



AMICUS GRAPHICAL, PAPER & MEDIA SECTOR

FOCs/MOCs/Union Reps Bulletin

Merger Special

Amicus members will be receiving ballot papers on the proposed merger with the TGWU. This special newsletter for GPM Sector FOC's, MOC's, Shop Stewards, Chapel Reps and Activists sets out the reasons why Amicus members working in the Graphical, Paper and Media Sector should support the merger and vote YES.

Vote YES to the merger between Amicus and the TGWU

UNITY IS STRENGTH

There's been a great deal of media interest over the course of the last twelve months about the 'New Union' merger project – who was out, who was in, how it would work, when it would all happen.

And quite rightly so, because this plan could have far-reaching implications, not just for those of us in the trade union movement, but for political life, industry and commerce.

Certainly, the first thing to say is that nothing will take place unless a majority of union members want it to happen – the members are in the driving seat and it is members who will have the final decision in a merger ballot.

The larger picture is straight forward enough. Amicus and the TGWU, two great unions with strong and proud traditions coming together to form one of the largest unions Europe has ever known – two million members across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, in industries as varied as manufacturing, print, papermaking, finance, health, textiles, construction, aviation, communications, public sector, transport, agriculture, etc.

This will give the new union unprecedented resources, bargaining power and political clout.

Its aims are also clear – to use that strength to improve working conditions and wages, campaign for political change and to promote international solidarity through affiliation with the wider labour movement.

And make no mistake – we will need every ounce of that additional strength. Multinational companies are exploiting every avenue offered by global profit-making, often at our members' expense.

By uniting across industries and across international borders, as envisaged in this merger, I believe we can create an organisation that will articulate the voice of working people and, as such, represents an exciting future. I hope you do too.

Derek Simpson, Amicus General Secretary



Tony Burke, Assistant General Secretary, explains why Amicus GPM-Sector members should vote YES to creating a new union.

This is a historic merger. Since the 1920s there has been nothing like it. Most union mergers have been driven by financial problems. The creation of Amicus involved three unions who were facing financial problems – but both Amicus and the TGWU are financially sound. The merger between Amicus and the TGWU is about strengthening both unions' position in the UK and Ireland, with a union representing over two million workers in virtually every sector of the economy.

It is also about eliminating wasteful duplication and competition between our unions and it is about developing a powerful and strong voice for our members not only at work, but also politically, in the country, in Europe and the world.

During the last century, small unions or craft unions, such as we had in the graphical and paper industries merged to create national unions to try to counter employers who became national companies or groups and in an effort to try to maintain industrial control as companies grew and technology changed.



...continued on page two

Tony Burke ... from page one

Today we are faced with global companies who move work around the world and pit unions and workers against each other. In order to defend members and build union membership in the growth areas of the economy we will need a new union which will be financially strong and one of the biggest unions in Europe.

Over two years ago, the GPMU, along with Unifi, merged with Amicus. It was the right decision. But in that period things have changed dramatically for the print, packaging, paper and media sectors. As with most of manufacturing, job losses have grown as print, packaging and papermaking companies restructure – this will continue to be the case. And it's not just members working in large companies who are being hit. Many medium sized and small companies – are in the "supply chain" of the industry and they are facing problems too.

Technology still moves on at a rapid pace; new companies are formed; new means of communication – other than the printed word – are developed and companies look to merge or acquire other businesses. Globalisation means customers and companies alike are looking to central and eastern Europe to place their work or to invest. A growing number are looking to India and China. We now need a strong union to help defend members and grow.

Even with our organising experience, there are many areas we need to recruit and organise – publishing, new media, on-line information companies as well as companies where we don't have members.

The new union will have the financial firepower to help with this work. £5 million will initially be available for organising and recruitment work.

One Sector, One Union

Merging with the TGWU will "close the circle" in the graphical, paper and media industries. The TGWU have members in papermaking, boardmaking, packaging and newspapers. It will mean all our members will have one voice, in one sector, in one union for all print, graphical, media and packaging workers.

As a strong and powerful new union we will maintain our significant influence within the main international print and paper union organisations such as UNI, ICM and EMCEF and we will maintain our major influence with employers and their federations.

For members, the merger will free up resources in all sectors to provide a modern and professional service – as well as research, training and campaigning. The new union will have industrial sectors which will have industrial autonomy – essential in a modern and progressive union.

The new union will be based on participative democracy at work, at the chapel, at the Area Activists Meetings, at Regional and National Sector Committees, on Equalities Committees and the NEC. Decisions, at all levels, will be taken by union members who represent people at work, who are accountable to their electorate and who will be collectively bound by the rules and policies of the union.

Democratic Union

The new union has the potential to be one of the most democratic trade unions that has ever been in existence.

The next few years will be a period of intense activity – organisationally, industrially and politically and the new union will have the job of representing over 2 million workers – advancing and defending wages and conditions.

The new union will begin the process of progressive change in the trade union movement in the UK, Ireland and Europe.

Many graphical and paper unions across Europe, USA and Australia have now merged – some initially with technical or white collar unions – which in turn have led to mergers to form large national unions. The fact is that no one union on its own has come up with an alternative.

This is not only a good deal for members but also for organised workers and for potential members.

The formation of a new, powerful trade union offers us our best chance – and we should take it.

WHAT WOULD THE NEW UNION LOOK LIKE?

Following a successful merger ballot result in March, an 18-month transitional period is proposed, during which time both the Amicus and TGWU sections would run their own affairs within a framework set by a joint executive council.

This would give the merger time to settle down. The joint executive council itself, which would have overall control of the union during the transitional period, would comprise 30 members, 15 from each sectional executive. The chair of the council would alternate between the two sections.

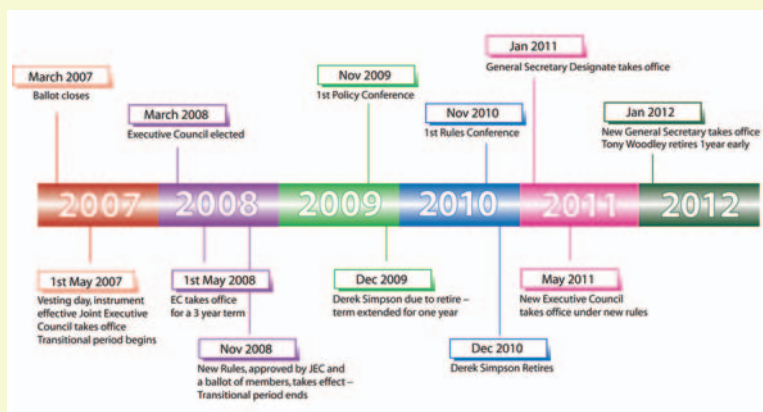
It would oversee fiduciary duties, appoint officers and staff, set terms and conditions for employees and observe the union's general rules. Like many recent union mergers the new union would operate initially with two joint general secretaries, each responsible for their own section.

The Amicus general secretary's term would be extended by one year to December 2010, by which time a general secretary designate for the whole new union would have been elected by all members of the new union.

This new general secretary would take over the whole union from January 2012 when the current TGWU general secretary retires. At this point the new union would be fully merged.

A crucial landmark in this provisional timetable will be 1 May, 2008. That is the provisional date for an executive council to come into being replacing the joint executive council. It would have a three-year term.

As far as conferences are concerned, a system of biennial policy conferences is planned, starting in November 2009 with a rules conference every four years from November 2010.



Planned timetable for the new union

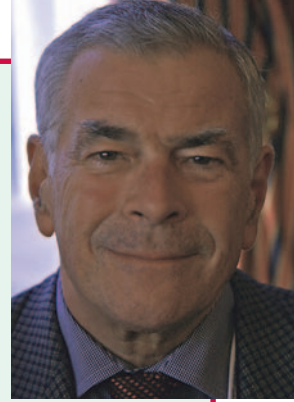
NEW UNION WILL GIVE US MORE INFLUENCE

The trade union movement has always been the driver of social progress. The creation of a new union through the merger will create a new and progressive force that will help defend and support our members. But the struggle for a better life is wider than the workplace. We need more political influence than we have now to ensure Labour delivers for working families. The creation of a new union will help give us that – with more influence locally, in parliament and in Europe.

We need this influence to ensure Labour delivers for working people and trade unions, including changes in policy and law which our members feel are overdue – including the commitment to the protection of agency and temporary workers; a single equalities act to protect workers from discrimination; increased protection for workers in dispute; an uprating of redundancy pay to restore its real value; training and pensions to become part of the bargaining agenda and legislation to prevent employers from dismantling a company whilst redundancy consultations are still ongoing. These are some of the commitments we are looking for.

One union with the strength of 2 million members will be able to hold the Government to its promises. I would urge Amicus reps and our members to vote YES to this merger.

Tony Dubbins, Amicus Joint Deputy General Secretary



“Joining forces with the TGWU is good news for workers in wholesale news and in the ink sector as well as in printing and publishing. It has a reputation for organising and mobilising lower paid workers and with ever larger companies employing thousands of people all grades and skills in the workforce will benefit from the combined industrial strength of the two unions and their traditions of democracy and solidarity with workers fighting for their rights.”

– Ann Field, National Officer

“The merger will mean our members will belong to an organisation with similar power influence and resources as the one they work for, ownership of local and national newspapers changes on a regular basis, they are no longer the exclusive domain of the business tycoon but more, now than ever, ownership is corporate conglomerates and venture capital, who's only interest is the balance sheet.”

– Steve Sibbald, National Officer

“The imminent merger between Amicus & TGWU offers exciting opportunities for organising and learning. The commitment by both Unions to allocate £5m towards organising and the infrastructure of both Unions will give the new Union a fantastic opportunity to encourage more people to belong to a trade union. Both Amicus and TGWU are serious about the Learning & Skills agenda and participate in the Government's Union Learning Fund. The merger will mean we will be able to continue to build on the new Learning and Skills agreements reached with employers in printing and papermaking. These new agreements make training a collective bargaining issue, which we have demanded from the Government. The merger will help give all members access to learning and skills, which are essential for the future.”

– Bernard Rutter, GPM-Sector Head of Organising, Learning & Skills

Why the Amicus Graphical Paper & Media national team support the merger

“Another packaging company has announced closure. This follows job losses across all sectors of our industry. We need to secure work in our sector and merging with T & G will give us financial, industrial and political strength, which will help find a solution over work going to Eastern Europe and combat the emerging threat from China to our industry.”

– Vernon Robson, National Officer

“I was apprenticed into print from school and have grown up living and breathing the changes that have affected us all in our industry. In the same way that we have all experienced change at work, so we have in our everyday life. That change has also affected our union. The body that provides our protection and gives security and representation at work is not immune to the pace of change that we all understand. So it is that we are again being asked to endorse a merger, this time to create the largest and most powerful union in the country. The reasons that drove the merger into Amicus are now the same reasons that promote the creation of the new union. This merger is not just bigger, it is better. It will provide better protection industrially and politically. It will enable our representatives to wield greater influence particularly in those political areas outside of the workplace where we are all most affected. When decisions are being made about issues such as health and safety, employment rights, national holidays, investment in manufacturing plus the creation of good jobs and skills training a stronger voice means better outcomes for members. I believe the GPM Sector well understand the factors that are driving change. Let's make sure the change is progressive. That the change is for the better. Vote to make it better.”

– Mike Griffiths, National Officer

“A merger between Amicus and TGWU is a natural progression in the paper and board manufacturing industry. Although Amicus is the majority partner there are a number of T&G organised plants that are represented on our group wide negotiating committees. T&G also play a significant role in the industry-wide negotiations with the Confederation of Paper Industries (CPI) securing national agreements in both the paper and corrugated board sectors. Most of our members work for Scandinavian, North American and Western European companies, facing the problems created for working people by increasingly remote employers operating in an unsympathetic global economy. This merger can strengthen our position in that scenario so we need to be bold enough to grasp the opportunity and vote yes.”

– Peter Ellis, National Officer



www.amicustheunion.org



New Union

For more information on the merger

www.amicustheunion.org



Broadcasting Now

the new podcast from Amicus

www.amicustheunion.org

For updates and news on the **Amicus GPM Sector** including regular e-bulletins and health & safety e-bulletins www.amicustheunion.org/Default.aspx?page=1648

What do Amicus GPM Sector reps say about the merger

Stewart Eaves, FOC at Ward Knowles in Accrington:
The merger will create a new union with the power to meet any challenges our members face. I will be asking members to vote Yes to the merger.

Frank Emerson, FOC, Marchmount Packaging in Dublin:
Before the GPMU merged with Amicus we were a small union with a small voice. So I know from my own experience the difference a large organisation can make. To me that spirit was summed up in the Irish Ferries dispute which brought together people from all trades and professions with a common goal.

Terri Miller, MOC, De La Rue, Dunstable:
The merger between T&G and Amicus can only work for the better. We are all fighting for the same thing – employee rights. If we are all on the same side we are stronger.

Raffiq Moosa, FOC at Chesapeake Fields, Leicester:
My members always support anything that makes the union stronger – thats what this merger will do.

Alan Ritchie, St Ives, Andover:
Amicus members already work side by side with our colleagues in TGWU and merger makes good sense. A yes vote will increase our industrial strength and politically enable us to exert more pressure for policy changes.

Jim Todd, Caledonian Paper, Scotland:
I feel the merger with the T&G is the right way to go for all of us. I agree with Derek that a 'super' union may be the only way to deal with massive multi-nationals and global enterprises. The prospect of European and worldwide unions working together for better terms and conditions for everyone is the next logical step. If private business can do this, then we have to follow suit and do it better.

Flo Ormisher, MOC at Wayzgoose, Sleaford:
Being part of a bigger union will help put pressure on the government to change the law which exempts firms with fewer than 21 employees being exempt from the current recognition procedures.

Tom Usher, Paragon UK, Sunderland, chair of the GPM Sector NSC:
Global exploitation is hitting our members hard with job losses and downward pressure on wages and conditions. A yes vote in this ballot for a merger with the TGWU is essential to create a new union of two million members with the strength to defend jobs and improve working conditions.

Gary Leech, FOC at SCA Packaging, Ellesmere Port:
When the ballot papers start coming through people's doors I will be out there campaigning for a massive YES vote.

AMICUS – TGWU MERGER

Vote Yes



- More resources
- More bargaining power
- Political strength