfully , a return to work without any concessions , a loss of prestige for the unions and particularly for the miners. This led to the Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act, 1927, which placed many constraints on the unions more

particularly it heralded a further decline in TUC affiliated membership "by almost half a million between 1925 and 1927". (Pelling 1967)

Although "most unions accumulated large reserves during the first world war, when strikes were illegal", the cost of disputes and particularly the General Strike, the payment of unemployment benefits (eventually abandoned by most unions including the general workers and the clerks' union, due to the heavy unemployment of that period) and the cost of administration was to create the pressure for a further amalgamation. Nevertheless all proposals for one great general union, echoing that of Thorne, made to the joint committee of the TGWU and the NUGMW was allowed to lapse. Bevin, as General Secretary of the TGWU, had now become one of the most influential leaders in the trade union movement. Radice stressed a reason for the decline in profile of the NUGMW,

"Thorne and Clyne were less effective than in the past. The weakness of the GMWU (NUGMW) duumvirate gave the TGWU the initiative in general union affairs." Thorne was 69 years of age and Bevin 35 years of age in 1926, and it was clear that the former's "horizons had narrowed with age. If Thorne could have been backed by younger men, it would have been some compensation, but most of the district secretaries were also growing old". (Radice 1974)

The TGWU weathered the storm somewhat better than most unions, due to the sheltered nature of the docks and transport.

The only other major general union, the Workers' Union, was in a state of collapse. (See Table 8) This union had always been an advocate of amalgamation and, although it had broken from previous merger talks, it recorded its commitment to the principle at its Triennial Conferences in 1923 and 1926. As Hyman outlines in his history of the Workers' Union,

"by 1927 the union's financial straits had made amalgamation not merely a desirable objective but an urgent necessity if bankruptcy was to be avoided. Only two organisations could reasonably be approached". (Hyman 1971)

The NUGMW was still the main contender as it had a similar culture to the Workers' Union ,

" they were both truly general unions , whereas up to this time Bevin's union had been primarily a transport union , although with wide secondary interests outside". (Hyman 1971)

However the opportunity was missed. No approach was made by the NUGMW

"its tired administration was no attraction to the leaders of the Workers' Union to swallow their pride and make a new initiative. The other alternative was the TGWU, which had by contrast achieved a forceful reputation and was in terms of membership clearly the more successful". (Hyman 1971)

The Workers' Union amalgamated with the TGWU in 1929.

The consequence of this was TGWU membership rose to 423,000 , whilst the NUGMW rose to only 291,000 in 1929. As Hyman stressed, although the TGWU took into its ranks a financially ailing union, the amalgamation transformed the union into a truly general union,

"more than doubling the size of the existing General Workers' Trade Group and greatly extending its industrial coverage perhaps even more important in the long run, it also brought recognition...The TGWU thus acquired a standing in a range of industries which allowed ready facilities for expansion when conditions became more favourable for union organisation." (Hyman 1971.)

Brought into the TGWU as part of a trade group, the amalgamating union did not enhance the regional structure, as we have seen was the case with the NUGMW mergers . In this instance the introduction of a further truly general union into the trade group structure meant that

"this could only be a temporary solution with so ramified an organisation as the Workers' Union, and it was agreed that within two years a complete regrouping should be worked out". (Hyman 1971)

In fact had the NUGMW pressed its case or at least made an approach to the Workers' Union

"they might have brought off the deal ; and their union would then have been certain of becoming far and away the largest in the country". (Clegg 1964)

Meanwhile clerical employees and their union , the NUCAW , had been dramatically effected by the economic crisis and unemployment of the 1920s. As a small union it had fewer reserves and, overdrawn at the bank , it was now back to its prewar position . Its activities for the most part reverting to representation of individual members and propaganda.

The Engineering Employers' lockout, referred to above, and the effects of the depression saw the National Union of Clerks membership in engineering dwindle from 15,000, claimed in 1920, to 730 for the combined engineering, shipbuilding and metal trades. The manual unions in this industry were helpful and friendly , but as stated above were taking action themselves to protect their interests.

By 1930 the total membership of the NUC was only 7,404 contained mainly in the cocoa , cooperative societies and wholesale, trade union and other labour movement staff , with merely pockets of , and sometimes individual, membership in other industrial sectors. The AWCS stabilised around 3,000 mainly in London . (Lockwood 1966)

There was no attempt at joining into a manual union , although there is reference to 'shop floor staff' in both the NUGMW and the TGWU. In fact the latter established a non - manual trade

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group in the initial amalgamation mainly catering for such staff, mainly supervisors, in the sectors in which the union predominated.

The Governments of the early 1930s all held office during a period of world economic crisis. Unemployment, as it had been in the 1920s, was still centred in the UK. heavy industry. Although a national problem governments treated the issue as essentially regional in character with aid policies to little avail. Unemployment increased with an inimical affect on trade union membership. Attitude to trade unions by the Conservatives was one of either tolerance or outright hostility.

The NUCAW membership appears to have been stabilised at around 7,500 throughout this period. The NUGMW membership decreased by 23,000 during 1930 to 1931 and 26,000 in 1932.

The TGWU benefited from the important amalgamation with the Workers' Union and the consequent opening up of new job territory for consolidatory recruitment, but also by Bevin introducing what was to be its continuous aggressive merger style. (see Chapter 2) No real account was to be taken of the financial status of the amalgamatees, as they were to assess goodwill higher than money and the trade group structure was well adapted to amalgamation. This was to be the differing heritage and culture of the two general workers unions. The NUGMW, Clegg was to underline is

"considerably more decentralized than other unions and is in strong contrast to the IGWU, in which devolution of authority is by industry rather than by area". (Clegg 1954 & 1964)

In the late 1930s to the early 1940s, employment began to improve with the rearmament

programme and the Second World War. Technology led change, time study implications of the Bedaux system and early forms of automation, particularly in the new car industry, was moving the workers back to collective protection. The NUGMW under a new general secretary, carried out a drastic reorganisation. The structure was streamlined to ten districts (regions) and financial administration was given priority. At the head office, a research department was established and new national officers appointed. Compulsory retirement was introduced for full time officials. (Clegg 1954)

This was a period of consolidating membership, which the restructuring assisted and resulted in growth. Both the NUGMW and the TGWU did arrange mergers during this period. However the consolidatory merger style of the former did not produce the same results as the aggressive style of the latter. The consolidation activities did, nevertheless, create an increase of 94% in the period from 1933 to 1939 for the NUGMW (467,000), which may have lessened the resolve to change the amalgamation style. Clegg noted that none of the unions, that amalgamated with the NUGMW, "brought in large numbers or a claim to organise in a wider field of industry". (Clegg 1954)

The NUCAW was also beginning to see signs of growth again, but this was also consolidation rather than changes in job territory. Despite the union in some areas organising its affairs as if it was a debating club, outside of the area / branch machine the industrial activists were attaining some successes. Both clerical unions were involved in political identity struggles. The AWCS had the bulk of their membership in London. As most of the propagandist activity was in the capital, inevitably its activists were politically motivated. Also, as it so happened the NUCAW

"became absorbed in the 1930s with popular left-wing issues of the day...Behind these lay the activities of the Communist Party." (Marsh 1978)

This constant political bickering militated against building effective organisation . Despite this, the membership of the NUCAW was growing , especially in the manufacturing sectors. The AWCS did not benefit from this industrial sector growth and its membership was stagnating. This caused the question of merger to be raised again . The TUC had held many meetings with the two unions, in line with its policy of structural change. In the General Council Report, 1938, it stated, with regards office workers, that

"one combined union for this profession ...did not prove to be practical politics, but the NUCAW intimated their willingness to enter into amalgamation proceedings". (TUC 1938)

The TUC acted as the facilitator to the drafting of the instrument of amalgamation , through transfer of engagements , during 1939 and 1940. The attainment of the requisite majority lay with the AWCS as the transferee . (TUC 1938 & 1939)

During 1939 negotiations nearly broke down as the NUCAW General Secretary , Elvin , was against giving national status to the two existing paid officials of the AWCS. He wanted to give them Area status only. However the new NUCAW President won the argument at his executive . This was endorsed at the subsequent Annual Conference in March 1940 , even though the transferring membership from the AWCS was below that of the NUCAW women membership . The transfer of engagement terms were approved by the AWCS membership and, in 1941, the new union came into existence. The merger created one identifiable occupational union for clerical and administrative staff. (Hughes 1953)

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The Clerical & Administrative Workers' Union : the CAWU

Within the new rules of the new union were the election of President, and two Vice- Presidents , not more than two of the three to be of the same sex and, two additional women reserve seats on the Executive for an interim period of three years.

The Second World War was to have a profound effect on trade unions , their influence and growth. Bevin, now (Cabinet rank) Minister of Labour, steered through policies which created social partnership of employers, trade unions and government , the concept which lasted until the late 1970s . Membership growth was inevitable.

The structural change of industry , and the attitudinal change of the craft industrial unions to semi and unskilled workers as potential members, was to advance further the cause of consolidation of membership. For example, the AEU, in 1942, decided to admit women into membership, prior to this only the two general unions represented them on the shop floor . This move of job territory , whilst maintaining it as a consolidation in a specific industry, was to create a new competition for potential membership with the general unions. The craft / industrial unions had become more "open" trade unions, but the broad increase in membership levels allayed any alarm. As Pelling outlined

" The Transport and General rose from less than 700,000 to over a million members...the AEU became for a time the second largest union, more than doubling its size from 334,000 in 1939 to 825,000 in 1943, but later falling back with the contraction of the engineering industry in the last phases of the war...the General and Municipal Workers challenged the AEU for second place : it rose from 467,000 in 1939 to a peak of 726,000 in 1943...Meanwhile smaller unions...more than doubled their membership" (Pelling 1967)

So this growth was not by mergers essentially. The TUC in 1944 offered the suggestion that

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amalgamations should be encouraged and in 1946 produced the report "Trade Union Structure and Closer Unity". Securing the level of approval by members, as required by law, was still most difficult. (see chapter 2)

Consolidatory mergers did take place, from miners' federation to the NUM : USDAW formed from two major shop assistants unions and the AEU had three unions transfer engagements. The general trade unions were not participant in this merger wave, their efforts were concentrated on continuing consolidation of their established sectors. The membership figures increased, bolstered by the new status and security for a vast number of workers. (TUC 1944 - 1945)

With the election of a majority Labour Government in 1945, the social partnership principle in industry was given further accord by the TUC, British Employers' Confederation (forerunner of the CBI) and government. However the task of restoring the economy ravaged by war, and the policy to extend the welfare system, was to place great strain on the external and internal relationships of trade unions. The government carried out a radical change to ownership of sectors of industry through nationalisation - coal, public utilities, railways, the airlines, iron and steel - and created the National Health Service, alongside other welfare benefits. Nevertheless, most industrial sectors remained in private corporations. In this environment an amalgamation of the general unions would appear to be probable. But as Clegg records, possibly the last time for forty years, the question of the "one big union" was broached and failed. (Clegg 1964) A resolution on amalgamation with the TGWU was withdrawn at the 1948 NUGMW Congress due to organisational dissimilarity:

"the differences in structure between the regionally decentralised NUGMW and the industrially decentralised TGWU and the great difficulties which would be raised over finding suitable posts for the leaders".
(NUGMW Journal 1948)

The CAWU membership also rose steadily during the 1940s having become the sectoral union of clerks and administrative staff. The membership increased from 18,478 in 1941, to nearly 40,000 at the end of the decade and, by 1956, now the largest staff unions, to 53,000 members. As with the general unions the character of the union had changed, in this instance quite dramatically. By the early 1950s around 23,000 members were employed in engineering, but by 1956 it was about 30,000, with a national officer specifically appointed having this industry as his prime duty.

The unions were strong, but now faced employers seeking to reassert the prerogatives they had in the pre-war years. Alongside this was the austerity programme period of Sir Stafford Cripps, the Minister for Economic Affairs, commencing with a warning of prices and incomes controls in a White Paper "Personal Incomes Cost and Prices". Even so the unions, particularly the new "giant" general unions, gave a commitment to wage restraint. To a great degree the leadership, although there was some unofficial disputes readily disowned by the unions, carried the opinion of their members until 1948. However, it was unreasonable to expect that in such a climate a voluntary adopted policy could easily be maintained and, more particularly, to convince their membership to what was tantamount to a wage-freeze. The growing opposition is often linked to, as Pelling puts it, "communist penetration of the trade unions" evidencing the positions held at national level in certain craft / industrial unions, including the ETU and AEU. Both general unions and the CAWU had rules preventing communists holding key posts. Because of this the NUGMW stated that

"in view of the fact that certain unions were pressing their wage claims irrespective of the policy, there should be some form of voluntary machinery in the Trade Union Movement to coordinate wage claims. The explanation was accepted but nothing was done". (Pelling 1967)

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Their policy was crumbling, more particularly, because of a rising cost of living and a frustrated work force, as some workers had their remuneration enhanced through payment by result bonuses, overtime and by other methods. In defiance of the General Council advice, and the protestations of the General Unions, a composite resolution was carried at the TUC Congress in 1950 which formally ended wage restraint. The Labour Government elected in 1950, with a majority of five, lasted just over a year. With the death of Ernie Bevin in 1951, the early chapter of great general union amalgamations was closed. (Pelling 1976 : TUC 1945 - 1950 : Marsh 1978 : Bullock 1967)

The three consecutive Conservative governments, during the 1950s, under four prime ministers, accepted the concept that to manage the economy required the continuation of social partnership and collective bargaining. To some analysts of that period it has been construed that trade unions had become part of an extended State. The details of the debate surrounding these points does not impinge upon the effects on the trade unions in respect of the question of mergers and need not concern us here. However, it is important to recognise this means of managing the national economy was central to trade union and employer relations, and, more particularly, the relationship with government which existed until 1979.

The trade unions continued consolidatory action during the 1950s, the general unions within their sectors rather than merging to extend job territory. Even so there was a slight dip in membership after the war. An examination of TUC reports of the period shows that inter union disputes more often involved the general unions with industrial unions. Encroachment due to the change in accepting other than skilled workers was creating a diversion from previous recruitment practices.

In engineering, shipbuilding and associated industry, assisted by the growth of employment in these sectors, the AEU membership increased by recruitment and mergers to 888,000 in 1959. By the end of the decade the TGWU was the largest union with 1,240,000 members and the NUGMW, with 769,000 members, dropped to third place in the TUC membership league table. Both general unions had become major unions in manufacturing and processing industries. (TUC 1950-1959) The NUGMW still had (and has) a major membership in local government manual workers.

The NUGMW began to hold regional ad hoc meetings were held relating to specific sectors of the union. These were held under the instruction of the Regional Secretary and were agenda driven by a full time Regional Organiser. Broad policy determination stayed with the Annual Congress and the national Executive Council. The Regional Council, however, remained the agency for developing input into these bodies.

It was at this time, also, that the CAWU ad-hoc conferences of engineering and shipbuilding representatives were formalised in Rule. Initially they were to have only an Area (regional) profile, but, in the mid 1940s, a National Engineering Advisory Council was approved. It followed that in other industrial sectors, as and when membership size determined, advisory machinery was also set up. However policymaking still lay with the National Executive between annual conferences. Practical application of the policy remained the responsibility of the Area Councils, which jealously guarded the level of autonomy they retained. An example of this was the attempt to centralise accounts, even a partial approach in respect of current accounts, in 1956. Area Councils would hear nothing of it. Membership by the beginning of the 1960s had increased to 64,000 by 1962.

Apart from the NUGMW and the TGWU both absorbing three small unions in their traditional job territories, there was no developed strategy towards amalgamation in the general or sectoral unions.

The sixties brought into focus, at the TUC, further debates on the structure of trade unions. In 1963, it invited comments and suggestions about possible amalgamations, although the result was a restatement of the status quo. Throughout the decade this was to be the cornerstone. Although group conferences were called by the TUC, which drew together unions in particular industries or sectors, it did not create a momentum to challenge change. What was clearly taking shape, was the need to adapt trade unions to the new structure of industrial ownership and control, the mechanising of what was once termed skilled functions, government inspired productivity bargaining and the extended use of time study. Government provided the facility in law to be involved. The details of that debate serves as a reminder of the socialisation effects of capital / labour changing the characteristics of unions discussed in Chapter 1. (see also Table 2) The only model that could meet the change was general trade unionism.

Externally discussions were being held with the Minister of Labour requesting the repeal of legislation which mitigated against amalgamation of trade unions. The Act which received Royal Assent in March 1964, the Trade Union (Amalgamation etc.) Act, contained all the main points raised by the TUC, as outlined in Chapter 2. Later that year the Conservatives lost the election. The incoming Labour Government was to usher in industrial relation reforms, which assisted the profile of the trade unions. Nevertheless, the decentralised system of collective bargaining which had developed during the 1950s, with shop stewards committees and plant negotiations, was to make the TUC attempts to maintain a wage restraint policy ineffective.

The seventies saw the political debate shift to direct legislation on trade union organisation and the involvement in collective bargaining. Nevertheless the growth of membership continued during the Conservative government of 1970 and the subsequent Labour minority governments of 1974 - 1979. This was the period of amalgamations by all those unions that had those distinctive merger style discussed in Chapter 2 : consolidatory, defensive and aggressive . At the same time a pattern was being established by the introduction of the philosophy of law into the industrial relations system by the Conservative Industrial Relations Act 1971 . This law provided a framework of institutional arrangements, organisational reconciliations, law on collective bargaining and legal remedies. Legalism had replaced the "voluntary " system. All the tendentious factors were in place , it now required a change of trade union characteristic. The major unions, irrespective of their antecedents and evolution , were to take on the main attributes of general trade unionism. This was exposed particularly in this amalgamation wave and recruitment . (see Chapter 2)

The NUGMW during the sixties and early seventies suffered from a stance which was atavistic . Cooper, the General Secretary (1962 -1973) continued the right- wing approach of all his predecessors since Thorne. He retained a leading edge in the political arena by supporting "every twist and turn of Labour orthodoxy", Instead of looking to amalgamation and, therefore developing in new job territories, continued consolidation and gave precedence to a continuing benefit - led membership role. The union developed a professionalism, both regional and national, through research facilities, financial services, legal sections and, enhanced stewards and lay activists training. This attuned local negotiators to meet the criteria for obtaining productivity deals, over and above the Labour Government's salary increase norms. The new National Board for Prices & Incomes (NBPI) produced reports and guidelines , which were supported by the unions as a means of assisting collective bargaining and, the avoidance of industrial disputes.

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(NBPI 1969) The NUGMW financial reserves more than doubled during the period.

In the sixties and seventies the white collar labour force was expanding. In his Research Paper to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Bain referred to the

"critical period in the history of the British trade union movement. While the number of manual workers is declining, the number of white-collar workers is increasing so rapidly that they will soon be in the majority". (Bain 1967)

He then demonstrated the extent of expansion, unionisation and the problems of recognition impeding the growth of white-collar unions. (Bain 1967)

The growth of the CAWU was constant, but not exceptional. In the decade membership rose from 59,500 (1960) to 86,500 (1969). The increase in membership was primarily by consolidation and particularly in the heavy manufacturing industries. In 1961 the national Executive Council formally set up the National (industrial) Advisory Council in the union's Rules. Combine Committees were organised, to mirror the major engineering groups and the centralised industrial relations management structure of these companies. These changes not only developed, but also transformed, the union into an industrial identifying union. As was to happen in the GMWU in the mid 1970s (see later this Chapter) this increased the scope for the lay activist with the internal power structure remaining intact. (Fig 1)

The establishment of the NBPI, was to have an even greater affect on the office staff unionisation. This was a new environment, trade unionism for white collar employees was apparently publicly desirable. There was an acceptability within the Trade Union Movement, with expressions of support and respectability in industry. In the NBPI report on salary structures

reference was made to the levels of pay , but also to the need for rationalised salary structures. The union had initiated research and produced guidelines on job evaluation. This was used to assist the membership in many industrial and commercial sectors to achieve such a rationale. It also served as a most useful organising vehicle, both in consolidating and recruiting new membership. With this approach, underlined by NBPI documents on job evaluation, employers organisations and business consultants continually stressed the need for trade union participation. (NBPI 1968a: 1968b) Productivity agreements had become the basis for increases above the statutory norm and credence was given to white collar employee productivity in NBPI Report 123

"The first major conclusion to be drawn from the case studies is that work measurement techniques and other methods of improving efficiency can be applied to a wide variety of clerical and non-manual jobs, and that their use can lead to substantial increases in efficiency and reduction in labour costs." (NBPI 1969)

Further to this , the Engineering Employers' Federation stated in their research paper that

"The notion that white-collar , especially clerical , workers cannot be measured effectively is a myth that must be dispelled . Investigations made during the course of this study have shown that there are few areas indeed which are impractical or non-economic to measure...Installation of control techniques almost invariably increase total effectiveness by at least 25%." (Bayhille 1968 quoted by Cliff 1970)

To offset these developments, white collar employees joined the unions for the expertise and ability to deal successfully with consultants and the ways of maximising the benefits that could accrue.

There was still some problems with recognition by employers , but that too was to be addressed in 1968 by proposals in the Donovan Report to establish a special forum for settling recognition disputes. Recognition traditionally in Britain had little to do with the law, and more to do with

the trade union traditional reaction to any refusal. It was this reluctance to recognise the rapidly growing white collar trade unionism by some employers that prompted a response. The Labour Government established the Commission on Industrial Relations (later to become ACAS) to facilitate this and other conciliation in 1969.

These extensions to the viability of collective bargaining, and the dynamic shift in the industrial and occupational composition of work, was to give a confidence for the future as this decade ended. Nevertheless, the activists in the CAWU were now calling for the union to look to amalgamation . Three identifiable strands appeared in motions to the 1968 Annual Conference : merger with DATA and AEU , a powerful sectoral arguments as the DATA / AEU merger was then taking shape (see previous Chapter) and the largest membership group was in engineering : white collar trade unions mergers , supported by evidence using the analysis of growth potential: general trade unionism , supported strongly by the industrial sector activists. However the left activism of the TGWU did not have much support , but neither did the extreme moderation of the NUGMW.

"Such was the 'moderation' of the GMWU (NUGMW) that Lord Cooper was even quite ready to register under the 1971 Industrial Relations Act. Only a threat of revolt from the union's Executive Council held him in check." (Taylor 1980)

The TUC had taken a policy stance not to register under this Act. It had become the symbol of reaction to legislation on trade union rights. This was to establish a trade union shibboleth , which would create difficulties in the 1980s.

John Edmonds , new from Oxford University , who had been appointed a research assistant during this difficult period recollected

"the considerable complications so far as Cooper's personal life was concerned which diverted his interests, but it was his political style that frankly put us (the union) just miles out of step with the rest of the trade union movement. (Edmonds interview 1992)

Referring to the registration issue, which Cooper saw as 'left led', Edmonds recalls that it was Cooper's turn to chair the TUC Congress that year (1971)

"on the eve of Congress when he expressed his view that the union should register under the Act. Now this was at a time when the TUC was building up a big campaign against registration. So for that reason there were no options on amalgamation. Who would amalgamate with the NUGMW in what was such a difficult period for the union." (Edmonds interview 1992)

Cooper's attitude was no doubt established back in the mid 1940s and early 1950s when he was the full time official called upon to trouble-shoot the problems of "communist organising" in the union. Furthermore he had always supported national pay bargaining and incomes policy. (Clegg 1954 & 1964)

However as officials negotiating at that time have stated, there was a definitive change of attitude in the rank and file member. There was a proactive approach to bargaining, and an impatience in these first years of full employment and rising living standards. The prevailing employee culture had shifted, from the need for security of employment of the post war period, to a demand approach by local negotiators to achieve the maintenance, but, more particularly, the advancement, of their standard of living.

In 1968 the NUGMW Congress decided to investigate a national trade group structure. All that was achieved was a system of ad hoc national industrial conferences. They were to be entirely consultative with no direct input into the Executive Council. Policy judgment and advice was to be left to the full time officials. (GMWU 1969) This was comparable to the situation in the CAWU in the late 1950s, referred to earlier. However, the NUGMW had to wait until 1975, and a new General Secretary, before industrial conferences were formalised and part of the union structure. *Nevertheless this*

*"was a tentative first step towards a more industry based general unionism".
(Taylor 1980)*

Edmonds now an Organiser in the Southern Region in 1970, noted the difference to other unions.

"So the union was very much out in the wilderness, the house view was that you should not have a dispute about anything, under any circumstances. So the union was way out of touch with what was going on." (Edmonds interview 1992)

This slow approach at understanding the new pressures in industry and changed attitudes was clearly seen in the unofficial dispute at Pilkington glass works, 1970. At this time most unions were having difficulty coping with changing norms : the AEU and ETU were in a state of continuous political argument at their National Committees and the TGWU had its rough patch of rank and file argument within the trade groups . But the Pilkington issue was different . Here it was a lack of awareness regarding the age profile-change at the company, and its effect on the socio-industrial makeup. Further there was a perceived inertness of the officials. As Lane and Roberts point out in their account of this strike , this was a company that for years had wages and conditions better than most in the vicinity . Their account outlines fully the changed job environment , the changed expectations of the workers and the effect this seven week unofficial strike had on the company , the local community, the union members and particularly the union. What is important here is that this unofficial strike at "Pilkingtons proved to be a watershed in the union's history" (Lane & Roberts 1971)

David Basnett , General Secretary in 1973 , was certainly affected by the Pilkington dispute, he had been the national officer for the glass industry at the time. Basnett stated three years into his office

"Our trouble was we were not attuned to expansion . The leadership was simply unaware of what was going on ". (Taylor 1980)

The Undy et al. study underlined this inability to attune to expansion. Particularly cross referencing the NUGMW and the TGWU in the late 1960s to the mid 1970s, they noted the difference in organisation and structure , the containment within a given job territory and job regulation.

"Membership (of the NUGMW) rose from 795,767 to 881,356 or 10.9%. Of this increase however , 11,074 was the direct result of mergers. Thus 'natural' growth contributed some 9.4%" of this growth. The TGWU expanded far more rapidly 1,481,565 to 1,856,165 in the same period (1965- 1975) or 25.3% . The major element of this growth was merger. Between 1961 and 1975 twenty-one unions merged with the TGWU. The merger of the NUVB in 1972 gave it a "craft dimension " and significantly broke the traditional general worker profile". (Undy et al 1981)

The GMWU, as Undy's tabulations show, had its membership growth tied directly to closing up particular sectors "where they already had a substantial membership" and more particularly, the differing leadership styles in the Regions. "All regions of the TGWU , unlike those in the GMWU, increased their membership over the 1965 -1975 period." (Undy et al 1981)

"It can be reasonably suggested therefore that the GMWU's growth in membership was very largely the result of internal change agents...Thus , since at the beginning of the period studied, commitment to growth objectives and priorities, were confined to two regions, differential rates of growth emerged in those regions . But as more regional secretaries came to accept growth as a priority, and the new General Secretary promoted concomitant national changes...the union began to grow on a national rather than a regional basis." (Undy et al 1981)

Edmonds (a national officer from 1972) recalled that at national level

" Bassnet filled the leadership vacuum putting an end to the rather strange attitude towards disputes , towards the organisation of the union. He was keen to go for expansion and to look for amalgamations. There was a whole range of schemes including APEX, the EETPU and a three way amalgamation between the AEU ,

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TGWU and NUGMW. But it was difficult , all unions , almost without exception were putting on members there were little financial pressure, a Labour Government and the union still had its past to account (for) . So the tone had changed the General Secretary was very keen to reform the (structure of the) union to encourage amalgamations . However there was little achievement of amalgamation...until eventually with the Boilermakers." (Edmonds interview 1992)

As we have seen, CAWU lay activists were suggesting the union review the position on mergers. At national level the reaffirmation of independence from other unions was also expressed . The leadership stance was stated by David Currie, CAWU President;

*"Facing the facts that these are the days of the big unions the Clerical and Administrative Workers needs to expand by amalgamation and growth to build a large union...Our future does not lie in a particular industry or group of industries. It stretches throughout the field of clerical employment . The way to expand is not by amalgamation with workers with quite different skills, but by vigorously pursuing closer working with the positive end of amalgamation with other clerical unions".
(The Clerk Jan. 1970.)*

Currie's attitude was coloured by the culture of the union, which still held at bay the undercurrent of change being generated through the industrial advisories and the joint working at workplace level. He returned to this theme at the 1970 Conference , as it once again discussed amalgamation. The motions repeated the call for a merger away from the tight constraints of staff unions only

*"to pursue discussions with other unions not necessarily only those catering wholly or mainly for clerical workers , and report back to the next Annual Conference.."
(CAWU Conference 1970)*

*"open negotiations with the AEF" (as the AEU was now titled).
(CAWU Conference 1970)*

However Currie repeated that the union was

*"not in a hurry to amalgamate , but we have a responsibility to clerical and administrative and supervisory staffs in the offices to get our plans right for the developments which may occur in the next two or three decades."
(CAWU Conference 1970)*

This was echoed at that Conference by Henry Chapman the retiring General Secretary . The membership had topped 100,000 with a record 14,000 increase from the previous year. The incoming General Secretary Roy Grantham speaking to an Executive report on amalgamation , however, referred to the growth of skilled technicians and , due to computerisation , the employment of fewer routine clerks. He warned that the changes in industry would make staff status common for manual workers. He told delegates that the background to amalgamation should be the membership explosion as this gives a better bargaining position. He further advised that informal discussions had been held with the AEF, NUGMW and some staff unions.

Basnett , as a decision maker , in seeking to alter the merger style and enhance growth , needed a variation to the unions cultural foundation. By the mid 1970s the "General Worker Section " of the TUC was composed of the NUGMW only . Basnett had led discussions and finalised the transfer of engagements with last remaining two smaller unions in that Section : the National Union of Water Works Employees and the Rubber Plastic and Allied Workers' Union . But these were still consolidatory mergers. For development the union needed to move into new job territory and change in its characteristic profile.

In 1975 the variation to the culture was established. The union Congress delegates , the decision-takers , agreed changes which streamlined the government of the union from a two tiered executive to a single Executive Council , to consist of the Chair of the union (later termed President) elected by Congress, the General Secretary, 2 lay members from each region and the

Regional Secretaries. In addition it also adopted proposals to formalise the system of industrial conferences. Seventeen industries were identified where National and Regional Industrial Conferences must be held. Conferences could also be held for other groups of the membership (which may be a sub group of the industry) as and when required. In addition there was an annual conference for MATSA, the non-manual section established in 1972. This extended the role of the lay activist without drastically changing the internal power structure. (Fig. 2)

The purpose of the Industrial Conferences was further underlined at the 1981 Congress and in the guidelines subsequently produced, "Success in the 1990s". As we will see later, this was to be significant in progressing amalgamations. In 1979 the union also emphasised its general profile by agreeing a change of name to the General & Municipal Workers' Union, the GMWU

CAWU membership was to still show constant growth however not to the extent envisaged by the union. The union's journal, The Clerk, under a front page graph showing membership "soaring to 120,000", prophesied,

"At this rate CAWU will be over a quarter of a million strong in December 1972 - pass the half million mark in early 1975" (The Clerk August/September 1970.)

The figures for the period however indicated a slower growth. This was due to the effects of new competitive trade unionism, the large manual unions having changed to a wider and less clearly defined recruitment sectors. The unions new approach, of being more involved in industrial disputes, aided consolidation, but hampered fast growth in new sectors. The membership was to reach only 128,000 by 1974.

The union changed its name, after consultation with members, to the Association of Professional

Executive Clerical and Computer Staff, using the acronym APEX. It was hoped that this redesignation would assist in recruiting across a broader spectrum and into the new and growing high and information technology sectors.

A new phenomena, at this time, was the occupation of factories or workplaces as a form of industrial action. The most notable was the Upper Clyde Shipyard in 1971, however there was at "least another two hundred " during the 1970s. In these circumstance manual and office staff came together to prevent closures or the diminution of trade union rights. APEX played an important part in most of these actions, as the major clerical union in the heavy manufacturing industries. This also significantly effected the attitude at the National Advisory Council for the Engineering / Shipbuilding Industries. (Thompson & Hart 1972 : TUSIU 1976) During this period the union was also active in pursuing "phasing in" agreements on equal pay for women member, by rationalising salary structures, having become recognised as expert in the negotiating of job evaluation schemes. (NBPI 1968) The Equal Pay Act 1970, introduced by the Labour Government, had the unprecedented lead in period of five years. All these activities drawing a closer relationship with non-staff unions.

Recognition by the company was still a problem for all unions, when recruiting new members. Identified in the Industrial Relations Act 1971, legal sanctions were outlined for "sole bargaining agents", that is the sole union recognition for wholly or a particular occupation or grade. However this and other advantages could only be used if the trade union registered under the Act. (Dept. of Employment 1971 : Selwyn 1971 : Simpson 1991) APEX did not register, like the majority of TUC affiliates, as part of a policy of total opposition to the Act. The penalty for breaching policy was suspension from the TUC. APEX and the GMWU amongst many others, however, took a pragmatic approach to protecting their interests at Industrial Tribunals and the National Industrial

Relations Court. The latter being set up by the Act as "a new branch of the High Court". (TUC Special Congress 1971 & TUC 1971/1972)

These difficulties were somewhat alleviated by the return of a Labour government in 1974. The Employment Protection Act 1975 section 11 created "procedure for reference of recognition issues to ACAS" and was "quite widely used with some 1,600 references to ACAS made over four and a half years". This section of this Act, alongside its Schedule 11, which gave legal means of establishing "the going rate" and underlined the purpose of collective bargaining, was to give impetus to trade union growth.

Nevertheless the incidence at Grunwick (1976-1978), showed the inadequacy of the Act. A group of Asian workers, mainly women, in dispute with their employer joined APEX. Apart from the reasons for the strike, and the uncovering of loopholes in the recognition law by the company, it became the arena for outside agencies' activity. It also became a media show of mass picketing with the attendant police/pickets aggravation. What was most important, an employer refused to abide by the traditional position and agreed conventions. Grunwick management supported by Conservative ideology, was said to stand for "company freedom against the dictates of the state". ACAS Council, the tripartite national body, had written to the Secretary of State for Employment in 1979 stating that the law as interpreted by the courts was preventing ACAS from operating the procedure satisfactorily. There was to be no changes except that of a change of government in 1979. (Dromey 1978 : Ward 1977)

The political consequence of the industrial disputes of 1978 and the early months of 1979 assisted the electoral prospects of the Conservative Party. The Conservatives returned to government in 1979 determined to pursue policies which were diametrical to the union incorporatism of

previous Labour and Conservative governments. The Conservatives returned to government in 1979, determined to pursue policies which were diametrical to the union incorporatism of previous Labour and Conservative governments. This Government's response was to repeal the Employment Protection Act. Replaced by the Employment Act 1980, it changed significantly the State's relationship to trade unions and an end to tripartitism. A radical change of politics from previous governments, social partnership was ended.

The distinct change at the end of the seventies, which would be significant with regards future amalgamations, was the evident shift in trade unions' culture, the values of the activist, officials and through them the membership, of the white collar and skilled worker

Clerical workers, and to some degree all office workers, particularly in the manufacturing and service sectors, were now more clearly identifying with the manual worker. Their relationship to, and their own functions taking on, the mode of production process, created a shared status. It was a shift from the long held acceptance of the classic Lockwood "black coated worker" analysis, which underpinned in the 1950s and 1960s, the notion that identification would be with other white collar unions. The concepts developed by Braverman plays a much more clearer role in this analysis. The "labour process" debate took a shift in emphasis which was to have effect on the merger equation.

The general unions, having merely dabbled in white collar and skilled sectors, were now faced with further potential decline if they did not change their job territory. Meanwhile the skilled craft industrial unions, in mirroring this, were becoming in all aspects general unions. Staff unions recognised the need to develop membership services, to have better research and resources and the changed identification with other manual trade unionists.

In APEX , this developing change was not only due to clerical and administrative wages falling relative to production workers . The aspects of scientific management techniques, necessary for productivity agreements , clerical work measurement , organisation method work study , all placed the staff in direct comparability with the manual workers identification of role/status. Job evaluation, referred previously, also created salary structures which indicated union collective approach to job status. The perceived in built sexism of most work measurement allowance tables, and the inequality of the the male/ female scales established in the structures, using wages levels prevailing at the time, was to link the campaign for equal pay to collective bargaining.

GMWU had established the basis for recovering lost ground. Its financial status was good, and the continuing commitment to professionalism, with the internal reforms, created a firm foundation for mergers. The impact of legislation , changes in collective bargaining, company culture and organisational change, as explored in Chapters 2, created the need for progress in merger style change. The early 1980s had become a period when the extra tendentious factors created the need for such change , but there was also an anticipated return of a Labour government which would facilitate the necessary environment to stave off the haemorrhage of membership. Nevertheless , no doubt due to all the tendentious factors outlined in Tables 1 and 6, an amalgamation took place , which was significant in providing the start of the GMWU's orientation to growth, by providing new open - union characteristics.

The ASBSBSW , the Boilermakers' Society , itself formed by an amalgamation of three craft unions , had been the subject of incorrect prognostication regarding a further craft union merger. It amalgamated with the general union , the GMWU in 1981 . As with the NUVB / TGWU merger , the union had broken the traditionalist general worker profile. Now it was to develop the

amalgamation friendly merger style with its new title the General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union, GMBATU.

This amalgamation will be further considered in the next Chapter.

Meanwhile the concept of the "market situation of clerks" had become even more insufficient in terms of distinguishing them from the manual worker. Computerisation and the use of the visual display unit, which was to become all embracing in the 1980s and thereafter, had become a threat for the future. Updating Braverman, a study by Crompton and Jones (1984) showed that this computerised information technology was (and is) perceived to threaten skills, job security and salary levels. They also portrayed a continuation of the inbuilt sexism of industry in respect of promotion of males. What was significant, was the relationship to management. Staff workers were now more aware that they needed protection through collective bargaining. APEX and many other unions, manual and staff, negotiated new technology agreements and entered into discussion on job design.

Moving into the 1980s, the long established non-proletarianisation theories of the "Black coated Worker", based on continuing white collar trade unionism growth of the 1950 - 60's, alongside the non-embourgeoisement theories of the Affluent Worker studies of the 1960s, all appear to be time locked statements. (Lockwood 1966 : Goldthorpe & Lockwood et al 1968 & 1969) They had become less relevant to what was taking place in the workplace. Single union agreements at green field sites, single table bargaining at multi union sites, often joint staff and manual, harmonisation of conditions and single status employment, all were emerging as the main elements of the unions' new agenda.

Alongside this was the major factor noted by the Certification Officer.

"Thus the rapid growth over the past decade comes to an end in 1980. The substantial decrease in membership is doubtless associated with the current economic conditions, particularly rising unemployment." (Certification Office for Trade Unions & Employers' Associations 1981)

Redundancies, "natural" wastage of employed labour, ie the non-replacement of leavers, and early retirement was now usually negotiated on a multi-union basis. This was establishing an "enterprise unionateness", as against the wider "society unionateness". (Prandy, Blackburn & Stewart 1983)

This found expression at union conferences as an end to the staff/ manual worker divide.

Conclusion.

In preparation and writing of this chapter a decision was made to relate to the unions' historical development. However this could not be merely the compiling of dates and names nor extracts from reports although all these played a part. To make this the *raison d'être* of the chapter would have placed undue emphasis on stressing division rather than parallel development.

An examination of the relevant literature revealed, that whilst there were distinct differences in historical development, there were distinct common threads of development. The change factors and the growth and density statistics analysed in Chapter 1, alongside the components of change considered in Chapters 2, have shown in this Chapter to be fundamental in why a white collar union could decide to amalgamate with a manual general union. As the frame of reference for change, they were pivotal in understanding the components of change outlined. The synthesis in this chapter indicates why a white collar union would merge with a manual union, and why a general union would be such an amalgamator.

It further focused on the parallels of the two unions, APEX and GMBATU. It only partially answers how these parallels eventually come together. The next chapter will examine the acceleration of these change factors in the 1980s, the actual negotiations and participation of the decision makers and decision takers which shaped the amalgamation.

The Decade of Decisions

Concluding from the chair what he had called a "unique conference, the first of its kind in the history of this union", Cyril Unwin GMWU Midland Regional Secretary, in the course of his reply to questions, made the following statement:

"Amalgamation, of course, is not the answer to increasing membership ...but it does lead us to situations where we do increase membership...also equally important, it means we can get into new fields that we were not in before ... it gives us a new image". (GMWU 1980)

This was indeed a unique conference. In May 1980 the GMWU called together all full time officials and the Executive of the union to "collectively consider" the problems that faced the union. The conference was timely as trade union membership was beginning to decline and there were certainly new problems to overcome.

Both the GMWU and APEX were taking stock of their position in the first six months of 1980. APEX recognised that it had not made the growth progress of ASTMS probably due to the differing merger styles and leadership. (see Chapter 2) Grantham, the General Secretary of APEX, reported to the Annual Conference the difficult state of the finances due to the decline in membership. The Conference itself gave a distinct perspective of the effects of the problems as all Branches of the union with a membership of 40 or more had a delegate in attendance. Reflecting upon this he recalled..

"So APEX, which had 150,000 members in the 1970s had a continuously falling membership which barely exceeded 80,000 when the decision to amalgamate was taken. The union managed its finances well, but Branches were closed and most of the remaining Branches had many fewer members. Delegates to Annual Conference fell significantly and it was this physical change in the number of delegates meeting in Conference Halls we once filled that sparked the support for an amalgamation." (Grantham interview 1993)

The reason for the decline has already been outlined earlier, and both decision-makers and decision-takers referred generally to the Conservative Government economic and industrial relations policies and the effect on the manufacturing industry as a major cause :

" companies gone to the wall or severely cut employment. Aided by computers the largest cut had been in the clerical staff." (Grantham interview 1993)

Area Full time Officials pointed to the loss of the Union Membership Agreements, the post - entry closed shops which having been "amicably reached ", no longer gave the necessary support to the attained 100% membership. There was a loss of experienced workplace representatives also, due to redundancies. Often the young successors had little experience and , of course now, no legislative support.

However the firm impression of this cross section of opinion was

"the impact of legislation was limited" (Grantham interview 1993)

"Legislation came into it , but..." (Travis, National Vice President and senior workplace representative at British Leyland, Midlands interview 1993.)

" it may have been the originating cause of the effects to move the union to seriously consider amalgamation but..." (Moran, Area Chair London & Home Counties & Senior workplace representative at British Aerospace interview 1989)

Others made no reference to the legislation changes at all, although Ged Moran possibly expressed the underlying thoughts.

All concentrated on the other tendentious factors:

culture changes of companies , necessitating union change....

There was

"changing culture of management which became much more macho and no longer provide recruitment facilities...Single table bargaining, particularly all unions' representatives jointly addressing issues like company and job restructuring and redundancies, the growth of common pension schemes as a result of joint negotiations were a major cultural factor in preparing delegates and members to consider amalgamation with unions other than white collar. This was reinforced by the aggressive poaching by TASS (at that time still in the AUEW). APEX had been a major advocate of single status (agreements) at Conferences like the CSEU and had to some extent educated manual unions to a more positive recognition of the values of common standards"
(Grantham interview 1993)

Collective bargaining and industrial relations structures were changing :

" There was an increasing move to staff status on behalf of the manual workers to a degree our membership resented the consequential loss of differentials and some wondered if they should now be part of a larger group. Single union agreements were forcing APEX to face merger with unions who could provide, with us, one union cover. The over-riding factors, in my recollection, were the rapid declining membership, financial strictures arising therefrom, and a consequential inability to guarantee absolutely a continuity of employment for officials and staff and the provision of service to the members".
(Ken Smith then a National Vice President and was National President at the time of the amalgamation with the GMBATU interview 1993)

Industrial organisation was changing alongside the company culture:

" Information Technology was effecting all parts of the offices, the union had produced a number of documents on this even negotiating agreements. A committee was set up nationally to monitor the change. Nevertheless it had an immediate effect upon the number of staff employed and their skills. More and more we were sitting down with our shop floor colleagues to discuss jointly this or that issue ...redundancies, privatisation, pensions, Joint negotiations, more and more staff conditions of employment were becoming the norm for manual workers."
(Moran interview 1989)

The decision -takers were taking note of the changes and what was needed

"Single union agreements, single status, common bargaining issues, multinational

companies changed company structures...We had to face difficult redundancy situations together (with the other unions) so strength in number became buzz words". (Travis interview 1993)

Thus at the 1980 Annual Conference 12 motions, with an equal number of amendments, appeared on the agenda calling for action on amalgamation, all recognised the action taken by the Executive in having discussions with other unions. They were now becoming more specific and fell into three categories: those that recognised that there exists a basic identity of interest between manual and non-manual workers and links should be sought accordingly, some specifying the GMWU; those which felt that the membership's interest was best served by linking to a white collar union, some specifying ASTMS; those which merely called for progress but outlined the process of consultation and special Conference requirement. In the end the Executive and General Secretary were given direction by the acceptance of their report to seek further discussions with unions including the feasibility of a Confederation of unions.

APEX was at a cultural crossroad as far as the decision-takers were concerned. The decision-makers, the Executive Council and the General Secretary, however were to some degree taking particular political stances. Ken Smith recalls

"there were two schools of thought: one mainly ASTMS oriented, the other AEU (then actually known as the AUEW). Some desultory, in my view, negotiations with the GMB (then the GMWU) with David Basnett present were undertaken. These fell through, ostensibly, because (of) Basnett's preoccupation with the Isle of Grain dispute which had just arisen, as I recall. (inter-union dispute between the GMWU, AUEW and particularly the EEPTU see TUC Reports 1980 & 1981) I felt that I detected a relief in the eyes of the senior (lay and full-time) national officers when the GMB fell through and ASTMS never really got off the ground." (Smith interview 1993)

There was some still

"hoping APEX could go it alone for a few more years". (Travis interview 1993)

The GMWU was similarly at a crossroad . At this unique One Day Conference of Full- time Officials ,1980, , Basnett pulled no punches in outlining the "failure " in not employing an aggressive approach to membership growth . Using "change statistics " of ten major unions over a 14 year period (1964-78) and divided this into 5 year periods, he showed how there had been insufficient consolidation . The GMWU had, during the growth period of the 1960s

" failed in relation to the growth of public services in the 1970s and lastly , in the important period , ...failed to really get into the white collar field". (GMWU 1980)

In a full analysis , looking at regional differences, recruitment ratio, and projected employment changes , he concluded that the union had

"to make sure that ...there are no barriers in our structure or the way we work to maintaining and improving our membership performance". (GMWU 1980)

There then followed a lively and frank debate with the Officials. In particular, the important points related to amalgamations. Basnett drew attention to the fact that the union had "failed to achieve any major amalgamation". In the 14 year period the TGWU had increased its membership by 856, 000 of which 153,000 was by amalgamation , ASTMS by 435,000 and 43,000 by amalgamation with a shift into new job territory. The GMWU increased its membership by 180,000 with only 10,000 by amalgamation.

Reference was made to the unsuccessful (at that time) discussions with the Boilermakers Society and in reply to criticism of the union's approach , Unwin responded.

"As far as the Boilermakers are concerned, I certainly would not accept that it was a 'softly , softly ' approach. There was a hell of a lot of time spent with the Boilermakers on discussing the possibility of amalgamation and in fact we did reach agreement with them at Executive level...Their Conference took a decision against that amalgamation. So it is unfair to say that we were pussy-footing and 'softly , softly ' on that one. It is a fact that

amalgamations are time consuming. Nonetheless they are areas we have to look at, that we have to spend time on and have to be more flexible than I think we have been on some occasions in the past in relation to amalgamations". (GMWU 1980)

There was vital concern regarding this proposed amalgamation as it would create the means for extending a craft profile in the union, the TGWU having achieved this with their amalgamation in 1972 with the NUVB. (See Chapter 4). Although discussions were continuing with other unions (including APEX) this proposal to amalgamate was given priority.

The Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers, the full title of the Boilermakers Society, was formed itself by a merger, in 1963, of three of the oldest craft unions: the United Society of Boilermakers (est. 1834), the Ship Constructors and Shipwrights Assoc. (est. 1882- the Shipwrights Assoc. of South Shields being formed in 1795) and the Associated Blacksmiths, Forge & Smithy Workers Soc. (est. 1857). This was a union with strong cultural values and norms. (see Chapter 2) There was, according to the full time officials who recall this period, an anti-General worker attitude amongst most members. In fact the attitude within the Boilermakers Society was that if merger was necessary it should be with "kindred Unions". The craft sense of sectarian exclusiveness, through a competence to use certain tools or skills, was clearly manifested and portrayed these narrow craft horizons. There was also countervailing memories of rivalry and the non-support of industrial action.

With the appointment of Ken Baker, GMWU Senior National Industrial Officer, to have a complete oversight for amalgamation, the merger friendly style was developing. In 1981 he was party to the discussions of forming a "Confederation of like-minded unions". Roy Grantham was initially in favour and

"originally sponsored the proposal for this Confederation between the GMWU, EETPU and APEX. Each organisation would keep an identity for recruitment, it would span skilled, unskilled and staff workers and secure economies in Research and other functions". (Grantham interview 1993)

Baker made reference to this, what he termed "tripartite discussions, in his speech to that years GMWU Congress. A number of other unions had been approached including FTAT and UCATT, but no discussions had taken place. However he detailed discussions being pursued with APEX / EEPTU. regarding the Confederation suggestion and those continuing with the Boilermakers Society, the National Union of Agricultural Workers (NUAAW), the National Union of Dyers and Bleachers and Textile Workers (NUDBTW).

The talks on a Confederation broke down, two reasons have been cited: the inability to reach agreement on the transference of white collar members from the partner unions (Grantham) and the Isle of Grain dispute. (Smith.) Discussions between the GMWU and APEX were still part of the merger agenda.

The APEX Conference of 1981 was advised of the progress to date, however the need for merger was underlined by the report submitted in support of increasing union contribution rates. Stating that "membership could fall as low as 130,000 before the bottom of the slump was reached", reference was also made to difficulties in maintaining employment of full time officials and staff. Advocating non-replacement of those who retire or leave service of the union and possible redeployment, the General Treasure also proposed to change elements of fund allocation and the reserves. During the 1980s the decline projection to 130,000 members was to prove to be an underestimation.

1982 was certainly a year of mergers: 8 transfer of engagements and 4 amalgamations of trade unions. The Certification Office for Trade Unions Annual Report for the year noted that

" Almost a million and a half trade union members were affected by the mergers that took place during the year. This is more than five times the number involved in the whole period from 1976 to 1981..." (Certification Office 1982)

The NUAAW and the NUDBTW both transferred engagements to the TGWU early in the year, but by far the largest merger (at that time) since 1945 , was the amalgamation of the GMWU and the Boilermakers Society in December 1982 creating the General Municipal Boilermakers & Allied Trades Union, the GMBATU.

The amalgamation gave impetus to the union's new approach to expansion by further amalgamations, and broadened the structure of the union by establishing two sections - GMW and BMS. (Fig 3)

Although there was a clear acceptance to amalgamate and it was indeed a prestigious merger, it was only achieved

"at the second or third time around, because the GMW got to the stage of getting out the terms , having them agreed nationally and then they were overturned by the Boilermakers Conference . It took some time , but a basis of merger was eventually agreed". (Edmonds interview 1993) .

As a Scottish Boilermaker, or as he made it plain a ship wright , recalled

" enthusiasm was high amongst the national officials , but locally , even amongst some of our officials, we were less than happy. Although I voted For ; the alternatives were even less attractive " .

Other activists and officials confirm these sentiments , but clearly recognised that the option of non- merger was not available due to the decline in membership. The AUEW, ISTC and the Blast furnacemen's union appeared to be in similar problems and to some were "too right wing ". The latter comment most strongly put about EEPTU. The GMWU had " moved to the

centre".

A member complaint was received by the Certification Office (this is not unusual in mergers), but was dismissed without holding a hearing . Reference is made to it here to show the importance of the norms and values, the culture, of a union to the membership. The written decision was summarised in the 1982 Report...

" Mr. T. Gormley (the Boilermaker member supported by his branch committee) complained that the ASB did not follow the proper procedures which he said was laid down in its rule 35(4). This provided that the ASB could be dissolved by consent of four - fifths of its members in benefit at the time of taking the vote.

The Certification Officer said that the complaint was based on a misunderstanding of the statutory provisions governing amalgamation of trade unions under section 2(3) of the (Trade Union [Amalgamation etc.] 1964) Act. A simple majority of the votes recorded is sufficient to pass a resolution , whatever the Union's rules might say (except in circumstances which did not apply in this case). Accordingly , the Union's rule 35(4) was not applicable to the vote to approve the instrument of amalgamation" (Certification Office for Trade Unions 1982.)

In APEX, the GMBATU dialogue had been disturbed by the Confederation idea . Furthermore, the AUEW (Engineering) had made an approach on the possibility of an amalgamation. National Officers and Officials had met , but only the principles were discussed. This approach was significant , because Grantham

"prior to the discussions supported an amalgamation with the AUEW". (Grantham interview 1993)

His reasons were to do with the potential for growth in those sectors of existing APEX density. The memberships , he contended,

" largely overlapped in engineering , aerospace, shipbuilding , civil aviation and oil. Engineers were employed in most other industries such as food , but in such industries our (APEX) membership strength would give APEX the leadership role. There were clear advantages in recruitment single union agreements and economies in servicing on common issues like pensions, (company) reorganisations, merger and redundancies" . (Grantham 1992)

Significantly there was also the political stance of APEX and the AUEW. Both unions were categorised as right-wing led within the TUC and Labour Party. Lewis Minkin, in his most important study of the complex relationship between trade union and the Labour Party, showed

"there were strong personal links with some of the union leaders in APEX, the AUEW, ISTC and strongest of all in the EETPU. Political forums existed where old friendship and alliances endured..." particularly "...the St. Ermin's Group, (which) was named after the hotel where they met ...in the period 1979 - 1981". (Minkin 1992)

Furthermore Grantham was an influential and directing figure in these right-wing trade union leaders caucuses. The senior officers of the union, Dennis Howell MP, the President, Jean Travis, Vice President and Roy Grantham, were acknowledged protagonists of labour movement right wing policies. However it must be acknowledged that these policies had the support of APEX Conference decisions.

Travis, who also had a preference for the AUEW prior to the discussions with the GMB, whilst echoing Grantham's job territory / potential growth statement from her industrial background, acknowledged that "this political side (of the equation was) also part of the argument". (Travis interview 1993)

There were, therefore, industrial and political reasons for the national leadership predilection for the AUEW.

APEX was facing financial difficulties, not only due to the loss in membership and therefore revenue, but also the cost of the Grunwick Dispute and the lengthy Cheall legal case caused by the acceptance of a TUC ruling on this individuals membership. In November 1982, at a special meeting of Area Secretaries and the Executive Council, a report was produced which showed the continuing decline in membership, but, more particularly, drew attention to

future employment trends predicting further job losses. The meeting considered other recruitment potential, but it was becoming self evident, that for progress, a merger was necessary. By 1983, careful management of the finances, a further contributions increase, and economies including early retirement of officers and staff, resulted in the union's reserves becoming very stable, however the future healthy state of finance depended upon growth of membership.

The year 1983, was significant in many respects. Labour was defeated once again in a General Election. It had "lost more than a quarter of its 1979 vote; its share of the vote was the lowest ever won by the principal opposition party". (Guardian 1992)

The incoming Conservative Government, buoyed by this result, outlined the succession of legislation to contain trade union action and union internal practices. At the same time further research by the unions recognised the effects of technology on employment in the offices. Although the unions were successful in reaching agreement with a number of employers, whereby there would be joint consultation and mutual agreement on the introduction of technology, the reports projected job loss scenarios.

Meanwhile APEX members saw moves towards harmonisation of conditions of employment by the manual workers, with specific reference to the shorter working week. The staff unions in the manufacturing industries argued for a convergence of conditions of employment

Braverman's argument, that technology had reduced the division between the shop floor and office worker, was plain to see, with staff unions seeking to evolve joint policies with their manual worker colleagues (CSEU 1983). The divide between the manual and staff worker had been bridged by what Prandy et al. termed enterprise unionateness, which, as we have

seen, relates to the workplace union awareness and bonding . Previously what has been termed unionateness, later re termed society unionateness referred particularly to " the extent of political commitment of the union, the level of identification with the broader trade union movement to differentiate with "enterprise unionateness " . (Prandy et al 1982)

There were new employment avenues, but they were in non traditional sectors which were particularly employer-negative towards trade unionism. Without the previous legislation assisting recognition , the unions were faced with added difficulties.

Living standards had undeniably risen (trade unions argued this was due to the previous social partnership inherent in the past industrial relations of Britain) . Social Trends changed especially with regards manual workers ; the growth of home ownership , increase in disposable income, more consumer goods purchased, cars, telephone, coloured T.V., and holidays. The income differential between classes may not have changed, but the working class was now clearly a consumer target. The exceptions were the unemployed and those on fixed or means tested incomes. So the importance of change was not merely the significance of manual workers being able to have vestiges of new affluence, as this did not alter their social class. It merely portrayed changes in their use of income , which certainly did affects the traditional values, customary attitudes and behaviour. The major influence, however, was this developing mutual approach of the staff and manual worker in collective bargaining. Also redundancy, which affected shop floor and office , created a new way of perceiving their commonality of employment

The shift in the labour movement political complexion, highlighted by the defection of Labour politicians to form the Social Democrat Party (including Shirley Williams M.P., an important figure in APEX politics) in 1981 also affected attitudes. By 1982, the composition of the APEX Executive Council had a weighting of "left " and "right" Area

Representatives, which was balanced by two or three who were "open to persuasion". There was some difference in the nature of the left. At one time it was the communists that were instrumental in pressing the left politic (see previous Chapters on involvement), however the left was, what had become termed the "soft left", Labour Party activists, mostly "non aligned" to any group. The importance in the context of this study was that these decision-makers were open minded about merger partners and decisions affected by this balance.

Also at this time Howell, the President, decided to retire from the position. Howell who supported Gaitskell the right wing leader of the labour party (1955 - 1963), had been a minister in the Wilson Government and was recognised as a prime figure of the political right of the movement. The union elected the vice president Ken Smith in his place.

Smith, a full time senior APEX staff representative and branch secretary at Rowntree Mackintosh, York, categorised himself as

"a grass-roots Yorkshire office workers representative".... claiming he had "no commitment to either side of the political debate". (Smith interview 1993)

Nevertheless, he was more often categorised by his contemporaries as right of centre. He had been part of the ongoing discussions on mergers, but referred to what he termed the

"perpetual ongoing talks in private between General Secretaries although at the time I knew little of these in real detail. Only what Roy (Grantham) chose to tell the E.C." (Smith interview 1993)

As President he, recognising the need for amalgamation and

"kept an open mind. At the time there were too many people in the union at all levels who had (in his opinion) made up their minds regardless of any factual considerations" (Smith interview 1993)

Furthermore the campaign for the leadership of the Labour Party, after Michael Foot MP resignation, was to change the "anti left" undercurrent. Most of the APEX senior national officers and officials supported Hattersley, the right candidate. However a ballot of the membership gave clear support to Kinnock for leader and Hattersley for Deputy. Factional political cohesion on the left and right had become weakened by the necessity to face up to the changes referred to above. The consideration of merger-mate was to be less and less effected by any past political culture of the union.

That year was also significant in that Roy Grantham was returned to the General Council of the TUC by what came to be termed automaticity. He had lost his seat in the past, because the large union, with a left bias, and those smaller unions in the industrial groupings dependent on these large unions' votes themselves, combined to elect candidates suited to their political stance. In the past left candidates had suffered when there was the opposite political complexion. Therefore the proposition of automatic representation on the General Council had been under examination since 1976. At the TUC Congress 1978, with Basnett in the Presidents chair, the GMWU tabled a motion requested the General Council to reconsider the question of its structure, for

"automatic representation for all unions with over 100, 000 members and a larger, though not a proportionate, representation for the larger unions". (TUC 1978)

With a direct reference to APEX and the Grunwick Dispute, the delegate stated that "the General Council cannot be fully represented if unions of size and influence are excluded". (TUC 1978)

The motion was lost.

The argument was reintroduced in 1981 by the POEU giving detailed structure to the GMWU

motion of 1978. This did not call for a "reconsideration", but the acceptance of the principle with the practical application of same to be put to the TUC in 1982. In seconding the motion Fred Baker, GMBATU, underlined the inequities of the system, affirming that his union "has no axe to grind. it is automatically on the present General Council" and can by its large vote...." influence the choice of members from small unions". (TUC 1982)

Echoing sentiments expressed in his own union about their own internal polemic, he concluded that "we must have a body that automatically reflects changes in union structures and which is representative of the Movement". (TUC 1982)

It took a further bitter debate in 1982 before it was recognised that the industrial / trade grouping had lost their purpose. In September 1983, therefore, APEX was on the TUC General Council automatically. But this whole debate drew attention to the fact that to maintain influence trade union size was very important.

Because the GMBATU had established, after the recent amalgamation, two sections, the GMW and BMS. This was a period of difficulty even hostility between activists and often officials. For the BMS section, their old system of districts committees existed, full time Executive members were designated national officials, reflecting the regional power interface. This created difficulties in the Regions for the BMS section Regional Organiser whose direct line of authority was the Regional Secretary, yet the structure had a direct line for policy action to the BMS national officer. (Fig 3) This dichotomous position of the officer led, often, to a mistrust of the individuals loyalty to the Region. Also the Regional Secretary could and in many regions, some BMS officers suggested, did frustrate activity. This was due to elements of the BMS Section rules, within the Rules of the Union, which appeared to create as one GMW officer suggested a union within a union. As the Congress Report 1988 outlined ...

*"All BMS officials are under the operational control of the BMS Section Executive Committee. Administrative support continues to be supplied by the Regions".
(GMBATU Congress Report 1988)*

In the culture of the GMWU, loyalty to the "union in the Region" is paramount, the national perspective is maintained by regional representative structures. It was claimed that membership figures on merger were not as expected and there was also ill feeling amongst GMW officials over the amalgamation terms related to contract of employment elements. (See later this Chapter reference to Full Time Officials.) Although there was this general friction throughout the country, efforts were made in most Regions to accommodate the situation. Continuously, however, reference was made to the question of identifying; this included the need to have Boilermaker in the union title, retaining their officer and local structures and reference back to their rules.

As Edmonds succinctly put it, "A most important amalgamation for the union's profile, a learning curve on how to handle major amalgamations". (Edmonds interview 1993)

A Review of the Union Finances, Structures and Services, incorporating alteration to Rules, was produced and presented to the 1984 Congress of GMBATU, and known as Decision '84. The document noted the immediate and medium term prospects of a decline in the job territory where "the GMW Section and the BMS Section have historically recruited - semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, both male and female, and the metal working craftsmen and ancillaries". It further noted the continuing shift in employment patterns away from large, generally unionised, places of work to smaller locations with the difficulties of organising, part-time and casualisation of employment and the legislation factors referred to early in this Chapter. The strategy outlined covered; inevitably finance and contributions, to contain expenditure, and have a viable income to meet cash flow and reserve. Most important it

outlined the need for integration between GMW and BMS Sections . The officers structure was changed creating the post of Regional Industrial Officer (RIO) ,

"responsible for a major group of members by broad sector" that "when welded to an appropriate Management Structure, will provide a sharper edged organisation able to adapt to new , maybe hostile, industrial and political environment" (GMBATU Congress Report 1984)

and a single grade of Regional Organiser.

More particularly it also recognised the need for further amalgamations and to "be structured efficiently so as to be the most dominant partner in any future major amalgamation". (GMBATU Congress Report 1984)

The actuality of the BMS Section , the existence of the RIO grade and this strong, but amalgamation friendly , style were to be fundamental in the APEX dialogue and eventual merger discussions. Although Sectionalisation of the GMB did not take place until after the APEX / GMB amalgamation , the foundation and causality was in this document. (GMBATU 1984 : see Chapter 6)

In the internal document "Recruit , Retain Consolidate " reference was made to "merger possibilities". Particular consolidatory approaches in the metal trades and textiles sectors . With regards the latter, specific discussions had taken place, on the possible transfer of engagements of a federation of ten separate unions in the Textile industry , mainly located in Lancashire and Yorkshire area. There were to be complex discussions during 1985, with transfer of engagements in 1986 of approximately 28,500 members. This strengthened the Textile industrial sector in the union , but did not augment the sectors where potential was perceived to be ; the staff or white collar and retail / distribution employees.

A further factor, in the cycle of amalgamation, was the ending of the federal structure of the AUEW, after much legal wrangling during the early 1980s, including an unsuccessful appeal to the Court of Appeal in 1982. Eventually, after advice from the Certification Office, a rule change in the AUEW Engineering section and the submission of revised instruments of transfer, the three independent sections of the AUEW (Engineering, Foundry and Constructional sections) joined into one AUEW with integrated sections. (Certification Office Reports 1981, 1982 and 1984)

The staff section, TASS, remained outside this integration for reasons explored in Chapter 2. TASS, then by transfer of engagement, was to merge with two metal trade unions - the transferees APAC and the NSMM - both targeted by the GMBATU. TASS was at this time was left led and, as Grantham was to stress, communist dominated leadership. They were to seek and obtain merger with unions of common political culture, this included tobacco workers and sheet metal workers unions. They also took up an aggressive approach to membership recruitment in staff areas, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

The miners strike, which began in 1984 ending March 1985, the continuing Tory legislation, membership decline, redundancies and consequent financial problems, all signalled a message to the APEX conference that there should be an urgent "exploratory meetings with unions with whom the possibility of an amalgamation had to be seriously considered". (APEX 1985)

During 1985 initial discussions took place with the unions on the list, but with little direction. Approached by the Metal Mechanics union (NSMM) discussions and proposals were to be put to their delegate conference (along with those from other unions including the GMBATU). Their decision was to transfer engagements to TASS, subsequently confirmed by a ballot of their members. The EMA proffered what was essentially a federation, this too

was unsatisfactory. These discussions however created some media speculation and rumour on merger. To this extent the APEX Conference 1986 had a number of motions which specifically directed the union leadership : particularly regarding the question of autonomy.

" Conference...notes with concern the lack of any real progress on the question of amalgamation... re - establish meaningful discussions with trade unions sharing similar industrial coverage, whilst seeking to maintain autonomy ...this cannot be held sacrosanct if the future of the membership is to be protected "
Motion 26

the union should

... "enter into discussion with...unions with a similar industrial base... prepare a report for Annual Conference 1987...recognise that this will entail relaxing our present policy of insisting on maintaining our present autonomy"
Motion 27

"...in view of our declining membership and current financial problems , seek an urgent review of our position....."
Motion 28

"...commence immediate talks with TUC affiliated trade unions with a view to amalgamation"...as addended...to make a specific recommendation as to which union we should amalgamate with ."
Motion 29

"...concerned that rumours continue to arise linking the name of APEX with discussions about merger with other unions...discussions / correspondence should be reported at the earliest possible opportunity."
Motion 30

The decision - takers were pressing the decision -makers to produce an urgent response, outlined the general direction and requested leadership on this important issue.

The motions were composited into one motion calling on the Executive to enter into discussions with other trade unions and prepare a report. This was agreed at the conference and as Grantham recalled

"The Executive received a report from me advocating discussions on amalgamation with ASTMS, AEU, USDAW, TASS and TGWU. The Executive looked at other unions in the report and added the GMBATU to the list". (Grantham interview 1993)

Initially in the statement presented to the Executive he suggested that he "meet the General Secretaries of ASTMS and the Amalgamated Engineering Union informally". However in the following months all the unions on the list were approached.

The GMBATU had also reviewed its progress on amalgamations and in his last year as General Secretary, Basnett had the Research Department carry out

"a major piece of work on employment trends. This showed that the core membership of the GMBATU would decline fast, irrespective of who was in government. The centres of membership, heavy engineering, heavy chemicals, shipbuilding and the manual workers in the public services were at best going to stay steady, but most of them were going to shrink very rapidly indeed. Mainly the semi-skilled and traditional craft workers (job territory) were going to shrink. The union was heavily male based and full time, that also was going to shrink. So however the membership growth potential was analysed, we (the union) were in the wrong area for future expansion. There was one obvious area, a critical mass had to be reached amongst white collar employees. So strategically what was needed was a white collar amalgamation. Because the union had been regarded as a unskilled and semiskilled, the union needed a craft amalgamation: the boilermakers provided that. The research focused attention on the need for a white collar and retail sector amalgamation. Explicitly we (the union) needed the three and that is why it was essential to secure the amalgamation with APEX". (Edmonds interview 1993)

With a new General Secretary, John Edmonds, the union was to "pioneer a new approach to trade unionism which combines strategic thinking with a moral force long obscure in the labour

movement" (Financial Times 1987 a)

Edmonds' recognised savoir faire was to heighten the media profile, developed when national industrial officer in the public sector. On achieving this senior post he was portrayed as

" the very model of a modern union leader : a university graduate, a professional , someone who had never done the job of the members on whose behalf he negotiated "

(Financial Times 1987 a)

He was, nevertheless, seen to be a part of the contemporary Labour centrist thinking,

"charting a new path for British trade unionism ". (Financial Times 1987a)

To do this, he responded to the analysis that was the outcome of the aforementioned research. The union not only recognised the changes in employment trends , it also noted that it needed its path to be broad enough to encompass disparate influences . Added to changed employment factors, of low pay, part-time and casual work , was status - consciousness, portrayed in the quality of life themes . Furthermore the promotion of women's involvement in the internal democracy of the union was achieved by the introduction of 10 women seats on the CEC. There was also a shift of priority in negotiation to issues of training, health and safety . A structured recruitment approach was developed to suit new company human resource culture, often accepted by the employee.

The union image was updated by the GMBATU, becoming simply the GMB, with a streamlined designer logo. Out went the old image of clasped hands with the slogan "Unity is Strength", replaced by stylised man and woman and the maxim " Working Together". That is not to say that the union had shifted in its advocacy and support of industrial action, within the

law, to achieve better wages and conditions. An example is the support given to members in the Lancashire textile industry in the first year of the merger of the textile unions with the GMB .

APEX was by now approaching the issue of amalgamation in earnest. The list of unions was as established in 1986 and had become part of a general dialogue amongst the lay activists and membership , in no small part due to media speculation. At the activist level an attitude prevailed against the AEU being a possible merger partner. The reason for the AEU approach

"was seen to be a means by which they (the AEU leadership) could progress their argument for a merger with the EETPU. Most of the activists, even the right-wing were against anything to do with them (EETPU) due to the Wapping affair". (Moran interview 1989)

The Wapping affair referred to the industrial dispute at News International and the allegation that the EETPU had secretly colluded to provide workers to work at Wapping after the company had dismissed print workers. The Financial Times , along with other newspapers , gave prominence to the possible merger with speculation on the effect noting that

"Apex's choice of merger partner will have significant implications...A link up with the AEU would enhance the prospects of an EETPU - AEU amalgamation boosting the strength of the right in the TUC. The GMB's influence as a centrist force would be consolidated through taking in APEX while a merger of TASS, ASTMS and APEX would create a 600,000 strong left leaning group. Within APEX , the AEU and the GMB are considered the frontrunners". (Financial Times 1987 b)

Other workplace representatives echoed Moran that the merger had to be in the interest of the members, however there was no longer an argument for a white collar merger only.

Although the Executive was instructed to consider the unions involved and bring a recommendation to the next Annual Conference,

" the main APEX decision - making committee , day by day , consisted of the general secretary , deputy general secretary, and the four lay National Officers (President, two Vice Presidents and the General Treasurer) one of whom hardly ever attended ". (Smith interview 1993)

The Executive was , in the recall of an Executive member at the time, "quite happy to await the report , although speculation was rife". (Darke Apex Northern Region National Executive Member, Senior Staff Representative Swan Hunter interview 1989.)

On this committee, however, Smith believed " there were clear and fixed views in most cases" . Although in the early stages he held no view , he did eventually come to an opinion , but "was careful not to express it since it was not in accord with the majority of officers at that time and (he) was not prepared to be sidelined in the negotiations".
(Smith interview 1993)

The Discussions with Possible Merger Partners

Outline talks had been held, by APEX , with about eight unions. These talks , mainly initiated by the eight unions, consisted of proposals by them with submissions and letters . A report was produced to consider these details and the changing industrial and commercial environment. (Document 1)

After the report was given by this decision-making committee , the APEX Executive decided that further talks be held with five of the unions -the GMB , TASS/ASTMS (at this time now in open discussions themselves on merging) USDAW, the TGWU and AEU. These discussions to centre on suggestions and proposals from APEX.

USDAW

*"The lack of membership cohesion with USDAW eliminated them" .
(Grantham interview 1993)*

TASS

*"The financial status, communist domination, and aggressive attitude soon eliminated them . They had been approached by ASTMS for a merger."
(Grantham interview 1993)*

"They did not appear to want to discuss the issues properly. Probably the ASTMS approach was paramount to them" (Smith interview 1993)

ASTMS & TASS

"ASTMS was attractive even though Clive Jenkins, General Secretary) over gilded the lily. A joint membership in engineering would have been powerful to stand up to TASS. In recruitment , staff association mergers and seeking Single Union agreements it would have been a highly effective body. However , ASTMS pressed on with its discussions with TASS and when they had reached a basis for merger they jointly invited APEX to the talks. These were not attended by either of their General Secretaries and the National Officers of TASS were so insulting it was clear they were afraid we could undermine their hopes of taking control of the merged unions. So the talks came to an end". (Grantham interview 1993)

*" We met when they had virtually agreed their merger, it only needed the formal decision. We knew there was some feeling left in APEX for a white collar merger and the impending ASTMS / TASS merger was seen by some as a threat to our organising in the offices and others as a way forward. Amongst the committee I do not believe they were a favourite. They (ASTMS / TASS) made it very clear that we would be a junior partner. Contrary to what had been indicated previously , Jenkins told us it was too late for Roy (Grantham) to become a joint General Secretary"
(Smith interview 1993)*

[Note this was the position agreed for the General Secretaries of the other unions.]

TGWU

*"The talks with the TGWU were harmonious , but their financial and organisational difficulties coupled with their internal political feuding meant that a merger would not solve our problems".
(Grantham interview 1993)*

"The TGWU made it very clear that we would be expected to fit into their trade group structure and this conflicted with the view that they needed to be some autonomy in the early stages for our members in a group of their own. Also they had financial difficulties and, as I recall, were proposing a transfer of engagements". (Smith)

The " Front-Runners "

AEU

"The talks with the AEU were affected by our common membership in engineering and other industries, our view of them as a Rule Book ridden body, the fact that they had only the previous year emerged from a difficult financial position, the fact that their officials were paid less than ours, but had larger expense payments and their then prospective amalgamation with the EEPTU. The AEU could offer APEX 30,000 staff members, a strong recruiting base and the ability jointly to secure Single Union Agreements. The AEU offered a Sectional structure under which APEX would have its own EC and Officials, its own structure and Annual Conference, subject to our contributions paying for these facilities and our share of the central costs of the union and accepting policies made by a Central Conference with limited numbers attending". (Grantham interview 1993)

[Note . January/ March 1987 the AEU had proposed a wage freeze for all staff and full time officials ; redundancy plans " to reduce the number of officials by around a third" , were to be discussed ; merging of branches etc to meet their financial problems. Financial Times 1987a/b]

" The AEU were very welcoming , but with all that was offered I could not see our women members faring well in that male oriented preserve . It would obviously be fine for the engineering industry men (I think the women would have been swamped) what about the other industries? Even their document presented to us was specific in mentioning engineering. Their membership was declining rapidly , finance problems, I had my own political opinions (a Labour Party member) I supported what was sometimes seen as right arguments , sometimes the left. So the politics in the issue was not as relevant to me." (Smith)

[Note. The Document referred to was probably the AEU amalgamation submission "The Process of Change" . It referred to "your industry" and "developing a common strength" in "engineering and manufacturing" also there was no mention of a structural position for women members.]

GMB

" The attraction of the GMB started with their financial strength and their good administration which appealed to Officials who are always influential in amalgamation talks. John Edmonds with his capacity for leadership undoubtedly influenced the E.C. and appealed to Conference delegates. The wide range of industries covered and the existence of a staff section MATSA were additional sources of encouragement to many delegates although its minority position in engineering formed a point of some contention. Then the general political stance of the GMBATU and its support for policies that were also supported by APEX at both the TUC and the Labour Party were further bonds. As John Edmonds said both unions could be comfortable with each other". (Grantham interview 1993)

" the GMB seemed to me, in the person particularly of John Edmonds , to try to meet our aspirations. They were straight - they advised us of their experience in the boilermaker merger and the need to have some autonomy within one union . This gave us the possibility of a large white collar section consisting of APEX , MATSA and LCCSA and any other staff groups who came in subsequently. They made reference to their Equal Opportunities structure and agreed to holding to the Area structure and already had similar industrial advisories. They expressed the intention of holding a 'high profile , well backed up , well publicised White Collar Section Annual Conference'. John Edmonds words. GMB's attitude could not be better. They promised security and better conditions of employment for the Officials and staff. They could provide first class legal educational and pension services along with research services that were up with the best. We would have unlimited help in extending white collar membership not only where we were relatively strong , but in areas which were new to us. Finally the financial worries would diminish. By this time I was sold , since I had come to trust John Edmonds , in fact I told this to our Annual Conference" (Smith interview 1993)

[Note. The LCCSA , London County Council Staff Assoc., referred to above, had been retitled the Greater London Staff Assoc. and was merged by transfer of engagement to the GMB on 14th Sept. 1988.]

A document was produced by Grantham that analysed the eight unions and gave particular attention to the four. This was the basic information , the actual assessment was conditioned by further reports of attitudes to APEX opinions and more particularly the viewpoint of the

decision makers committee , but also the Executive Council had now developed an opinion.

The Executive Committee meeting held in February 1987 was fundamental and established a recommendation , to be submitted to the Annual Conference to be held in June, of one union for merger , the GMB.

"By this time I was out in the open and had been for some weeks . The E.C. took its final decision to recommend the GMB alone to the Conference . This GMB only decision was as a result of certain members on the E.C. committee (one in particular who had attended very few of the meetings) pressing hard for the AEU to be put on an equal recommendation. I believe this pushed the GMB supporters to close the AEU option down there and then , once and for all and to take the EC behind this" (Smith interview 1993)

"The opposition to the AEU came (also) from Officials who regarded salaries and career opportunities in the GMBATU were much more attractive and a majority of one on the Executive who (the Executive) were influenced against , solely by a future merger with the EETPU in the light of Wapping and their leaving the TUC." (Grantham interview 1993)

[Note. Although at this time the EETPU had not been suspended from the TUC for its refusal to accept General Council directives , which was to happen on 8th July 1988 with the eventual expulsion at the following TUC Congress in October , the issues involved were well known and the 'leaving the TUC' expected. (TUC 1988c)]

"I was one of the two lay officers who was not prepared to support the GMB as the "sole runner " , because at my first meeting (1985) with David Bassnet I saw it (then) to be a takeover...the reason (supporting the AEU because) they had a non effective white collar group . I saw more of both the political side (of the equation) being also part of the argument and a great chance to increase membership". (Travis interview 1993).

"On the information given to us, bearing in mind that most of the EC recognised that it was between the AEU and GMB, coming from the shipbuilding industry I could see the benefits of both. We already had single table bargaining in my company and the

idea of a white collar amalgamation was now a non runner. Other EC members had their own reasons -political and/or related to their industry or service and the region they came from . The majority agreed that the best benefit for our membership was the GMB". (Darke interview 1988)

The Decision was to take to Conference the recommendation for open formal negotiations with the GMB.

The issue had also been a major item for discussion at the APEX Area Officials' Fraternity meetings in August and November 1986 , where it became clear that there was a support for the GMB. This was not merely to refer to salaries and conditions of employment , but also the need to maintain a positive role in the labour movement (unionateness) , an acceptance of the changes in collective bargaining procedures and the decline in APEX usual job territory, sectors and membership. At the full -time officials' meeting in February 1987, having received a report from their "observer " on the Executive Council (E. C.) , support was recommended for the E.C. stance supporting the sole union merger proposal and was to be put to their Annual General Meeting in June 1987.

The GMB Central Executive Council had been kept abreast of the discussions however as they were at this stage informal , they were merely a part of the overall analysis of the merger possibilities and talks taking place. Nevertheless this amalgamation was seen to have equal importance to the GMB as that finalised with the Boilermakers Society .

Reference was made in the recollections of the main players in the APEX decision -making committee to the Officials being "influential in amalgamation talks " and the importance of the Officials and staff "security and conditions of employment". In both the GMB and APEX the full-time Officials had internal organisations which did have an influence and were not only

interested in the terms and conditions of employment , but particularly the future security of employment. The latter item being linked to the question of future growth of the union , job territory for recruitment and servicing the membership. Although they differed structurally and in relation to the union , the APEX Area Officials Fraternity (AOF) and the GMB Officers Negotiating Committee (ONC) were to play a role in the merger process.

The Officials

In Chapter 2 amongst the factors considered , that effect the *raison d'etre* to merge , were the culture of the union and , amongst the decision - makers, the leadership by the full time bureaucracy. The main consideration, in that Chapter, being the national focus . Apart from a national bureaucracy there are also the local full time officials, professional trade unionists , in difference to the trade union professionals and staff . We considered in Chapter 1 , when inquiring into the socialisation effects of capital / labour changing the characteristics of trade unions, the altering scale of operation in the complexities of modern economic and industrial life as it developed. This essentially required trade unions to move away from what Sidney and Beatrice Webb in 1898, called the "ideal of primitive democracy". By primitive democracy they were referring to those early days of trade unionism when all the members of the union could meet regularly to make rules and policy decisions and apply these in their locality. Obviously there are still some very small unions that might be able to do this , but size, geographical spread , administration, the recondite knowledge of legislation and regulations that effect the union member , alongside the changing process of collective bargaining , has created the need for trade unions based upon representative democracy and the professional bureaucracy .

In Chapter 2 a brief reference was made to Michel's "iron law of oligarchy" and often the above basis of reasoning is used to suggest that this develops into an hegemonic hierarchy. A *volte -*

face occurs on understanding the intricate democratic concord derived from the open challenge by members. Particularly their elected representatives and activists often can call in question the actions of the Officials and the politic of the union at a Conference / Congress which has representative rank and file delegations . The so - derived rules and policies are then mandatory on the Official.

Furthermore the career pattern of the Official , more often than not , begins with the election to unpaid offices as a shop steward , a branch official and the regional / area structure. This career pattern does not refer, therefore , the office administrative staff , who work for the union, just as they would work for any other employer. In no way does this imply a lack of loyalty by staff to the organisation , but it derives from a differing motivation. A further differing motivation applies to those with technical positions on the staff , the trade union professional , - legal , education , research , industrial engineer and political officers - oriented towards professional standards of their occupation . Although their career pattern commenced with an appointment , some direct from staff , others college - educated , their identification with the union is often an advancement of the ideology that drew them into or developed during their union work. For example, in the final stage of the GMB / APEX merger a motion was carried at the APEX Conference originating from the GMB staff who were members of APEX (the majority employed at the GMB national office) which clearly underlined this. It stated:

"...the right of all workers to belong to, and be represented by , an independent trade union

That , as the main union for trade union staffs, APEX must support the extension of this right to all those employed by trade unions.

...the right of all APEX members employed by the GMB to transfer membership to an independent trade union of their choice, in the event of an amalgamation between the two unions.

...this right to be enshrined in the terms of the proposed GMB / APEX amalgamation". (APEX Annual Conference 1988)

The full time Officials of both unions , however, did not accord with this identification. Although their terms and conditions of employment are conditioned by the internal structural organisation, their identification with the union differed.

Internal Full-time Officials' Organisation.

The APEX Area Officials Fraternity (AOF) was composed of all the union's full time area Officials including the Area Secretaries , but excluded the National Officials. Its right to represent was embodied in the Rules (APEX Rule 53 and 54) . In addition the AOF had its own written Constitution agreed by its membership and endorsed by the APEX (national) Executive Council . It held an Annual General Meeting at the Annual Conference which was attended ex - officio by all Area Officials . It also had corresponding representatives in each Area, who attended other meetings to discuss issues and represented the opinion of their colleagues. By custom and practice the AOF officers could speak at the Annual Conference on matters affecting the Officials or where the Officials' viewpoint (in their opinion) was felt necessary or requested.

With regards their terms and conditions of employment, the negotiating team consisted of the officers of the AOF (4) and , for the union , the national lay officers and the General Secretary.

The AOF was entitled to a non - voting seat on the Executive Council. It was therefore aware of all decisions of the union's supreme body between Annual Conferences and the representative was often called upon to give the Officials' opinion. This was not only on issues which directly affected or were appropriate for negotiation , but also issues of policy. The Area Corresponding member also was entitled to attend the Area Executive Committee for the same purpose locally.

The GMB Officers' Negotiating Committee (ONC) represented all the Regional Officials with the exception of the Regional Secretary, but includes the Head Office based National Industrial Officers. Its rights of representation is not accorded under Rule, and at the time of the amalgamation, there was no reference to it at all in the Rules. However the ONC has a Constitution approved by "the General Secretary and appropriate Union Sub - committees and Council". Due to numbers, there were over 200 GMB Officials, there was no equivalent meeting to the APEX - AOF Annual General Meeting. The membership of the ONC meeting was composed of 25 representatives, ie. 2 from the regions, separate representation from BMS, RIOs and NIOs. (Note: this was increased for an interim period after the GMB / APEX amalgamation.)

The negotiating team consisted of the officers (3) and two others from the ONC and, for the union, the President, General Secretary, 4 C.E.C. members (usually includes 2 Regional Secretaries) and personnel management (2).

[Note. The status of the Regional Secretary, as a national Executive member, treated under Rule as a member of the Regional Council creates the equivalent role in the Region to the General Secretary nationally..... In later Rules reference is made to the ONC in new (1988) Rule 17 F3, Officials Disciplinary Procedure, this amended the old Rule after the Union agreed a disciplinary procedure with the ONC however there is still no embodiment of recognition in the Rules,]

The two Officials organisations' officers met on an informal basis. immediately the decision was taken to seek amalgamation (June 1987 APEX Conference), both stating their support for the merger. After the November 1987 APEX Recall Conference discussions were on a more formal basis. The main topic was obviously to cross reference the terms and conditions of employment, but also to discuss how the integration of the two unions could take place. It

was the expressed view of both organisations , as outlined in the AOF submission to the Joint Organisations' working party , that Officials should be regarded as

"Officials of one union and not sections of a union...except for an interim period, we do not believe that there should be separate white collar seats on the body representing officials or it's negotiating committee". (APEX ONC 1988)

In the discussions it was recognised that APEX officials would be servicing the white collar section of the new union, however they set an objective of " the maximum degree of integration of officials in the shortest possible time span ". It was understood from the outset that

"cross - section servicing is not only a possibility but would be advantageous to the union by ensuring that officials gain experience in dealing with all members". (AOF 1988)

The discussions carried through 1987 /88 with interim arrangements and mirroring the negotiating period of the two unions. The interim period was to last two years and entailed representation on the ONC by the four officers of the AOF and the two officers of the AOF recognised in the APEX Rule Book (the Chair and Secretary) joined the negotiating committee. In line with the ethos of integration, after the two years it was agreed that the ONC revert to the Regional and National representation. This not only meant ex-APEX officials having to participate in the elections in exactly the same way as other GMB officials , but this also applied to the BMS officials. Furthermore it set a pattern for future mergers.

Ron Langston , the chair of the GMB/ ONC recalls the meetings as being on a harmonious basis ;

"very professional so that the integration of officials was smooth . We had some meetings with the Officials in my Region although little contact with the lay officers. (see later this Chapter- Approach to the Decision Takers.) The links with the AOF gave an added lift to making the amalgamation successful. Even when there was some argument about the establishment of the Regional Staff Officer post , the

equivalent to an RIO, for the APEX Area Secretaries , it was not too difficult to neutralise the problem . There was little suspicion of our colleagues from APEX . This was certainly different to problems during the Boilermaker merger". (Langston Interview 1991 ONC Chair . He was also a Regional Organiser in the Birmingham and West Midland Region)

During this period AOF/ ONC joint meetings were held with the joint General Secretaries regarding the details terms and conditions. Again this was to cement relationships between Officials.

The chair and secretary of the respective organisations attended the Unions' Conference (April 1988) / Congress (June 1988) where the final decisions to merge were carried.

The Final hurdles

At the June 1987 Conference of APEX , although

"there were some fairly strong attempts to reopen the AEU option , the delegates overwhelmingly supported the sole option of the GMB" . (Smith interview 1993)

At the Conference the motions submitted favouring ASTMS/TASS were heavily defeated ; there were successful motions clearly against even discussions with the EETPU , one also added to this the AEU due to its financial problems and particularly its prospective merger with the EETPU. The AOF chairman told, the Conference that the APEX Area Officials

"welcomed the Executive Council decision to discuss amalgamation terms with the GMB"...going on to state that it was..."in the interest of the Union for a sound industrial base , (that) this should be conducted as speedily as possible..." (APEX AOF CHAIR NOTES)

The Executive Recommendation was therefore a substantive motion and carried with only marginal dissent .

The GMB Central Executive Committee met later that month and tabled a Special Emergency Motion to its Congress which was carried unanimously.

"...warmly welcomes the decision of the APEX Conference to, seek early discussions, with a view to amalgamating with the GMB.

Amalgamation between our two organisations will be an important step forward for the trade union movement. It will provide staff employees in all industries and from all grades, with strong representative and expanding organisation, as well as a clearer voice inside the labour movement.

Conference therefore calls on the CEC to enter into urgent discussions with APEX in order to draw up firm proposals concerning the details of amalgamation which can be recommended for acceptance by GMB and APEX members". (GMB Congress 1987)

In a Joint Amalgamation Steering Committee was held and agreement reached to set up two Working Groups : (i) Finance, Contributions and Benefits and (ii) Government & Organisation. The Steering Committee composition was the four national lay officers, the Deputy and General Secretary of APEX and the President, General Secretary, National Executive Officer, Regional Secretaries (3), CEC members (7) and the BMS Section Secretary for the GMB (only half the GMB team attending at any time.). The Working Groups were smaller, but both include the Presidents and the General Secretaries with four others (GMB :-four from the steering committee and Apex :- three from the steering committee plus an Area Secretary (chair of the AOF) on the Government working party and a Regional Secretary on the Finance. These sub committees met on a very regular basis (often more than the once a month as agreed) as the objective was to get the Heads of Agreement conclude by October for submission at the recall APEX Conference in November.

This was achieved and set out the structure and financial arrangements that would be ultimately established and the transitional arrangements (mainly over two years) as to how the new union moves to that structure, benefits contributions and other finance arrangements. Personnel issues would be discussed with the relevant bodies. There were key issues of

representation at the GMB Congress and the CEC on a better basis for an initial period, the APEX Section structure nationally and regionally and the branch structures. There were a few issues of Rule, however as this was an amalgamation it gave the opportunity for the GMB to update its rules. (GMB 1988)

The stage was set for the amalgamation,

"the Special Conference (in November 1987) accepted most of the recommendations on the amalgamation talks. The negotiators were sent back to see if further consideration of some issues could result in change". (Grantham interview 1993)

The issues were not significant and were, as Grantham put it in his speech to the GMB Congress, "proposals of those who wanted to merge but wanted to stay as they were". (GMB Congress 1988)

The Apex Conference in April 1988 sealed the decision. The final hurdles on the amalgamation details had been cleared and the lead up to the ballot was underway

Introducing the special debate at the GMB Congress in June 1988 by presenting the document "Shaping Up for Our Next Century" Edmonds stated that the amalgamation "would transform the nature of the GMB". Linking the other merger, the transfer of engagement of the GLSA which took place in October of that year, he underlined them as "part of a carefully thought out plan for the future of a new union". Although the transfer of engagement predated the amalgamation, the terms were based upon the GMB / APEX model. The plan was a conglomerate trade union, without "the elitism that afflict some other white collar unions", an identity within one union structure and therefore the debate was the vehicle for opening the debate on deleting the BMS section from the Rules and replacing it with an integrated section, based on the GMB / APEX model (the Technical Craft Section) which

was also outlined in this special Report. (GMB 1988) The debate was highly supportive and a unanimous decision for the amalgamation ballot to be arranged.

Approach to the Decision - Takers

The membership in both unions had been kept aware of developments in the Regional / Area meetings, correspondence with Branches and the unions' house magazines. After June 1987 the information resourcing was stepped up. Agreement on closer working arrangements meant joint activities were undertaken in a number of Regions. Full reports were made on an ongoing basis to the Area/ Regional meetings and reports on relevant and major aspects to the branches.

In some Regions joint approaches were made . This was to a degree due to officials' relationships , as in the London and the Southern Regions of the GMB (one Area in APEX)

" a joint meeting was arranged in British Aerospace by the full time officials not for any other purpose than to introduce each other to the stewards. Obviously we knew each other well as we were at that early stage preparing for the shorter working week issue. But it did show us that there was this close working relationship and the membership respected the officials' credibility" (Moran interview 1989)

The nature of the industrial sectors created even further links ,

" The GMB is a major union in my industry (shipbuilding) and the research material is excellent . This and the strength of the union in the (Northern) region, the largest union, meant we had regular contact with our (GMB) colleagues in Labour Movement meetings also. The APEX officials? Our Area Secretary was committed to the amalgamation , so naturally we had all the documentation " (Darke interview 1989)

However , Travis could not recall being involved in any approaches in her Region , but

"understood that in certain regions approaches were made , but in my (Birmingham and West Midland Region) it was limited to Officials in the main. I have often thought it may have been due to my anti - stance , which was well known". (Travis interview 1993)

After the 1988 Conference / Congress all regions had this joint approach enhanced. All parts of the organisation were affected by the literature and open support given. Branches were visited, speakers were arranged for the respective Area / Regional meetings including the industrial advisories. In APEX special weekend and day schools for activists were held, to explain the merger details and recommendation of support. In fact at the special meeting of APEX Area Secretaries in September 1988, the reports showed that great progress had been made in developing the support for the recommendation to amalgamate. Special posters, leaflets and lapel stickers were produced.

The decision takers had no qualms about amalgamating with a union with differing historic characteristic, they were aware of the need to amalgamate for reasons of growth and finance. They were obviously effected by the attitude of the decision - makers. Particularly, they had seen the changing industrial relations scene, caused to no little degree by employment legislation, but also the changed nature of their relationship with their colleagues, staff or manual worker. What was now significant, was the way the merger discussions were carried out. The amalgamation friendly style which created the correct environment for progress, was fundamental in achieving the final result.

A timetable was established and action taken in accordance with statutory requirements. All ballot documentation had to be submitted to the Certification Officer ;

The unions' instrument Of Amalgamation (Document 2)

The notice to members (Document 3)

The voting paper ; only YES or NO (Document 4)

The new Rule Book which forms part of the Instrument of Amalgamation

A joint letter from the two General Secretaries setting out the main terms and detailing benefits anticipated by the proposed amalgamation. (Document 5)

This was to be a full postal ballot.

The timetable also has to meet statutory requirements . The ballot would commence in the September for announcement of results of ballot and formal application to the Certification Office to register by the end of December 1988 . After the ballot

" the Certification Officer cannot register the instrument of amalgamation earlier than six weeks after the application for registration...Before or during the six weeks a member of any of the organisations concerned may complain " on specified grounds. (Certification Office 1989)

The results were

	FOR	AGAINST
GMB	171,284	22,301
APEX	16,879	4,850

GMB majority of 88.48 of nearly 25% votes cast.

APEX majority of 77.68 of about 29% votes cast.

The amalgamation took effect from 1st March 1989

The significance of the amalgamation is as Edmonds stated three years later , the GMB had

" secured mergers along the way , but the two strategic ones were the Boilermakers and APEX., probably more particularly APEX. They changed the nature of the union". (Edmonds 1992)

How this changed the nature of the GMB, how this case study and other mergers relate to the conceptual maps and what can be related to future change will be considered in detail in the next chapter.

The Way Forward

The consequences of the GMB/APEX amalgamation, in 1989, can be measured against the expectations of the main players and the changed realities. They must also clearly follow the reasoning for the amalgamation as portrayed in the previous Chapter. APEX activists, whilst seeking to maintain a strong presence of staff employees in a trade union, recognised the disappearing gap between the socio- industrial status of blue and white collar workers. However, there was still an identification with some form of separatism for the white collar employee . The GMB leadership, in addition, saw it as a means of projecting a new organisational structure. The amalgamation with the Boilermakers' Society had given effect to a craft worker identity, broadening the general union concept, but it did not trigger a transformation of the organisation, merely "bolting the two unions together. The result was a confused structure of authority and decision-making". (GMB 1990)

The move to a more synergistic model came out of the pre- merger discussions with APEX. From these discussions, post-merger , the Apex Partnership Section was established forming the basis for future amalgamations. There had developed in the GMB a recognition that "every union discussing amalgamation wants to retain its own identity and its own autonomy". (GMB 1990)

By the means of sectionalisation, the question of identity and autonomy could be met on an industrial sectoral basis.

This new Section, the Apex Partnership , consisted of the ex-APEX membership and those GMB staff members in the MATSA group , which included the ex-Greater London Staff

Assoc. membership. The GLSA, the London Local Authorities' staff union, had transferred engagements earlier in 1989. Following this pattern, the Boilermakers Section became transformed, linking ex-GMW section members in the industrial sectors of heavy manufacturing, for example engineering, shipbuilding, steel etc, into the Technical and Craft Section. The Boilermaker identity was now subsumed into this new broader sectoral body. There was now

"a prototype structure which (was) still based upon the traditional GMB Regional system...extended to encompass other Sections to attract and accommodate other unions seeking shelter". (GMB 1993 i)

The amalgamation, therefore, did trigger the transformation to an organisational form, Sectionalisation. This was claimed to be the appropriate structure for the future, within the tradition of the strong Regional culture. This union Regional culture, if it was to be maintained in the political and industrial climate of the 1990s, needed to integrate with the newly emerging Sectionalisation. Furthermore it was now believed that "by 1995 the industrial scene could be dominated by four super unions" each with "well over a million members". (GMB 1990)

Taylor saw this as marking a "clear change of focus away from the GMB's traditional strength among the regional secretaries". However the activists and representatives surveyed did not confirm this view. (Taylor 1994) Any attempt at changing the regional identity of the GMB would have been opposed by all. Even APEX activists prior to the merger were regionalists.

One thing was certain, bolting unions together to form one union through merger was destined to create problems and had been tried previously. (see Chapter 3 with regards to Unison and the AEEU) Therefore, the achievement of an amalgamation friendly style requires consistent organisational development, which can take a strategic view across whole sectors, and give a facility to an element of autonomy. These Sections in the GMB also had to align to the

Regional form. As Charles Handy has noted

"...many of the ills of organisations stem from imposing an inappropriate structure on a particular culture, or from expecting a particular culture to thrive in an inappropriate climate". (Handy 1985)

At a special Conference held on 20th September 1990 , the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers agreed to seek a ballot for transfer of engagement to the GMB . By the agreement to merge in 1991 , a further section was established, the Clothing and Textile Section. The section was to consist of the ex-NUTGW membership and the Textile industry members of the GMB. A difference was to occur upon transfer of engagements with the NUTGW, the white collar members employed in the clothing industry remaining in the Clothing and Textile Section.. This was at the request of the members who sought to maintain their industrial links and their voice on issues within the sector.

The development of a more extensive sectional structure was now underway within the GMB . After further analysis, it was demonstrated at the GMB Congress in 1991, how the existing membership could participate on issues affecting their particular company , industry or sector , by the establishment of a further four sections, creating a seven section structure : Apex Partnership, Technical and Craft ; Clothing and Textiles; Food and Leisure; Energy and Utilities; Process and Construction; Public Services. The Sections achieved organisational legitimacy by a Rule change at the 1992 GMB Congress. The arrangement was to consolidate GMB/Apex Partnership members within sectors by allocation to the particular Section.

(Note. With the transfer of engagement by FTAT to the GMB in 1994 the Construction sector was put into a new section , the Construction Furniture , Timber and Allied section - making eight sections.)

Each Section has its own National Committee of lay members elected from within the sectors

of employment and its own annual conference. Each conference is the forum for debate on issues specific to the industries and can not consider issues of policy, which remain the responsibility of the Annual Congress. Nevertheless, this sectionalisation has given the union a distinct industrial focus.

The consequence of the APEX/GMB amalgamation of 1989, therefore, had clearly assisted the ability to meet the challenge of the changing reality, but some of the main players in that merger began to view the situation differently. The last president of APEX, Ken Smith, summed up the feelings of some activists

"I'm just sad that subsequent events have not mirrored the picture that was painted prior to amalgamation, most of all the new Sectionalisation proposals spell the death knell of any remnants of APEX, as we knew it."

We were told by GMB in the early negotiations that MATSA was a part of the union which needed revitalising and reshaping to cater for the needs of the growing white collar occupation.

I fear now that our members have been led - and I was one of those who led them - into a position where they have become only a part of a section, their identity lost in the manual worker strength in the sections. I look even further into the future and see the GMB structure adjusted and adapted making a GMB/TGWU merger much easier...and not too far hence "(Smith interview Feb. 1993)

These sentiments, as we will see later, were to surface at subsequent Apex Partnership Section Conferences. This was, to some degree, the expression of people who wanted no change and did not appreciate the changes going on around them. In fact, Smith, having reconsidered the situation, gave an insight into the appreciation of realities.

"Having considered again my first reactions, maybe I'm a bit unfair to John Edmonds by implication. Obviously he may not have intended to change from the original plan, as I see it, (regarding a white collar section) but has been forced by events to vary and adjust what I believe was the understanding...We HAD to merge with someone and I still feel - and not just to justify myself - that the GMB was the right option. I suppose I yearn for the old APEX days, but if we were given an option of going back - we just could not, for all the reasons that weighed at the time. And of course since our merger, the situation has changed as far as industry

and services are concerned...and the recession.. I'm out of it all now, so maybe I have missed out in being involved in these changes." (Smith Interview March 1993)

Smith's original opinions were echoed by other APEX activists, with some, like Smith, then reconsidering after giving it more thought. Others still argued that there was need for a strong white collar section and that white collar members have common interests across all industries and services. They further contended that the white collar section could coexist with the trade sections, with such employees participating in both. These attitudes were primarily held by the APEX activists who had played an active policy role in the past, as will be seen later in this Chapter, it also caught the spirit of feelings at the Apex Section Conferences. As one Northern Region activist put it

"At the Conferences there was this feeling of being left out-of the union's strategy discussions. I voted along with the others for a retention of what we already had, a white collar section. But I realise, for progress, that it (sectionalisation, which will integrated white and blue collar workers) has to come. The company I work in (engineering) has had a number of redundancies since the amalgamation. The number of Apex members has been decimated". (Ex - APEX activist still active in the Apex Section Interview 1993.)

At the Apex Section Conferences strong advocacy for this retention of the separatist white collar section came from the trade union and political staff sector delegates. Nevertheless, it was a popular theme at the Conferences. It must be added that this conviction was also shared by some ex - MATSA activists,

" At the (Apex Section) Conference we have looked at those issues that are of concern to white collar workers. We could still participate in our trade section" (Ex- GMB MATSA activist still active in the union. Industrial sector: Gas. Interview 1993)

At the first Apex Partnership Section (for brevity this will hereafter be called the Apex Section) Industrial Conference for the engineering, shipbuilding, aerospace and allied sectors, the delegates agreed unanimously a motion calling for the integration with the Technical and

Craft Section industrial conference. This was in 1990, the first year of the merger, and significantly was the position of the largest element of the old APEX. The rationale for the move was that

*" In the longer term it had been agreed that the problems facing the shipbuilding and engineering sectors were common to both the white collar and blue collar staffs..."
(Report 1991 GMB Apex Section National Industrial Conference for the Engineering, Shipbuilding and Aerospace Industries.)*

Yet after the 1991 GMB Congress agreed to the establishment of the seven Sections and, the following year the rule amendments to establish the structure and organisation, the Apex Section Conference in the November 1992 refused to accept the Section's National Committee Report on sectionalisation. The report referred to the changes in the Public Service Section

" the changing economic climate, changes in public services structures and bargaining arrangements led the Central Executive Council (CEC) to establish a working party to consider how best to represent and promote our membership within the Sector. The CEC decided to include all public services workers (including white - collar members) in the Section.

The ongoing harmonisation of terms and conditions of employment of blue and white collar workers within the Sector necessitated strong organisation.

The creation of a new union by the pending merger of NALGO, Nupe and Cohse will have implications for all other public service unions.

... a similar decision (was taken) in respect of the Energy and Utilities Section.

Changes in Government policies - including privatisation - and changes in bargaining arrangements placed pressure on members in the industries and this in turn created a growing desire from the membership to unite in order to have a strong industrial voice and high profile." (Apex Partnership Conference 1992)

The situation in the public sector and the newly privatised energy and utilities sectors had in fact moved the membership to seek integration in the Section. More particularly, it also indicated the direction for other Sections. The report went on to say

"THE FUTURE... As the sectionalisation of the union continues, there are likely to be

other white - collar groups who would wish to move into industrial sections...the Apex Partnership Section will remain a strong voice within the Professional and Commercial Sector. The integration of GMB and Apex members into industrial sections will enhance the involvement of Apex members within these sections whilst at the same time developing a specific profile in respect of professional, commercial and business sectors. (Apex Partnership Conference 1992)

The delegates to the conference felt this was a negation of the pre - merger commitments, in that the white collar workers' issues would be lost or diluted , in fact an echo of Smith's earlier comments referred to previously in this Chapter. Yet at the same Conference the Special Reports covering Manufacturing, Public Services and Utilities all outlined the need to minimise the division between blue and white collar workers. Further it was stated that the development of separate industrial sections within the union allowed this to happen. These reports were accepted. As one member from the public services sector stated

"We wanted the best of both worlds. I realised the need to integrate, but still felt the need to have a white collar identity protected".

His colleague, a younger member and activist, disagreed he thought that with

"...all the changes we face , there is need for a common approach".

At the 1993 Apex Section Conference , the issue was again approached in the Special Report, "The Way Forward". Once again the reasons for change were outlined by the national officers. Concern had been expressed, at the 1992 Conference, at the alleged lack of consultation in the public services and energy / utility sectors regarding integration. So it also outlined the wide consultation undertaken amongst Apex membership in the Food and Leisure, Process and Construction and Clothing and Textile Sections, regarding integration. The outcome was a desire by the membership, as expressed through their workplace representatives at regional level, to participate in the business of their industrial Section. The engineering , shipbuilding and aerospace industries were yet to be consulted on the possible integration into

a reconstituted Technical and Craft Section. However it was felt that this was merely a matter of time.

The Report's recommendations were that the Apex Section would relate to the commercial, legal and professional staffs, Automobile Association (AA), civil air transport, security sector and the trade union and political staff. This took into account that

"Despite the ongoing recession, employment trends indicate that the commercial and service sectors will be important sectors of the economy by the year 2000". (GMB 1993)

To a degree, this also recognised the transfer of engagements of Staff Associations such as the AA Staff, Legal Aid Staff and the National Union of Labour (Party) Organisers.

(Note. The engineering, shipbuilding and aerospace staff stayed in Apex Section subject to consultations and possible integration, see above.)

The activists who attended the Conference rejected all the recommendations, keeping firm to the ideal of a separatist white collar entity, even though the National Committee promised

"In addition, two sessions of the annual Apex Conference will be allocated to consider issues relating to the white collar membership of all Sections of the Union. Representation at these two sessions of the Conference to be determined following discussion with other Sections of the Union". (GMB 1993)

However, most workplace representatives and activists, even those who, as delegates, had been caught up in what one termed "Conference fever", thought that sectionalisation was the way ahead. Some even, away from the heat of debate, agreed with Smith's reconsidered sentiments as stated earlier, of change being forced by events, the recession and the transformed nature of industry and service sectors. There was a need for integration of white collar membership into the relevant industrial Section due to flexibility, single status, single

table bargaining and, in some instances, single union agreements. Activists appear to hold a contradictory dichotomy in opinion and attitude on this matter .

When considering the attitudes that prevail, it is easy to believe that these are references to the "ordinary member", those who hold no office in the union and are not delegates to any part of the structure. The consequences of the amalgamation seemed more immediate to the activist, less so for the ordinary member. Obviously these changes did affect the whole membership, but the perception of the affect clearly differed.

The "ordinary" (mainly ex-APEX) members interviewed were well aware of the amalgamation and the new union. This had been re-emphasised for most by the recent need to reaffirm their deduction of trade union contributions from salary, due to the Trade Union & Employment Rights Act 1993. They were unaware, to a certain degree, of the Sectionalisation issue. Some did make reference to it being mentioned by their shop steward. There was certainly no hostility to the idea. A common thread from these discussions was the reliance on their colleagues, who were "more involved", giving greater consideration to these matters. Essentially the burden of facilitating the structural change rested upon the shoulders of these activists and the officials.

These "ordinary" member more readily pointed out how the impact of the changes affected themselves, as individuals, and their own workplace; a different regional official, speed of access to legal assistance, information regarding their industry or sector and the affect on their salary and job status. It underlines the fact that they see their trade union as a service organisation, not an agency of social movement relating to a changing social class, from staff to some other class position. Far from identifying with the attitudes of the activists, there was an indication that they more identified, as individuals, with

- * the pursuit of a better economic position and job security,
- * a purposeful approach and need to know about training and development
- * effective and professional approaches to the changing jobs environment,
flexibility, single employment status , single table bargaining
- * the high profile of the union.

What they recognised was the union's ability to achieve these aspirations, by collective approaches or individually. The savoir- faire of the general secretary, John Edmonds and regionally the media attention given to the Northern Regional Secretary Nick Anderson, were both major factors of satisfaction . The investigation was carried out in the Northern Region, where it is the largest union. It is also the largest region in the GMB.

However, it is important to note that the origination of the motions to the Apex Section Conference, in deference to the National Committee position on Sectionalisation, was London and Midland Regions. This is hardly surprising given that these were the areas of major membership in the old APEX, and held pivotal power in the pre amalgamation days. Furthermore the London area is the main centre for trade union staff membership. These are highly articulate, and, to a degree, more politically than industrially motivated members. Nevertheless, in brief discussions with "ordinary" members from these (and other) regions, who were attending the union's college for industrial relations courses, they echoed the sentiments in the Northern Region.

More important in the competitive atmosphere of modern trade unionism, these "ordinary" members identified with the new concept trade unionism expressed by the leadership, regional and national. Interestingly they identified positively with the union's political stance, broadly

mainstream Labour Party, but this is probably due to other factors. It is, therefore, important to keep a balanced perspective on how the organisational changes are perceived in the union as a whole.

Full time officials of the old APEX perceived few problems occurring due to the merger. At the time of the merger there were some who did not have a fully understanding how the GMB worked in practice. They understood the structure, the organisational elements, but some were unaware of the fundamental status of the Regional Secretary. One admitted in retrospect that

" It should have been self evident when you consider the size of the membership in the Regions: basically they are general secretaries in all but name. Edmonds is the national General Secretary but a lot of power lies in the Regions... as a senior officer the direct line of authority was through the Regional Secretary and not a national officer as it often was in APEX ". (Rice Interview 1992)

This regional, rather than central, authority, although something to which APEX officials had shown favour, was still a culture difference which they had to take on board. Also considering the continuing erosion of the main membership sector of the old APEX, engineering, shipbuilding and aerospace, to maintain the aim of a strong presence of white collar workers in trade unions, the merger was essential and improved those elements listed above and the job security of officials and staff. The assimilation into the GMB was obviously assisted by the position taken in 1988 in the lead up to merger, outlined in Chapter 5, that they were to be Officials of the GMB, not a section of the union, and that cross-section servicing was essential. The general consensus at officer level is that the merger has worked well. Most ex-APEX officials now work in Sections other than the Apex Section.

The reality of change is symbolised by the development of what has been termed the Super Unions. Recorded in previous Chapters are the mergers creating the AEEU, with speculation

of the MSF returning to that amalgamation , UNISON and TGWU .

In the lead up to their merger with EETPU, which created the AEEU , the AEU established changes to its structure which recognised that "to remain dynamic and attractive to new members a union must maintain the identity for groups..." (AEU 1986)

UNISON has declared it will

"organise all those employed , directly or indirectly , within those areas of employment which provide services to the public whether in public, private or voluntary sectors of the economy". (UNISON Rules)

The current situation (1994) of three embryonic super unions is shown in Table 9.

Progress to the Super unions Table 9 Membership 1993 ; Total TUC 7, 303, 419 :- 69 Unions	
UNISON	1,486,984
TGWU*	1,036,996
AEEU**	884,463
GMB*	799,101
MSF**	552,000
Merger probabilities	* TGWU / GMB discussions continue **AEEU linked with MSF , but no formal discussions OTHERS: UCATT 157,201 declared membership in formal discussions with TGWU USDAW 316,491 no links as yet.

They are all conglomerate in character with identifiable core sectors, with further prospective mergers and the probability of drawing in smaller unions .

This produced this need to establish appropriate organisational structures. As has been established the relationship to cultural facets will be all important , so organisational change, such as the Sectionalisation of the GMB, is part of the super union profiling whilst retaining the regional character .

The Sectionalisation, which has been established as a proactive organisational move to be more merger friendly, has also been seen to be a prelude to a GMB/TGWU merger. Smith's opinions recorded early in this Chapter was echoed by others .

Outlining the feasibility and possibility of such a merger a document was presented to the GMB Congress 1993 as part of an "ambitious task of creating a new concept of trade union" (GMB Congress 1993)

In outlining initiatives already taken between the two unions, it also underlined the political and organisational differences. These differences, historic and cultural, which have been outlined previously in this study, were highlighted and underlined in motions and the debate at the 1994 GMB Congress. Although the merger is still a strong possibility, the GMB decision makers, the Central Executive Council , have recommended that the unions, at this stage , only have "closer working relationship". (GMB Congress 1994)

Measuring the consequences of the GMB/APEX merger against any success criteria is, therefore, fraught with difficulties. The reasons for the merger and the factors inherent in Tables 1 and 5 still apply. They have , however, been exacerbated by the ongoing recession and the laws affecting trade unions. It would be mere speculation to attempt any consideration of what would have occurred if APEX had remained an independent union, other than to recognise a large membership decline, or if it had amalgamated with the AEEU. It can be determined that, taking into account the reasons for the merger and the attitude and opinions of the ordinary member, the merger has fulfilled what could be realistically expected. The ryder, perhaps, relates to the sectionalisation, which as an organisational change is universally accepted, with some activists still hankering after the past, believing that a separatist white

collar section could exist outwith an industrial or sectoral identity. Given the caveat regarding measuring consequences, the merger has been positive in its affect on membership, officers and the GMB.

Conclusions

The key dynamics that have appeared, as the analysis has proceeded in the preceding Chapters and explored here, are emphasised in the quadrants of change in Table 10, a composite of Tables 1 and 5. The coalition of the factors in this model is recognisable in the two relief maps of change; the actual traversing of the geography of these maps was clearly exposed in the case study. Interwoven threads of historic determinism developed the structural characteristics, whilst the effects of the capital labour nexus, changed the nature of the unions. These socialisation consequences also developed related change characteristic. The decline in growth and density of trade union membership, in the past fifteen years or so, and the widening occupational bands of the potential membership, created a need for economies of scale in organisation and services, but this was merely the start in understanding the new merger wave. The analysis (whilst paying attention on the way to past merger waves) led to the tendentious factors of change.

This concluding Chapter is concerned with three issues. First to draw together the threads of the previous Chapters and relate these to the two maps in Table 10. The change ethos will be considered by reference to the development and change, including the restructuring to sectionalisation and the embryonic super union, analysed in the case study, in the last three Chapters. Thirdly to focus on the implications of these issues on the unions' merger management and driving force. This set of hypotheses have given a direction to future merger probabilities, however their sum constitutes a larger agenda for further reflection.

It will be useful here to restate the network of change factors :

INTRA- AND EXTRA-FACTORS WHICH AFFECT TRADE UNION AMALGAMATION	
TABLE 10	
INTRA-FACTORS	EXTRA - FACTORS
MAP 1	
CHARACTERISTICS	CHARACTERISTICS
Trade Union Structural Traditional to Conglomerate Manual → Craft Non-Manual → Staff Industrial → Sectoral General → Conglomerate Open or Closed	Potential Union Member Social Stratification Actual → Assumed Imagery → Perception Industrial → Sectoral Demographic Change New Job Territory
MAP 2	
TENDENTIOUS FACTORS	TENDENTIOUS FACTORS
Merger Styles Financial Status Individual Union Culture Decision Makers & Takers	Impact of Legislation Collective Bargaining Changes Company Culture Industrial Organisation Changes

The two maps of change, the characteristics and tendentious factors and particularly the elements within each, were refined during the course of the analysis for each Chapter. This was not a redefinition of the elements, but placed into two subdivisions in each map, the quadrants of change. Each quadrant began to define a positive dynamic, either at a given point of analysis or continuous throughout. It was important, however, to establish an initial linking of the intra and extra factors by reference to previous research.

The literature, regarding historical determinants and the structural characteristics of change, showed the development from the social closure of the early craft unions, to the incentive for them to amalgamate within strict boundaries to meet the challenge of the New Unionism.

Consideration of the details showed the pressure on the large unions (always a driving force for change) led them to a general style with a more open organisation. Nevertheless the traditional classifications were difficult to set aside, for both the unions and the academic observer. This retention of these outdated classifications, even though they related more to beliefs and assumptions than to any reality of practice, effected the progress of change. Linking these socio- historic factors to the socio- industrial changes, in Chapter 1, exposed more clearly and reinforced the route the unions would be likely to take: an important indicator to the tendentious factors which were later analysed.

Analysis of the four periods of change in Table 2 showed the effects of socialisation linking capital and labour change. The early literature however was engrossed in considering competing definitions of class status and awareness. (Lockwood 1950 : Goldthorpe et al 1968 & 1969 : Roberts et al. 1977) Braverman's analysis of the evolving class structure in an advanced capitalist state was directly relevant. It gave emphasis to what was portrayed in Table 2 ; the changing structure of capital reflecting a change in the structure of the working class. Inevitably this would affect the nature of trade unionism although he did not relate his analysis directly to, nor considered in any detail, organised labour. The changes in the labour process in the clerical and administrative sector resulting from the application of scientific management, which he examined, assists in giving balance to the dominant arguments on white collar workers status. Braverman, however, failed to give significance to the affects of the state incursion into the equation. (Braverman 1974)

In the last three decades in Britain the political institutions have played a significant role in the process of change as considered in all the previous Chapters. Nevertheless the old divisions of labour, inherent in trade union structures, were adjusting to reflect the actual and potential membership profiles. In the 1990s we began to discern the emerging shape of the new unions;

general in approach, Super unions; at a time of declining membership.

In the past one and a half decades, the dominating concern of all trade unions and those who were analysing the changing environment, was (and is) the decline of membership and as a consequence, the effect on density. There was an extent of quantitative data, which documented well, the changing pattern of social and economic indicators in this period of transformed Fordism. Having established within the two factor elements of Map 1 in Table 10, the direction of trade union characteristics, the data relevant to the potential union membership in new job territories demonstrated one further driving force to merge.

Alongside the growing opaqueness with regards manual and non- manual work was the pressure to merge for growth reasons.

However we noted in Chapter 2, decline in membership was not the only necessary causation of mergers; mergers had taken place during periods of growth and decline. (Buchanan 1974 & 1981: Waddington 1988) Within Map 2 of Table 10 are other influential pressure components : the tendentious factors, comprising both internal and external agents.

Amongst the intra-factors the merger approach was a vital force for change; what was termed merger styles. The study by Undy et al in 1981 which had as its empirical core the comparative study of twelve major unions considered organisation, union government, job territory and regulation. They developed, in the course of that analysis, the three merger styles: defensive, consolidatory and aggressive. In Chapter 2 those styles were considered against the changed socio - industrial and political environment in the 1980s and 1990s. There were still defensive and consolidatory mergers taking place, however the amalgamator union had transformed the style from aggressive to amalgamation - friendly .

An obvious factor in mergers was financial stability. The documents and data considered showed the vicissitudinous nature of the funds. Financial viability has certainly played an important part in the merger candidates motivation and appraisals. It is perceived as an indicator, not only of security, but also organisations' professionalism.

As this study proceeded, it became more and more obvious that the data pointed to a most important factor for discerning reliable trends in mergers: the culture of the union. By this term is meant the whole identity of the union; its inheritance, the norms of rules, regulations, practices and the values of belonging and the paradigm. This latter point being the beliefs and assumptions of a particular union which are often taken for granted. Even though as outlined in Chapter 1 the old divisions of labour had become obsolete and there was also a converging of status between manual and non-manual workers, the culture of the unions in any merger was a determining aspect. As stated above, the old classifications of trade unions often remained when they were no longer relevant, this often became critical in how merger partners were perceived. Much evidence is here available to support the notion that cultures can change; and there is no question that this is a subject future development in mergers will continue to address.

The delivery mechanism of the norms and values (and any subsequent changes) is the leadership, the decision makers, and the membership, the decision-takers. The study also reflected upon the power equation involved. The analysis of the affect of leadership was considered in brief in the early Chapters, but developed more fully in the case study.

Apart from these internal motivators, there are external or extra tendentious factors which directly impact upon mergers. They were the overall social, political and human resource

management change directly affecting trade unions, but also augmenting the other merger factors.

The positive steps in the Trade Union (Amalgamation etc.) Act 1964 created a better legal process of mergers. Intensifying amalgamations, it more particularly aided the transfer of engagements. Furthermore all the analysis of the period, prior to this and up until 1979, showed not merely a participation in the corporate tendency of the the British State, but through the process of tripartite discussions (the government institutions, the employers and the trade unions) a positive and accepted role for the unions. The Labour Government of the 1970s provided a means of direct approach. This not only assisted recruitment of members, but created the environment of merger for consolidatory reasons, political (culture) motives and, for non-TUC unions, particularly, to merge with affiliated unions, so as to be influential in the corridors of power.

In the previous Chapters we noted the effects on particular unions and the direct change it gave to their structural and cultural makeup. Undermined by economic problems and the "winter of discontent", the Labour Government was replaced by a Conservative Government in 1979. Since that date the continuing Conservative Governments effected radical changes to employment and trade union law with subsidiary regulations and codes all to constrain trade unions. This ended the previous plurality and the accepted integral role of the trade unions in consultation and development of strategies. This in itself created the new *raison d'etre* for mergers: the need for back up resources including research and professional services.

Alongside the state intervention and the social changes referred to earlier in these conclusions, other extra- factors were reassessed. The changes in company organisation and the culture affecting and changing the nature of collective bargaining, the impact of technology, the

influence of market variables and individualism, all of these needed the ability to readjust, reinterpret and, to a greater degree, accommodate the changing environment. This again pushed the process of merger into a new wave.

The analysis has not shown any particular cycles of change. In fact the use of the term waves, the notion used by Waddington in 1988, is most precise, as there is no merger automaticity in the historic determinants or tendentious factors. However the intensity of the wave, the propensity for merging, is given an additional push when one or more factors creates more drive. All factors are in some way an affecting driving force, but unions can be driven by the factors differently. When there are the stimuli to change, they could be driven in different directions at the same time or create barriers.

In approaching the case study, using the methods outlined in Chapter 3, it was thought that, given personal involvement in the merger, attitude and bias could influence the selection of data and the interpretation of detail. However, conscious of this at all times, the grid like network of the interconnecting quadrants of the change model helped to avoid this impediment, as did the chosen interviewees. Using the the conclusion of the analysis, the model in Table 10 was the outcome. Having re-addressed each element during the research, there was not one key factor to the process of amalgamation. What was clearly exposed in the case study was this interplay of both the characteristics and tendentious factor paradigms.

The development of trade union structures, conditioned by the characteristics of a changing socio-industrial environment and therefore the potential union membership in Chapter 4, showed amalgamation to be driven by the changing nature of work, the widening of industrial boundaries, and the convergence of approach in the bargaining arena. The impact of the tendentious factors was also perceived throughout, with an acceleration of the impact in the

last 15 years as evidenced in Chapter 5. It showed, categorically, the need for trade union organisation of a kind that could handle the dynamics of change against a back cloth of inimical conditions .

There is some complementarity between both case study unions' historic development and pressures. Although starting from differing cultural positions their merger traits had significant similarity as explored in Chapter 4. The common denominator was the barriers militating against effective change. However the intensity of the factors in the last 15 years, as shown in Chapter 5, pushed back these barriers effecting the decision to merge and underlined the process of change .

As the analysis proceeded and the maps placed as a matrix of change, it became evident that it was unlikely to provide any precise extrapolation into the future for all mergers. But there were discernible reliable trends:

- * there is no monocausal determinism : all the factors interplay in the process
- * the factors are interdependent
- * the wave of mergers is intensifying
- * the Super Union
- * development of a conglomeratism

We have seen in case study, Chapter 6, how the management of change has required structural changes to the organisation. Post amalgamation the development of Sections, reflecting sectors of industry and services, in the GMB was seen to cause some anguish to the APEX activist . The "ordinary" member, however, in tune with the official stance, felt that the changes were essential to meet the new circumstances. Union merger management is now a

major element of the forces for culture change in the trade unions, with structural development and organisational form critical to the successful merger programme.

This new concept of trade unions has a significant importance for the unions internally, but also on the developing Super unions. Unison, the AEEU, TGWU and GMB had a combined total membership, in 1993, of 4, 207,544 which was 57% of the TUC affiliated membership. The stage is set for more mergers. In the context of this study, the possible merger of the TGWU and GMB would again put the general union as the largest union in the TUC. The TGWU has held this status since the 1930s, until, in 1993, when the new union, Unison pushed it into second place. A merger of the TGWU/GMB would produce a union which would account for about 25% of TUC membership. However, whether these discussions bear fruit or not, the super union syndrome will continue have an important affect on British Trade Unionism and the character of the TUC.

Throughout this study, the TUC has been one indicator of overall trade union attitude and one important aspect of unionateness. Although there was no specific analysis of its organisational structure, continuing reference has been made to its goal of maintaining harmony amongst a multiplicity of autonomous unions. The current development of the super union, which is conglomerate and multi- sector based, has required important structural, organisational and cultural change within the TUC. John Monks, TUC General Secretary appointed in 1993, has initiated such changes and started the development of a new role as the coordinating body. The effect of this will again intensify the merger waves. He believes that further mergers will reduce the number of affiliates to just over 40 unions (69 affiliates in 1993) in the next five years...

*"some of the mergers in the past were made on political grounds, but these days they make industrial logic. But there will always be the need for a trade union centre".
(Monks 1993)*

He also makes reference to the use of the trade union centre in European developments. Edmonds also believes that any new modern union "must operate successfully within a European context". (GMB Congress 1993)

To this end the GMB has an office in Brussels and cooperation agreements with sister unions in the European Union.

This study has focused on a range of merger driving forces, the reason for merges, the process and consequence of mergers, and how they act as stimuli to further merger waves. The case study has provided detail of one particular merger, GMB/APEX amalgamation. This case study has demonstrated the importance of the factors contained in the model set out in Table 10. As more mergers are likely via the development of super unions, the importance of these factors in the model will continue.

As a final point, this model cannot address every issue in every merger situation. However, the model does possess a degree of predictability. As such it should serve to highlight the key factors to be considered and managed in any further mergers.

Finally, it is worth noting that the model and case study demonstrate that Trade Unions, far from being outmoded institutions which are resistant to change, see the need to change, wish to change, and are able to change.

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Appendices

Interviewees

Nick Anderson	GMB Northern Region R.I.O. at the time of the GMB/ APEX merger . Northern Regional Secretary 1991
Tom Brennan	GMB Northern Region Organiser formerly a District Delegate (full - time official) of the Boilermakers ' Society.
Peter Carter	GMB National College
Allen Cowan	APEX Scottish Area Secretary. Now GMB Scottish Region RIO
Eddie Darke	APEX Northern Area National Executive Member at the time of the GMB / APEX merger. Now GMB Northern Region (national level) Central Executive Council Member.
John Edmonds	GMB General Secretary
Tony Finn	GMB Northern Regional R.I.O. Formerly a District Delegate of the Boilermakers' Society
Roy Grantham	APEX General Secretary at the time of the GMB/ APEX merger. GMB National Secretary of the APEX Section 1990-until retirement 1993.
Ron Langston	GMB Birmingham & West Midlands Regional Organiser. Also GMB Officers' Negotiating Committee Chair at the time of the GMB/ APEX merger. Retired 1992.
Olga Mean	GMB National President at the time of the GMB/ APEX merger, she also took part in the pre- merger committees.
Joe Mills	TGWU Northern Regional Secretary retired 1993
Ged Moran	APEX London & Home Counties Area Chair and Senior Workplace Representative British Aerospace.
David Rice	APEX London & Home Counties Area Secretary.
Peter Scott	Apex North West Area Secretary also part of Apex representation on the pre-merger joint unions' committee discussing finance .
Ken Smith	APEX National President at the time of the GMB / APEX merger.
Jean Travis	APEX National Vice President at the time of the GMB / APEX merger.

Certain individuals who were interviewed requested to remain anonymous and do not appear on this list . Other information was obtained during informal discussions and although the purpose of the discussion was known it is not possible to list the persons.

STRUCTURE of the UNION

As from 1961

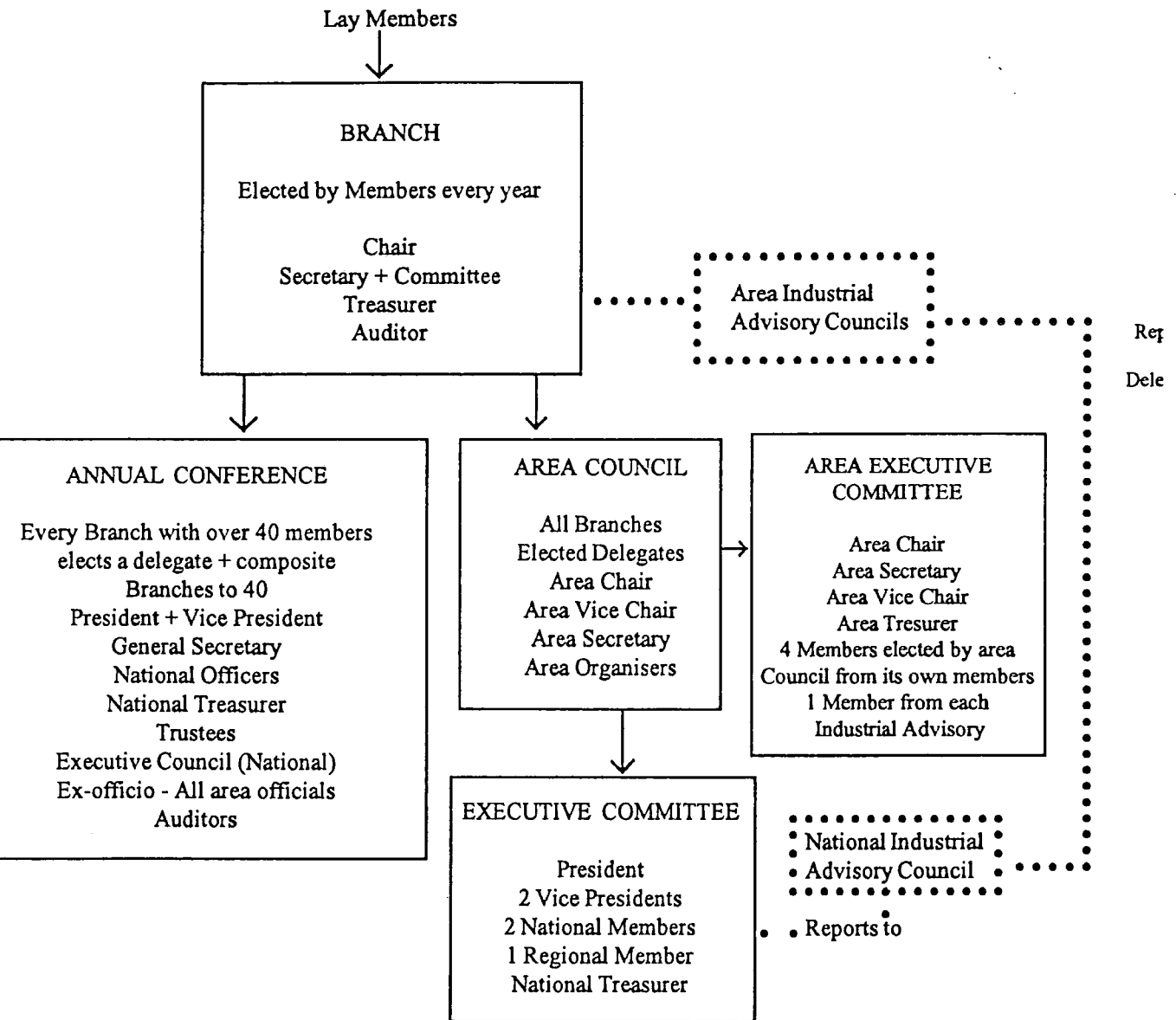
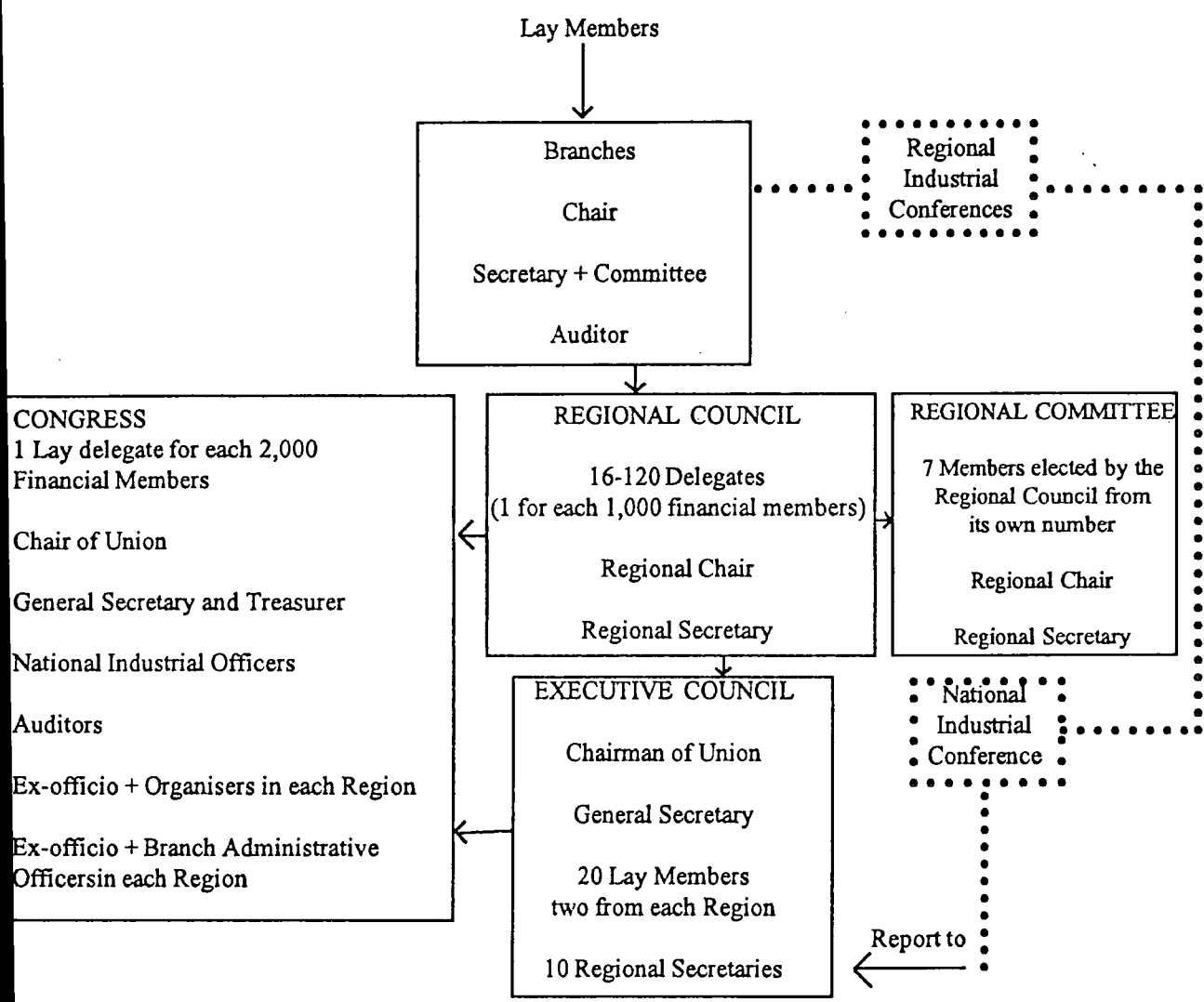


FIG 1

STRUCTURE of the UNION

As from 1976



Note:	<p>Elections are every 2 years for delegation + committees.</p> <p>Industrial Conferences are advisory bodies only, reporting to the executive council.</p>
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FIG 2

STRUCTURE of the UNION

As from 1988



IN THE
NORTHERN REGION

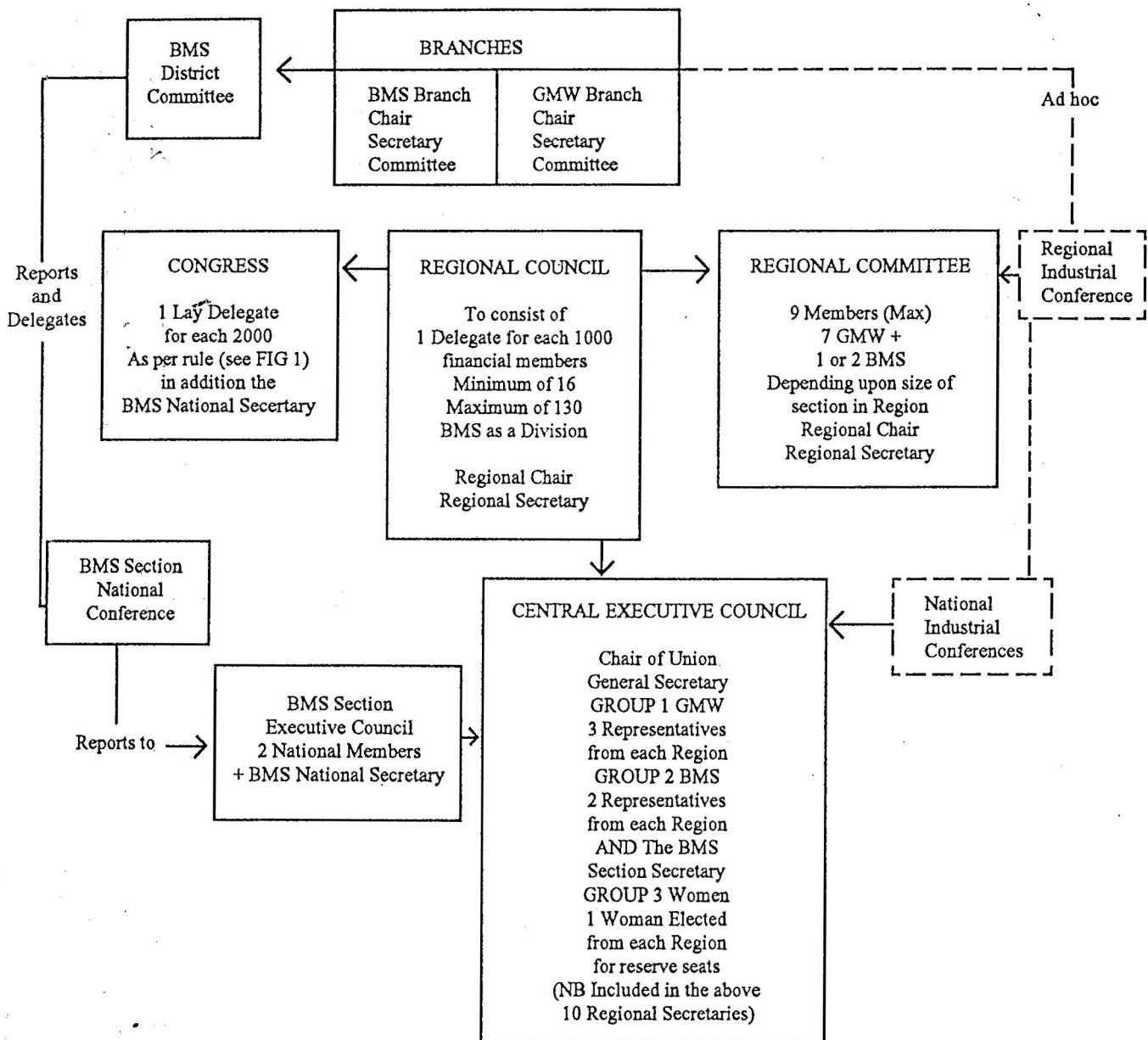


FIG 3

STRUCTURE of the UNION

As from 1993

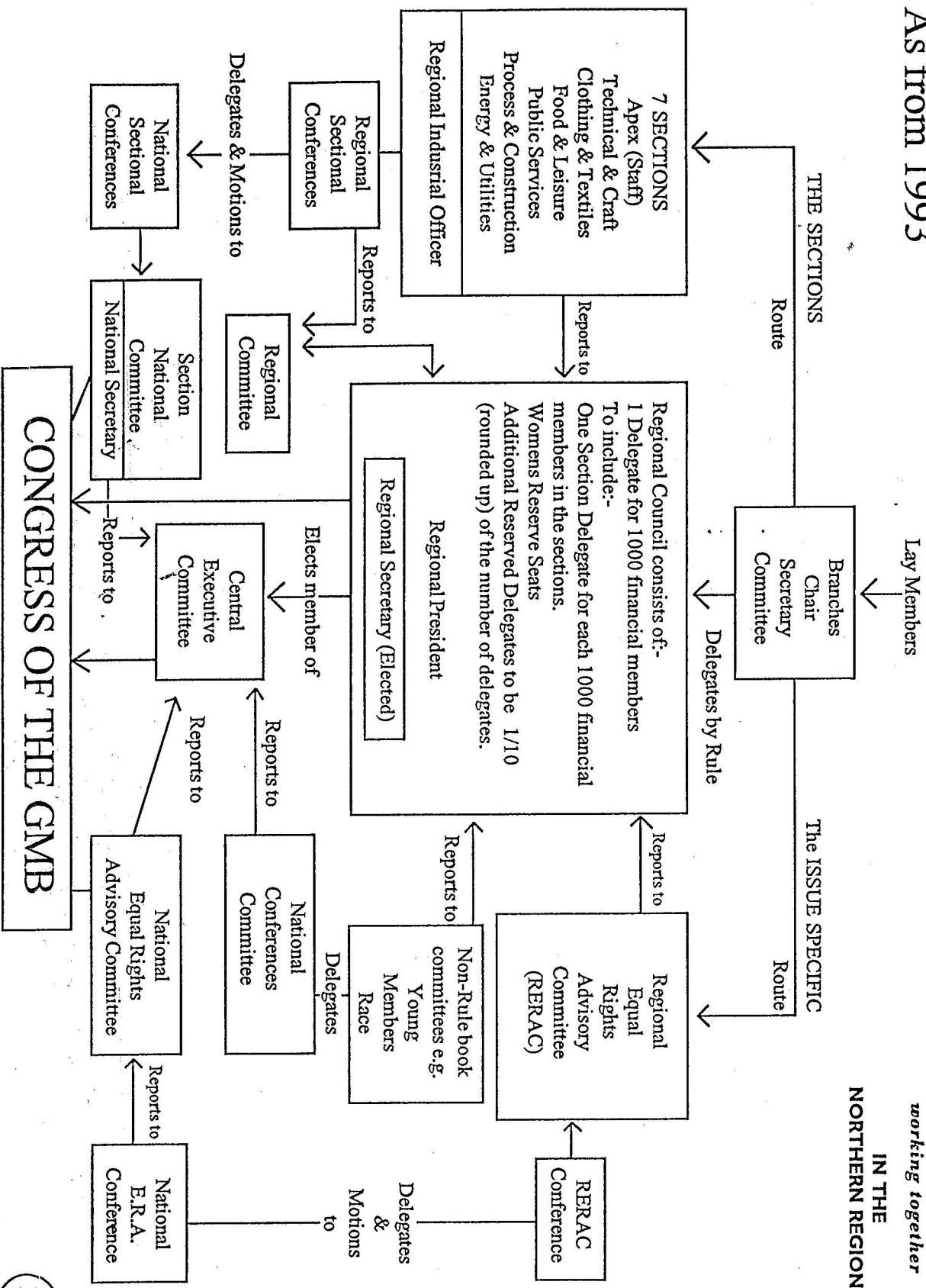


FIG 4

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL, EXECUTIVE, CLERICAL AND COMPUTER
STAFF

Paper on the Issues to be considered on Amalgamation
Meeting, Saturday, 21st February, 1987

1. What are the major issues
 - (a) We have to assess how industry and services are likely to develop in the future.
 - (b) We have to find a fit with one or more unions that help sustain our present base and help us to strengthen our organisation in the future, both in our present base industries and in our target areas for membership development.

2. Industrial and Service Development in the future

I attach a paper 'A' on employment trends for the next few years. Putting its conclusions together with others we can be pretty sure that :

- (a) basic industries like agriculture and mining will become more capital intensive and employ fewer people in the future as they have done for the past 50 years.
- (b) Manufacturing industry will not expand its share of the employment market, but will change its shape with 'hi-tech' firms growing and 'low-tech' firms diminishing in all industries.
- (c) Health, Education and other public services will grow.
- (d) Areas of the travel industry in which we operate such as CAT, holidays, ferries and AA will increase marginally.
- (e) Distribution will increase.
- (f) Banking, Finance and Insurance will increase.
- (g) Professional services - legal, accountancy, actuarial, property will increase.
- (h) Construction will grow a little.
- (i) New production facilities will be smaller than in the past - typically between 100 and 500 employees.
- (j) With single status being progressively introduced the scope for more than one union in newly organised companies taking account of changes in size will diminish significantly. These will be a knock on effect in companies that currently have a number of unions.

3. Where is APEX in employment terms?

Our critical membership is in the following areas :

(a) Engineering, Aerospace, Motors and Shipbuilding represents half our membership. It has fallen both absolutely and relatively due to the slump.

(b) CAT, AA, Tour Operators and Ferries represents 16% of our membership. There are prospects for growth.

(c) Fuel-Mining, Electricity and Oil represent 9% of membership. Only oil offers significant growth prospects.

(d) Food, Drink, Co-ops and Tobacco represent 8% of membership. Existing memberships are being reduced, but there is still scope in other companies to offset this.

(e) Other industries represent 4%.

(f) Services, including TUFs, legal, insurance represent 8%. There are large growth opportunities in law, accountancy, and other professional services.

(g) Unidentified Commercial represent 5%.

Growth will come among:

Managers
Computer staff
Legal
Finance
Staff Associations
Hi-tech single agreement
companies like AB Electronics
Travel

Our basic industrial membership base has to be protected and must be strengthened by using the resources of an amalgamation to develop wider and deeper membership in groups, and by securing single union agreements in high-tech or new manufacturing industries. The words widened and deepened are important. They mean that whichever union we amalgamate with, we need to widen our membership among technicians and supervisors, strengthen our membership among managers and computer staff, and cover all employees in single union situations. The two best exemplars of this trend are the AA Section - all employees from management downwards covered; and the Welsh Area which in its single union agreement at AB Electronics and its agreement with Chartered Trust covers all employees plus all employees at the Howells Garage subsidiary - these two companies provide half the Area's membership.

Other unions have to be capable of supporting us in these objectives if an amalgamation is to be to our advantage.

4. Analysis of Other Unions

Other unions can be analysed under a number of headings; contribution rate, membership by industry, contribution income, structure in regard to Executive Council and Conference all being important.

(a) Contribution Rate.

1) EMA	0.55% of income - broadly comparable to our own %
2) USDAW	61p a week
3) APEX	78p a week
4) TGWU	80p a week
5) AEU	82p a week
6) TASS	84p a week
7) ASTMS	86p a week
8) GMBATU	90p a week

Notes :

(i) ASTMS Executive proposed a contribution increase to their 1986 Conference but failed to get the two-thirds majority to get it approved.

(ii) Any contribution rate higher than that agreed on by ASTMS/TASS could be severely detrimental to our interests if we were competitors.

(b) Contribution Income 1985 and surplus or deficit

	<u>Income</u> <u>Thousands</u>	<u>Surplus</u> <u>(Deficit)</u> <u>Thousands</u>
1) TGWU	47,665	7,234
2) GMBATU	25,111	330
3) AEU	16,662	(1,389)
4) ASTMS	9,829	164
5) TASS	6,294	(35)
6) USDAW	6,860	417
7) EMA	2,649	406
8) APEX	2,835	246

Notes :

(i) Contribution income divided by annual contribution rate gives a good indication of paying membership.

(ii) The AEU increased its number of Officials in 1979 and has not reduced them until the recent announcement. Hence their deficits in 1985 and 1986. While the TGWU, GMBATU, ASTMS, TASS and APEX have made periodic cuts in the slump.

(iii) TASS still have an excess number of Officials due to the mergers with small craft unions. They are selling off surplus properties to cover the problem.

(c) Number of Officials

1) TGWU	528
2) GMBATU	270
3) AEU	217
4) ASTMS	90
5) TASS	55
6) USDAW	130
7) EMA	18
8) APEX	42.

Note:

Any amalgamation will increase the relative surplus of Officials and Staff as the present areas of duplication are rationalised.

(d) Membership by Industry

A paper is attached showing a broad industrial analysis of membership in each industrial grouping.

Executive Council and Conference

1. TGWU have 39 members on their Executive Council. Pro-rata APEX/ACTSS could jointly expect to get 5 or 6. ACTSS already have 3.

TGWU hold a biennial Conference. Representation is based on the membership in each Regional Trade Group; 1 per 1,000 up to 5,000 members, 1 per 2,000 thereafter. Our representation would be about 60.

A separate Conference would be provided for APEX/ACTSS to deal with industrial issues. It is not covered by their Rules and would have to be the subject of negotiation.

2. The GMBATU have 33 members on their Executive Council, based on three per Region. They would expect APEX/MATSA to have about 5/6 members on the Executive Council when it reaches 200,000 members. MATSA currently have 3 members elected from Regions.

GMBATU hold an Annual Conference based on 1 delegate for every 2,000 members. So APEX could expect to have 42 delegates.

The Rules give the Executive power to create industrial bodies but the question of representation and authority of an APEX/MATSA Industrial Conference would have to be negotiated.

3. The AEU has an Executive Council of 11. APEX could secure 2 seats like the Foundry Section but there is a strong case for 3.

The National Committee has 124 delegates but in the present economy drive this may be reduced. Many still prefer the old 52 person Committee. On the present formula APEX could expect 30 to 40 delegates in proportion to the Foundry Section, but only half that number if the Committee is halved.

As the AEU has no white collar section they would agree to our having an Industrial Conference like our present Annual Conference and retaining our existing Executive Council for industrial matters.

4. ASTMS and TASS currently are talking of merging their Executive Councils on the basis of equal voting numbers, even though ASTMS has substantially more members than TASS. However, for APEX they have indicated pro-rata representation as the basis for an amalgamation. The joint Executive would have 48 members, 24 from each union. Clearly this would be too large and it would decrease in size over a period of time - APEX could expect between 8 and 10 Executive Council members which would strengthen the pressure to reduce it.

A Rules Revision Conference based on 330 voting delegates from each union would determine the Rules for the merged union covering the structure of the union, size and representation at Annual Conference and the size and election of the Executive Council. ASTMS would group Branches to ensure 1 delegate per 1,000 members. TASS would elect its Representatives at its Divisional Councils. APEX could expect 90 to 110 delegates at such an initial Conference.

5. USDAW have an Executive Council of sixteen members plus the President, who are elected every two years by ballot of members. The only difference with ourselves is that Officials are entitled to contest the positions for the Executive Council but it is overwhelmingly a lay Executive. We discussed with them the question of APEX representation on a joint Executive. They said they would look to a fair settlement for both sides on the question of APEX representation at that level. They would want to integrate over a period of time the memberships where this was appropriate and acceptable to both sides so that common groups of members ultimately became responsible for electing Representatives to the Executive Council.

They have a Branch based Annual Conference. Unlike ourselves they allocate 17½% of the contributions to Branches but they are responsible for paying the expenses of their delegates to Annual Conference. They have approximately 1,000 Branches which determines the size of their Annual Conference.

6. The EMA would want a Federation. As we would be the larger unit we could keep our Executive Council and Annual Conference intact, but they have a federal biennial Conference at which representation would need to be agreed.

Industrial Implications

(a) Public Industries

With the white collar workers in Fuel, Local and Central Government and the NHS very strongly organised no amalgamation that we are considering would really give us a base for major expansion in these industries.

(b) Engineering

In the engineering companies covered by a sample survey by the EEF it was shown that about 85% of manual workers were organised, with a large majority in the AEU. Only 46% of staff workers were organised, showing a good proportion of the companies or establishments not organised and less than full organisation among white collar workers where organised. There are two viable strategies in engineering - to join with ASTMS and TASS to create a large white collar bloc of 300,000 where our membership and policies would form 14% of the total. The problem is that with the growth of single status and single bargaining this provides only a half solution. The other viable alternative is to merge with the AEU, and acquire their, say, 20,000 white collar members. Half of these would be foremen and a lot of craftsmen would subsequently become technicians. So our negotiating field would have to widen to cover these. The AEU will benefit from the current talks on a revised Procedure Agreement.

(c) Transport

The TGWU is by far and away the biggest union. But the AEU, GMBATU and ASTMS have useful memberships.

(d) Food, Drink and Tobacco

USDAW is by far the most significant union, but the TGWU and GMBATU are very important also. ASTMS is better organised than we are overall, and TASS have taken in the Tobacco Workers.

Finance

ASTMS has the greatest membership in this group - although the CBU and BIFU both have larger memberships. It is interesting as a pointer to how minds are moving towards industrial based unions, that BIFU has always replied to our approaches that it is an industrial union while we are a white collar union. Both USDAW and the TGWU have small memberships that would fit in with our own. The 30,000 members in GMBATU are probably associated with TV hire companies.

Other Industries

In chemicals the GMBATU, TGWU and ASTMS are important.

In textiles the GMBATU and TGWU are important.

In construction the TGWU, AEU and GMBATU are important.

Professional Services

The only unions that are in this field seriously are APEX and ASTMS. We should need an image whoever we amalgamate with that enables us to build very substantially on the steps we have so far taken to develop this area.

In Summary

There are several industries that are important to us, but for future growth and viability we need to do four things - maintain and develop our position as an important union in manufacturing - strengthen our development in transport - rapidly develop our position and visibility in services - and through amalgamation strengthen our capacity to carry out single union agreements covering manual and staff employees. In particular we need to cater for all grades and types of staff - management, office, computer, technical and other.

Conclusion

This basic analysis is necessary before we can examine on the 21st February how we develop our response to the various approaches that we have received. The Executive Council needs to assess the points that are important about each union. It then needs to consider what points we would need answered by each of them in relation to their approach on structure, policy and the role of our members. Only when we have clear answers to these questions will the Executive Council be able to come to a judgment as to which would be most favourable to our members' interests.

Roy A Grantham
General Secretary

A/G/RAG/DAH
9.2.87.

Membership Figures of Each Union in Thousands

	<u>APEX</u>	<u>T&CWU</u>	<u>GMBATU</u>	<u>AEU</u>	<u>ASTMS</u>	<u>TASS</u>	<u>USDAW</u>	<u>EMA</u>
Engineering	42	300	145	630	86	180	-	6
CAT and Travel	14	227	7	42	9	-	-	-
Food, D & T	7	186	100	3	14	15	300	-
Other Industries	3	266	142	50	48	15	73	1
Finance	2	5	30	-	83	-	8	-
Other Services	10	10	24	-	12	-	-	-
Total	<u>378</u>	<u>994</u>	<u>448</u>	<u>725</u>	<u>252</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>381</u>	<u>7</u>
Fuel	8	46	100	17	4	-	-	27
Government	-	66	17	20	21	-	-	-
Local Authority	1	285	233	10	-	-	-	-
NHS	-	26	35	5	26	-	-	-
Grand Total	<u>87</u>	<u>1,417</u>	<u>833</u>	<u>777</u>	<u>303</u>	<u>210</u>	<u>381</u>	<u>34</u>

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

This paper concentrates exclusively on the two major institutes that address themselves to employment forecasts: namely the Institute of Employment Research Warwick University and the Institute of Manpower Studies. Their most recent forecasts cover the years 1985 to 1990.

There are differences in approach of the two institutes: IER concerns itself with published statistics and macro forecasting; IMS forecasts are derived from employer surveys.

APEX needs to be looking to longer term development than the next three years but, with the present "state of the art" the best that can be provided is an assumption of the continuation of the significant trends identified.

In global terms the forecasts differ, in that IER perceives a total employment growth of some 145,000, whereas IMS visualises a decline of some 125,000. Within those totals, however, on an industrial sector basis, there are similar trends identified. The most significant of these is the perceived growth in the financial services businesses sector of between 263,000 and 381,000 jobs. The other area of growth is in construction. Both institutes visualise significant decline in manufacturing industry, particularly in engineering and its related industries where job losses of between 274,000 and 314,000 are projected. Attached at appendix A is the IER projection of industrial employment, sector by sector from 1984 to 1990.

IMS predicts a growth in employment in small companies which are defined in two ways. The first adopted definition is under 200 employees; the second is turnover of under £1m in manufacturing and £250,000 in other sectors (1981 prices). The forecast increase in employment is 700,000 jobs across all sectors, excluding agriculture and energy.

Conventional wisdom suggests that with a continued switch from manufacturing to services, the gap between the south east and the rest of the country will be widened. Research studies, however, point to a more complex picture. For example, since 1979, while unemployment was growing in all regions, there were some particular areas of strong growth. These were: new towns, rural areas, historic towns, the spa towns of the southern region. This trend seems to be strongly linked to the growth of the service sector as an increase in service employment has occurred in all regions except East Midlands, North West and Yorkshire and Humberside.

Size of the workplace is deemed to be extremely important by IER as there is a strong statistical link between unionisation and the size of establishment (not the overall size of the employing organisation). There appears to be a critical level of around 500 employees. Up to this point unionisation grows quite rapidly; above this figure the density rates do not change much with any increase in the size of the establishment.

Fearing in mind the IMS prediction of employment growth in small companies, the growing propensity to decentralise and indeed split existing companies into separate units, this is a factor which needs to be borne in mind.

Another important issue for consideration is the growing inclination of employers for single union agreements. In the context of workplace sites employing less than 500 people, this is a consideration not lightly to be dismissed.

2.

In organisational terms from a trade union point of view, it also makes sense. The key problems, however, are the amount of effort and time needed to recruit in companies that fall below the 200 employee level and the identification of those companies which are likely to experience employment growth and the necessary consultation with other unions.

Occupational information is more difficult to come by and must be more carefully interpreted. Both IER and IMS predict growth in the following occupations: engineers and scientists. Warwick foresees a 9% growth in security occupations and a 24% growth in supervisors of white collar workers together with a 12% increase in managers and administrators. IMS, on the other hand, sees most of these occupations as remaining fairly static, with main growth concentrating mainly on part time staff, against a background of anticipated job losses in operative and clerical occupations.

11 NOV 1987



To : Delegates to Annual Conference
and Members

November 1987

Dear Fellow Member,

Background to the Negotiations on Amalgamation with the GMB

Supplementary Report No. 2 on Amalgamation sets out in detail the structural and financial issues that have been the subject of detailed negotiations with the GMB which are recommended by the Executive Council to the November Conference.

This statement deals with other issues in relation to Amalgamation which were referred to at the June Conference but need further amplification.

The Changing Future

Major changes will take place in the next ten years broadly as follows:

- 1) Basic industries like Mining, Steel and Shipbuilding will employ fewer people.
- 2) Manufacturing industries like Engineering, Chemicals and Food will continue to decrease but 'hi-tech' companies would grow and 'low-tech' companies would diminish:
- 3) Health, Education and other services will grow.
- 4) Banking, Finance and Distribution will grow.
- 5) Areas of the Travel Trade such as CAT, Holidays, Ferries and the AA will increase marginally.
Professional Services such as Legal, Accountancy and Actuarial will increase.
- 6) New production facilities will be smaller than in the past - typically between 100 and 500 employees.
- 7) With the growth of single status in industry the scope for more than one union in newly organised companies will diminish significantly. APEX needs to be part of an organisation that can comprehensively represent all employees.

An amalgamation with the GMB with their major membership in Manufacturing and Services - in the Private and the Public Sectors greatly enhances our ability to tackle these changes in the interests of our members.

INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION

How will an amalgamation affect our members in each industry:

1) Engineering, Shipbuilding and Steel.

The GMB are creating a Craft and Engineering Section to join together the Boilermakers and their own Engineering members. The GMB is strong in electronics the growing part of the industry. Together the two unions have over 160,000 members.

2) Transport

APEX is strong in CAT, the AA and in some other parts of the industry. The GMB has fewer members since they do not count their large Security membership as transport. The two unions have over 20,000 members - as many as the National Union of Seamen.

3) Food, Drinks and Tobacco

The GMB is very strong, while APEX has an important membership. The joint membership is nearby 60,000.

4) Energy, Oil and Mining

The GMB is very strong in Gas, Electricity, Water and Quarrying. Together we would have over 100,000 members.

5) Chemicals

The GMB is a major force with over 25,000 members.

6) Textiles

The GMB is strong in Cotton and Wool. Jointly the unions have over 15,000 members.

7) Construction, Building and Furniture

The GMB has a substantial membership of over 40,000 with scope for growth. Construction is poorly organised on the staff side and which will provide a great potential for recruitment.

8) Business Services and Commerce

The GMB has large memberships in Hire Purchase Finance and Security Staff. APEX has a wide membership. Together the unions have over 30,000 members.

9) Distribution

In the Retail and Wholesale Trades the two unions have over 30,000 members.

10) Local Authorities and NHS

The GMB has 250,000 members.

11) New Technology and Computer Companies and Greenfield Sites

APEX has an important agreement with A.B. Electronics where we have 1,000 members plus major membership at other High Technology and Computer Companies. The GMB has several similar agreements. The White Collar Section will be responsible for all such staffs in an amalgamation and will be responsible for developing our membership in Computer, New Technology and Greenfield Site Companies.

12) Other Services

APEX has growing membership among Legal Staffs, Printing, Trade Unions Staffs, Insurance, Sports and Leisure. In at least four of these sectors, the GMB has membership and can reinforce growth.

13) Union Services

With a large membership it becomes easier to provide better services for members. In all their ten Regions the GMB currently has full time staff devoted to servicing their members on the following subjects:-

- a) Legal Representation - issues are dealt with closer to the members.
- b) Health and Safety - an area where we need to improve our service.
- c) Education - they have one of the finest Education Colleges in the country plus an Education Officer full time in each Region.
- d) Research - they have a Research Officer to assist Officials and Representatives in each Region. At national level the GMB Research team is highly respected. Joined with ours they will be a formidable team. Already we are both regarded as the leaders on Pension issues.

Negotiations

Our staffs will continue to be served by their existing Officials in negotiations. An amalgamated union would strengthen support in Research for negotiations, in Publicity for recruitment, in Education and Training, and in the growing area of Legal support on Company mergers, rights to information, Equal Value cases and Pension provision.

Where there are APEX and GMB staff and manual members in the same Company or industry it would be the intention to develop systems of co-operation to the mutual advantage of both.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Only one other union the AEU offered us a White Collar Conference in addition to the Annual Conference of the Union - and their Conference only has one delegate per 6,000 members. ASTMS is abandoning a Conference of Branch delegates. With TASS they are likely to decide on a Conference based on one delegate for about 1,500 to 2,000 members. The TGWU has a biennial Conference at which our representation would be about 60.

The three day White Collar Conference of an amalgamated union would cost 60% of the cost of the GMB Conference.

We bargained very hard to get a fair arrangement that continues the democratic traditions of branch participation in policy making in APEX.

Executive Council

In looking at representation on the Executive Councils of unions we calculated that with the TGWU the APEX and ACTSS members would get 5 to 6 members on the Executive Council, with ACTSS already having three of the seats.

With ASTMS/TASS we calculated we would get between 8 and 10 members initially, but that the overall size of the Executive and our seats on it would be progressively reduced.

Our negotiations with the GMB have resulted in an agreement for APEX to have 7 seats initially. After four years the White Collar Section (APEX-MATSA) would have ten seats and in addition out of the ten Women's seats on the Executive Council about three would be won by White Collar members.

In addition there would be a White Collar Executive Committee of about fifteen members overseeing all White Collar developments.

November - Decision Time

The resumed Annual Conference at the end of November will have the vital task of deciding whether to approve the proposals we have jointly agreed with the GMB on the Government and the Finances of an Amalgamated Union. On Finance the GMB has learned a great deal from us. White Collar members in the amalgamated union would pay 10% less than the GMB rate, since our members do not need Friendly Society Benefits. That means we shall need only a very small increase in our contribution rate next year to reach the agreed figure. This represents the first bonus from the advantages we shall secure from being a large union.

Next year we have important issues to clear - a common rule book, the management structure of the new union, the White Collar structure, the location of offices and common conditions of employment. Thereafter the final document would be submitted to the Annual Conferences of both unions, and finally to a ballot of members.

November is the real test. Members and delegates have to weigh the changes in our society that will affect us all over the next twenty years, come boom or slump. The old trade union movement has not got the answers to change, because it is too divided and spends too much time competing instead of co-operating. No White Collar union can effectively answer the changes in skill, in status and in the development of common bargaining for all employees.

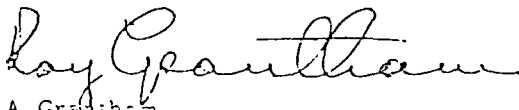
Amalgamation with the GMB, and the other amalgamations that will follow as others join us, aims to tackle these fundamental issues.

When our team started these negotiations we were not all united on amalgamating with the GMB. Today after four months of negotiations we are unanimous that we have chosen intelligent, competent and forward looking partners. We have chosen people who honestly want to build a better union with us and have been prepared to make major concessions to us to achieve that end.

The proposed amalgamation can benefit every group of our members.

I strongly recommend it to members.

Yours sincerely,



Roy A. Graitham
General Secretary



Dear Member,

WE HOPE you will vote "yes" in this ballot - "yes" for the amalgamation, and for an exciting new future for our two unions.

The amalgamation will create a new union for the 1990s and beyond.

It will give the GMB and APEX a more powerful voice to represent people working in all kinds of industries and all types of jobs.

It will give us a strong and respected white collar section. This will act as a springboard for recruitment - allowing us to take trade union ideals and action to people working in new industries, extending the frontiers of trade unionism. And it will give us a clearer voice in winning a better deal for white collar staff in all industries and services.

We will also use our combined strength to provide new and better services for union members - financial services, health and safety advice, legal services, equal rights and bargaining skills to win better pay and conditions for people at work.

We urge you to vote "yes" to the amalgamation - to a new union that will have the strength and skill to protect your rights at work to build a better future.

JOHN EDMONDS
GENERAL SECRETARY - GMB

ROY GRANTHAM
GENERAL SECRETARY - APEX

INSTRUMENT OF AMALGAMATION

Between

GENERAL, MUNICIPAL, BOILERMAKERS AND ALLIED
TRADES UNION

And

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL, EXECUTIVE,
CLERICAL AND COMPUTER STAFF (APEX)

This Instrument of Amalgamation made between GENERAL, MUNICIPAL, BOILERMAKERS AND ALLIED TRADES UNION and ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL, EXECUTIVE, CLERICAL AND COMPUTER STAFF (APEX) (hereinafter called "the amalgamating unions") shall, if duly approved by a resolution of the members of each of the amalgamating unions, take effect on 1st January 1989 or on the date of the registration of this instrument, whichever is the later.

Upon the coming into operation of this instrument the members of each of the amalgamating unions will become members of the amalgamated union, to be called "GMB", and be subject to that union's rules.

The rules of the amalgamated union shall be as set out in the rulebook which is attached to and forms part of this instrument.

Signed:

John Edmonds
General Secretary

Signed:

Roy Grantham
General Secretary

Olga M Mean

Ken Smith

Jim Morrell

Rose Degiorgio

Derek Gladwin

Jean Travis



TO ALL MEMBERS OF APEX

TAKE NOTICE that the 1988 Conference and the Executive Council of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX) have resolved that a ballot of its members be held to decide whether APEX shall amalgamate with the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union.

A ballot of the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union members is also being held.

The terms and conditions of the proposed amalgamation are set out in the Instrument of Amalgamation, which accompanies and forms part of this Notice. The Instrument (including the rules of the new union) and this Notice have been approved by the Certification Officer.

Please make use of your chance to vote.

Cast your vote by marking the Voting Paper with an "X" in one of the two boxes.

Then place the Voting Paper in the pre-paid envelope and post it. DO NOT AFFIX A STAMP.

Voting shall commence on Monday, 28th November, 1988. Your Voting Paper must arrive at APEX, 22 Worples Road, London SW19 4BR by Monday 19th December 1988.

A simple majority of votes will pass the following resolution:

"Do you approve the Instrument of Amalgamation of APEX with the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union?"

**ROY GRANTHAM
GENERAL SECRETARY**

VOTING PAPER

Do you approve the Instrument of Amalgamation of the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX) with the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union?

PLACE AN "X" AGAINST YOUR CHOICE

YES	
-----	--

NO	
----	--

Voting Papers containing more than one cross or containing marks other than a cross will not be counted.

