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British Labour and the European Union:
The Europeanisation of Trade Unions?

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Introduction

The revitalisation of the EU since the 1980s has seen a qualitative change in the trajectory of the integration project. Market integration is at the core of the change and represents Europe's response to competitive challenges from US and Japanese markets. The Single European Act and the subsequent rounds of intergovernmental conferences (IGCs, Maastricht, Amsterdam, Nice etc) have deepened market integration by removing both tariff and non-tariff barriers to the free-movement of goods and services. This has been achieved by relaxing the intergovernmental decision-making process and allowing for qualified majority voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers in policy areas concerned with market making. The consolidation of the single market has been followed by the creation of a single European currency. Although the UK has yet to decide whether or not to join the Euro, these changes are significant for trade unions. Previously nationally bounded firms have now become Euro-companies with corporate governance, in addition to macro-economic, financial and political governance, shifting to the European level.

For trade unions, the neo-liberal core of the European integration project has important implications for the achievement of their aims and objectives. Member states of the EU can no longer pursue independent national strategies of macro-economic management and therefore trade union political achievements, linked as they are to the nation-state, are threatened by erosion. In addition, the QMV arrangements, crucial to facilitate integration, do not extend to the political and social fields; there is an asymmetry in EU governance. The build up of social democratic elements [positive integration] at European level is de facto a harder task than implementing market liberalisation policies [negative integration] (Geyer 1997, Moss 1998, Scharpf 1996, Streeck & Schmitter 1991).

The Maastricht Social Agreement (MSA), although limited, has provided a potential mechanism at the Euro-level for trade union participation in EU decision-making. The EU has delivered some important new social and labour market Directives. In addition the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) has made some important changes to its structure that are significant given the limited and contested nature of the incentives deriving from European integration (Dølvik 1997). Interpretations of these developments are highly contested between optimistic and pessimistic views on the EU as an arena to deliver more than market integration. The assessments of the threats and opportunities of European integration for trade unions are complex and their responses to these processes are contingent on factors not solely associated with the European level.

The remainder of the paper presents an overveiw of the literature in this field and the responses of the TUC, T&G and GMB to the EU.

Europeanisation and Trade unions: An Overview.

Existing approaches to the study of trade unions have been historically contingent on the evolution of national industrial relations rooted in the implicit assumption of congruence between regulatory systems of employment and the nation-state" (Dølvik 1997, p.14)

As the above citation makes clear trade unions in the twentieth century have been shaped by (and shaped) their national regulatory system, consequently their focus has been almost exclusively national, *'Organisational forms are inherited from the past and institutionally embedded'* (Hyman 1997: p.532). Thus studying trade union Europeanisation '*is an adventure into an unknown terrain of industrial relations'* (Dølvik 1997).

the international system may itself become an explanatory variable. Instead of being a cause of international politics, domestic structure may be a consequence of it. International systems, too, become causes instead of consequences. (Gourevitch 1978)

The literature to date has tended to focus on (comparative) national peak level trade union organisation or the European peak level (ETUC)[1]. Visser (1998) points to the interplay between 'push' and 'pull' factors that encourage trade unions to Europeanise. This chimes well with the well-worn debate in European integration studies between the neo-functionalists and intergovernmentalists. For the neo-functionalists, the emphasis is the 'pull' of the European level (Haas 1958). Inter-governmentalists posit that integration generally occurs only when the domestic context can no longer deliver what it once could (Moravscik 1993). Sequentially the push comes before the pull. The internationalisation of markets and capital means national industrial relations regimes are no longer able to deliver what they once did for the trade union movement and this forces them to look further a field for solutions[2].

Unions may be pushed or forced to seek co-operation across national borders because they no longer find allies, protection or rewards within national arenas. This may be true for labour and capital, and may be unrelated to European integration. (Visser 1997, p.231)

Recent developments at the EU level make it the obvious target for trade unions simply because other international organisations (ILO, IMF, World Bank etc) do not provide any opportunity presently for directly regulating the employment relationship and wider issues in social policy.

In industrial relations literature the functional logic of trade union organisation matching the boundaries of the market stretches right back to the turn of the century. The seminal work of Commons (1909) examined the expansion of

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[1] See Wendon (1995) for an overview of individual trade unions in Britain to the EU.

[2] Geyer (1997) found that the labour movement in Britain developed a more pro-EU perspective than the labour movement in Norway due to the perceived crisis in British social democracy (Thatcher) when compared to the well functioning and stable social democratic institutions in Norway. Little incentive for the Norwegian social democrats to support membership of the EU if membership threatens or waters down their strong social democratic system. Also see Marks & Wilson (2000) and Haahr (1993) for similar theoretical approaches (political parties)

local markets to the national level in the USA; his basic argument was that in order to "*take wages out of competition*" trade unions must extend their organisational (bargaining) coverage from the local to the national level. Dølvik (1997) highlights how this logic has been applied by both academics and trade unionists to the internationalisation of capital in the 1970s. Given that the single market process implies an internationalisation of capital by the removal of trade barriers (negative integration) within a European context the extension of functional logic suggests that this is accompanied by trade union efforts to Europeanise their organisation and bargaining strategies[3].

> *The foregoing sketch of industrial evolution in America brings into prominence the part played by the ever-widening area of competition and the effort of protective organisations to ward off the peculiar competitive menace of each stage of development.* (Commons 1909: p: 76)

So far so good, however, these optimistic perspectives have been questioned by a more pessimistic stream of thought encouraged by the conspicuous lack of collective bargaining at the European level.

> *Ever since Commons, (1909) it has been a familiar argument that the boundaries of employment regulation are shaped by the scope of product markets; but there is nothing automatic in this process* (Hyman 2001b: p281).

The Euro-pessimistic view criticises the assumed link between market expansion and the Europeanisation of trade unionism. The pessimists' view does not contest that for trade unionism, in general, the rational course of action in response to market expansion is to redraw the boundaries of solidarity but they emphasise that the obstacles faced at Euro-level preclude this course of action and thereby drive trade unions into cross-national competition (Streeck 1995, 1999).

Specifically the obstacles to Europeanisation are the neo-liberal core to the integration process, the lack of a central European government (political resources) to promote and sustain industrial relations institutions, the inability and unwillingness of employers to engage at European level and the specific problems of collective action faced by the ETUC.

Recent Treaty changes from the mid 1980s onwards have significantly shifted the character of the EU in a neo-liberal direction (Geyer 1997, Scharpf 1996, Streeck & Schmitter 1991). This supra-nationalisation of market making has not been accompanied by a comparable shift in social policy competence to the EU. The scope of the Maastricht Social Agreement (MSA) is limited to a small number of specified areas excluding some crucial elements seen within national systems of industrial relations[4]. The MSA does not balance the asymmetry between EU social/political and economic governance and signals

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[3] Haas (1958) also predicted that trade unions would extend their organisational and bargaining strategies to the Euro-level – he claimed that his would then '*compel an increasing measure of supranational unity among employers*' (p.388)

[4] For instance Article 2.6. states, "*The provisions…shall not apply to pay, the right of association, the right to strike or the right to impose lock outs.*" These constitute basic trade union rights underpinning trade union activity but remain the prerogative of national systems of regulation, thereby compounding European diversity between trade union movements.

the defeat of the aspiration for an effective pan European Social Dimension by reinforcing the principle of Subsidiarity in EU decision-making. This has shifted previous EU aspirations for convergent social standards toward the principal of mutual recognition, leaving effective power with the member-states. Europe has become a single market space with 15 different areas of social provision, to be increased with enlargement. Social democracy at the Euro-level is therefore overshadowed by neo-liberalism.

While Streeck (1995) recognises that markets do indeed need governance, he differentiates between Community social policy and European social policy. Community policy is sufficient to make the market work and is not the same nor will it evolve into a European social policy capable of redistributing in ways seen previously in national systems. Streeck emphasises the lack of political resources at the European level able to limit market forces '*that pulverize social commitments and obligations unless placed under political control'* (Streeck 1995: p. 409). Without the support, or existence, of a strong central state providing incentives for Euro-level institutions they are unlikely to develop under a 'voluntarist' regime.

Streeck (1995) also highlights the role of the other 'player' in Euro industrial relations, the reluctance of the employers' organisations to engage in any constructive dialogue at the Euro-level, let alone collective bargaining, unless they have an opportunity to dilute forthcoming legislative initiatives.

The ETUC is the confederation of national trade union organisations and the various European industry federations (EIFs). The membership organisations are from very different geographical, ideological and confessional contexts. The success of the ETUC, emerging as a single umbrella organisation representing the majority of trade unionists from across Europe is also a potential weakness. The '*conundrum of cross-national diversity'* (Ebbinghaus & Visser 1994, p.4). The ETUC as a vehicle for integration and coordination of trade unions is constrained by the diversity of its affiliates. To date this has largely been overcome by its focus on procedural rather than substantive goals and a largely political not bargaining agenda. As European integration deepens and the stakes become higher for the diverse membership, the aggregation of interests will become increasingly difficult unless the limited scope of supra-nationalisation in the ETUC can be built upon.

The fear, for trade unions, is that attempts to formulate a unified European trade union response will be offset by national efforts to retain their members' jobs in the face of the intensified logic of regime competition, a race to the bottom to avoid social dumping (Streeck 1995). The whole logic of trade unionism in the national arena switches to efforts to maintain international competitiveness and thereby mediate competitive pressures or risk losing membership due to capital relocation (exit or threat of exit). The vogue for the partnership approach to industrial relations is especially pronounced in trade unions situated in the exposed sectors of the market (AEEU under Sir Ken Jackson for example). The implications for British trade unionism are obvious.

Unions, which in previous decades based their appeal to workers on their ability to win tangible improvements in pay and working conditions, have a far harder task to justify their existence if obliged to accept the reversal of their former achievements. (Hyman 1997: p.527)

The responses of trade unions to this 'peculiar form' of integration (EU) are *regime competition* and *competitive solidarity* based on short-term domestic survival, not European coordination (Streeck 1995, 1999). The balance of power within the domestic context shifts toward the '*potentially outwardly mobile production factors, above all capital*' (Streeck 1995: p.421). Hancké (2000) has found empirical evidence for this hypothesis, his study found that trade unionists were utilising their membership of European Works Councils (EWC) to help improve local competitiveness vis-à-vis their European trade union counterparts and not to co-ordinate European trade union activity.

> *The decisive impact of intergovernmentalism and the neo-liberal European political economy has structurally precluded development of an effective supranational regime of social regulation and prevented any significant Europeanisation of trade unions.* (Dølvik 1997: p.17)

This paper takes on board many of issues raised by the pessimistic stream of thought although not in totality. It is clear that the obstacles at the EU level do presently rule out the development of a comprehensive industrial relations or social system as seen in the domestic context. However, this does not mean that the development of an effective regime of industrial relations is structurally precluded. The EU, like any other arena in which trade unions have organised, is a battleground for them to influence. A structural analysis of the national situation one hundred years would have provided no indication that the trade union movement would have made the gains they have, both substantive and procedural, in various European nation states in the 20th century. A *regulatory conundrum* to be sure but one that can sometimes be navigated with political agency (Rhodes 1995).

Defining exactly what Europeanisation means, in a trade union context, thereby becomes increasingly confused. Does it mean changing domestic practice and ideology, importing the 'social partnership' ideology, in order to ward off the threat of European competition thereby pitting British unions against their European counterparts? Alternatively, does it mean engaging more fraternally with their sister organisations with the aim of building a pan-EU regulatory framework to ward off cross-national competition? Can both co-exist? Visser's definition is an inclusive one.

> *Hence, we cannot understand Europeanisation as a vertical process only, acting through downward intervention or the modification of arrangements at the lower (state, region) level through harmonisation at the higher level, or through upwards delegation or the creation of a new higher (European) level of jurisdiction in addition to, and on top of, the jurisdiction of national systems. We must also take account of the horizontal process of competition and interdependence or the factual pressures that originate in properties or policies of other regimes at the same level, be they firms, regions, sectors, countries or even groups of countries.* (Visser 1998, p.237)

In order to make the research both coherent and manageable it is important to define exact how it will approach the definition of Europeanisation. Given the lack of collective bargaining at the EU level, the traditional focus of industrial relations in Anglo-Saxon models, it seems commonsensical to focus in on the political sphere. Therefore, Europeanisation in this paper refers specifically to

a particular trade union's ideological approach to the integration process coupled with their efforts to adapt themselves to 'understand' and 'influence' the political processes within the EU. Borrowing the terminology of Bulmer & Burch (2000) the terms 'projection' and 'reception' will be used to aid analysis. What is the organisational capacity of trade unions with regard to the Euro-polity?

> *The question of organisational capacity involves vital but complex issues: the ability to assess opportunities for intervention; to anticipate, rather than merely react to, changing circumstances; to frame coherent policies; and to implement these effectively….Perhaps we may define the key elements as **intelligence, strategy** and **efficacy**.* (Hyman 1997, p.519)

Reception, in this case, refers to how trade union organisations have developed intelligence on EU issues. Research, information gathering, education and the ability (and willingness) to disseminate this throughout the organisation.

Projection entails the ability of a union to aggregate and then to represent interests,

> *link knowledge to action through analysis of circumstances, evaluation of alternative options and planning of objectives and forms of intervention. It links closely to that much abused concept, leadership.* (Ibid, p519).

Therefore, Europeanisation, in this case, does not refer to the 'importation' of European ideologies and practices of social partnership but, rather, to the extent to which union organisations engage internally and externally with the European polity[5].

Politics and British Trade Unions.

The emphasis switches from the traditional Anglo-Saxon pre-occupation with collective bargaining to political activity, questioning the narrow theoretical approach to trade unions, as exclusively economic agents, by Commons (1909) [6].

> *Shifts in the structures and geographical locus of institutionalized power can be expected to be accompanied by simultaneous changes in the structure and locus of mass politics* (Marks and McAdam 1996)

EU governance represents something very different from previous national developments and so it is highly unlikely that trade union Europeanisation is going to follow national norms, in Britain based on the 'free collective bargaining' fundamental. Trade unions are one of a number of 'challenging

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[5] That is not to say that this type of adaptation to external change is not Europeanisation but it is difficult to establish causal links. The internationalisation of markets and capital is not solely a European phenomenon but is also linked to wider processes of globalisation (for want of a better word). In addition, given the diversity of ideology with regard industrial relations practices across the member-states which particular form is being 'imported' – Swedish, German, Italian?

[6] See also Perlman S. (1928) who argued that dabbling in politics by trade unions was a perversion of their function as economic agents.

groups' seeking to influence the emerging European polity and so national distinctions between pressure groups, social movements and trade unions are irrelevant in this context[7].

This 'resource mobilisation' perspective has two implications for trade unionism. The first is that it implies that European level institution building (positive integration) will be accompanied by trade union political Europeanisation. The second is that the member states have lost the exclusive competence in aggregating the interests of their domestic constituencies and EU decision-making[8].

With regard to the assumed political opportunities, Marks and McAdam (1996) qualify the assumption that changes in the location of institutionalised power will inevitably lead to a shift in the location of mass politics in the following way. The ability of trade unionism to interact with the EU political environment is

> *more a function of its **internal** characteristics. Of particular relevance here is the way inherited institutions and ideologies may constrain a group's ability to exploit whatever EU-level opportunities are available. That the link between political opportunity and movement response is not at all reflexive* (Marks & McAdam 1996: p.103 – emphasis added)

Although the focus of Marks & McAdam (1996) was the internal characteristics of the ETUC, the analytical framework is applicable to union organisation at the national and sub-national level.

Trade unions at the lower levels must also combine the two logics implied by this analytical perspective. The extent of Europeanisation is dependent on the '*logic of influence*' [EU opportunities] and the *'logic of membership'* [internal constraints]; trade unions are after all democratic organisations that have to reconcile both effectiveness and legitimacy (Traxler & Schmitter 1994 & Dølvik 1997). If leaderships are not perceived by members to be legitimate then members' participation in action, their *willingness to act*, will be jeopardised (Offe & Wiesenthal, 1985), undermining the role of unions as *agencies for action* (Ibid.).

Therefore it is assumed that trade unions will not necessarily formulate responses based solely on their perception of economic interest, ideology is

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[7] Marks & McAdam also point out that the emerging European governance structure does not continue the centralising thrust of earlier Nation-building. Nation building saw power shift from local to national arenas, centralising governance. European integration has seen power shift both upwards and downwards simultaneously and so predictions of developments based on the model of nation building are inappropriate.

[8] Both of these implications question the Euro-pessimistic perspective outlined above. If the current structure of the EU rules out the effective development of social policy and trade union Europeanisation, how can recent political developments be explained (Ross & Martin 1998)? Pierson's (1996) study of the social dimension recognizes its present limitations but he suggests that over the past two decades it has developed more significantly than predicted by those using a simplistic structural focus - just as the national achievements of trade unions could not have been predicted by a domestic structural analysis a century ago. Martin & Ross (1999) take the view that the Commission have been instrumental in the recent Europeanisation of the ETUC – seducing them away from their historic mission toward a social partner role too uncritical of integration and the impact upon their members.

also imortant. For example, the Communist French trade union (CGT) was unable to support the completion of the internal market even though their union members might benefit from such a development. Unions where commitment to ideology is strong will find it harder to adjust their positions to changes in the economic environment and visa versa. The CGT, for example, only switched their position after disengagement proved to be a recipe for impotence.

Responses of trade unions are not solely determined by exogenous changes to economic and political institutional structures both of which are subject to divergent interpretations. Trade unions are '*social institutions in their own right, and develop their own internal patterns of power, goal-seeking and conflict'* (Crouch 1982, p. 161).

> *It seems to us that these external agents of change have done little more than present union leaders and their allies with additional problems to solve. Such change agents usually allow union leaders a variety of alternative responses, including, on some occasions, the alternative of inaction* (Undy et. al 1981: p.23).

Strategic choice is possible and responses are the outcome of '*internal discussion, debate and often conflict'*(Hyman 2001: p.170). The internal dynamics of the organisation do provide another potential variable influencing trade union policy responses. Responses to European integration can also depend on intra-union institutional/ideological struggles and decision-making processes.

Political action has not been a prominent feature of British trade union ideology at the individual union level. The TUC was created as the organisation to represent affiliates to Parliament. Subsequently the Labour Party emerged from the trade union movement as the vehicle to secure political objectives.

Trade union ideology with regard industrial relations has been termed 'Labourism' (Saville 1973, cited in Hyman 2001), at its core is self-reliance (collective bargaining via industrial muscle), suspicion of outside interference (political and legal) and a determination not to become wide ranging political actors, leaving the political dimension to the Labour party (Minkin 1991). These characteristics of trade unionism now confront an emerging European system that does not reflect British norms.

What distinguishes the trade union movement in Britain from elsewhere is the long period of historical evolution[9] in which it has developed. In terms of a general British trade union identity, there are some distinguishing features of industrial relations that have shaped trade union activity in the domestic context. The 'tradition of voluntarism' (Flanders 1974) has been a constant feature of British industrial relations, until Thatcher[10]. For trade unions the

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[9] The British trade union movement was the first national movement to develop.

[10] MacShane (1991) suggests that the anti-union legislation is an example of Europeanisation in industrial relations. This highlights the difficulty of picking out trends in the domestic arena and labelling them Europeanisation. While there is no doubt that many EU member-states' industrial relations regimes are more legalistic than the British model, my view is that to call Thatcher's anti-union onslaught Europeanisation is ridiculous for two basic reasons. The first is that trade unions in

protection of 'free collective bargaining' from interference from outside, especially the state, has marked their evolution. Politics was initially only necessary to ensure the 'immunity' of trade union activity from legal sanction (Pelling 1963). Unions were happy to rely on their industrial strength vis-à-vis the employers and so the social pacts negotiated with the state by some of their European counterparts, for instance Italy, did not form part of trade union repertoires of action. What developed in Britain was legal immunity and not positive trade union rights, this has led to a distinction between *de jure* and *de facto* rights in the literature.

This suited trade unions whose major focus was the market and class rather than society (Hyman 2001). Although class identity has been tempered by the results of free collective bargaining, the oppositional stance stems from the initial struggle for recognition in the face of employer and state hostility (Pelling 1963, Hyman 2001). '*There has been a constant tension between cautious bargaining and class assertiveness'* (Hyman 2001: p.68). Trade union aversion of the law as a means to enforce their rights stems from their distrust of the courts as a neutral arena for the resolution of industrial relations disputes (Pelling 1963). Given the class background of the judiciary and the hostility of their judgements toward trade unionism (e.g. Taff Vale case), they were not to be trusted as able or willing to be beneficial to trade unionism.

However, given the domestic rupture of recent years the limitations of the traditional focus of British trade unionism have become glaringly apparent. Identity and ideology can also shift. Circumstances have overtaken trade unions and left them '*in search of an identity'* (Hyman 2001)

> *Trends in British trade union ideology remain uneven, uncertain and contested. But experience since 1979 has clearly shaken the stability of a model of trade unionism founded on the market-class axis. The opposite pole of the eternal triangle – encapsulated in the notion of social partnership – has exerted increasing attraction: the geometry has shifted.* (Hyman 2001: p.110)

Can union leaderships shift trade unions from domestic crisis to European opportunity? In addition to a national ideology, trade union organisations in Britain have developed ideological diversity within the domestic context based on their own historical developments. Inherited institutional frameworks are varied across the different trade union organisations. The divergent union types emerged in different generations and so retain specific ideological inheritance (Hyman 2001: p. 73). What we are left with after two centuries of gradual evolution is a confusing structure of trade union organisations. Craft, industrial, general, public sector and white-collar trade unions all exist side-by-side crosscutting membership constituencies. Each has different ideas of how to balance participatory vs. representative forms of democratic organisation.

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most European states are viewed as legitimate social/economic/political actors within pluralist industrial relations systems. Thatcher's aim was to restrict trade unionism undermining their legitimacy. The second reason is that there is no causal link between Thatcher's policies and 'Europe', not once did the Conservative government of the 1980s mention European social norms as the dynamic behind her reforms, quite the opposite.

The remoteness of European policy-making from the day-to-day bread and butter bargaining activity of unions[11] and the central control of international policy, residual from previous Cold War considerations (MacShane 1991), offers union leaderships greater autonomy to respond[12]. That is not to suggest that leaderships are always able to put their policy preferences through but they are insulated somewhat from the rank & file.

The leadership of organisations is often found to be crucial to collective identity and the definition of interests (framing) (Kelly 1998, Undy et. al. 1981, Johansson & Raunio 2001). National level leaderships are centrally located and control the essential elements of technical knowledge, research and education vital for influencing policy responses (Crouch 1982). In his study of change in trade unions Undy (et. al. 1981) found that change was more likely to occur the more centralised decision-making is, giving leadership more leeway, and the more united (less factionalised) the leadership of a given union is.

How union leadership balances the divergent logics of influence and membership depends on the specifics of the trade union organisation under study. The external environment requires interpretation, responses that do not fit with previous identities or repertoires of contention (McAdam et.al 2001) are presumed to be more difficult for leaderships to implement. Thus the role of the leadership in 'translating' (framing) European issues, in order to support their strategies, is a crucial element. So when outlining ideological or institutional responses to European integration it is the national leaderships (the official response if you like) rather than the rank & file perspectives, unless significant, that is presented.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) and Europe.

The TUC represents 69 affiliated unions with over 6.5 million members. According to some commentators, the 1980s and 1990s have witnessed a profound change in attitude toward European integration by the Trades Union Congress (TUC)[13].

The British referendum on membership of the EEC in 1974 saw the TUC opposed to membership, not just on the terms renegotiated by the Wilson Government, but also in principle (TUC, 1975). However, TUC affiliates were in fact split on the issue with rival campaigns, *Trade Union Alliance for Europe* and *Trade Unions Against the Common Market*, during the referendum. Nairn (1972) claims attitudes at this time were dominated by a chauvinistic 'little Englander' mentality, others writers emphasise the peculiar British situation and the predominance of Commonwealth and Atlantic concerns in foreign policy (Geyer 1997). Given that the TUC has been especially active in international trade union structures Nairn's findings do appear to be over

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[11] More likely to be important to the membership and local leaderships (Crouch 1982)

[12] Even where union leaders have the autonomy to act the ethical basis of the particular union and previous norms of behaviour limit this autonomy even if the institutional set-up doesn't (Allen 1957)

[13] Official Congress Policy switched between anti & pro perspectives on 6 occasions from the referendum until 1988!

stated. There is a paradox here, the TUC have been 'good internationalists' but 'bad Europeans'.

For many trade unionists, the referendum result meant a thawing in attitudes toward the then EEC, even among the most ardent opponents of European integration such as Jack Jones of the T&G. Officials at the TUC were instrumental in the establishment of the ETUC and began to explore ways to use their structures to achieve international objectives. However, official TUC policy (as set by Congress) was highly volatile in the period 1973-1988 shifting between pragmatic acceptance and hostility. With the Labour Party out of power and the post-Callaghan shift to the left in the Labour Party policy again shifted to the hostile. The TUC Congresses of 1981 and 1983 (TUC, 1981; 1983) called for a future Labour Government to withdraw completely from the EEC favouring the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' (AES) proposed by the Foot leadership of the Labour Party.

> *Positive hopes were of creating an insulated island of socialist progress in contrast to the capitalist EU"* (McIlroy, 1995, p.315).

International solutions were not seen by trade unionists as a viable or necessary option. Teague (1989) highlights that trade union thinking was influenced at that time by naïve Keynesian or traditional Left economic theory.

Just seven years later, however, at the 1988 TUC Congress, Jacques Delors received a standing ovation from delegates after setting out his vision of a Social dimension to Europe that included a role for European trade unions as social partners. This "*astonishing conversion"* was a major feature of British politics in the late 1980s (Rosamond 1993, p.420).

It is the synthesis of the Thatcherite domestic exclusion of the TUC (push factors), likely to be compounded by employer reaction to increasing international competition from the Single Market program, and the possible emergence of a social dimension to the single market (pull factors) that provided the main impetuses for the TUC to adopt a more pro-European stance. Having been excluded from any significant national role by the Thatcher government the TUC were in danger of becoming irrelevant to their affiliates[14]. The development of a European Social Dimension therefore represents their best chance of exerting influence on the wider political economy. In the words of Ron Todd (T&G leader),

> *The only card game in town is in a town called Brussels and it is a game of poker where we have got to learn the rules and learn them fast'* (Speech to 1988 TUC, cited in McIlroy 1995, p.313)

The Thatcher Government from 1979 onward represented a departure from previous British governments' industrial relations policy in the post-war era. She sought an end to state intervention in the market and previously sacrosanct national goals such as full employment were sacrificed to the free functioning of the market. The consensual approach of Callaghan, via tri-partite incomes policy bargaining at national level, was abandoned. State

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[14] A point made clear by all trade union officials interveiwed to date.

supports for industrial relations institutions were withdrawn, the legal immunities of trade unions eroded and the labour market transformed. Far from 'rolling back the state', as their manifesto was keen to express, the Thatcher government sought to exclude trade unions from hindering the free working of the market and did so by a series of legislative initiatives, thus the state became much more involved in deciding how trade unions should operate both internally and externally.

> *From one of the least legalistic industrial relations systems in the world, Britain became one of the most legally prescriptive; and in a form bearing asymmetrically on workers' organisations as against employers (Hyman 2001, p.104)*

The 'New Unionism' of the Monks leadership of the TUC since 1994 has confirmed the TUC's commitment to social partnership at all levels. This is a clear departure from the oppositional identity and 'tradition of voluntarism' (Flanders 1974) in British Labourism[15]. A clear 'misfit' in ideology, borrowing from the language of Europeanisation (Börzel & Risse 2000 & Cowles et al 2000). British trade unionism largely has been characterised by the separation of political and industrial spheres, each area jealously guarded by the two components of the British Labour Movement (Minkin 1991, Hyman 2001, Pelling 1963).

For the TUC the choice seems clear cut, either they sign up with their European trade union counterparts and attempt to build an EU social market model in a broadly Christian/Social Democratic tradition or else Europe is in danger of steering a course toward the Anglo-American model of shareholder capitalism.

> *Do we really prefer American wild-west approaches to the kind of European partnership approach? My answer to this, of course, is no.*[16]

However, the stable pro-EU ideological response from the TUC since 1988 owes more to one or two influential unions, subordination to Labour Party policy and the full-time TUC officials rather than a consensus among the affiliates. Agenda management at Congress and the 'unique' compositing processes obscure rather than clarify the true state of trade union attitudes toward the EU. However, what is apparent is that the vote at Congress on the General Council Statement is getting closer and closer every year[17]. It would be interesting to see how the affiliates will vote when the issue of the Euro is real rather than abstract. In many recent votes, the TUC has managed to

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[15] A paradox pointed out by Hyman (2001, p. 111) and recognized by the TUC (1999) is that as social partnership has become the vogue the TUC has simultaneously opened an organising academy based on the 'anger, hope, action' model of organisation. Hyman goes on to point out a more fundamental paradox that in most other Continental countries where 'partnership' is the model legal representational rights support it. These legal rights are absent from the British law due to the voluntarist traditions of industrial relations and unlikely to be implemented by a New Labour regime that does not view trade unions as an integral part of social partnerships.

[16] John Monks speech on 'People's Europe' 24 January 2000, taken from a TUC briefing document, web ref. – http://www.tuc.org.uk/international/tuc-388-f0.cfm.

[17] See Appendix for this year's debate.

convince sceptical unions to vote with the General Council or to abstain. Bill Morris in 2003, his final year as General Secretary (T&G) finally came out against the General Council Statement (under orders from Gordon?). In a recent poll of union members 48% were in favour and 46% against (39% & 54% in general public) joining the Euro (Guardian January 21st 2003)

Since the turnaround in official TUC policy, the TUC has been able to explicitly project a serious strategic response, instead of their officials having to work in the shadows. Change in policy can be traced back to the Foot defeat in 1983 even though official policy was calling for withdrawal. The Vredling Directive, for example, was accepted by Congress (TUC 1984). The moves toward a Single Market also provoked a serious assessment of EU issues and possibilities culminating in 1988 with the publication of *Maximising the Benefits, Minimising the Costs* (TUC 1988). Finally, it began to hit home that the EU was going to have an increasing influence in the domestic arena. Although wary of the effects 'social dumping' might bring the TUC emphasised the potential of economic growth, competitive strength and lower prices for Europe in line with the Commission's Cecchini report 1988.

Key to the TUC's favourable assessment of the EU was the Social Dimension; this was compounded by the visit of Delors to Congress in 1988. His emphasis on the importance of trade unions and workers' rights as integral parts of a healthy modern economy stood in stark contrast to the closed-door policy of the Thatcher government. Thatcher's response in Bruges, "no socialism through the back door or by the back Delors", shortly afterwards was probably just as important. If she was that worried by these developments then there must something in it! At the same time, however, domestic government was viewed as the major obstacle to realising the potential of EU social legislation. This view was confirmed by the blocking tactics of the UK government in the Council with regard social initiatives and the negotiation of the UK opt-out from the Maastricht Social Chapter (relegated to a Protocol subsequently). Although New Labour opted back in to this and therefore brought it into the Treaty proper, the TUC still view the UK government's approach at EU level to social issues, not to mention their interpretation and transposition of Directives into domestic law, as a serious obstacles to realising the full potential of social legislation. In addition, the naive Keynesian thinking (Teague 1989) was transformed,

> It will be impossible in the long run to successfully conduct economic policy in isolation from the move toward EMU within Europe (TUC 1990)

Until the mid-1980s European issues were dealt by just one member of staff within the peripheral International Department, substantive issues were dealt with in the various departments. Given the dramatic drop in union membership and subsequently funding the TUC reorganised itself into a more streamlined campaigning organisation. The Committee system was finally scrapped, these had previously shadowed governmental departments, however given the domestic exclusion of the TUC they were now redundant and ineffective. As part of this restructuring, the TUC set up 'Network Europe' with two aims

1. To influence decision making in Brussels

2. To act as a trade union information-gatherer, educator and coordinator on EU issues

TUC officials have cultivated links with the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Ministers and the Economic & Social Committee in addition to an important role (second largest affiliate) in the ETUC. In 1993 the TUC opened an office based in the ETUC building Brussels, aimed at sharpening up lobbying and information services. The TUC is represented at the monthly meetings of the European Parliamentary Labour Party in Strasbourg and has contacts with MEPs from all parties and member-states. The office in Brussels taps into the views of the TUC affiliates via the *Europe Monitoring Group*; this group is chaired by John Edmonds (GMB)[18]. The presence in Brussels allows the TUC to react quickly to events on the spot.

For instance, one example given was the Transfer of Undertakings Employment legislation (TUPE) revision in the early 1990s. The Major government were seeking to weaken the provisions and apparently had support from other large member-states (CD in Germany). The TUC official was well placed to work with the Danish, Swedish, Austrian, Finish & British Labour MEPs and union bodies in order to defend the TUPE legislation. Persuading the Commission required demonstrating an alliance existed capable of counter-weighing the UK government's. *The Commission officials need support and back up during the initial stages they too have to justify their position* (Grell 2003). The legislative process requires constant monitoring, as it is not just the Commission that decides but a complex mosaic of institutions. Knowing when, where and how to intervene requires a presence and a profile. A permanent presence means the TUC can liase with a number of different EU institutions and other pressure groups; alliances vary from issue to issue.

The contacts developed in the various institutions and organisations based in Brussels aid the TUC to gain information on developments much more quickly than would otherwise be the case. Information is passed through networks based on trust and this can only be built from experience. MEPs and Commission officials are willing to pass information on to the TUC immediately due to their trust of the representative, this might change with a change in personnel.

The TUC office therefore acts as a radar system for its' affiliates and enables them to perform the second role as an information-gatherer, educator and coordinator.

> *TUC Network Europe stands ready as a service to unions both in long-term information provision and as a service for early warning and rapid response on specific issues of concern to affiliated organisations.* (TUC 1993, p.16)

In addition to a number of educational courses run for affiliate officials and the publishing of educational materials on the EU, the TUC also coordinates a monthly meeting of relevant trade union officials. The *Network Europe Contacts Point*s (NECP) brings together representatives of various affiliate organisations. Attendance varies from month to month depending on the

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[18] Up until 2003 – others in the group include M.Rooney (Amicus – MSF), T.Dubbins (GPMU), K.Jackson (Amicus – AEEU), Bill Morris (T&G), D.Prentis (UNISON) and the TUC General Sec.

issues addressed and the availability of the representatives. However, it is fair to say that some of the major unions never send representatives to these meetings; this is a very hard state of affairs to fathom out. The very same unions who are not represented by officials in the NECP meetings are also the same organisations that have little profile in Brussels. Logically the NECP offers those trade unions that do not have a presence in Brussels the opportunity to learn and 'free-ride' from other officials experienced in the EU environment.

The NECP disseminates a wide range of information predominantly in the political field rather than the sectoral; the particular industrial issues are managed by national union representatives via the particular European Industry Federations. A typical meeting covers both information emanating from Brussels and the ETUC/TUC responses. For instance, the NECP meeting of 27th September 2002 covered the following issues; Social Action Programme Update, European Parliament Update, Managed Migration and related matters, TUC's Draft General Council Statement, The Seville Council Conclusions, Corporate Social Responsibility, European Health and Safety Developments and ETUI[19] EWC members database. The pooling of trade union resources is an important aspect given their limited resources vis-à-vis the employers. In some circumstances, this can lead to delegation between officials of the various organisations for information-gathering thereby stretching and maximising limited resources.

The TUC's journey into Europe is significant. It grew out of the paucity of domestic opportunity but with the transposition of the Info & Con Directive, being a product of their dialogue with the CBI, it has proved their saviour. The TUC has no role in collective bargaining in Britain and has no authority to bind its affiliates. Without the European journey, the TUC had a limited future as only an arbiter of inter-union squabbles. Full credit must be given to TUC officials for grasping this opportunity quickly and effectively. The irony is that it now has provided them with a larger domestic role and profile especially if the social dialogue modality of transposing EU Directives becomes precedent in Britain. Given the lack of an explicit TUC ideology (Minkin 1991), the TUC eschewed ideological baggage in order to maintain cohesion among its affiliates; the journey into Europe is primarily the pursuit of economic and organisational interests.

The TUC Affiliates.

TUC enthusiasm for European integration is not shared by all its affiliates. Teague (1989) identifies three groups or factions with regard to Europe among the TUC affiliates: the *pro-Europeans*, the *anti-Europeans* and the *Pragmatists*. Rosamond (1993) updates these categories as he argues the question of membership is no longer up for debate but that the debate now concerns the type of Europe rather than membership of the EU. Rosamond describes the various factions as *the pro-commission group, the sectoral pragmatists and the left sceptics*[20]. These divisions remain, although the

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[19] European Trade Union Institute – The research section of the European Trade Union Confederation.
[20] These groupings connect with the left to right factions formed in response to Thatcher, though not exclusively. The 'new realism' response (Len Murray & N. Willis TUC Gen Sec.) of exploring ways

components of each faction may have shifted, and can be illustrated by the following three policy statements with regard to EMU.

> *Joining the single currency early in the next parliament when the British economic cycle and that of the members of Euro-land are closer together offers us many advantages…Opting out is not a low risk policy for Britain. It is a dangerous game to play with all our futures.[21]*

> *UNISON reaffirms its policy of opposition to the single currency based on the Maastricht convergence criteria and the Amsterdam Stability Pact.[22]*

> *Orchestrating a push for a referendum at this moment is premature as it cannot possibly be responsibly delivered within the lifetime of this Parliament, or indeed could Britain become a member of the single currency in this Parliament, so why behave like euro lemmings eager to leap off the euro cliff irrespective of the economic consequences?[23]*

A recent study by Strange (2002) emphasises a marked further Europeanisation of trade unions but he basis this analysis primarily on the GMB and the AEEU the vanguard of the pro-Europe camp. Strange claims that there now exists a consensus among trade unions concerning the efficacy of European integration as a means to achieve goals no longer attainable in the domestic context. Accordingly, trade unions have abandoned naïve (national) Keynesian thinking and shifted to various forms of regional or Euro-Keynesian thinking.

However, the article sheds no light on how union organisations have adapted themselves to 'receive' and 'project' (Bulmer & Burch 2000) with regard to EU policy developments, crucial aspects of Europeanisation. Interviews carried out with regard to this research questions this notion of consensus and indicates a wide diversity of attitudes toward the EU underneath the official pro-EU veneer of the TUC.

However, both Teague (1989) and MacShane (1991) found that, regardless of their ideological approach to the EU, individual trade unions had done very little to Europeanise their activities.

> *In the industrial-economic dimension there existed a high level of consensus among trade unions – none attached any importance to industrial or economic initiatives at the European level'* (Teague 1989: p.42).

The following section provides a brief overview of two of the larger union organisations in Britain, both with very similar membership constituencies.

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of cooperating with the Tories where and when possible, 'business unionism' of the electricians and engineers (Ken Jackson) single union agreements, no strike deals and the 'marxist/syndicalist' approach of the industrial unions led by Scargill and the NUM.

[21] A joint report, **AEEU, GMB, GPMU, ISTC & KFAT**, 'A Trade Union Agenda For Europe' http://www.gmb.org.uk/press_office/display.asp?id=73

[22] **UNISON** National Delegate Conference 2001. http://www.unison.org.uk/about/policieslist.asp

[23] Bill Morris (leader **TGWU**) New Year message to members – Monday 30th December 2001 – Press Release, TGWU, PR02/001.

The GMB.

The GMB is a general union and has over 700 000 members from a number of different sectors in both the exposed and sheltered parts of the economy[24]. The union has an unusual regional structure[25], with each of the 10 regions guaranteed places on the Central Executive Council (CEC) dependent on their respective membership levels. The National Office has jurisdiction over international policy and given the regional structure this insulates the leadership from the membership on EU issues. Since 1988, it has been solidly located in the pro-Europe camp in the Labour movement. The leader of the GMB has been instrumental not only in shaping GMB policy toward the EU but also in the conversion of the TUC. The GMB has traditionally sat on the centre-right of the Labour movement although this still means it is to the left of the present government. Along with most of the trade unions affiliated to the TUC, it has been highly critical of the Blair government especially with regard to their record in the transposition of EU Directives. A common criticism residual from the previous Tory administration is that the influence of the CBI is far greater than that of the trade union movement in New Labour circles.

> *Frankly, it does not help us when we are trying to build a positive case for Europe if the TUC has to keep taking the British Government to the European Court of Justice to win back employment rights which are clearly enshrined in Directives and which are freely accepted elsewhere in Europe. I would like to see a Labour Government in Britain leading the debate on social improvement, not being the last in a very long convoy expressing arrogant disapproval.* (John Edmonds Speech to TUC – 12th Sept. 2000)

John Edmonds was the General Secretary of the GMB until 2003. First elected in 1986, he was re-elected in 1991 and 1996. A member of the TUC General Council and its Executive Committee, he was President of the TUC in 1998. He is regarded as a leading strategist of the trade union movement and as such, he chaired the TUC Committee on European matters. The GMB was the first union in Britain to open an office in Brussels, two years before the TUC opened their office. The union signed the first-ever European Works Council agreement with a United Kingdom multinational before the British 'opt-in' to the Social Protocol/Chapter. Edmonds helped to launch *Trade Unionists for Europe* to campaign for early entry into the Euro and for strong social protection for European workers.

Edmonds is often painted as an extreme Europeanist (Guardian 2003), however, one that voted against British membership of the EEC in the 1970s. The engaging approach of the GMB to the EU originated in an acceptance of the inevitable rather than a European idealism. 1986 was a bleak time to become a union leader and Edmonds is quick to point out the instrumental role of Thatcher's *unrelenting hostility* in making the EU an attractive alternative. The closed doors of Whitehall contrasted to the open doors of Brussels *where arguments were taken on their merit*. The possibility of

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[24] The Sections are Clothing & textiles, commercial services, construction & furniture, Timber & Allied, Energy & Utility, Engineering, Food & Leisure, Process, Public Services

[25] The Regions are Birmingham & W. Midlands, Liverpool/N. Wales/Irish, Lancashire, London, Midland & E. Coast, Northern, Scotland, Southern, South-Western, Yorkshire & N. Derbyshire.

bypassing Thatcher, opening up a new flank of attack, to enhance workers' rights and protection seemed to good to be true. Traditional ideology takes a second place to the union's role as a power-seeking organisation.

> *Europe is where the rights are, where you get protection, the UK is where the Tory government oppresses you.* (Grell 2003)

This simple argument together with the raft of new legislation in the area of health and safety convinced the GMB leadership of the need for a permanent presence in Brussels. There were some major teething problems to overcome. To begin with the office premises was borrowed and the difficulties of paying wages abroad under Belgian law had to be overcome. The office costs over £250 000 per year to run although this cost has been reduced by letting space to the GPMU. Although day-to-day activity in the EU is normally beyond the comprehension, let alone control, of the membership, the office is sanctioned by the GMB biannual conference. Recent financial problems and a new General Secretary (Kevin Curran) have not threatened the survival of the Brussels office.

The GMB perspective on the development of a EU social model is exactly congruent with the TUC. Both organisations recognise the diversity of models within the EU but argue that this is only apparent when comparison is between member-states. If comparisons are made between the contours of Japanese and American industrial relations and the various European models then a discernable European Social Model is clearly distinguishable. The legitimate role of trade unions, strong welfare states and the belief that the state has a role in protecting the casualties of globalisation.

The main arguments presented in GMB documents for full participation in the EU (including the Euro-zone) are economic. Pointing to job losses especially in manufacturing, clothing & textiles and engineering sectors specifically, the GMB regard full membership of the Euro-zone as providing a degree of certainty for inward investors unattainable if the UK remains on the periphery (GMB 2001, Guardian 2003). The example given is the decision by Toyota to locate the second phase of their investment program in France. The first phase is currently in Derbyshire and has among the best labour productivity records in the EU. (Grell 2003)

They dismiss analysis emanating especially from the public sector unions that membership of the Euro threatens current levels of public spending in the UK. The examples of greater social spending per capita in Germany, France and the Benelux Countries demonstrate that membership of the Euro-zone doesn't necessarily mean lower public spending just lower debt to income ratios. The EU is a whole package and cannot be viewed as a menu to pick and choose from if credibility as a Euro-player is to be maintained; in reality, this is the argument the GMB are most convinced of, well most of the leadership[26].

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[26] The London Region in particular is not supportive of the national leadership on the pro-Euro policy, GMB London members are predominantly public sector workers and so fear that the convergence criteria will lead to a squeeze on public spending, the manufacturing members are located more in the Midlands and the North. An internal poll of 1,252 shop stewards (respondents out of 2,952) found that 67% do not want to join the Euro (Guardian March 17th 2003). Paul Kenny, Regional London Head, contested the leadership and lost in 2003.

Internal market reform must be linked to a strong social agenda that enables the protection of workers from the worst effects of structural change. One cannot occur without the other (GMB 1989, 2001). If the GMB, and the UK more generally, are to retain their current influence in Brussels on the decision-making processes it's partners must view them as credible. An approach that asks for the benefits of the social dimension without also supporting Euro membership is not a credible strategy, even if this is the most desirable outcome. The UK must be part of the inner-core of economic policy making and this means joining the Euro. To date the UK has not borne the brunt of exclusion as our partners in Europe are giving us the benefit of the doubt and expect us to join sometime in the future. The longer uncertainty remains the more isolated the UK will become. (GMB 2001)

The benefits of a permanent presence in Brussels echo the findings of the TUC. It has established a profile not matched by any other union organisation in the UK and this enables the GMB to monitor and disseminate information both within the union organisation and to their lobby targets. One way of achieving both aims has been the production of a monthly bulletin, the *European News Bulletin,* this is sent out each month to the 10 GMB sponsored Labour MEPs, Commission officials, other MEPs (outside the EPLP), members of the EP Secretariat, the ETUC, the EIFs, sister trade unions across the EU and internally to Regional Secretaries/National Officers/Heads of Departments etc. The bulletin contains a regular briefing on GMB activities and views on European issues and effectively kills two birds with one stone.

The office also informs internal regions and branches of funding opportunities emanating from the various funding bodies aimed at increasing the education of the social partners on EU issues, such as information and consultation. All applications for funding are normally coordinated through the office where the staff are familiar with the criteria, Euro-jargon and Commission officials relevant to any application. The possibility of funding opportunities goes well beyond trade union issues and extends to partnership arrangements with employers and local authorities for various different types of funding. These processes have shifted the focus of trade union activity away from exclusively the workplace and out into the wider local and regional communities.

The overall strategy to Europe has been termed *going over and under,* referring of course to bypassing the UK government preferring to cooperate with local, regional and European tiers of government and organisations. The GMB recognise that the EU is not simply a process resulting in power shifting upwards to the EU level but given the principal of subsidiarity a multi-level polity is emerging. This has huge implications for the union organisation but given the regional structure already in place the implications have largely meant ensuring that officials at all levels are well informed and empowered to use the information.

One of the unforeseen benefits of the office has been that the GMB is often better informed on EU issues than the employers where their members are situated and as such, they have become more influential in the work place. In order to better inform their members the GMB has also produced a number of publications on the EU and related issues, ranging from educational material

on the institutions and the social charter to checklists for local negotiators to ensure that the employers were up to the challenges presented by '1992' (GMB 1989, 1992a)

One of the major reasons, outside of perceived cost, of other trade union organisations not locating an office in Brussels is that the perceived benefits are hard to quantify. In addition to informing their membership and raising their profile (local, regional & European), can a tangible benefit be discerned from the permanent presence in terms of the contents of EU legislation? One MEP certainly thinks so.

> *I am a practical sort of person and perhaps I can best refer to my area of work… since 1984 I have concentrated on health & safety and workplace legislation. During all of that time, my greatest ally and advisor in moulding the laws passing through the Parliament has been Nigel Bryson, GMB's Director of Health, Safety and the Environment. Some 60% of the amendments, which we have adopted in this field, have been incorporated in the finished legislation. That means in reality that much of the content of these laws has come from Nigel's pen or the pen of other trade unionist.* (Simon Hughes MEP – Address to GMB Congress 1993, p.425 – *Report of Congress*)

Developing ties with sister trade unions in the other member-states has also been high on the agenda. While much of this is carried within the EIFs concerning industrial issues, stronger links that are more binding have been secured. The GMB has signed treaties with both HK Denmark and IG Chemie, both treaties ensure that the organisations will act as representatives for each other's members where members are working abroad. Of more interest for the political sphere is how they are helping each other in the field of education. After more than two centuries of collective bargaining British trade unions now have to face up to the prospect of making the most of information and consultation mechanisms. These forums require different skills and so the GMB exchanges officials with the two aforementioned organisations. Officials can thereby experience first hand how union officials experienced in these forums utilise them to their full potential. For the Danish and German officials, they are eager to learn as much as possible from the British experience of deregulation and the neo-liberal onslaught.

Finally the network of contacts made available by the permanent presence in Brussels have also been utilised to highlight industrial rather than political issues the GMB has. On one occasion, after pressure was brought to bear from MEPs (cross-party support), the management of Levi Strauss agreed to meet with union officials to discuss the planned closure of plants in Dundee and Bellshill. Without this network of contacts, it is unlikely that the management of the multi-national would have met them at all. Two weeks after the announcement of the closure of these plants to the New York stock exchange, without consulting the workforce, management agreed to fund an independent expert to assess alternatives to closure. The company also agreed that the time taken for this process would not effect any ultimate settlement if closure were inevitable. (GMB 2002)

In conclusion the GMB' strategy of *going over and under* has yielded many benefits and in terms of ideology, 'reception' and 'projection' Europeanisation has no doubt occurred. Surprisingly, for trade union organisation, the GMB

has been able to shift the effects of Europeanisation downward and so they are no longer just measurable among the national-level elites of the organisation. The perceived crisis in traditional British industrial relations has seen the GMB turn its back on the stale and restrictive pre-occupation with collective bargaining and immunity from the law toward the aspirations for positive workers' (not just union members') rights, the EU is one of many arenas where this aspiration can be fought for.

The T&G.

The T&G represents over 900 000 members and organises in a number of sectors, it has a slightly higher percentage of members in the manufacturing sector than does the GMB. The key differences between the T&G and the GMB are ideological and organisational. Although organised regionally the strength of each region does not compare to the 'baronial status' of the regional heads in the GMB; the union polity is much more centralised. The major fault lines among the membership are industrial sector and ideology. The T&G is much more factionalised (at all levels) and this resulted in a particularly bitter period of in fighting and rivalry in the run-up to the recent leadership elections. Interestingly the issue of Europe did not surface in the recent elections. The differences between the GMB candidates Kevin Curran and Paul Kenny on the issue were stark, it seems that all of the candidates for the T&G leadership were either extremely hostile or indifferent to European integration.

In the mid to late 1980s it appeared on the surface that the T&G had indeed turned a corner, the infamous quote by Ron Todd (see above p.12) although hardly Euro-idealist did at least suggest a pragmatic acceptance of the potential for opportunity. They were one of the first trade union organisations in the UK to appoint a specific European officer to monitor EU issues and maintain contacts with MEPs.

Internal T&G documents dated around the time of the 1992 programme highlight the pessimistic view that officials held vis-à-vis the development of the EU. The analysis at this time focuses almost exclusively on the industrial implications of the 1992 process and the subsequent Maastricht Treaty. The political possibilities were not as systematically presented except for the possibility of the European Works Council Directive. The T&G preferred to pursue traditional industrial policies based in horizontal linkages but were not prepared to shift power upwards to their EIFs. Indeed the T&G were already concerned at the coordinating role the EIFs were to obtain in the area of EWCs. Although one idea that was surfaced and never followed up on is the idea of using the political fund to finance European political lobbying (The GMB carried through such a policy in recent years).

The T&G is historically close to the Labour Party and Bill Morris' speeches have often been interpreted as being penned by Gordon Brown. Morris has been a vocal opponent of UK entry into the Euro-zone although his argumentation is far from clear. The T&G claims that opposition is a temporary position due to unsuitable timing and the effect this will have on jobs (T&G 2001, 2002, 2002a 2002b) and public investment. However, a closer inspection reveals more fundamental problems with the single currency.

> *I do not deny the resonance of issues of national sovereignty and democracy which are also raised by the move toward the common currency.* (Morris 1998, p.183)

The T&G follow the UNISON line in claiming that joining the Euro-zone will mean cut backs in public spending and therefore a loss of jobs in the public

sector. The ingrained neo-liberalism under no democratic control also rules out support for the Euro. Morris views the move toward the common currency as a German political project not an economic necessity (Morris 1998, p.184). In the same chapter, Morris also highlights the loss of national sovereignty and the lack of any replacement at the European-level; the lack of political resources required to intervene in the market. In addition the 'one fits all' straight jacket of common interest rates is another factor mitigating against the UK signing up. He sums up by highlighting how the majority of our trade is with the EU and how we cannot afford to be left outside of the EU.

His more recent comments have proved contradictory. Press releases (T&G 2001, 2003, 2003a, 2003b) call for the government to take the lead on the euro debate by procrastinating further! Given all the reservations articulated above his opposition to current membership of the Euro is based on more than just timing. Staying on the sidelines means the UK has little impact on the way the 'rules of the game' are defined and refined in Ecofin, in his own words

> *Britain did not join the Coal and Steel Community at the outset. We delayed entry to the Common Market and were, as a result, lumbered with the Common Agricultural Policy. We rejected the ERM and then went in too late and at too high a rate. It is a sorry record.* (Morris 1998, p.187)

Although the T&G were the first to appoint a dedicated Euro-official, it was a position based in London. The official would travel to Brussels periodically but was not a permanent fixture. The official eventually was 'let go' by the T&G in the late 1990s; what exactly happened is not clear but given the background of infighting it would be surprising if he didn't fall foul of this. The only contacts within the EU institutions are with a handful of MEPs and within the EIFs. The T&G don't send a representative to NECP meetings at the TUC, so they don't even get a free-ride!

The T&G's emphasis for a Europe for jobs rather than bankers is a sentiment echoed throughout the trade union movement. Unfortunately, the T&G doesn't see how Europe can be part of the solution. National governments are perceived as the only agency able to intervene effectively in the market place to deliver full employment and other trade union objectives. This to some extent explains why Europe remains a peripheral issue in the T&G. An indication of just how little an issue Europe is can be illustrated by looking on the T&G's website. Here they have a whole section on International issues and globalisation, there is not one section on the European Union, although EWCs do get some brief coverage.

The research is still inconclusive as to why the T&G has not fully represented their members interests in the EU or adequately informed/educated their membership sufficiently on developments and opportunities at the European-level. The relationship with the more sceptical elements of the government and ideological factionalism has witnessed a reluctance of the leadership to actually lead the union in this area.

For the T&G the internal constraints do seem to have outweighed the external factors in the scope, extent and direction of Europeanisation.

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