SOGAT

A HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY OF GRAPHICAL AND ALLIED TRADES

JOHN GENNARD AND PETER BAIN

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

PREFACE

In November 1990 I was approached by the National Executive Council of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (1982) with an invitation to write a history of the Society. In May of that year its Biennial Delegate Council had voted overwhelmingly to accept the package for an amalgamation with the National Graphical Association (1982) to form in July 1991 the Graphical, Paper and Media Union. The Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) with a history going back to the 1760s would cease to be an independent trade union. The National Executive Council considered the time was right to commission their union's official history. I was pleased to accept the National Executive Council's invitation.

My objective has been to update Bundock's official history of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers and then to describe and analyse the evolution and development of SOGAT over the period 1966 to 1991. The Society has given me open access to all its records and an entirely free hand to write the history as I found it. Any views expressed in this history are entirely my own, without any influence or censorship by the Society.

I have arranged the history in four parts. The first deals with the NUPB&PW/SOGAT relationship with other printing unions and the formation of SOGAT in 1966, its break-up in 1972 and the formation of SOGAT (75) and then SOGAT (82). It concludes with an analysis of the factors leading SOGAT (82) and NGA (82) to form the Graphical, Paper and Media Union. The second part deals with the decision-making and financial structure of NUPB&PW and SOGAT whilst the third part describes and analyses their relationship with the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, the International Graphical Federation, the International Chemical, Energy and General Workers' Union, the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees, the Trades Union Congress, the Scottish Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party. The final part deals with relationships with employers in the general printing industry, provincial newspapers, papermaking and paper conversion, national newspapers and ink manufacturing and covers, *inter alia,* wages, hours of work, holidays, pensions and equality issues. This approach, however, is not without its limitations in that it involves overlapping and any division into separate compartments is unreal.

The history has been written from NUPB&PW/SOGAT official records—National Executive Council minutes, delegate meeting reports, branch circulars, rule books and monthly journals—and interviews with past leading national and branch officials. In

addition, the annual reports of the Printing and Kindred Trades Federation, the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party have provided a great deal of information. The reports of the three post Second World War Royal Commissions on the Press, Courts of Inquiry into printing industry disputes and government and quasi-government bodies, including these covering papermaking, have also been important sources of information. C.J.Bundock's history of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers has been a rich and indispensable source of reference as has J.Moran's history of the first 75 years of existence of the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants.

I wish to express my great appreciation of the kindness and constant helpfulness of Brenda Dean (General Secretary), Danny Sargeant (President), Ted Chard, Bob Gillespie and Teddy O'Brien (National Officers).

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Mrs Deborah Cadenhead who diligently and cheerfully word processed numerous drafts of the manuscript.

Lastly, research work inevitably impinges upon family life, and thanks for understanding in this matter are due to Anne, John and Julie Gennard.

JOHN GENNARD

FOREWORD

Benjamin Franklin writing in the mid-eighteenth century said,

> Historians relate not so much what is done as what they would have believed.

In this rich and informative study, Professor John Gennard has conscientiously borne Franklin's implicit warning in mind and confined himself to writing a factual and analytical account of events based on the hard evidence which explains the growth and development of one of the oldest and proudest trade unions within the British Trade Union and Labour movement.

When SOGAT and the NGA finally reached agreement to merge to create a single trade union for the paper, printing and media industries in the UK in 1990, an important chapter in the history of print trade unionism in Britain came to an end, and the Executive Council of SOGAT thought it appropriate to invite Professor Gennard to produce a history of SOGAT for the period 1955—the date that Bundock used to conclude his detailed study of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers—to 1991, when SOGAT's period as an independent trade union ended and it amalgamated with its sister union, the National Graphical Association, to form the Graphical, Paper, and Media Union.

SOGAT's National Executive wanted something more than a mere internal commemorative history, indeed they took the view that the experiences of the men and women who made up SOGAT's membership during the period deserved a serious piece of scholarship which would be of interest not only to SOGAT members but to students and scholars of industrial relations and labour history who wished to understand how our industry and its system of industrial relations underwent a dramatic transformation during the second half of the twentieth century—fuelled by those great motors of change, politics, economics and technological innovation.

The National Executive therefore in November 1990, approached Professor John Gennard from the Strathclyde Business School at the University of Strathclyde—who has spent over a quarter of a century analysing industrial relations within the UK printing, packaging, and papermaking industries, with an invitation to produce SOGAT's official history. Over the last four years, Professor Gennard has worked diligently, combining the more traditional approaches to historical research with oral history techniques, which has

resulted in this remarkable volume. Professor Gennard has exercised great discipline in confining his methodology to an examination and analysis of the voluminous written sources which he has compared in an easy symbiosis with the many oral accounts that he was able to elicit from officers and members who took part in the great events that are related in his book.

Professor Gennard's technique, therefore, has resulted in a delightful and remarkable book, which examines both critically and sympathetically, not just the history of a movement and a union—but of two industries—printing and paper and board—both of which have played, and continue to play, a major contribution to the British economy. It is also a tribute to the many men and women who throughout the history of the union, by their major contribution and commitment to build an association of workers to hand on to future generations, have left their mark, not for their own self-satisfaction but for the improvement of conditions for their colleagues.

SOGAT has given every assistance to Professor Gennard in the compilation of the book, and our vast archives were made freely available to him. One of the conditions on which Professor Gennard accepted his mammoth task was an understanding that we could not seek to interfere, edit or influence the content or analysis contained in the final manuscript. We agreed willingly, and are proud to be associated with a well-written and meticulously researched piece of work, which we have no doubt will stand the test of time and become an obligatory text on the reading lists of students engaged within the field of industrial relations or labour history for many years to come.

National Executive Council

MAIN ABBREVIATIONS USED AND NOTES ON THE TEXT

ABBREVIATIONS

The acronyms in this list cover all the key unions, other organisations and establishments relevant to the text. Individual union branches and divisions, however, are not included here.

ANMW	Association of Newspaper and Magazine Wholesalers
ASLP	Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers and Auxiliaries
ATFEF	Advertising, Typesetting and Foundry Employers' Federation
BBF	British Bag Federation
BBPA	British Box and Packaging Association
BCA	British Carton Association
BFMP	British Federation of Master Printers
BFPA	British Fibreboard and Packaging Association
BPBA	British Paper Box Association
BPCC	British Printing Communications Corporation
CAWU	Clerical and Administrative Workers' Union
EETPU	Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications/Plumbing Union
EFCGU	European Federation of Chemical and General Workers
EFTA	European Free Trade Area

EGF	European Graphical Federation
FIET	International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees
FLWND	Federation of London Wholesale Newspaper Distributors
FPCA	Fibreboard Packing Case Association
GMBATU	General Municipal Boilermakers' and Allied Trades' Union
GPMU	Graphical, Paper and Media Union
ICEF	International Federation of Chemical, Energy and General Workers
ICF	International Federation of Chemical and General Workers
IGF	International Graphical Federation
IPC	International Publishing Corporation
IPL	International Printers Ltd
LSC	London Society of Compositors
LTS	London Typographical Society
MCC	Maxwell Communications Corporation
MCTS	Monotype Casters and Typefounders' Society
MSMEA	Multi-wall Sack Manufacturers Employers' Association
NALGO	National and Local Government Officers' Association
NATSOPA	National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants
NBPI	National Board for Prices and Incomes
NGA	National Graphical Association
NPA	Newspaper Proprietors' Association
NPIPFS	Newspaper and Printing Industries' Pension Fund Scheme
NS	Newspaper Society
NSPWSND	National Society of Provincial Wholesale Sunday Newspaper Distributors
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
NUM	National Union of Mineworkers
NUPATW	National Union of Printing and Allied Trade Workers
NUPB&PW	National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers
NUPE	National Union of Public Employees
NUWDAT	National Union of Wallcoverings, Decorative and Allied Trades
P&KTF	Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation
PEC	Packaging Employers' Federation

PMMTS	Printing Machine Managers' Trade Society
PWNDA	Provincial Wholesale Newspaper Distributors' Association
RAGA	Reproductive and Graphics Association
SBPIM	Society of British Printing Ink Manufacturers
SDNS	Scottish Daily Newspaper Society
SGA	Scottish Graphical Association
SLADE	Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers
SOGAT	Society of Graphical and Allied Trades
SMPS	Society of Master Printers of Scotland
SPEF	Scottish Printing Employers' Federation
STA	Scottish Typographical Association
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
TA	Typographical Association
T&GWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
TUC	Trades Union Congress
USDAW	Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers
YOPS	Youth Opportunities Scheme
YTS	Youth Training Scheme

NOTES ON THE TEXT

(1) Any money referred to pre-decimalisation (February 1971) has been converted from pounds, shillings and pence into decimal pounds and pence.
(2) Imperial tons and metric tonnes have been reported faithfully as they appear in individual sources. No attempt has been made to convert from imperial to metric measure or vice versa.
(3) When SOGAT and the Scottish Graphical Association amalgamated in 1975 they formed SOGAT (75). When NATSOPA and SOGAT (75) amalgamated in 1982 they formed SOGAT (82). When the NGA and SLADE amalgamated in 1982 they formed NGA (82). These legal titles—SOGAT (75), SOGAT (82) and NGA (82)—have been used only where they are essential to understanding. In general the dates have been omitted as the unions were always referred to by members and officials as SOGAT and the NGA respectively.

The publisher has been assured that all quoted material, unless otherwise indicated, has come from the SOGAT archive housed at the modern records library at the University of Warwick and can be accessed there for further reference.

CHAPTER 1

THE PRINTING AND PAPERMAKING INDUSTRIES IN 1955 AND 1991

The Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) was formed on 1 February 1966 with the amalgamation of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers (NUPB&PW)[1] and the National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants (NATSOPA). The former, created in 1921, was a merger of the National Union of Bookbinders and Machine Rulers[2] and the National Union of Printing and Paperworkers. This latter union had been formed in 1914 by a marriage of the National Union of Paper Mill Workers and the National Amalgamated Society of Printer's Warehousemen and Cutters.[3] The National Society of Operative Printers and Assistants had been formed in London in 1889 as the Printers' Labourers' Union for assistants in the machine rooms.[4]

The problems of devising a constitution for SOGAT proved insurmountable (see Chapter 5) and in 1972 the amalgamation was dissolved. The NUPB&PW retained the title, SOGAT, but NATSOPA adopted the title the National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel.[5] On 1 October 1975 SOGAT amalgamated with the Scottish Graphical Association[6] to form SOGAT (75). In 1981 SOGAT (75) began amalgamation talks with NATSOPA which resulted in the formation of SOGAT (82) on 5 July 1982. In 1984 SOGAT (82) began amalgamation talks with the National Graphical Association (82)[7] which led on 30 September 1991 to the formation of the Graphical, Paper and Media Union (the GPMU).

This history examines the development of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades and its constituent unions over the period 1 January 1955 to 30 September 1991. Its starting point is that at which Bundock concluded his History of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers, the bulk of whose membership was employed in the general printing trade followed by papermaking and newspapers. Today these industries are very different to the mid-1950s in terms of their production techniques, their product markets and their skills structures. To understand the development of the NUPB&PW/SOGAT over the past 36 years a comparison of the environment in which the NUPB&PW operated in 1955 with that of SOGAT (82) in 1991 is the starting point.

THE INDUSTRIES IN 1955

Product Sectors, Processes and Tasks

The Printing Industry

Product Sectors

In 1955 the printing industry divided into a number of subsectors in all of which the NUPB&PW had members. First there was the 'general print' sector which employed the majority (60 per cent) of NUPB&PW members. This sector included firms specialising in security printing, packaging and stationery, catalogues, banknotes, maps, cards, tickets, books, magazines and periodicals. In 1955 over 3,500 periodicals were published in the United Kingdom. A second sector was the provincial press in which were to be found 10 per cent of NUPB&PW members and which consisted of companies producing daily morning and evening papers, and bi-weekly and tri-weekly newspapers. There were in Great Britain 25 daily morning newspapers with a total circulation of three million copies and 75 daily evening newspapers selling in total over seven million copies. The provincial press was dominated by four national chains—Lord Rothermere, Lord Thomson,[8] Cowdry[9] and Drayton.[10] A third sector was national newspapers which produced ten national daily morning newspapers with a total circulation of 16.2 million and ten national Sunday newspapers with a total circulation of 15.3 million.[11] Ten per cent of NUPB&PW members were employed in this sector. The national morning press was dominated by Beaverbrook Newspapers, the Rothermere Group and the Mirror-Pictorial—Odhams Group. National Sunday press ownership was also concentrated into three groups—Beaverbook, the Mirror-Pictorial and News of the World Ltd—who between them owned seven of the ten national Sundays. In addition three London evening newspapers had a total circulation of 3.2 million.

A fourth sector was the wholesale distribution of the printed products which NUPB&PW members had helped produce. Some 4 per cent of NUPB&PW members were to be found in this sector. National newspapers were distributed throughout the UK (except for London) by rail to appropriate points where they were collected and distributed to retail newsagents. In 1955 there were 25 wholesale distributors of daily national newspapers in London and over 200 in England and Wales. In both the provinces and London there were many independent wholesalers coexisting with large wholesale companies such as WH Smith Ltd, Wyman & Sons Ltd and Surridge Dawsons.[12] In London each national newspaper delivered its papers directly to the wholesalers. In Scotland, wholesale distribution was dominated by John Menzies & Co. However, D.C.Thomson and John Leng who published morning, evening, Sunday and weekly newspapers in Dundee and Glasgow, handled their own distribution to retailers.

The distribution of national Sunday newspapers was largely carried out by different wholesalers than for national dailies. Sunday national newspaper wholesalers, were mainly small family owned businesses many of which operated only one day per week. The Sunday wholesale national newspapers trade was always regarded as a separate trade from that of national daily newspaper wholesaling.

Printing Processes and Stages

In 1955 of the three main printing processes—letterpress, lithography and gravure—letterpress dominated. Of the 144,000 NUPB&PW members, 75 per cent were employed in printing firms which used the letterpress process. This used type or blocks to produce the printing image which stood out on a raised surface. Letterpress required print origination based on composing machines that manipulated hot metal or work based on metal but produced by hand. Lithographic printing used a plate on which the printing and non-printing parts were on the same level but the latter were kept damp and free from ink. Litho machines required print origination based on machines that processed film. Photogravure printing used cylinders on which the image was etched. Letterpress and lithographic printing were carried out either on flat bed machines, in which the type or plate remained stationary, or rotary machines, in which the type was attached to revolving cylinders. Gravure printing was predominantly by rotary machines. Printing machines were fed by single sheets of paper or by a web of paper which, after printing, could be cut into individual sheets or folded into sections of a book or periodical, etc.

(i) Typesetting and plate-making The main stages of production in a printing and publishing house were typesetting, plate-making, printing, finishing, warehousing and despatching, all of which were supported by management, administrative, technical and clerical functions. Some typesetters arranged separate letters to form words and lines of text whilst others used keyboards which operated a casting machine which either produced each line of type in a metal slug or produced paper type which operated a caster which in turn outputted lines made up of separate letters. The typesetters' work was checked and corrected by a reader. In newspapers, page make-up was also done by the typesetters. Copy holders read copy prepared by typesetters whilst revisers corrected proofs for final errors. The plate-making departments produced the printing surfaces. A plate was required for all litho work but for much letterpress work the assembled metal type provided the printing surface. Most large letterpress printers and newspapers made their own blocks and plates but for smaller companies this work was often contracted out to specialist trade houses.

(ii) Printing The actual printing took place in the press department. In the printing industry some 85 per cent of machine managers and assistants were working letterpress machines. In newspapers the proportion was as high as 90 per cent. Litho machines were mainly confined to the general printing sector. Letterpress and litho printing machines were controlled by machine managers some of whom were members of the NUPB&PW and who were responsible for the quality of the job. They worked with a number of assistants who were either members of the NUPB&PW or NATSOPA (see Chapter 2). The brake-hand was the most senior assistant with responsibility for the speed, tension and braking of the press. Oilers lubricated the machines, fitted and removed metal plates and assisted webbing and rewebbing in the case of web-fed presses. General assistants cleaned the presses, removed copies and waste emerging from the machines and in some national newspaper offices transported the reel of paper to the press. On average, letterpress rotary machines required four times as many assistants as litho presses.

(iii) Finishing, warehousing and despatch Before printing, the tasks undertaken by NUPB&PW members in the general printing trade sector included finishing, warehousing, despatching, stitching and cutting of paper. After the printing process tasks included folding, counting, collating, gathering, stitching, binding, trimming, packing and

despatch. A high proportion of this work was done by hand by semi-skilled or unskilled workers, most of whom were women. However, automatic folders were in use whilst collating/gathering, stitching, wire stapling, trimming and binding were becoming automated.

In 1955 hand binding craft skills of NUPB&PW members were found only in establishments catering for high-quality, special presentation books. The vast majority of books were bound by machine. The first stage in bookbinding was the mechanical folding of large paper sheets into sections. However, this work was done by hand if it was unusually difficult or if the number of sheets to be bound was small. In the second stage the book was gathered together in the proper order and then sewn mechanically. The book was then sent for 'forwarding' which included smoothing its edge, coating glue on its backs and, in the case of quality books, glueing a strip of strong paper to it to make it more rigid. Meanwhile a case which was to cover the book was produced manually. The lettering of the case was done in a blocking press and the book's binding completed by a casing-in machine which brought together the book and its case.

Binding of stationery and machine ruling was used, for example, in the production of school exercise books and ledgers used in banks and offices. The buyers of ledgers required them to last for a long time and the strongest materials, such as leather, webbing tape and thread were used in their production which was predominantly by hand. Machine ruling, in which accuracy was important, was done either by pens or discs. On a pen-ruling machine, paper was fed onto a blanket which carried it under the press which ruled the paper as it travelled along. On a disc-ruling machine, paper was carried by a cylinder and was ruled by discs pressing against its surface.

Printing firms kept large stocks of paper cared for by warehousemen who knew all the papers' different sizes and qualities, how the papers could be matched for a job and how to cut the paper to the right sizes. Warehousemen counted the correct amounts of paper required for a job and then delivered it to the printing department. There were also printed-sheet warehouses where sheets sent from the machine room were checked and stored after printing until required for a further operation, such as bookbinding, for example. The printed sheets, which were cut on a guillotine machine, were stored away and their number, description and position recorded in a stock book. Work in despatching in the general print sector involved the receipt, wrapping, labelling and despatch of the printed product. The bulk of these tasks were done mechanically. However, in national newspapers despatching included hand loading of bundles of newspapers onto vans and lorries for transportation to railway terminals or for collection by wholesalers.

(iv) Wholesaling In 1955 in the wholesale distribution of newspapers, periodicals, magazines and trade publications, two main tasks carried out by NUPB&PW members were packing and driving. Packing was labour-intensive, and with almost everything done by hand the pace of work was intense. Wholesale distribution involved a large permanent work-force supplemented by casual labour as and when required. The publishers' drivers took the newspapers, magazines, periodicals, etc. from the publishers to the wholesalers' warehouses where packers made up parcels to be delivered to each individual retail newsagent. In the wholesale distribution of national newspapers time was of the essence as the product was highly perishable. In London the national morning and Sunday newspapers were collected by 22 wholesalers from the printing works and taken to warehouses where they were sorted into parcels and then delivered to some

7,000 retail newsagents. Wholesalers sought to complete their packaging by 5.00 a.m., but if one of the national papers was late this delayed all London morning papers as they had to go all together in one parcel.

National newspapers printed in London to be sold in the rest of the UK were delivered by the publishers to the appropriate rail terminal. In some cases the newspapers were then taken by train, unpacked to another rail head where they were collected by the wholesalers' drivers and taken to a warehouse, packed into individual parcels and then delivered to each retail newsagent. In other cases wholesale distribution was based on a system of train packers. National newspapers were driven from Fleet Street to a main rail station then loaded into special newspaper packing vans for delivery to the provinces. These vans were fitted with tables and fluorescent lighting. As the train travelled along the track, packers employed by member firms of the Provincial Wholesale Newspaper Distributors' Association broke down the bundles and remade them into parcels for each individual retail newsagent to be dropped off at the appropriate railway station.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Product Sectors

A second major industry in which the NUPB&PW had members was papermaking and paper conversion, in which there were a number of subsectors. First, NUPB&PW members were involved in the manufacture of newsprint, writing and printing paper, tissues, industrial and special purpose papers. There were 200 mills producing paper and board in an industry characterised by a small number of large companies operating big mills alongside a number of small firms. In 1955 over half of the UK paper and board output was produced by five large groups—the Bowater Paper Corporation, the Reed Paper Group, the Wiggins Teape Group, Thames Board Mills and the Inversk Group. Bowater was the largest producer of newsprint in the world whilst the Reed Paper Group was the largest UK producer of paper and board. UK production of paper and board at 4 million tons per annum made the UK was the largest paper producer in Europe and the fourth largest in the world.

A second sector in which NUPB&PW members were to be found was the production of rigid boxes and cartons. Rigid boxes were despatched, made up and ready for use with their corners stitched or glued to form a rigid, upright box with a separate hinged lid, as seen, for example, in pill boxes. Cartons differed in that they did not have a separate lid and were erected by the customer. Rigid box production was dominated by small firms and was concentrated in London and the Midlands. Carton firms were usually located close to their main customers, e.g. the tobacco industry.

A third sector employing NUPB&PW members was fibreboard packaging. This was produced from sheets of board or from a layer of corrugated paper between outside layers of board. The edges were glued, taped or stitched together to form a rigid structure but the cases were normally produced and delivered flat. Fibreboard cases were stronger than cartons and thus were used for transporting bulky items. Fibreboard packaging enabled the product inside to remain identifiable, protected from hazards and deliverable in factory-fresh form. The sector was dominated by large firms e.g. Reed Corrugated, Bowater and Thames Board Mills.

A fourth sector containing NUPB&PW members was paper bag and multi-wall sack manufacture. The Trade Boards/Paper Bag Order (1919) defined this sector as the manufacture from paper of any bag or container without a gummed flap, including any printing carried out in the course of the production process. Paper bags in 1955 were produced mainly for use in the retail distribution sector. The stronger multi-wall sacks introduced in the 1920s were used for carrying cement, fertilisers and animal feedstuffs. Paper bag and multi-wall sack manufacturing was dominated by small firms.

Production Processes and Stages

There were seven steps in the papermaking process. The first stage was pulping. Wood pulp was produced mechanically or chemically or by a combination of both depending on the type of pulp required. The second stage was stock preparation during which the fibres were dispersed in water. Mechanical treatment then modified the physical characteristics of the fibres. The third stage was sheet formation, during which the fibres were diluted further and then filtered through a screen or sieve to make a uniform layer or sheet of wet paper.

The fourth stage was couching, whereby the wet sheet of paper was separated from the screen to leave an unwrinkled wet sheet of paper. The fifth stage in the process was pressing, during which the couched paper was placed in contact with a woven cloth and pressed to remove excess water. The sixth stage was the drying process, whereby the moist paper was removed from the felt and dried. In the final stage the dried paper was appropriately treated to produce the required quality of paper which was then cut or slit to the required dimensions, inspected, packed, labelled and finally despatched.

Pulp-making and papermaking were separate processes in the UK but in Canada and the Scandinavian countries they were integrated in large combined plants. The UK papermaking industry needed to consume annually over 2 million tons of wood pulp, nearly all of which was imported, and one million tons of home-produced paper. In paper and board production NUPB&PW members were employed on direct manufacture from the arrival of the raw materials to the despatch of the finished paper and board. In addition to these process tasks, there were those concerned with the repair and maintenance of machinery, equipment, power and buildings. A third group of tasks were performed by staff employees involved in management, research, development, administration, sales and clerical work. The process manual worker jobs were graded into four categories according to skill. Around a quarter of the tasks associated with papermaking were carried out by skilled male workers and their assistants.

Carton-making involved large-scale production with mechanical cutting, creasing and folding and the carton board being printed on directly. The cutting and creasing of the carton sheets was carried out by ‘formes’ press machines. By 1955 the box carton sector was becoming automated and more employees were undertaking either machine minder or machine assistant tasks. Those NUPB&PW members engaged in forme-making and setting, cutting and creasing, rotary cutting, fancy box making, bending machines and guillotines claimed they were as skilled as printers.

Paper bags and sacks were produced from sheets or from reels of paper. A bag-making machine applied adhesive to form an endless tube which was then cut to the required length with an adhesive base being added. Multi-wall sacks were sealed, stitched, sewn

and glued by automatic bottoming machines. Other important tasks in producing multi-wall sacks included cutting and slitting, hydraulic pressing, stock keeping, packaging and despatching.

Employment, Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations

The Printing Industry

Employment

In 1955 the printing industry was dominated by small firms, many of which were family owned. The majority of firms in membership of the British Federation of Master Printers employed under 25 people. Less than 3 per cent employed 300 or more. Newspaper firms were larger and over two-thirds of these employed more than 25. London, with over 1,000 firms engaged in the general print trade, was the dominant centre. Of the 144,000 members of the NUPB&PW, 65,000 were members of its four main London branches.

By 1955 there were 375,000 employees in the printing industry, of which 35 per cent were employed in the printing and publishing of newspapers and periodicals. Some 80 per cent of men and 87 per cent of women in the craft and non-craft categories of cutters, binders and warehouse workers—all NUPB&PW areas—were employed in the general printing and book sections. Of male packaging and despatch workers (NUPB&PW members) 40 per cent were in the newspaper and periodical sectors. The remaining craft and non-craft cutters, binders and warehouse workers were employed in the periodical and stationery sectors. The general printing and stationery sectors employed over 22,000 women, most of them NUPB&PW members, with few skills on hand finishing work. In the general print sector, NUPB&PW organised skilled, semi-skilled and women workers and had to balance the interests of each group which, in a number of ways, but especially in wage bargaining, were in conflict with each other.

Trade Unions

In 1955 there were 12 major trade unions in the printing industry with a total membership of 319,000. The demarcation of jobs between them was clear. In letterpress the craft typesetting functions involved five unions of which two were confined to London and one to Scotland.[13] The Monotype Casters and Typefounders' Society (MCTS) catered for monotype caster attendants in London and part of the English and Welsh provinces.[14] Monotype operators were members of the London Typographical Society (LTS), the Typographical Association (TA) and the Scottish Typographical Association (STA). The largest craft union in the industry was the Typographical Association which organised 62,000 compositors, caster attendants, readers and machine managers in the English provinces, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic other than Dublin. In composing rooms, linotype assistants, copy holders and revisers were organised by NATSOPA and proof pullers by the NUPB&PW. The transmission and receiving of text and pictures by electronic means for inclusion in newspapers and journals was the preserve of the National Union of Press Telegraphists[15] whilst the production of

information in written form for inclusion in newspapers, journals and periodicals was undertaken by members of the National Union of Journalists. In lithography origination was controlled by the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers (SLADE).

The production of plates for letterpress printing was undertaken by members of the National Society of Electrotypers and Stereotypers. Provers in the process and foundry departments of national newspapers were organised by either the Printing Machine Branch (PMB) of the NUPB&PW or SLADE. Letterpress machine managers in London were organised by the LTS, in Scotland by the STA and in the rest of the UK by the TA. The LTS did not control all the machine rooms in London and in some houses, for example in the *News of the World,* control lay with NATSOPA, and in others the PMB had a presence. These situations had arisen because the London machine managers originally regarded rotary and platen machines as not being within their jurisdiction. By the time the London machine managers realised the situation, NATSOPA in the case of rotary presses and the NUPB&PW in the case of platen presses, had gained control in some houses and were not then prepared to give it up.[16] In lithography, plate making and printing was controlled by the Amalgamated Society of Lithographic Printers (ASLP).

Assistants in the machine room in both the letterpress and litho printing process were organised in some towns by NATSOPA and in others by the NUPB&PW. In the general print sectors and in newspapers in the bindery, warehouse and despatch departments the same situation prevailed. For many years the custom had operated of referring to 'NATSOPA' and 'Paperworker' towns. In a Paperworker town those employed in the bindery, warehouse, despatch and white-paper departments, in addition to men and women in the machine room, were NUPB&PW members. In NATSOPA towns men and women employed in the warehouse, despatch and white-paper departments and those in the printing machine room were NATSOPA members. However, there were certain exceptions to these generalisations. For instance, motor drivers in general printing houses, employees working under the bindery and stationery agreements and employees in box-making were members of the NUPB&PW irrespective of whether employed in a NATSOPA or Paperworker town. On the other hand, in Paperworker towns all those employed in newspaper machine rooms were members of NATSOPA. In addition, there was 'the London setup' under which all employees in the bindery and the warehouse were NUPB&PW members whilst assistants in the printing machine rooms were NATSOPA members. These complex spheres of influence between the Paperworkers and NATSOPA did not apply in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The individual printing unions jealously guarded their autonomy but realised the need to speak collectively on many matters and to have a means of resolving their inter-union difficulties. In 1901 the printing unions formed the Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation (P&KTF) to co-ordinate their activities.[17] In 1955 the Federation had 16 affiliated unions with a total membership of 320,525.[18] Its objectives included the establishment of uniform working conditions in different branches of the industry, the co-ordination of union policies, the prevention and settlement of disputes and securing unity of action amongst affiliated unions. It acted for the printing unions on matters of common interest and spoke collectively on their behalf to the TUC and the central government and conducted research and inquiry work for its affiliated unions either collectively or individually. However, the Federation's constitution stated that 'the Federation shall not

interfere in the internal management of any union, nor its rules and customs'. Nevertheless, it had been given powers to settle demarcation disputes between affiliated unions via an arbitration board.

Employers' Associations

In 1955, the major employers' organisation in the UK in the general printing sector was the British Federation of Master Printers (BFMP). Founded in 1900, its members were engaged in general printing, periodicals, magazines, books, etc. It comprised 12 regional bodies, known as 'Alliances' which varied greatly in the number of associations and firms they represented. The Federation had in excess of 4,000 member firms which employed over 85 per cent of the total employees engaged in the general printing industry. It negotiated on employment terms and conditions.

The Newspaper Society (NS), founded in 1895, represented the proprietors of the provincial morning, evening and weekly newspapers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as weekly newspapers published in London. The Society had some 350 members who had 290 newspaper plants. Some Newspaper Society members undertook general printing and were also members of the BFMP. In 1955 member firms of the NS employed 20,000 production employees. In Scotland the Scottish Daily Newspaper Society, established in 1915, represented the interests of publishers of daily newspapers in Scotland, whilst the Scottish Newspaper Proprietors' Association conducted the same functions as the NS with respect to Scottish weekly and bi-weekly newspaper publishers.

The Newspaper Proprietors' Association (NPA), formed in 1906, represented the national newspapers published in London and Manchester. Its member firms employed some 18,000 regular operative staff. Although on labour matters the NPA maintained informal contact with the BFMP and NS it conducted separate negotiations with the unions. NPA members considered their product so specialised they could not be associated with other branches of the industry. They considered themselves vulnerable to union action in a way that did not apply to the provincial press and the general print trade in that they produced a highly perishable product.

The Provincial Wholesale Newspaper Distributors' Association represented the interests of wholesale daily newspaper distributors in England (other than London) and Wales. Its member firms employed 4,350 regular operative staff for whom it negotiated terms and conditions of employment. The Federation of London Wholesale Newspaper Distributors represented the interests of daily newspaper wholesalers in London. Its member firms employed 1,000 regular staff supplemented by a significant number of casual staff recruited from the call system operated by the London Central Branch of the NUPB&PW. The Federation negotiated wages and other employment conditions. The Sunday Newspaper Distributing Association represented the interests of London Sunday national newspaper wholesalers. Its affiliated companies employed a regular staff of 1,000. It negotiated employment conditions. The National Society of Provincial Wholesale Sunday Newspaper Distributors represented the interests of Sunday national newspaper wholesalers in England (other than London), Scotland and Wales. Its member firms employed a regular manual work-force of 1,000. The Society negotiated wages and conditions of employment.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Employment

In 1955, the papermaking industry was dominated by eight large groups which controlled between them 62 mills. Coexisting with these firms were 125 small companies which owned 150 mills in total. The large groups accounted for 83 per cent of the market with the remainder divided between the small companies. Half the firms in the paper-making industry accounted for only 6 per cent of the total market.

In 1955 the papermaking industry employed 100,000 people. Supplies of clear water were essential to production and therefore mills tended to be located on or near rivers. In some places the mill dominated the village. The largest group of mills employing 16,100 of the industry's 71,000 manual workers was in the Thames estuary and the Medway with a second concentration of 4,000 manual workers in North West England and North Wales. There were 22,000 women employed in the papermaking industry.

In paper box the occupational structure was highly segregated between men and women whilst in rigid box it was a predominantly female work force which made up boxes on hand-fed machines. Men were employed as skilled machine minders, guillotine operators, dye or sample makers or unskilled labourers. In paper bag manufacture the majority of the 1,000 employees were women but the 3,000-strong work-force in multi-wall sack production was comprised roughly equal numbers of males and females. The skilled tasks were a male preserve whilst part-time working was common amongst female employees. The fibreboard packaging case industry, dominated by large firms, employed 11,000 people in 45 establishments. The average-sized enterprise employed 240 employees but even in the mid-1950s outworkers existed in this sector.

Trade Unions

In paper and board manufacturing the main process unions were the NUPB&PW, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the General and Municipal Workers' Union. Nearly 90 per cent of process manual workers were unionised and of these 80 per cent were members of the NUPB&PW. The main craft unions were the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers and the Electrical Trades Union. In 1948, the General and Municipal Workers conceded sole organising rights in papermaking to the NUPB&PW except for the few mills where it had had a long connection. In the rigid box sector unionisation was low although in the early 1950s NUPB&PW branches in several cities had established advisory committees aimed at improving the wages of box-making workers. Union density in the fibreboard packaging sector was high, with the NUPB&PW the dominant union. NATSOPA had members in this sector. Both the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA had members in paper bag and multi-wall sack manufacture. The level of unionisation was highest amongst manual workers in the multi-wall sack sector.

Employers' Associations

In papermaking the main employers' association was the Employers' Federation of Papermakers and Boardmakers whose member firms employed 100,000 workers. It was responsible for co-ordinating the wages and conditions of work within the industry and conducting national negotiations with the main trade unions on behalf of its member companies.

The Fibreboard Packing Case Manufacturers' Association, founded in 1919, was dominated by large companies. The British Paper Box Association, formed in 1910, provided the employers' representatives to the Paper Box Wages Council established in 1910. As cartons and fibreboard packing cases increased in importance, separate employers' associations emerged for these trades, viz., the Fibreboard Packing Cases Manufacturers' Association in 1919 and the British Carton Association in 1935. It was mainly the large companies which joined these two organisations and small companies remained with the British Paper Box Association.[19] The British Paper Bag Federation provided the employer's representatives to the Paper Bag Wages Council established in 1919.

Industrial Relations Machinery and Procedures

The Printing Industry

General Print Sector and Provincial Newspapers

In 1955 there was no formal national negotiating machinery. *Ad hoc* arrangements existed whereby if one side wished to change the agreement it approached the other and if they were agreeable negotiations to amend the existing agreement took place. The BFMP and the Newspaper Society negotiated jointly with the print unions, including the NUPB&PW, on all matters except for pay. The P&KTF negotiated on behalf of its affiliates with the BFMP and NS on issues such as hours of work and holidays. In 1955 the working week in the general printing trade and the provincial newspaper industry was 43½ hours over five days and paid annual holidays were two weeks. This had been achieved in 1946 following a dispute between the P&KTF and the BFMP.[20]

In the general printing trade and provincial newspapers, individual unions negotiated national minimum wages agreements with the BMPF and the NS. Between 1947 and 1951 the BFMP and the NS unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the unions to co-ordinate their wages claims through the P&KTF rather than submit separate and unrelated claims. In this way it was hoped to achieve a stable wage structure. The print unions, including the NUPB&PW, favoured a stable wage structure but were unable to agree amongst themselves, They were divided over provincial craft parity, the London/provincial craft differential, provincial grading, the craft/non-craft differential, the male/ female differential and the system of voting within the P&KTF to determine any co-ordinated wage claim. However, by early 1951 the general printing trade and provincial newspapers had arrived, via a tortuous path and a major industrial dispute between the London Society of Compositors[21] and the London Master Printers' Association, at an agreed wage structure to remain in being until November 1955, The

1951 Agreements with the separate unions all provided, in addition to the five-year stabilisation period, for house rates and merit money to be consolidated for a cost of living bonus and for the following basic weekly rates:

London craft	£7.75
Provincial craft	£7.17½
Provincial non-craft	£5.67½
Women	£3.80

Over the stabilisation period, the cost of living bonus added £1.65 to these rates to give by November 1955 a London craft rate of £9.40, a provincial craft rate of £8.82½, a provincial non-craft rate of £7.32½ and women's rate of £5.45.

In 1919, a Joint Industrial Council for the Printing Industry was established. It consisted of 40 members elected by the BFMP and the NS and 40 members elected by the P&KTF. The Council had no authority to negotiate wage agreements but it provided machinery for settling disputes via conciliation committees, for the selection and training of apprentices and learners and for provision of health and safety.

National Newspapers

In national newspapers there was no formal machinery for negotiating national agreements. *Ad hoc* arrangements existed. The P&KTF often co-ordinated claims by the separate print unions to the NPA on wages. However, on all other issues e.g. hours of work and holidays P&KTF negotiated on behalf of its affiliated unions. However, in collective approaches to the NPA each print union retained its autonomy and any wage agreement reached from such an approach had to be submitted by each union to its members for approval. Chapels also negotiated their own 'house' agreements with the result that actual earnings in Fleet Street bore little relationship to the National Agreement. In 1954 the NPA and the NUPB&PW, signed an Agreement, to terminate on 30 November 1957, which provided for the absorption of a cost of living bonus of £1.05 into basic rates, a cost of living bonus based on movements in the Index of Retail Prices and the addition of 12.5 per cent on the consolidated basic rate to provide a basic weekly rate of £12.01.

There was as yet no Joint Industrial Council (JIC) for national newspapers. In 1919 the NPA opposed the establishment of a JIC for the printing industry, arguing that its interests were distinct from those of general printers and that unlike provincial newspaper owners they had no commercial printing interests. In 1949, consideration had been given to the establishment of a JIC for National Newspapers following a dispute in 1948 in Manchester over a disturbance in the differentials between rates received by TA members employed in NPA offices and its members employed in NS offices. It was felt that if conciliation machinery, as operated by the JIC for the printing industry had existed, the dispute might have been avoided. Following discussions between the NPA and the unions a draft constitution was submitted envisaging dealing on a regular basis with health, welfare and conciliation in industrial disputes. The JIC would have no right to negotiate wages and employment conditions. The NUPB&PW, supported the formation of the JIC

but three unions, including NATSOPA, were against. Since these three unions represented the majority of employees in national newspapers steps to establish a JIC ended.

Wholesale Distribution

In 1955 in newspaper and periodicals wholesale distribution there was only *ad hoc* machinery for negotiating collective agreements. The NUPB&PW negotiated directly with the Provincial Wholesale Newspaper Distributors' Association (PWNDA) and the National Society of Provincial Wholesale Sunday Distributors. It held agreements with each of these Associations covering manual employees' basic pay, holidays, overtime and disputes procedures. In Scotland in the daily newspaper trade there was no industry-wide collective bargaining but the larger firms operated to the PWNDA/NUPB&PW agreement. Throughout provincial wholesale newspaper distribution, company-level bargaining was also well developed in 1955. There was little collective bargaining for white-collar employees.

In the early 1950s, the PWNDA had granted wage increases on condition that the NUPB&PW did not press its claim for both the five-day and five-night week. However, in 1955 an arbitrator awarded a five-shift week, not only for the full night workers but for those NUPB&PW members who commenced work between 4.00 a.m. and 6.00 a.m.[22] In 1955 PWNDA's members of the NUPB&PW on Grade I terms were receiving a weekly basic rate of £10.05 for indoor night workers and drivers and £9.82½ for indoor day workers and drivers.

In London there were two collective agreements covering wholesale distribution. One covered daily national newspapers and the other Sunday national newspapers. These agreements were negotiated between the NUPB&PW London Central Branch and the Federation of London Wholesale Newspaper Distributors and the London Central Branch and the Sunday Newspaper Distributing Association. The London Central Branch jealously guarded these agreements which covered, for manual employees, basic pay, holidays, overtime and disputes procedures. As in the provinces, these collective agreements were supplemented by company-level bargaining. In London there were few collective bargaining arrangements for non-manual employees employed in national newspaper wholesale distribution. In mid-1955, the London Central Branch and the Federation of London Wholesale Newspaper Distributors concluded an Agreement with retrospective effect from 29 November 1954 which provided a basic weekly rate for indoor day workers and drivers of £9.20 and for indoor night workers and drivers of £9.55. The Agreement was the first occasion on which the London Central Branch established a night-work differential.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Paper and Board

In 1955 there was no formal machinery for negotiating changes in National Agreements covering wages and other employment conditions. *Ad hoc* arrangements operated. A nation-wide collective Agreement (known as the No. 10 Agreement) covering manual

workers existed between the Employers' Federation of Papermakers and Boardmakers and the NUPB&PW, TGWU and NUGMU. The agreement covered, *inter alia,* pay, holidays, overtime rates and consolidation of wartime bonuses into hourly basic rates. In 1954 standard weekly hours for day workers were reduced from 48 to 45 spread over a five-and-a-half-day working week whilst the hours of double day shift workers were reduced from 46 to 44. Annual holiday entitlement was two weeks. In 1955 the hourly rates were for adult males 22p for shift workers, 18p for day workers and 11p per hour for females.

A Joint Industrial Council for Paper and Boardmaking had existed since 1919. In 1943 a recognition and disputes procedure agreement provided a three-stage procedure for dealing with disputes. If matters could not be resolved at the mill level, then a 'district' conference took place involving local officers of the employers' federation and the unions. The final stage was an executive conference attended by national officials of the employers' organisation and the relevant trade unions.

Paper Box

In the paper box industry, terms and conditions of employment were determined by the Paper Box Wages Council established in 1910, which consisted of representatives of employers, the employees and three independent members nominated by government. Its function was to set minimum wage rates and conditions for the industry by majority decision of the council members. Most of the representatives came from the British Paper Box Association and the NUPB&PW. Only the employers' or the workers' side could initiate change in Wages Regulation Orders and the independent members acted as conciliators whose votes were cast in support of one side if no compromise solution could be found. The Minister of Labour approved settlements and had authority to refer issues back to the Wages Council. The Paper Box Wages Council had been established originally as a trade board and covered three types of packaging from paper and cardboard, viz, rigid boxes, cartons and fibreboard cases.[23] In the mid-1950s the minimum rates established by the Paper Box Wages Council were the highest of any wages council. In October 1955 the Minister of Labour approved minimum weekly wage rates of £8.50 for adult male workers and of £4.87½ for adult females.

Paper Bag

In paper bag manufacture, terms and conditions of employment were determined by the Paper Bag Wages Council established in 1919. It was still in existence in 1955 despite mounting pressure from the NUPB&PW for its abolition and replacement by voluntary negotiating machinery. The paper bag employers, like those in paper box manufacturing, opposed the abolition of the Wages Council, arguing that it provided stability in the industry. The NUPB&PW policy of wage parity between the paper bag industry and the printing industry achieved some success in 1955 when three large paper bag firms agreed to pay print wage rates. In the mid-1950s in the paper bag industry, as in paper box, the standard working week was 45 hours and employees were entitled to two weeks' paid holiday after one year's service. Wage rates in the paper bag industry tended in the 1950s

to follow those in paper box making and at the end of 1955 weekly wage rates were £8.72½ for skilled workers, £7.15 for unskilled and £5.05 for women.

The Economic Environment

In 1955 the main priority of macro-economic policy was the maintenance of full-time employment. If this caused inflation, then governments regarded the appropriate economic policy response to be the introduction of wage restraints. There was also a consensus existing amongst the main political parties that collective bargaining was a desirable activity, that legal regulation of the industrial relations system be kept to a minimum and that the existing level of immunity for trade unions from legal action by employers when they called their members out on strike was balanced.

The Printing Industry

The 1950s saw rising production and employment in the printing industry. In the mid-1950s a major problem for the industry was an acute shortage of skilled labour. The craft unions resisted demands from the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA that this problem be tackled by permitting new methods of entry, including the upgrading of assistants, into the skilled occupations of the industry. Both the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA favoured a system of adult promotion whereby if assistants, particularly in the machine room, proved their suitability for upgrading they be eligible for training to become craft employees. In the face of craft opposition to the upgrading of assistants, the employers sought to overcome the skill shortage by trading increases in the pay and conditions of craft employees for increases in the number of apprentices permitted to enter the industry and by using existing craft employees more effectively.

However, the increased demand for print work in the 1950s brought problems to the printing unions. The labour supply problems in the industry often resulted in long delays in the completion of printing orders with the result that more work was sent abroad and many firms outside the industry established their own in-plant printing arrangements. By 1955 the share of the UK printing and publishing market accounted for by imports was just under 5 per cent. Newspaper production, however, remained sheltered from the pressures of foreign competition. Its main threat was the introduction of commercial television which was expected to make inroads into the amount of advertising material carried by newspapers.

Even in 1955 the growth in the use of miniature printing processes (for example multigraph and varitypers) by employers in local authorities, nationalised industries, banks and insurance companies posed a threat to the general printing trade. The printing unions, including the NUPB&PW, attempted to organise people engaged on miniature printing machines but they had little success. In 1955, where organisation of employees working miniature printing machines had been achieved, it had invariably been done by non-print unions. A problem in organising these workers was that they were receiving pay and conditions superior to those in the general printing industry. The problem of small office printing machines was to increase in future years but it remained somewhat hidden in 1955 whilst the conventional printing industry experienced full employment.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

In the 1950s the UK papermaking industry faced increasing competition from imports, considerable surplus capacity, and a falling rate of return on capital. Rationalisation was taking place and employment security was falling. Import penetration was 30 per cent of total UK consumption of paper and board. The industry was disadvantaged relative to its international competitors. Papermaking and pulp-making were separate processes. In Canada and Scandinavia they were integrated, enabling these nations to produce at a cost of about 10 per cent less than was possible in the UK. The UK newsprint industry was also at a competitive disadvantage from the opening of new mills in Scandinavia which were partly financed by inter-governmental funds. However, these competitive handicaps were to some extent offset by an import tariff of 14 to 16.6 per cent on Scandinavian and other foreign paper imports.

The paper and board industry, with the exception of newsprint, had been protected since 1932. The early 1950s witnessed the reduction of this protection and the exposure of an industry whose efficiency had degenerated because of tariff barriers to increased international competitiveness. Many firms had failed to plough sufficient capital back into their businesses, whilst smaller plants operated obsolete plants. The lack of competition had kept production fragmented into small inefficient businesses. The exposing of the industry to international competition meant that by 1955 unemployment amongst NUPB&PW members in the papermaking industry was rising.

The mid-1950s also witnessed the implementation of new production techniques into the industry. Technological developments were to improve the quality of the product and enabled papermaking machines to run at more than twice their present speed and output. By 1955 the market for rigid boxes was already in decline due to increased competition from the emergence of new packaging materials such as plastics and foil.

THE INDUSTRIES IN 1991

Product Sectors, Processes and Tasks

The Printing Industry

The General Print Sector

The general printing sector still covered a wide range of products—packaging, advertising materials, security printing, business forms, books, periodicals, magazines, stationery and catalogues. There were 20,000 printing and publishing businesses—a large number of small, family-owned firms, a number of medium-sized printers and a small number of very large firms employing 1,000 or more. In 1990, printing and publishing, with a turnover of £18 billion was the sixth largest UK manufacturing industry. However, in 1991, unlike 1955, the printing industry operated in an increasingly international market. Limitations on the import or export of print work which existed 35 years previously had been removed bringing increased competition from foreign printers in

both the UK and the export market. Despite this, in 1991 the UK printing and publishing industry had a positive foreign trade balance.

A few large companies in the industry were multi-plant, multi-media in terms of product, and multinational, with printing, publishing and electronic media activities across national boundaries. In 1991 relative to 1955 production was concentrated in fewer hands. The 25 largest UK printing and publishing companies accounted for 14 per cent of the industry's total turnover and the top four UK magazine publishers for two-thirds of sales in that sector. In 1991 there were 13,000 book publishers who varied considerably in size and structure, but less than 50 printing firms owned more than 90 per cent of book printing capacity.

National Newspapers

In 1991 in the national newspaper industry, 90 per cent of sales were accounted for by four publishers—News International, the Mirror Group, United Newspapers and the Daily Mail Trust. The total sales of 11 national daily and 10 national Sunday titles amounted to 33 million. Since 1955 the *Daily Herald,* the *Daily Despatch, News Chronicle* and the *Daily Sketch* had ceased production. Of the Sunday titles the *Sunday Despatch,* the *Sunday Graphic,* the *Sunday Empire News* and the *Sunday Chronicle* had closed. The *Reynolds News* changed its name to the *Sunday Citizen* and the *Sunday Pictorial* to the *Sunday Mirror*.[24] In the 1980s, new daily morning newspapers appeared, for example, the *Independent,* the *Star* and *Today,* as did a new Sunday newspaper the *Sunday Correspondent*. In mid-1991, the *Sun* was the biggest selling daily newspaper, with a circulation of over 5m whilst the *Evening Standard* was the only London evening newspaper. The 'Press Lords' no longer dominated national newspapers. Entrepreneurs like Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell were now the dominant figures[25] and both had developed interests in newspaper distribution. In 1955 all national newspapers were printed in 'Fleet Street' and Manchester, but by 1991 all had left these locations. The printing of the *Sun, The Times, Sunday Times* and the *News of the World* moved to Wapping in 1986 and in the following year the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Daily Mail* moved to the London Docklands.

Another marked change in 1991 relative to 1955 was national newspapers separating their editorial and origination departments from the actual printing process and separating newspaper production into separate companies run by the publishers of the same papers. The most noticeable example of such arrangements was the publishing side of Mirror Group Newspapers being owned by the Maxwell Foundation whilst production facilities were owned by the Maxwell Communications Corporation (MCC). The sale of most MCC's printing interests to a management buy-out did not include the newspaper interests which were sold back early in 1989 to the Mirror Group Newspapers but which remained a separate company.

The provincial press

As in 1955, the provincial press consisted of companies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland printing and publishing morning, evening, Sunday, weekly and bi-weekly newspapers which were not distributed nationally. In 1991 there were 1,300 separate

newspaper titles with a total circulation of 16 million. The industry consisted of a large number of companies varying in terms of ownership, control, size, organisation and products. There were companies owned and controlled by one family or by an individual proprietor; others were owned by one family but with a number of minority shareholders and controlled by a board of directors with a family member as chairman. Yet others were controlled directly by a board of directors. Small independently owned newspapers were declining as publishing groups such as the Westminster Press, Thomson Regional News and United Newspapers acquired them. A further complication was that new national titles were printed on a subcontract basis thus blurring the demarcation between the production of regional and national titles. Portsmouth and Sunderland Newspapers and United Newspapers, for example, produced both regional and national newspapers in the same plant.

The late 1970s saw the rise of freesheet newspapers which depended solely on advertising revenue to meet their production costs. Such newspapers had the advantage of the customer receiving a copy free of charge, with no large-scale distribution operation being required as young people simply walked up streets delivering copies to every household. The entrepreneurs behind these 'freesheets' had backgrounds in information, sales and general business. The paid papers responded to this competition by launching their own freesheets and in mid-1990 there were over 600 freesheets throughout the country. In 1984 the value of advertising in weekly freesheets overtook that of 'weekly paid newspapers'. In 1990 the same 20 companies controlled over 50 per cent of weekly freesheets as controlled 50 per cent of the weekly paid-for circulation. Freesheet newspapers businesses tended to contract out their printing and to employ few journalists.

By 1991 newspaper owners were experiencing improved financial performance due to increased circulation, improved advertising revenue, increased output per head and reduced labour costs. However, the same bright picture was not true of the work-force. As the SOGAT Report on National/Regional Newspapers and Distribution to its 1990 Biennial Delegate Council remarked

> for us the past few years have been characterised by takeovers, redundancies, derecognition and other attacks on trade union organisation, reduced pay and worsened conditions.[26]

Wholesale distribution

The dominant change relative to 1955 in wholesale distribution was it was now done by road haulage and not by British Rail. This change began in 1986 when News International, during the Wapping Dispute bypassed the British Rail system by using the TNT road haulage company to deliver directly to retail newsagents. News International were soon followed by the Maxwell empire which established its own road haulage operation called Newsflow. The use of road haulage to deliver directly to the retail newsagents was then adopted by nearly all other national newspaper publishers. On Saturday morning 9 July 1988 weekday newspapers were carried by rail for the last time. In the early hours of Sunday 10 July 1988 Sunday newspapers were carried by rail for the last time. Associated with this change were large-scale redundancies amongst drivers, train packers and station personnel of wholesale newspaper distribution firms.

By 1990 the number of retail wholesalers with whom News International and the Maxwell empire dealt had fallen sharply as they were forced to bid for the franchise to distribute their titles to the retail newsagents. Under these franchising arrangements for wholesalers only one company was responsible for a defined geographical area instead of the previous network of 1,000 wholesalers, some of whom had only a few bundles. News International now used only 182 wholesalers compared with 1,000 in 1980. The Mirror Group had reduced the number of wholesalers it used from over 2,000 in 1980 to 230 in mid-1991. Although established large wholesalers like John Menzies, WH Smith and Surridge Dawson weathered this tendering process, many small wholesalers simply went to the wall or were taken over by the larger companies.

Screen printing and Ink manufacture

Although the general print sector, newspapers and paper conversion were SOGAT's big industrial battalions, in 1991 the union also had members in a highly specialised section—silk screen printing. This industry escaped the gaze of publicity but its work was highly visible. From posters on city hoardings and supermarket advertising displays to illuminated vehicle dashboards and computer control panels, high-quality screen printing formed a background to people's everyday lives. Screen printers had been members of the Sign and Display Union which merged in 1973 with NATSOPA and by that route eventually became part of SOGAT. SOGAT's merger with NATSOPA in 1982 took SOGAT into the printing ink manufacturing industry which in 1991 spanned a range of companies from small firms to multinational corporations.

Printing processes and stages

In 1991 relative to 1955 there had been a dramatic change in the use of the main printing processes. Letterpress, which dominated in 1955, had ceased to be the most significant printing process. The main use of letterpress machines, using flexible and flexographic plates was in paperback book production. Gravure now had a larger share of the total print market arising from the use of improved reproduction systems. The dominant printing process in 1991 was lithography. All major national and provincial newspapers were produced by web-offset machines in complete contrast to 1955. The growth of litho mirrored the changes of the late 1960s and early 1970s when hot metal systems were replaced by photocomposition as the dominant mode of print origination. Litho advantages over letterpress included a higher quality of printing, particularly colour. In the late 1960s, the introduction of litho machines into letterpress houses led to disputes between the letterpress and litho craft unions on the one hand and between NATSOPA and the NUPB&PW on the other.[27] In the binding and warehousing departments the production process was more mechanised compared to 1955. Book jacketing machines were common and were capable of binding a book using automatic feeds, full automatic book sewers and casing machines. Computer controlled stock keeping was common and in the machine rooms mechanisation, using robotic technology, for example, had resulted in the introduction of automatic reel feeding. Wholesale distribution had been transformed from a labour-intensive, low-mechanisation industry to a much more capital-intensive industry with little handling work.

(i) Typesetting and plate-making By 1991 hand and mechanical typesetters including monotype casters and filmsetters were few in number. Metal-based typesetting systems had been replaced first by photo-composition and then in the 1970s by computerised composition which in 1991 dominated, particularly in newspapers, where it enabled the combination of three previously separated tasks—editorial, advertising (where SOGAT had members) and composition. The journalist and advertising employees were able to typeset, correct and make up pages, all of which had previously been the preserve of typesetters in the composing department. In magazine and periodical production computerised composition had the same effect. Employment opportunities increased in editorial and advertising (a SOGAT area) but fell dramatically amongst the typesetters and SOGAT areas of linotype assistants, copy holders and revisers. The expansion of litho also impacted on jobs in the plate-making department with a sharp fall in letterpress plate-makers, photo-engravers and PMB provers. On the other hand, the employment of litho plate-makers had increased relative to 1955.

(ii) Print machine rooms In 1991 the dominance of litho in machine rooms meant more single and multicolour printing machines. One effect of these changes was the almost complete demise of the machine managers in charge of platen machines. By 1991 technological changes in the machine room had reduced the need for semi-skilled labour, since robots now fitted the reels of paper to the machines, and had also resulted in deskilling the machine manager's job with the introduction of computer-aided control mechanisms. Machine managers were responding by undertaking tasks which they had previously regarded as the preserve of SOGAT members.

(iii) The finishing trades In the binding, finishing, warehousing and despatch areas increased mechanisation had brought a decline in employment as jobs which had previously required manual handling were eliminated. Longer runs made it economical to introduce automation in these departments. However, in 1991 there were still many firms where customer demand meant dealing with one-off jobs and continuing to employ labour-intensive techniques. The growth of freesheet newspapers and the transfer of wholesale distribution from rail to road had meant substantial employment losses in traditional wholesale newspaper houses.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Paper and Board

In 1991 firms in paper and board manufacture were producing newsprint, writing and printing paper, industrial and special purpose papers, packaging and other boards. Total output stood at 4.7m tons compared to 3.3m tons in 1955. The markets for paper and board products were international and the industry was now a high-tech, capital-intensive operation requiring maximum utilisation of plant and rapid response to change. In 1991 firms operating either continuous or semi-continuous production systems covered 99.7 per cent of the industry's capacity.

Box and Cartons

In 1991, the paper box and carton sectors faced intensive international competition, particularly from other European Community states. The decline in demand for paper boxes had resulted from cartons and fibre-board case capturing larger shares of the market throughout the 1960s and from the appearance of new packaging materials such as plastics. Rigid box firms had responded by specialising in high-quality work such as presentation boxes. Carton manufacturing was still dominated by big firms dependent upon large volume orders. The four largest carton manufacturers accounted for 25 per cent of the total market and the largest 19 for over 50 per cent. Just over half of carton production was for food use and 17 per cent for soap, detergents, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Small firms still dominated the rigid box sector. Investments had been made in machines for automatic glueing in order to produce collapsible rigid boxes and to satisfy volume orders of standard boxes. However, as in 1955, many companies concentrated on one-off or short-run orders and on speciality box lines, and consequently there had been few changes in production methods since 1955. In contrast, in carton production the introduction of new machinery in the 1970s had increased output on a significant scale and enabled the production of more complex shapes as well as combining previously separate tasks, for example, varnish, cut and strip, or cut and crease. In 1991 laser cutting techniques were used in the industry whilst market requirements for small runs and faster turn rounds had seen the adoption of 'just-in-time' production systems. In 1991, relative to 1955, the production process was more sophisticated, utilising faster, more complex computer controlled machines. Fibreboard production systems were dominated by machines capable of multicoloured work and by faster corrugators with splicing and stacking capabilities.

Paper Bags

In 1991 paper bag manufacture was suffering increased competition from the expanding use of plastic bag and carriers. However, some competitive advantage was being restored as environmental concerns led to renewed interest in the use of paper. The largest market for paper bags was the food and drink industry. The UK paper bag industry remained fragmented with no supplier holding more than a 10 per cent market share. Multi-wall sack manufacture had expanded into printing containers for food, chemicals and refuse. However, the increasing use of plastics threatened these markets despite the development in mid-1991 of a new market for pet foods and freezer bags. Four companies accounted for 60 per cent of the multi-wall sack market at this time. Multi-wall sack manufacture was now a highly mechanised industry employing high-speed machines, electronic scanners, automatic feeders and stackers on sewing lines.

The Work-force

In 1991, the paper and board industry required a work-force capable of adjusting to a continuous process of change and of acquiring new and different skills. SOGAT argued that the industry's multi-skilled employees be reclassified as 'super technicians'. However, at the same time some occupations, such as machine minding, were being

reduced to 'button pushing'. There were strong pressures for the national grading structure to be renegotiated. In the late 1980s women were employed for the first time as machine crew members in paper mills.

In 1991, in carton production an increasing proportion of the work-force was employed as machine minders or assistants. Tasks such as waste stripping, banding, packing and glueing were carried out by machines which had displaced female workers. A further change in this sector relative to 1955 was a significant increase in the number of shift workers. The production process required workers with enhanced skills and responsibility as the range of carton styles continued to increase. In fibreboard the proportion of workers employed as machine managers or assistants had increased since 1955, shift working had increased and the number of women employed had fallen. In paper bag manufacturing manual inspection and many mid 1950s' manual jobs had been eliminated but some highly skilled jobs such as colour flexographic printers had increased.

Employment, Trade Unions and Employers' Organisations

The Printing Industry

Employment

In 1991 the general printing trade was still dominated by small firms. Approximately 90 per cent of establishments employed under 50 people whilst only 1 per cent employed 500 or more. The majority of firms, including some of the largest, remained family businesses. Nevertheless, there were some large groups. For example, the British Printing Communications Corporation (BPCC) and the Dickinson Robinson Group. Such groups had been absent in 1955 from the general printing sector. Newspaper firms remained larger than general print trade firms and by 1991 multinational companies such as News International were a significant presence in national newspapers.

In 1991 the total number of employees in printing and newspapers was 340,000. In national newspapers, 41 per cent of employees were non-craft workers whilst in provincial newspapers the proportion was 16 per cent. In national newspapers some 30 per cent of employees were craft manuals whilst in the regional press the percentage was almost 50. A major difference in the work-force relative to 1955 was the number of female employees. In 1991 some 10,000 women were employed in areas that in 1955 would have been traditionally associated with journeymen. There was also a greater proportion of non-manual employees, such as administrators, supervisors, scientists and technicians, in the industry's work-force. In 1971 the proportion of white-collar workers in printing and publishing was about 18 per cent. By 1991 this figure exceeded 25 per cent. In 1991 London was no longer the dominant printing centre in the UK. The London membership of SOGAT totalled 19,000 which was 10 per cent of the total membership. The London Master Printers' Association, which in 1955 conducted independent negotiations with the London-based unions, ceased to exist in 1985 when it merged into the South East Alliance of the BPIF.

Trade Unions

In 1991 the three main unions in the printing industry were the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (82), the NGA (82) and the NUJ. Their total membership was 320,000. In 1966 the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA amalgamated to form the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT).[28] Attempts after the merger to devise a common Rule Book failed and in 1972 the marriage was dissolved (see Chapter 5). The former NUPB&PW retained the title 'SOGAT' and in 1975 amalgamated with the Scottish Graphical Association[29] to form SOGAT (75). In 1982 SOGAT (75) and NATSOPA[30] amalgamated to form SOGAT (82).

The NGA (82) was the result of the merger of ten previously separate societies. In 1955 the London Society of Compositors (LSC) and the PMMTS had amalgamated to form the LTS which, in 1964 merged with the TA to create the NGA. In 1965 the ACP and the NUPT transferred their engagements to the NGA as, in 1967 did the NSES. In 1969 the ASLP merged with the NGA and 10 years later the National Union of Wallcoverings, Decorative and Allied Trades (NUWDAT) took the same step. NGA (82) came into being in 1982 when the NGA and SLADE amalgamated.

The P&KTF had been dissolved in April 1974. Mergers amongst printing unions had reduced the need for a body to co-ordinate common policy. However, the print unions established the TUC Printing Industries Committee (PIC) whose membership also included the AEU and the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications/Plumbing Union (EETPU) which organised maintenance workers in the industry. These two unions had been excluded from the P&KTF. The PIC was not an authoritative body and, apart from the limited services of the TUC, had few resources. It was a forum for information exchange but its activities included health and safety, industrial training and monitoring developments affecting the industry. It provided a body for the print unions collectively to consider common problems.

Employers' Organisations

In 1991 the major employers' organisation in the industry was the British Printing Industries Federation which came into being in April 1974 when the BFMP changed its name. It was felt that in the 1970s the words 'Federation of Master Printers' presented an inaccurate description of the organisation. The title did not reflect the fact that the industry had changed from one of master and servant relationship to one of management and employee.

The Newspaper Society was still the organisation representing provincial newspaper employers' interests. The NPA, which changed its name in 1968 to the Newspaper Publishers Association, had dismantled its involvement in industrial relations matters since its members' firm withdrawal from it for industrial relations purposes. In Scotland the main employers' organisation was the Scottish Printing Employers' Federation which was the changed name of the Society of Master Printers of Scotland which had established itself in the early 1980s as an independent body from BPIF. It also represented the interests of the Scottish weekly and bi-weekly newspaper publishers. The Scottish Newspaper Proprietors' Association had disbanded in 1982.

Nineteen seventy-two had seen the emergence of another employers' organisation, namely the Reproduction and Graphics Association (RAGA) which represented the

interests of those employers in the ad-setting industry who were not in membership of the Advertising, Typesetting and Foundry Employers' Federation (ATFEF). The screen printers' employers' interests were represented by the Display Producers' and Screen Printers' Association. The printing ink manu-facturers' collective interests were represented by the Society of the British Printing Ink Manufacturers.

In 1991 in wholesale newspaper and periodical distribution, the main employers' organisation was the Association of Newspapers and Magazine Wholesalers (ANMW) formed in 1988. In the following year the Federation of London Wholesale Newspaper Distributors merged with the ANMW to become its London Section. The introduction of tendering for franchises to distribute national newspapers led to the collapse in 1988 of the Sunday Newspaper Distributing Association and the National Society of Provincial Wholesale Sunday Newspaper Distributors. Newspaper publishers had insisted as a condition of bidding for a franchise that companies must handle their titles on a seven-day week basis.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Employment

In 1991 there were 31,000 employees in paper and board manufacture, a fall of 45 per cent since 1980 and less than a third of the number employed in the 1950s. Following take-over and mergers, particularly in the 1980s, there remained 71 companies running some 109 mills, giving an average work-force size of 300. The industry still remained heavily concentrated in Kent, Scotland and Lancashire/North Wales. The capital intensity of the industry in 1991 relative to 1955 was reflected in the fact that over 20 per cent of the manual work-force was employed in maintenance compared to less than 10 per cent in the mid-1950s. By 1991 carton manufacture too was much more capital-intensive and by the late 1970s almost 40 per cent of carton manufacturers employed more than 100 people, accounting for nearly 90 per cent of the 22,000 jobs in the industry. In 1991 employment in fibreboard packing case was concentrated in a small number of large establishments. Just over half of all establishments employed more than 100 people and over 90 per cent of all employees worked in such establishments. The industry was much more capital-intensive than in the 1950s and, as a consequence, there had been steady decline in numbers employed.

In 1991 the average number of production workers covered by national negotiations and employed in paper box manufacturing companies was 80, a figure that reflected the continuing preponderance of small firms in the sector. Relative to 1955, box manufacture was characterised by a decline in both the number of establishments and of employees. In 1991, most multi-wall sack manufacturers were located close to rural areas, cement plants or grain mills and there were a greater number of multinational companies, mainly from Scandinavia, in the industry than in the mid-1950s.

Trade Unions

In the manufacture of paper, rigid box and carton, fibreboard packing case, paper bag and multi-wall sacks the main trade unions for process and general workers remained

SOGAT, T&GWU and the General Municipal Boilermakers' and Allied Trades' Union (GMBATU). The main union for non-manual employees was SOGAT's white-collar branch—Clerical, Managerial and Sales (CMS). In 1991, manual worker unionisation stood at 87 per cent in paper and board, at 40–50 per cent in rigid box and at 90 per cent in cartons, fibreboard packing case and multi-wall sack manufacture. Union density was lower amongst non-manuals where it was mainly confined to clerical grades. Efforts by SOGAT to recruit in small firms in the rigid box sector following the abolition of the Wages Council in 1975 had been largely unsuccessful as many companies, aided by the British Box and Packaging Association, actively resisted unionisation.

Employers' Associations

In paper and board manufacture the main employers' association was the British Paper and Board Industry Federation which claimed its member companies employed almost 90 per cent of manual workers and staff in the industry. In 1989, the Federation altered its rules to allow membership to companies not party to the National Agreement, but in 1990 there were only 10 companies, representing 12 mills, in this membership category. Employers in box and carton manufacture still retained their separate organisations, namely the British Box and Packaging Association (BBPA) and the British Carton Association (BCA). The same was true of employers in fibreboard packaging, although in 1983 Reeds Corrugated Case, one of the largest companies in the sector, had withdrawn from the British Fibreboard Packaging Association (BFPA). In paper bag and multi-wall sack manufacture the employers' organisations had followed different paths. The British Paper Bag Federation disbanded in the 1980s and became the British Bag Federation (BBF) but the Multi-wall Sack Manufacturers' Association still existed in 1991.

Industrial Relations Machinery and Procedures

The Printing Industry

General Print Sector and Provincial Newspapers

In 1991, no formal machinery for negotiating national agreements existed in general printing, newspaper production or wholesale newspaper distribution sectors and the *ad hoc* arrangements still prevailed. However, the BPIF and the Newspaper Society no longer negotiated jointly with the printing unions. Since 1981 the two organisations had negotiated separately with each of the main printing unions. However, unlike in the 1950s, the basic wage agreements were no longer characterised by stabilisation, cost of living bonuses and wage increases for manpower concessions. A system of annual negotiations with the BPIF and the NS had existed since 1919 but in 1991 the latter terminated national bargaining and the National Agreements it held with SOGAT and the NGA.

In 1991 the standard working week in the general printing trade and provincial newspapers was 37½ hours, which had been achieved following a major industrial stoppage in 1980. Three weeks' annual paid holidays had been achieved in the mid-

1960s, four weeks in the early 1970s and five weeks in 1989. In 1991 the basic minimum rate for craft grades in the UK was £165.02 per week and for non-craft grades was £148.88 in the provinces and £149.74 in London. Provincial grade rates for both craft and non-craft employees had been terminated in the 1960s. In 1986, the Printing Industry Pension Scheme (PIPS) negotiated between NGA, SOGAT and the BPIF, provided a voluntary industry-wide, transferable money-purchase pension scheme for print workers. A significant change in 1991 relative to 1955 was that in the general print sector the apprenticeship system no longer existed. This had ended in SOGAT craft areas in 1985 when the BPIF and SOGAT signed the Recruitment, Training and Retraining Agreement. The main principles underlying this agreement were training to standards, joint management chapel manpower planning, comprehensive coverage of all skilled production workers with open age entry to skilled occupations and national certification.

In provincial newspapers a major difference in 1991 relative to 1955 was the decline in the bargaining power of the unions brought about by economic, political and technological developments of the late 1980s in newspaper production. In 1991 the provincial newspaper industry was considerably less unionised than in 1955 because of Newspaper Society member firms' policy of refusing to grant union recognition and of derecognition, especially in clerical areas. Provincial newspaper employers were imposing low pay settlements and increasingly putting employees on individual contracts.

National Newspapers

This aggressive attitude also existed amongst the national newspaper employers who introduced individual contracts for non-manual employees, derecognised SOGAT, the NGA and the NUJ, imposed unilateral changes in wages and employment conditions and introduced more bank holiday working. National newspaper employers were applying downward pressures on employment conditions. In 1990 the *Guardian* imposed a wage freeze whilst the *Financial Times* introduced wage cuts. The *Daily Telegraph* conceded an increase of 5 per cent funded by redundancies and changes in working practices.

Wholesale Distribution

The introduction of tendering for franchises within wholesale newspaper distribution had resulted by 1991 in the total demise of the independent Sunday wholesaler. In the 1989 pay negotiations, Sunday working became an integral part of the Association of Newspaper and Magazine Wholesalers' Agreement and thousands of SOGAT members lost their jobs. Yet, despite this, trade unionism had survived in the industry. However, employers were still attempting to weaken union organisation by policies of derecognition and dismissals.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

Paper and Board

In 1991 the National Agreement between the BPBIF and SOGAT, GMBATU and T&GWU remained. It was a testimony to the industry's system of industrial relations that radical change had been achieved without industrial conflict. Nevertheless, by 1991 there were disturbing developments. Two US-based papermaking companies (Kimberly-Clark and Scott Ltd) withdrew from the National Agreement whilst some other US companies were undermining existing working conditions. Three new paper mills—Bridgewater, Shotton and Caledonian—decided not to participate in the National Agreement and only one was organised by SOGAT. In 1990, under the National Agreement, the minimum hourly rates for adult day workers ranged from £2.71 to £3.20 for a 40-hour week and from £3.38 to £4.02 for four-shift workers. Paid holiday entitlement was five weeks. In 1982 an enabling agreement, reached at national level, permitted individual mills to negotiate working time on an annual basis. By 1991 one-third of manual employees were working on an annualised hours basis.

Cartons, Paper Box and Paper Bag

In carton manufacturing, since 1976, wages and condition had been covered by the SOGAT/BPIF agreement. After the Wages Council for Box Making was abolished in 1974 pay and conditions of employment were determined by annual negotiations between the BBPA, representing about 100 companies, and SOGAT and the GMBATU. Fibreboard packing case manufacture was removed from the Wages Council for Box Making in 1965 by a joint BFPA/SOGAT application reflecting the growing willingness of the big companies in the sector to negotiate with the unions at national and local level. In 1991 however, only 4,500 production workers were covered by the national agreement. In 1990 adult day-work rates for a 37½-hour week ranged from £122.14 to £152.02, with the national minimum earnings guarantee set at £136.48.

Following the abolition of the Paper Bag Wages Council in 1969 the BPBF negotiated collectively at the national level with SOGAT. However, in 1982 these arrangements were terminated in favour of local-level negotiations. In 1991 in the multi-wall sack industry annual national negotiations between the Multi-wall Sack Manufacturers Employers' Association (MSMEA) and SOGAT, the T&GWU and GMBATU were the order of the day. In 1991 adult day work rates of pay in the industry varied from £125.16 to £139.71 per week, for adult double day shift workers from £150.91 to £167.65 per week and for adult night shift with double day shift workers from £167.68 to £186.28.

The Economic Environment

By 1991, the major priority of government in managing the economy was control of inflation by use of interest rate changes, reduction in public expenditure and changes in indirect taxes to prevent spending power outstripping the supply of goods and services in the economy. The level of employment was not the responsibility of government but that of the buyers and sellers of labour services. If employees demanded too high a wage then

unemployment would result. Unemployment was prevented by wage rates falling. For the British government, trade unions, by setting minimum standards, prevented unemployment from being reduced. The British government, therefore, saw that its contribution to achieving full employment was to deregulate the labour market. The government's anti-trade-union legislation over the period 1980–91 (see Chapter 13) was seen as contributing to creating employment opportunities.

The Printing Industry

General Print

The 1980s saw a sharp increase in unemployment. In 1982 SOGAT had a membership of 236,660; in 1991 it stood at 157,218. Over the period 1982 to 1991 SOGAT's membership had declined by some 34 per cent. In 1991 the printing and publishing industry faced intensified competition from foreign imports, the growth of in-plant printing departments in many companies across a wide spectrum of industries, the growth of instant print shops and the expansion of advertising and art studios. The industry faced a big threat from the growth of an alternative communications industry based on electronic devices. Electronic information systems, such as Oracle, Ceefax and Prestel, offered an alternative way of communicating information, whilst audio-visual discs and cassettes offered mail order companies and travel companies the means of reaching their customers via their TV screens. New cable methods giving households direct access to information and entertainment also competed with traditional printing methods. Publishers of books and magazines were attracted to these new systems and, in particular, to desk-top publishing.

Papermaking and Paper Conversion

The papermaking industry was usually the first to feel the slump and the first to recover. When economic activity declines, companies do not order paper or packaging materials and that then knocks on to the paper mills. The converse is true. In the mid-1970s and early 1980s the industry suffered badly from the recession. There were many, at this time, who believed papermaking was in terminal decline. It suffered from high interest rates, high inflation and high energy costs coupled with low prices and falling demand. The industry began to recover in 1982 and by 1991 the economic environment was optimistic. British mills had increased output by 7 per cent, imports had fallen by 5 per cent whilst exports had increased by 37 per cent to 1.25 million tonnes. UK mills had found a specialist niche market in quality products. The creation of the Single European Market on 1 January 1993 resulted in a rush of mergers and take-overs as companies sought to obtain a foothold or establish leadership in markets. By 1991 over 60 per cent of the UK paper and board-making industry's capacity was foreign-owned.

The paper conversion industry was also optimistic in 1991. Although plastics had impacted seriously on the demand for paper boxes and bags, the industry had survived. A new demand for paper products had emerged. Plastic sacking had never been successful for cement. The sacks tended to sweat and the cement 'went off' before it could be used. By comparison paper 'breathed' and kept the contents fresh. Similarly, milk products

tended to solidify in plastic boxes. However, the paper box and carton industry optimism was not based solely on the spread of 'green' ideas but also on improvement in design and quality and an expectation that localised or specialist markets could be captured whilst the multinational companies concentrated upon pan-European competition. The share of the board 'paper box' sector captured by fibreboard case manufacturers had increased from 38 per cent in 1954 to 52 per cent in 1990.

Over the period 1955 to 1991 the general printing sector and newspaper industries underwent a major industrial revolution which is not yet finished. The origination areas were affected by the rise of photo-composition and then computer-based composition, when for 50 years mechanical composition had been the dominant mode of production. The machine departments had been dramatically affected by the decline of letterpress, the rapid rise of lithography and the slow but steady increase in gravure. The finishing, binding and warehousing departments had been affected by increased automation and mechanisation which eliminated a great deal of handling work and integrated the production, finishing, binding and warehousing functions. In newspaper distribution the dramatic change had been the switch from rail to road haulage where SOGAT had no presence.

In paper and paper conversion over the period 1955 to 1991 the industry also underwent significant change. Protection from foreign competition via import tariffs had been removed, production techniques had become more capital intensive, the presence of multinational companies had increased, and alternative products (notable plastics) to those based on paper had established themselves in the market place.

The creation of SOGAT in 1966 and its development over the next 25 years, at which point it amalgamated with the NGA to form the Graphical, Paper and Media Union (GPMU), can only be explained against this industrial revolution in printing, newspaper production and distribution and in the paper and paper conversion industries.

NOTES

1. The union was originally known when formed in 1921 as the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding, Machine Ruling and Paperworkers. The shortened title was adopted in 1928. For a discussion of the reasons for the creation of the NUPB & PW see C.J.Bundock *The Story of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers,* Oxford, 1958, pp. 199–213.
2. The National Union of Bookbinders and Machine Rulers had been formed in 1911 by a merger of the London Consolidated Lodge of Journeymen Bookbinders which had been formed in 1840, and the Bookbinders and Machine Rulers' Consolidated Union, which had been formed in 1872. The creation of the National Union of Bookbinders and Machine Rulers was the merger of the London and Provincial Bookbinders and Machine Rulers. For a fuller discussion see C.J.Bundock *The Story of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers,* Oxford, 1958, pp. 1–110 and *SOGAT Journal,* September 1991, pp. 8–11.
3. For a discussion of this merger see C.J.Bundock *The Story of the National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers,* Oxford, 1958, pp. 111–98 and 370–9 and *SOGAT Journal,* September 1991, pp. 12–13.
4. The members objected that they were not labourers so the name was changed to the Operative Printers' Assistants' Society in 1898. When the union recruited outside London the word 'National' was added in 1904 to its title. In 1912 after the union recruited some machine

managers the word 'and' was inserted between the words 'Printers' and 'Assistants'. See J.Moran *NATSOPA: 75 Years,* Heinemann, London, 1964, Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 and *SOGAT Journal,* September 1991, pp. 16–17.

5. However, it retained the acronym NATSOPA.
6. For a detailed history of the first 100 years of this union (1848–1948) see S.C. Gillespie *The Scottish Typographical Association,* Maclehose, 1953.
7. For a history of the National Graphical Association and its constituent societies over the period 1950–90 see J.Gennard *A History of the National Graphical Association,* Unwin Hyman, 1990.
8. The Thomson organisation controlled leading daily newspapers in Scotland, South Wales and Northern Ireland as well as Sheffield, Manchester and Aberdeen.
9. Its provincial newspapers were all owned by Westminster Press Provincial Newspapers Ltd whose titles included the *Northern Echo* and the *Northern Despatch*.
10. The Drayton Chain owned Provincial Newspapers Ltd which published *inter alia,* the Edinburgh Evening News, the *Yorkshire Post* and the *Blackburn Times*.
11. See 'Balance Sheet of the Press' *Planning,* Vol. 21, No. 384, August 1955.
12. In London other leading wholesalers included Boon, Bulles, Holdens, Dumcumbs, Myours Bros, Marlborough, Martins and Pauls.
13. These were the London Typographical Society, the Association of Correctors of the Press, the Scottish Typographical Association and the Monotype Casters and Typefounders' Society.
14. For a detailed account of the history of this union which merged in 1962 with NUPB&PW see *Monotype Casters and Typefounders' Society, Diamond Jubilee, 1989–1949,* Sixteenth Annual Report, 1949.
15. Its members were employed in national newspapers, provincial newspapers and news agencies.
16. For fuller accounts of these events see C.J.Bundock *The National Union of Printing, Bookbinding and Paperworkers,* Oxford, 1958, Chapters 25, 26, 27 and 30, especially pp. 246–9, pp. 255–7 and pp. 282–90, and J.Moran *NATSOPA: 75 Years,* Heinemann, London, 1964, pp. 51–6.
17. For a description of the events surrounding the formation of the P&KTF see J.Child *Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry,* Allen & Unwin, 1967, Chapter 12, pp. 194–7 and *Sixty Years of Service, 1901–1961,* Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation, 1961.
18. In addition to the main printing unions the other members were the Pattern Card Makers' Society (334 members) which joined the NUPB&PW in 1963; the Sign and Display Trades Union (449 members) which joined NATSOPA in 1972; the London Society of Music Engravers (40 members) and the Map and Chart Engineers' Association (32 members).
19. In 1960 the Fibreboard Packing Cases Manufacturers' Association, the British Carton Association and the British Paper Box Association came together with other packaging employers' associations to form an umbrella organisation, the Packaging Employers' Confederation (PEC) to provide a joint secretariat for all its constituent employers.
20. See *Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Nature and Circumstances of a Dispute between the British Federation of Master Printers and the Printing and Kindred Trades' Federation,* Cmnd 6912, HMSO, London, 1946, and J.Child *Industrial Relations in the British Printing Industry* Allen & Unwin, 1967, Chapter 18, pp. 299–303.
21. For details of the dispute between the London Society of Compositors and the London Master Printers' Association see *Report of the Court of Inquiry into the Causes of a Dispute between the London Master Printers' Association and the London Society of Compositors,* Cmnd 8074, HMSO, London, 1950.
22. For the details of the arbitrator's decision see *The Paperworker,* Vol. 15, No. 12, April 1955.

23. In the 1960s voluntary collective bargaining agreements were negotiated to cover the large firms in the carton and fibreboard sectors. Firms producing mainly fibre-board were removed from the Council's scope in 1965 but because of the difficulty of finding a definition to distinguish clearly between boxes and cartons, both rigid box and carton production remained within its jurisdiction.
24. Public concern about the state of the national press was brought home by two events—the death in 1960 of the *News Chronicle* and the *Star,* and the acquisition by Daily Mirror Newspapers Ltd of Odhams Press Ltd which published the *Daily Herald* and the *People* as well as a large number of periodicals. Against this background a Royal Commission on the Press was appointed in 1961 to enquire into the economic factors affecting the press generally. See *Report of the Royal Commission on the Press, 1961–1962,* CMND 1811, HMSO, London, 1962. By the mid-1970s concern that economic difficulties facing national newspapers were lowering editorial standards in pursuit of increased circulation and that the solution to the industry's economic difficulties might require government action led in 1974 to the establishment of a third post-second-world-war Royal Commission on the Press which produced an *Interim Report* (Cmnd 6433, HMSO) in 1976 and a *Final Report,* (Cmnd 6810, HMSO) in 1977.
25. In 1991 Rupert Murdoch owned *The Times,* the *Sunday Times,* the *Sun,* the *News of the World* and *Today*.
26. See *Report on National/Regional Newspapers and Distribution,* presented to the SOGAT Biennial Delegate Council, 1990, p. 1.
27. See *Report of the Court of Inquiry Into the problems caused by the introduction of Web-offset machines in the printing industry and the problems arising from the introduction of other modern printing techniques and the arrangements which should be adopted within the industry for dealing with them,* Cmnd 3184, HMSO, London, 1967.
28. In 1961 the Book Edge Gilders' Society had joined the NUPB&PW. In 1962 the Monotype Casters and Typefounders' Society and the Papermould and Dandy Roll Society had joined the NUPB&PW. In 1963 the Pattern Card Makers' Society had transferred its engagements into the NUPB&PW.
29. The Scottish Typographical Association had changed its name to the Scottish Graphical Association in 1974.
30. In 1972, the Sign and Display Trades Union had merged with NATSOPA.

PART I
INTER-UNION RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATION OF SOGAT: ITS CAUSES

In 1955, the NUPB&PW organised across all the main printing processes of letterpress, lithography and photogravure. The craft unions organised around particular jobs between and within the main printing techniques. The demarcation between the job boundaries of the unions was relatively unchallenged, but where they were contentious the P&KTF resolved the demarcation and/or organisational problems that arose between its affiliates.

However, by 1955 there were signs that things were changing and there were also predictions that anticipated technological developments would blur the existing job boundaries. In response to these changes the craft unions began in 1956 unsuccessful amalgamation talks designed to achieve one craft union for the industry. The NUPB&PW responded to the proposed craft union amalgamation by starting merger talks with NATSOPA but these broke down in 1958. The NUPB&PW had also reviewed its existing relationships with the craft unions. In April 1955 its Reciprocity Agreement with the TA was widened to allow the latter's Printing Machine Branch members to operate vertical Miehle machines as well as platen machines. In London the PMB had agreement with the London Master Printers for the operation of vertical Miehle machines and small cylinders up to demi-size and for platens and pressmen.

Attempts to rationalise the printing industry's trade union structure continued in the early 1960s. The NUPB&PW was involved in unsuccessful merger attempts with the LTS (1962) and then for technical reasons (see Chapter 3) the ASLP (1963). However, in 1964 the London and the English, Welsh and Irish provincial compositors and machine managers amalgamated into one union to form the National Graphical Association. Two years later the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA, the two predominantly non-craft unions in the industry, merged to form the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT).[1]

A number of factors explain why SOGAT came into being. First, there were organisational anomalies between NATSOPA and the NUPB&PW. For many years the 'custom of the house' had been established whereby reference was made to 'Paperworker towns' and 'NATSOPA towns'[2] The same grades/groups of workers carrying out the same tasks in the machine rooms, warehouses, despatch and bindery departments were organised in a different union depending on which town they worked in. The situation had little logic. A merger of the two unions would remove these organisational anomalies and eliminate the possibility of disputes between NATSOPA and NUPB&PW over the interpretation and application of the 'custom of the house' arrangements.

Second, in the 1950s and early 1960s in the printing industry the implementation of technological developments blurred, or threatened to blur, the clear demarcation between jobs within and between the main printing processes. These developments involved new production techniques based on lithographic web-fed printing machines and film replacing type. The changes presented a challenge to inter-craft, and more importantly for NATSOPA and the NUPB&PW, to craft/non-craft union job control in machine rooms. Important technical changes were implemented in the binding, finishing and warehousing areas. These involved integration of these departments with the production departments thereby blurring demarcation between the jobs of production areas and those of finishing. The technical developments of the 1950s and early 1960s in the papermaking industry challenged traditional working methods and threatened to substitute unionised labour with new machines.

Third, the 1950s and 1960s saw the growth of substitute print and papermaking and paper conversion products. These years witnessed the continued growth of miniature printing machines in local authorities, nationalised industries, the civil service and the financial sector. They were also years of expansion in the import of printed matter and in alternative outlets to newspapers and magazines for advertising, a major source of revenue from which newspapers covered their costs. This was a period when the UK papermaking industry became exposed to international competition with the ending of tariff barriers with Britain's entry into the European Free Trade Area (EFTA).

Fourth the late 1950s and early 1960s saw a relative decline in London as a printing centre and the growth of large-scale companies created by mergers and take-overs. Work was lost from London as a result of the closure of printing establishments as well as the merging and take-over of printing firms in London, particularly the Mirror Group take-over of Odhams, Cornwall Press and Amalgamated Press. Work was also lost in that printing firms relocated outside of London in response to financial incentives from central government.

Fifth, the 1955/6 wage negotiations between the printing unions and the BFMP and the NS brought sharp conflict and dissension between craft and the non-craft unions. The negotiations demonstrated that no one union could successfully achieve an advancement in wages and conditions in isolation from the demands of other print unions. Since the end of the Second World War, the general print and provincial newspaper employers had shown a reluctance to conduct separate negotiations with 12 different unions. They had resisted conceding to one union more than they were prepared to grant to other unions. It was 1959 before the printing unions presented a collective claim for an increase in wages and a reduction in hours of work. Such collective approaches continued until 1969. However, the unions realised that collective approaches were a short term measure until the print union structure was rationalised by mergers and the achievement of one union for the industry.

As a result of the five factors outlined above, NUPB&PW and NATSOPA were fearful of redundancy and of increasing employment insecurity, whilst the introduction of litho printing machines and cold composition led them to believe the letterpress and litho craft unions might combine to deny them 'a stake' in the litho revolution. If the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA remained separate unions and a single craft union emerged then there was the possibility they would have little influence over improvements in their members' terms and conditions of employment and would merely have to accept such

improvements as the amalgamated craft union would permit. If the two unions were to influence future developments in the industry and not merely receive ‘crumbs’ from the craft union they required an amalgamation.

ORGANISATIONAL TIDINESS

The spheres of influence arrangements between NUPB&PW and NATSOPA were described in Chapter 1. There were exceptions to the general demarcation lines and even in London there were printing houses where NATSOPA members worked in the warehouse and NUPB&PW members worked in the machine rooms. In Manchester newspaper publishing rooms were staffed by NATSOPA members. In some parts of England bookbinders were NATSOPA members rather than NUPB&PW. In reality in some parts of England NATSOPA organised particular workers whilst in other parts the same workers were organised by NUPB&PW.

Both the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA organised specialist groups. The Paperworkers organised the circulation representatives for magazines and provincial and national newspapers whilst NATSOPA represented the interests of newspaper advertising employees. Although the sphere of influence arrangements represented organisational anomalies, they provided the basis of a friendly relationship between the two unions. One union gained a footing here, the other there, but a ‘good neighbourly’ policy recognised the established position. In 1960/1 a number of complaints arose over local interpretations of the arrangements and by autumn 1964 some 30 to 40 cases still remained unresolved. When the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA Joint Committee met to resolve these problems the Paperworkers’ General Secretary argued the only permanent solution was for the two unions to amalgamate and this task should start immediately. When NATSOPA agreed to amalgamation talks the jurisdictional problems between the two unions were put on hold.

The merger would tidy up these organisational anomalies. No longer in publishing rooms, warehouses or newspapers in London would the NUPB&PW be the appropriate union whilst in Manchester, all other provincial cities and towns and in Scotland, NATSOPA was the appropriate union. Merger would eliminate the situation that in some locations all machine assistants and operatives were members of the Paperworkers whereas in others the same workers were members of NATSOPA. It would also overcome the anomaly of Aylesbury where there were no NATSOPA employees except amongst clerical and administrative grades and of Exeter where there were no Paperworker members and bookbinders, guillotine operators, bookfolders and machine room hands were all in NATSOPA. Although the overlapping interests between the two unions were resolved by ‘custom and practice’ the organisational anomalies occasionally undermined the two unions’ bargaining positions with employers. A merger would eliminate this problem.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LATE 1950s AND EARLY 1960s

The mid-1950s and the early 1960s saw technological developments which involved not only new machines but also new production techniques which were based on lithographic web-fed printing machines and film replacing. These changes threatened the dominance of the letterpress craft unions and posed a threat to NUPB&PW and NATSOPA assistants in the machine room as well as NATSOPA assistants, copy holders and revisers. In the bindery and the warehouse the challenge to the NUPB&PW was posed by the developments in mechanical binding, for example, book jacketing machines with automatic feeds, fully automatic book sewers and casing machines. The implications of these changes for the bookbinders were well expressed by a delegate from Manchester to the NUPB&PW 1958 Biennial Delegate Council when moving the following motion:

> That in view of the rapid technological change taking place in the industry this Conference instructs the NEC to send a national officer and/or members of the NEC to the various printing trade fairs held in Europe with the object of reporting on technical advances to the NEC and as necessary to the membership either through the columns of the Paperworker or in a separate report.[3]

It was argued the technical advances on the bindery side would be catastrophic, the attitude of traditional bookbinders towards mechanical binding techniques would have to change and officials of the union go round the Printing Trade Exhibitions obtaining information about different binding machines from which the National Executive Council could determine an appropriate rate for the machine.

The NUPB&PW had two major fears about these technological developments. First, that they would cause redundancies and reduce the general level of employment in the industry. Second, they feared that the craft unions would use the changes to combine and then isolate them with a view to undermining the craft/non-craft differential, to prevent non-skilled employees gaining access to skilled jobs, to invade non-craft job territories, to continue with apprenticeships and to oppose adult promotion to craft jobs and continue the stratification of workers in the industry. These were fears heightened in September 1956 when nine craft unions met to consider the formation of an all-embracing craft union. Neither the NUPB&PW nor NATSOPA was invited to this conference, and they saw the real motive of the craft unions to create a two-union structure based on the ‘in’ union (the all-embracing craft union) and the ‘out’ unions (the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA). The NUPB&PW and NATSOPA responded to this threat by entering into amalgamation talks in 1956 but these broke down two years later. By that time however, the possibility of a single craft union had been reduced considerably[4] and the print unions saw the main priority as the achievement of a 40-hour working week rather than rationalising their structures.

The NUPB&PW accepted that technological change would be beneficial in the longer run but was aware that in the interim its members were likely to suffer redundancy. It believed that before automation could be acceptable to its members there must be closer working between the printing unions and that the NUPB&PW should be proactive in

initiating such moves. This thinking lay behind at the 1956 Biennial Delegate Council Meeting the Liverpool Branch's successful motion:

> This conference views with grave concern the introduction of automatic and electronic processes into the industry and being mindful of the implications of 'automation', direct the NEC to work in closer co-operation with the demarcation committees of other unions within the industry for the purpose of controlling the manning and remuneration of these methods for the best of our members prior to any agreement being made.[5]

The 1964 Biennial Delegate Council Meeting also urged the NUPB& PW to counter the adverse effects of monopoly and automation by determined efforts to achieve printing trade union unity by amalgamation, by strengthening the P&KTF and by pursuing a policy of further reduction in the working week and longer holidays.

The NUPB&PW feared the letterpress and litho unions would combine to push them out of 'a stake' in the litho revolution, particularly in newspapers, and would begin to organise in NATSOPA and NUPB&PW areas. Given that the formation of the NGA in 1964 was seen as a prelude to a single craft union for the industry, the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA recognised that in these circumstances to remain separate unions was likely to leave them isolated and played off by the craft unions and the employers. These fears were expressed at the 1965 NATSOPA Governing Council in the following terms:

> In this situation obviously if NATSOPA stands still, we shall be isolated, not over a long period of years, but rapidly reduced over a fairly short period of years. If we are reduced then our bargaining power, both with the employers and other unions will consequently be reduced in my opinion to the disadvantage of the people we represent, so the generalship and the policy immediately comes into this.[6]

Both the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA feared that the NGA, professing to be the graphical union, would feel free to take anyone into its membership or to train anyone for membership who found themselves in a 'dead-end' job. They envisaged a powerful and developing NGA could take over jobs that were currently under the jurisdiction of the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA. Both unions realised that unless they merged, their interests and influence in the industry might be lost to the NGA, whose formation was viewed as a means to retain 'new litho jobs' exclusively for craft unions members and to prevent those in predominantly non-craft jobs gaining upgrading to craft status in the printing industry of the future. If NUPB&PW and NATSOPA remained separate unions it would be easier for the craft unions to exercise control over the new jobs and to continue the traditional system of training for access to the higher-paid jobs and thereby excluding adult non-craft employees.

However, in amalgamating, the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA were not motivated solely by defensive reasons. An amalgamation would enable co-ordination of a counter-attack on the craft unions' attempts to maintain a craft dominance over the 'litho revolution'. As a single union they would be better able to challenge the apprenticeship

system as the only access to craft occupations and to adopt an aggressive attitude towards the rights of their members to have control over web-offset presses, especially where they were introduced into former letterpress houses. For both the NUPB&PW and NATSOPA the inclusion of the word 'Graphical' in the title of any merged union they might form was an important marker that they were entitled to have members in any part of the industry. The growth of lithography offered NUPB&PW and NATSOPA an excellent opportunity to challenge the craft unions' claim to all skilled jobs and to control the expansion of litho jobs to the exclusion of existing non-craft employees.

A merged NUPB&PW/NATSOPA union would reinforce their view that web-fed litho printing was a new process and the traditional demarcation lines between craft employers and non-craft workers were irrelevant. As one union NUPB&PW and NATSOPA would be in a stronger position to argue that all workers (craft and non-craft) in the industry would need some retraining to be competent to run web-offset machine rooms. A single non-craft union would carry weight confident in seeking equal access to the retraining necessary to enable its members to work the new litho processes. To remain separate unions carried the risk that expanding employment opportunities would be restricted to the craft unions who would resist the upgrading of non-craft employees to skilled status leaving them in 'dead-end' jobs. An 'aggressive' attitude towards retraining and a reform of the apprenticeship system was essential for non-craft employees if they were to have a stake in the 'new litho world'; a single predominantly non-craft union was a necessary condition of this approach.

THE GROWTH OF AN ALTERNATIVE PRINTING INDUSTRY AND PAPERMAKING INDUSTRY

Printing

By the mid-1960s, printing ceased to be a 'sheltered' industry. In the ten-year period from 1955–65, greater product market competition came from three sources—increased imports, expansion of in-plant printing and additional outlets to newspapers and magazines for advertising. The first two threatened the general printing trade whilst the third challenged newspapers and periodicals. Although this alternative printing industry produced lower-quality, lower-price products than the conventional industry, the quality was adequate for most customers' needs. The increased competition arose because the industry could not meet all the demands for print products. Delays in the completion of orders caused customers to place their orders abroad and/or set up their own printing capacity.

However, NUPB&PW and NATSOPA members viewed this product market competition as a potential rather than a real threat to their employment security. Although it represented a loss of work from the industry, there was still much work available and there was an acute shortage of labour in the industry. NUPB&PW and NATSOPA members did not consider that these emerging alternative printing products would ever be a real threat to their employment security.