



MANWEB NALGO

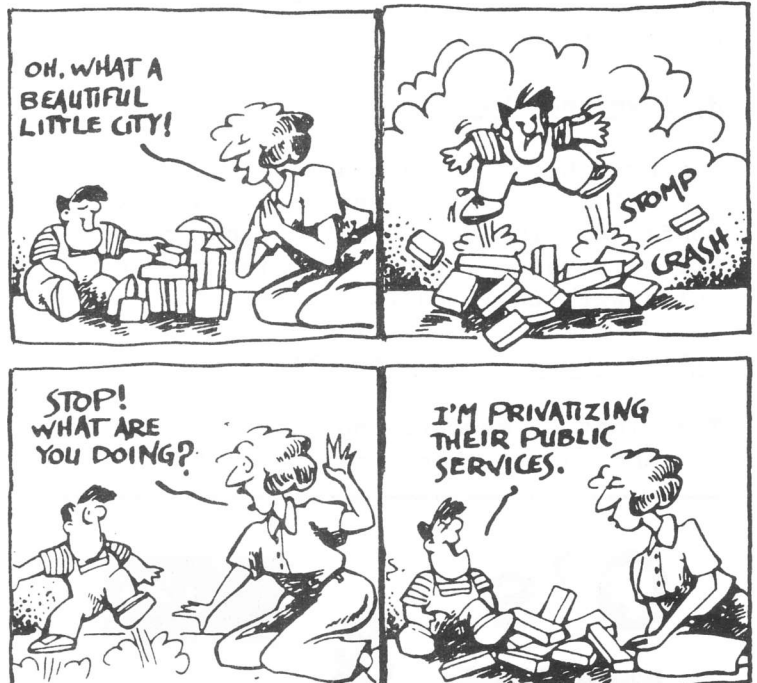
TIME TO MERGE

The prospect of a newly merged super union of 1½ million members is rapidly approaching as the 3 years of negotiations between NALGO, NUPE and COHSE reach their closing stages.

The 1991 Annual NALGO Conference overwhelmingly supported the principle of a merger but endorsed a number of firm demands from branches across the country seeking assurances that the union would be democratically controlled by the members' elected representatives.

A special conference in March this year, received a report of the negotiations and reaffirmed a number of key principles it still wished to see.

Our branch took an active part in the debate, extracting a pledge from the NEC that the initial rulebook would be presented to the full annual conference in June.



Early indications are that a substantial number of the principles and traditions of NALGO will be a feature of the new union. If this is the case then the June conference is likely to give its overwhelming backing to the merger proposal.

However, it is NALGO's 750,000 members who will decide the issue, in a ballot towards the end of this year.

As an active member of MANWEB NALGO who has taken part in the merger debate both locally and nationally, I would encourage all members to play a full part in the discussions in the workplace and at our half-yearly meeting in June, the week before national conference.

I believe the overriding concern of the next few years will be for workers in public services to be able to stand together in defence of hospitals, schools and other local services which face cuts and closures.

The resources of a union of 1½ million will both enormously strengthen our hands in negotiations and should provide a wide range of services and benefits to all members.

Where the members are

	NALGO	NUPE	COHSE
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LOCAL GOVERNMENT	492,300	300,000	5,000
HEALTH	63,500	200,000	200,000
GAS	31,700		
ELECTRICITY	29,900		
UNIVERSITY/POLY/ COLLEGES	20,500	60,000	
WATER	20,400	6,000	
POLICE	11,500		
TRANSPORT	4,800		
NEW TOWNS	2,100		
PORT AUTHORITIES	150		

SUMMARY OF DEBATE

Who will decide policy

The Annual Conference will be the sovereign body of the union with the final say on all policy matters. The conference will consist of delegates from each branch, elected in proportion to their membership. The conference will be run by elected representatives from each region.

Who will run the union

The national executive will be elected by all members by secret ballot, for a 2 year period of office.

Will we see the rules

Our branch has extracted a pledge that the rules will be presented to the national conference in June with the final report. All members will receive copies of the rules with their ballot papers.

Will members be able to change policy

The right of members and groups of members to campaign to change policy is the very

heart of a democratic union. It is for this reason that it has been a firmly endorsed principle that such a guarantee should be written into the rules. It is understood that NUPE and COHSE have accepted that this guarantee will be in the rules.

Who controls the finances?

Currently members subscriptions are paid directly to their local branch and a portion is then remitted by the branch to the national office. NUPE and COHSE have central collection with money being remitted back to branches. Although NALGO conferences have so far resisted attempts to impose a national collection system, NUPE and COHSE are unwilling to give up such an approach. It is likely that a compromise will initially allow branches the option of either system.

Will electricity sector still have its own independence?

YES. It is a common point of agreement with all unions that each service will control their own policy on service conditions and service issues.

Q's & A's

Why do we need a merger?

In local government both NALGO and NUPE have separate negotiations on pay, conditions and other issues. In the hospitals there are health workers in all three unions. In these key public services, one union of all workers would be an enormous step forward in the campaign to eliminate low pay and win more resources for a health service and local services which are being starved of resources.

How will electricity benefit?

Although NUPE and COHSE do not have members in electricity, we would be able to call on the resources of a union of 1½ million members. In negotiations with companies which are becoming increasingly wealthy and powerful, smaller unions are less likely to be able to stand their ground in the fight for a just share of profits.

Won't we be 'swallowed up' by council workers?

NALGO is already predominately made up of local government workers. However, each section of NALGO has its own service group. This will be continued into the new union. Just as now there will be an annual sector conference, an elected electricity committee and full time officers to service the committee. All matters concerning electricity will be decided by electricity NALGO members with the full support of the wider union.

Will I have to pay more?

Although the exact salary bands and fees have not been decided, however, a principle of salary bands with a sliding scale of fees has been agreed which would be similar to current figures.

Will I have a say?

YES. The merger will only proceed if a majority of members vote for a merger in a secret ballot to be held towards the end of this year. If you are undecided then ask your steward or representative for more information. Attend the half-yearly meeting in June and listen to the debate.