THE INFLUENCE OF TRADE UNIONS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

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To the memory of Jeff Mister a tireless worker for rural trade unionists who died in an accident at work whilst this study was in progress - a tragic indication that the subject area is of far wider than academic interest.

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SUMMARY

With the passing of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) the subsequent Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations (1977) the trade unions acquired an enhanced role in the field of health and safety at work. At national level they became involved in HSC Tripartite Committees whilst at workplace level union-appointed safety representatives with statutory support came into being.

The objectives of this study were to examine how health and safety at work is perceived by those trade unionists and how unions organise themselves to influence health and safety. In the course of the study an analytical framework for examining the influence of trade unions is developed.

Trade union influence in this area can be measured by looking at inputs such as ideology, resources and how they are organised or outputs such as effects upon accident rates and the extent of occupational ill health. This study concentrates on the 'input' side (leaving the more complex analysis required of the 'output' aspect for future investigation).

Data were obtained through an initial literature search, personal involvement, focussed interviews with experts in the field and questionnaires to safety representatives whose shopfloor level perceptions and experience could be set against national level perceptions.

The major conclusions were that though trade union information, training and advisory services had been increased in recent years not enough of these resources appeared to be reaching its shopfloor target and that the unions now need to concentrate upon building up workplace organization to translate the impact of improved servicing into the bargaining strength which will give them the influence to make improvements in health and safety at work.

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HEALTH

SAFETY

REPRESENTATIVES

TRADE UNIONS

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUEW Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers

ASTMS Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs.

ASLEF Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen

ACTT Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied

Technicians

ACP abnormal conditions payments

ACAS Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service

AAWNTG Agricultural and Allied Workers National Trade Group

APEX Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and

Computer Staff

AIAC Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee

BSSRS British Society for Social Responsibility in Science

BIFU Banking Insurance and Finance Union

BFAW Bakers' Food and Allied Workers

CBI Confederation of British Industry

CSU Civil Service Union

COHSE Confederation of Health Service Employees

EPEA Electrical and Power Engineering Association

EEPTU Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunications and Plumbing

Union

EMAS Employment Medical Advisory Service

FTO Full time officer

FBU Fire Brigades Union

FTAT Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union

GMBATU General, Municipal, Boilermakers' and Allied Trades'

Union

GMWU General and Municipal Workers' Union

HASAWA Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)

HSC Health and Safety Commission

HSE Health and Safety Executive

ISTC Iron and Steel Trades Confederation

IRS Industrial Relations Services

IDS Incomes Data Services

IPCS Institute of Professional Civil Servants

IAC Industry Advisory Committee

LRD Labour Research Department

NUAAW National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers

NALGO National and Local Government Officers'

Association

NUR National Union of Railwaymen

NUPE National Union of Public Employees

NFU National Farmers' Union

NIIP National Institute of Industrial Psychology

NUT National Union of Teachers

NUS National Union of Seamen

NUM National Union of Mineworkers

NGA (1982) National Graphical Association (1982)

NUFLAT National Union of Footwear. Leather and Allied Trades

NUTGW National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers

PVC Polyvinyl chloride

PAC Pesticides Advisory Committee

POEU Post Office Engineering Union

ROSPA Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

SS shop steward

SR safety representative

SRSC Safety Representativesa and Safety Committees

SOGAT 82 Society of Graphical and Allied Trades

SCPS Society of Civil and Public Servants

TUC Trades Union Congress

TGWU Transport and General Workers' Union

245-Trichloroxyacetic Acid

TURU Trade Union Research Unit

TULHM Trade Union Labour History Museum

USDAW Union of Shop Distributive and Allied Workers

UCATT Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians

VDU Visual Display Unit

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Health and Safety: a brief look at the nature of the problem and the trade unions' involvement at the workplace

This study attempts to explore the role played by trade unions in their efforts to minimise the health damage to their members particularly in the light of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974).

Banner headlines are a familiar sight in the press when trade unions become involved in strikes. Yet time lost through industrial accidents and prescribed diseases can be anything from three to six times greater (Robens, 1972).

For example, (TUC Education, 1977):

'the total time lost as a result of accidents in 1975 was 23 million man-days - which was four times the number of man-days involved in strikes in the same year.'

The HSE (1978) notes that:

'In the course of a year, more than 1,400 working people die and 300,000 suffer injuries serious enough to keep them away from work for three days or more',

and TUC ex-General Secretary, Len Murray, (TUC, 1984) adds:

'The economic cost to the community of industrial accidents and diseases comes to more than £2,000 million a year. But nobody can measure the pain, anxiety and hardship suffered by the victims and their families.'

However, even these statistics are commonly assumed to be considerable underestimates. For example, it is impossible to quantify loss of production in economic costs. Aitkin and Reid (1971) estimate 'the cost to the country' and Lewis and Latta (1975) saw common law damages paid for industrial accident compensation constituting a 'tax' on British industry of 60 million.

Kinnersley (1973) details several categories of workers not covered by official figures and applies a multiplier of at least 35 to give a more accurate picture (citing as examples non-recording of deaths of the self-employed in the building industry and ignorance of the outcome of long-term illness and injury. It is indeed hard to imagine that, for example, with the untested effects of contact with a number of chemicals subsequently found to be harmful, official figures for illness represent anything other than the tip of the iceberg.

Support for under-reporting of accidents alone comes from Powell et al. (1971):

'officially reported figures for three-day lost time accidents are still much smaller than the truth...It is a picture distorted by the different clerical arrangements of different firms, the wish to avoid blame, ignorance of procedures and differences in the compensation available from national and local sources.'

The Department of Employment (Robens, 1972) estimated the

ratio of non-reportable to legally notifiable accidents at 30:1.

My own experience of a number of industries is similar. In agriculture, the Inspectorate readily concede that unreported accidents predominate by at least six to one over reported accidents. It is unsurprising in an industry where workers are isolated, trade unionism weak, loyalty played upon and labour pared to the bone that farmworkers also concerned not to put their tied cottages at risk, either fail to report accidents or return speedily to work. Research in preparation (Dr K Cliff, Southampton University) finds farmworkers continuing to work with major injuries that might require several weeks lay-off in the view of a medical practitioner.

Official figures should therefore be seen more as an indicator of trends than as an absolute measure. Grayson and Goddard (1975) suggest that they are of 'very little practical use to trade unionists'. This argument is easily sustained in the face of subsequent changes in notification procedures - the most recent of which, the 1982 statutory sick pay scheme, has considerably increased under-reporting.

Examination of trends by Beaumont (1983) supports the view of Robens that Britain does not appear to compare unfavourably with other advanced industrial countries. It

also allows him to suggest a possible correlation between industrial accidents and economic activity.

Smith (1973) in the United Stated and Steele (1974) in Britain tend to corroborate Beaumont's suggestion that more accidents arise from increasing use of capacity and overtime associated with an economic upswing. Fatigue and inexperience would increase the risk.

As the mill worker in Jackson in Jack London's novel, the Iron Heel (1907) replied to the question as to whether it was carelessness that got his arm caught in the machine:

'No, I ain't for calling it that. I was working overtime, an' I guess I was tired out some. I worked seventeen years in them mills, an I've took notice that most of the accidents happen in the hour before whistle-blow than in all the rest of the day. A man ain't so quick after working steady for hours. I've seen too many of 'em cut up an' gouged and 'chawed not to know.'

Just as the issue has not appealed to news editors (with exceptions, growing more numerous, like asbestos and 245-T which rate as 'scare stories') neither had health and safety aroused consistent concern amongst workers. That this view seems to have altered in recent years, at least amongst union activists, is strongly suggested later in this study.

In all probability there are many contributory factors which have made health and safety a lower priority issue in the past. It is, after all, an industrial relations

topic, just like wage bargaining, but traditionally the annual formulation of a wage claim (with its attendant 'shopping list' of claims for increased holiday entitlement, decreased hours, etc.) gives a focus at branch or district level to discuss and pursue a positive target - and to decide what to do in the event of opposition from employers.

In contrast, it can be argued that in the past health and safety has been left to zealots perceived by their colleagues as having a 'bee in their bonnet' or reacting to particular hazardous circumstances - rather than pursuing a consistent interest in what seems a negative claim (the avoidance of health loss) as seen against striving to improve pay levels and therefore living standards.

The above is a line of speculation which might fruitfully be taken up elsewhere but certainly there is a complex series of pressures acting on the worker (such as outlined in the case of the farmworker) which may be damping down on a more militant approach to the health and safety issue.

It may well have been the coming of the safety representatives in 1978 following the Robens Report, the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the SRSC Regulations (1977), which has done much to move the subject higher up the trade union agenda.

For their powers, including the right to inspect plants regularly, to receive information from management and the inspectorate, to have time off for training and to set up safety committees if they wished, gave workers representatives - for they are appointed only by trade unions - a far more active role. It also gave the opportunity for the issue to be routinely and regularly brought before the membership.

In so doing it may well have made it clear to many trade unionists that their own interests and those of their employers may often diverge. An example of this is the conflict which often arises between the demands of continued production and those of operatives' safety. This can boil down to a crude question of cost to the employer which may or may not be a long-term saving.

The workplace hazard arises from the process of production. In order for the workers to be best placed to bargain over the issue with management they have certain requirements such as information about potential hazards, training on how to detect them and knowledge about how to improve standards of health and safety. As with the wage negotiator who requires knowledge of the 'going rate' for the industry, overall Retail Price Index etc., the safety representative needs all kinds of knowledge to play an effective role, to start to limit the hazards to both health and safety.

Under the 1974 Act, there are duties on employers, manufacturers and the inspectorate to assist in this process, but it is from his trade union or the TUC that the member expects most help and this study hopes to examine whether it is usefully forthcoming.

At the macro level, the economic cost of man-days, production, investment in training and machinery etc. lost through occupational illness, injury and death should be as much a concern to Government and employers as the pain and suffering and loss of earning power to the victims and relations.

But this theoretical consensus, reflected as it was in the main in industry at shopfloor level by safety committees before 1974, did not produce any dramatic improvements in workplace conditions, (amongst the exceptions was the coalmining industry which has had workmen's inspectors since the beginning of the 20th century) though it went hand in hand with a trade union approach which sought to extract maximum compensation through the courts for members who had suffered occupational disease or injury.

It was an essentially passive role for trade unions which the Robens Committee Report of 1972 would have done nothing to change. For its conclusion, that 'the single most important reason for accidents at work is apathy' brought forth only the solution that the law should be simplified and regulations replaced by voluntary codes of action with joint safety committees a central feature through which to discuss problems and encourage 'in-plant voluntary self-regulation'.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 in itself had no means of changing this central philosophy — it was an enabling act which would have no special teeth, in the view of many, unless union pressure were applied. Perhaps the most important section of the Act introduced the concept of the safety representative, with statutory rights and functions. Following the consultation period which the trade unions — during a period of generally increased militancy in the early 1970s — used to strengthen their role, the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations came into effect in October, 1978.

It enshrined a concept (LRD, 1978) of safety representative 'as the first workers' representatives with statutory rights to challenge the employers' claim to sole control of plant, machinery and methods of work. They must necessarily, if they do their work well, help the growth of industrial democracy which had perhaps been one of that complex of impulses diminishing the workers' thrust to impose safer standards in the past consciously or unconsciously rejected as being too presumptious or 'not our job'.

Objectives

The year of the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act was also the year in which my own personal interest in occupational health and safety expanded. Interested by an excess of liver cancer amongst vinyl chloride monomer manufacturing workers, I undertook a research project on the issue (Kaufman, 1974). Shortly afterwards I started work for the then National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers in the legal department. Subsequently, I attended a number of gatherings of trade unionists discussing their attitudes to the new health and safety legislation. I also, through my job, dealt with a steady stream of occupational injury and illness cases reported to the NUAAW.

All these experiences convinced me that trade unions could and should be devoting far more energy and resources to an issue which, in general, had never featured very high on the list of priorities. I determined, therefore, to discover as broad questions, what kind of influences the trade unions did have on health and safety at work, whether they met the perceived needs of the shopfloor and the expectations of those operating at trade union national level.

The TUC's evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee (TUC, unpublished 1983) on Employment, Health and Safety, submitted as this project was drawing to a close, maintained that:

'The growing awareness throughout the trade union movement about health and safety at work, which led to the establishment of the Robens Committee, has continued to develop over the last ten years directly as a result of the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act. There has been a profound change in outlook and activity amongst trade unions at all levels towards health and safety at work issues.'

This statement provides a focus for another area of study: to examine the evidence that trade union activity has been growing in the years since 1974 but, more particularly, to discover trends in the last eight years or so since the beginning of this research.

The new legislation introduced new roles for trade unions; at the national level, for example, the setting up of the Health and Safety Commission with its tripartite committees to include trade unionrepresentatives and at the workplace level safety representatives and safety committees. It posed the question, what use could or would the trade unions make of these opportunities?

I was fortunately in the position, working for a trade union, where I would be allowed swifter and more open access to trade union officials in the field of study and to their information and co-operation than would be an outsider - who traditionally finds this particular 'closed shop' very difficult to enter. It would also enable me, if my suspicions were borne out by the research findings, to underline them with some vigour in an attempt to induce amongst trade unions' membership and officials a greater involvement in health and safety at work and to point up areas of successful practice at any of the various levels of trade union activity for emulation.

At the same time, however, I would have to ensure that my own preconceptions did not influence my findings if I was to avoid devaluing the research.

A structured setting for these objectives would be:

- (a) to examine the nature of the problem of health and safety at work in terms of:
 - how the issue is perceived by the parties involved (namely trade unions, management and government),
 - 2. how the trade unions organize themselves to achieve influence:
- (b) to develop an analytical framework for examining the influence of trade unions on health and safety at work.

To try to examine trade union influence it was decided to measure 'inputs' and 'outputs'. 'Inputs' can be broadly defined in terms of (a) ideology or attitudes and (b) resources devoted to the health and safety issue and the way in which they are organized or mobilised. The 'outputs' which may be seen in terms of criteria such as the effect upon accident rates and incidence of industrial disease, are the most difficult to define because there are so many other attendant variables, (such as economic activity and its effect upon man-hours worked and at what speeds) which can affect industrial accidents and diseases.

This study will, therefore, concentrate upon the 'input' aspect of the trade unions' work and the 'output' side solely in terms of the unions' involvement in decision-making on health and safety at workplace, regional and national levels. This implies observing the influence of trade union participation at the workplace through safety representatives and, to a lesser degree, through safety committees (by the time this study was completed there had been extensively surveyed elsewhere) and at the national level through bodies like the Industry Advisory Committees under the HSC.

In the absence of any known study of trade union influence on health and safety at work using examination of both national and local level union personnel, it is hoped that an analysis along the lines indicated will lead to an increased understanding of the issue and may encourage others to take on the more complex analysis of the 'output' side and of the many other issues which emerge in a so far underdeveloped field of study.

Methodology

In an essentially exploratory study the method developed for examining the influence of trade unions on health and safety at work was an initial literature search followed by a series of focussed interviews and the development and subsequent analysis of a questionnaire to groups of safety representatives attending TUC training courses. Using the information from these sources and the experience of my own personal participation in the subject area, hypotheses which had evolved during the course of the study would be tested and conclusions drawn in a brief final section which would suggest further lines of research thrown up by the investigation.

Participant observation through personal involvement

I became an official of the NUAAW in 1978, and gained valuable experience in the following areas of health and safety:

Casework in the union's legal department dealing with agricultural and allied workers' accidents or occupational ill health, for example, the high incidence of back injuries to farm workers.

Head office speaker at numerous union area conferences, all over Britain at which health and safety is always one of the three most popular topics (the others being poor wages and declining rural amenities).

Teaching union members at Winter and Spring Schools on health and safety, for example, on the rights and functions of safety representatives and the need to insist on becoming one.

Membership of the NUAAW's National Health and Safety Subcommittee and, since 1980, the Health and Safety Executive's Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee (till 1983) and Chemicals in Agriculture Subcommittee.

These experiences provided valuable insights into the hazards of working in a highly mechanised industry with a very poor record of health and safety. The scattered nature of its workforce make it difficult to organise and to service the existing membership. It also provided experience of working on the tripartite Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee of the HSE.

A developing interest in the use and effects of pesticides brought me into contact with almost all sections and levels of the NUAAW, including forestry and horticultural workers and a whole range of other unions; in particular. ASTMS, GMWU, NUR, ASLEF, TGWU, NUPE, USDAW, and ACTT. Being particularly concerned about the health and safety problems relating to the weedkiller 245-T, I liaised either directly or through a joint ad hoc committee interested parties from other unions under the umbrella of the TUC. Through this contact I learnt more of the workings of other trade unions. Through addressing meetings on the issue, I learnt something of the concerns of political representatives and the public to health and safety problems, such as pollution and occupational disease detection, which spread beyond the confines of the workplace.

As a delegate and speaker at several TUC Congresses and meetings, through contact with the TUC's Social Insurance and Idustrial Welfare Department (and one of its committee members, Jack Boddy) and occasional member of the TUC Health and Safety Specialist's Group, (which now has representatives from over 30 unions) I gained further insight into the workings of both the TUC and other unions on health and safety issues.

Further experience has been gained through a seat on the

National Water Council's Health and Safety National Joint Industrial Council which has afforded me a view and participation in the making of national level arrangements and negotiations in what has been one of the country's best organized industries in the occupational health and safety field. Similarly, attendance at several international conferences, (such as a 1982 gathering of workers and manufacturers concerned with the effects of pesticides), notably of rural unions, has added an international perspective to my appreciation of trade union activities in this sphere. It has demonstrated, for example, that workers in developing countries have even greater problems than in Britain which it was hoped to counteract by establishing transnational links between trade unions and sympathetic organizations.

My own career, from the legal department, undertaking union research latterly as Research Officer, becoming Editor of the agricultural workers' newspaper (The Landworker), playing a leading role in agitating for a ban on 245-T, (on which I co-authored a book - Portrait of a Poison, 1982, and with the campaigning pamphlets, Not One Minute Longer!, 1980: Pray Before You Spray, 1981 and How Many More?, 1984), joining the TGWU, (through a merger with the NUAAW in 1982), and latterly becoming Editor of the TGWU newspaper (The Record), has brought me into contact with widening groups of workers facing differing health and safety hazards. Some of these

dangers are common to several industries, some are peculiar, but I have become growingly aware of the need for a common approach based upon bargaining power.

From the above experience and concerns it is evident that it would be impossible for me to present a 'balanced' or unbiased view of the health and safety issue even if such a portrayal exists. However, the study will attempt to be rigorous and scholarly in its approach to the topic.

Literature Search

Much of the written material in the area of this study was published in the course of the research and is, therefore, referred to in the text rather than at the outset. To demonstrate this an example was taken of the source material quoted in the study, (Glendon and Booth, 1982) entitled Worker Participation in Occupational Health and Safety in Britain. Analysis showed that of 79 sources quoted, 55 had been published after and including 1977, (the year that this research began), amounting to approximately 70 percent of the literature.

Of the few works of note to have appeared before this date, reference is here made to what I consider to be the most important. Williams (1960) is a major work written long before the issue had 'taken off', which exposes the absence of a comprehensive plan either nationally or by any

interested parties, particularly (in this context), trade unions, for the prevention of occupational accidents and ill health. Williams identifies sixteen forms of activity which have a bearing on prevention. They are:

'1. Common Law Safety Standards, 2. Statutory safety standards, 3. Statutory inspectorates, 4. Workplace safety organization - compulsory, 5. Workplace safety organization - voluntary, 6. Medical supervision, 7. Compulsory notification of accident and disease, 8. Inquests and statutory investigations, 9. Claims for damages, 10. National joint committees, 11. Trade union activity, 12. Employers' activity, 13. Voluntary associations, 14. Research, 15. Education, 16. International activity.'

Many of the above spheres of activity in which trade unions have a role to play are discussed in this study. Williams' book (which has not received the recognition it merits), though now dated, is the most thorough work of its kind known and places great emphasis on worker participation, involving bargaining over health and safety rather than what he sees as ineffectual consensus. His views are shared by many others, including Vernon (1936) and Bramley Harker (1964) who lauded workers participation as one of the most important elements in any accident prevention programme.

More recently, Kinnersley (1973) and Atherley et al. (1975) have emphasised the same point in different ways. Kinnersley has an aggressive message for workplace activists once they have become apprised of the nature of the hazards they are facing:

'When you are organized to fight collectively for safety by answering any threat to health with a threat to profits, you can begin to exert real control over hazards.'

But he points out in a socialist critique that some problems are too big for the workplace union organization to tackle, (such as fast automated, multi-million pound car plant production lines which produced unhealthy, stressful conditions), so that:

'There can be no lasting solution until workers control society and can direct their skills and labour into meeting the needs of all people.'

In the above context he is referring to the inherent conflict of interest he sees between employers and workforce over the importance of devoting adequate resources to producing healthy and safe working conditions.

Grayson and Goddard (1975) and Gregory and McCarty (1975) produced useful handbooks with a fundamentally similar message to the above, that is, the importance of workplace organization to deal with the new situation arising from the Health and Safety at Work Act, and the last named published a Trade Union Research Unit Document (January 1977) attacking the fact and implications of the Government's delay in bringing the Safety Representatives Regulations into action.

Hutchings and Harrison (1911) gave a picture of factory

legislation as it evolved whilst Webb and Webb (1897) produced a very readable account (especially in their chapter on <u>Sanitation and Safety</u>) of the prevailing 19th century arguments for introducing workmen's compensation for accidents and illness arising from work.

The Webbs quote from Annual TUC Reports which are a fertile source for investigation of trade union attitudes to health and safety issues whilst Annual Reports of the Chief Inspector of Factories give a picture of the Factory Inspectorate's views. The Robens Report (1972) with accompanying volume containing evidence from a wide range of individual and bodies, is similarly illuminating, particularly with reference to the employers' collective views on the issue (as articulated by the CBI) and the Committee itself which favoured consensus and voluntary arrangements for tackling workplace hazards.

Finally, 2000 Accidents (Powell et al. 1971), a study of just over 2000 accidents studied by a team of researchers at four different workshops, added a useful body of information and thought to the issue, particularly stressing the importance of the work system rather than the 'careless worker' as the roots of most industrial accidents.

Discussion of the background to the focussed interviews and safety representatives' questionnaires introduces chapters 2 and 3 of this study.

CHAPTER 2

HOW UNIONS SEEK TO INFLUENCE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK -

In keeping with the objectives and methodology outlined in the introduction, the focussed interviews were conducted against a background of existing literature in the area of health and safety and a framework broadly described by the following headings: perceptions of health and safety at work issues; the role ascribed to trade unions; resources provided by unions for health and safety at work; how resources are mobilised.

Focussed interviews

A series of interviews with activists in the health and safety field was arranged in order to gain a background against which to evolve questions to safety representatives. Five out of six of the interviewees were the only and, therefore the best available trade union experts (in the 15 months from March 1977) in the field with a national level perspective on the issue. The sixth interviewee was a safety representative who served to give the investigation an early shopfloor view.

All the potential interviewees selected for the shortlist as being the most knowledgeable in their field agreed to be interviewed with one exception (he was Bill Prince of the Foundry Workers Section of the AUEW who was reluctant to undergo a taped interview) and who was not pressed further.

Those interviewed provided a good spread of union types and of different status within unions for the health and safety function. Further details of the structure and workings of the particular unions under discussion are embedded in later citings of the interview content but the following provides a brief description.

Sheila McKechnie - ASTMS

Sheila McKechnie of ASTMS was appointed as a national official - Health and Safety Officer, in 1977. At that time she had no assistance (apart from clerical) and a limited budget compared with, say, the Union's legal department. After that time she acquired the back-up of a qualified research assistant and built up resources like a health and safety library which she regards as indispensable as a reference source. (She left ASTMS early in 1985).

ASTMS is the second largest (NALGO is the largest) white collar union in Britain, (the seventh largest affiliated to the TUC) and organizes acrosss many sections (Eaton and Gill, 1981) in particular among scientific, technical and managerial staff in industry, commerce, education and health. It also has membership in practically every major industry, particularly in engineering, chemicals, universities and food. This diversity presented problems for McKechnie in trying to keep a varied membership

informed and organized to deal with a variety of hazards and industrial organizations.

Her job came into being as a result of a resolution passed at the 1976 ASTMS National Delegate Conference (against the advice of the Executive) pressure for which she ascribes to two main causes: the Flixborough disaster - a chemical plant explosion in 1974 which had a major impact upon public and union opinion; and the growing awareness of hazards by the membership in the chemical sector, particularly arising from the concern over vinyl chloride monomer which leads to angiosarcoma amongst some workers in the PVC industry.

McKechnie was in a unique position amongst union health and safety specialists in being appointed as an officer with full time responsibility in that area. Other unions have officers in part-time responsibility or full timers who work as staff in their research or legal departments. However, granted the status of an officer and free from the constraints of other departments, she appreciated the chance to concentrate upon the organizational side of health and safety, the setting-up of a servicing structure for the membership which required workplace organization to The appointment's comparative its demands. press seniority owes something to the fact that it emerged from conference decisions and, perhaps, more to the fact that the health and safety sub-committee of the ASTMS Executive in the words of McKechnie, 'had some understanding of the nature of health and safety as an issue, which is really crucial'.

Ken Clarke - ISTC

Ken Clarke, of the ISTC is an example of a national official who has had health and safety grafted onto his existing job, and which despite taking an increasing proportion of his time was by no means a full-time pursuit.

The ISTC is the dominant union within the British iron and steel industry which consists of several important sections which are, in effect, industries in themselves. These include the heavy steel section, concerned with the manufacture of pig iron, ingot production and rolling of heavy products; the sheet industry; the tinplate industry; the tube trade; the Sheffield steel trade; and the foundry industry, petering out until it impinges on the engineering trade. ISTC organizes nearly all production and ancillary workers throughout the industry, except for the blastfurnace workers in England and Wales.

Clarke ascribed his appointment to two trends which had not come directly from the membership. The passing of the Health and Safety at Work Act and Britain's entry into the European Economic Community. The first said Clarke

'created a new set of conditions in the view of our Executive Council', and, together with the suggestion from the TUC that affiliated unions might think in terms of increasing their head office manpower dealing with the issue, created the pressure for the appointment. Added weight was given, however, by the growing realisation that the Union's then General Secretary, Bill Sirs, when he attended a number of committees in the European Coal and Steel Community, was not being afforded the research back-up that was required.

However, the failure of the union to evolve established internal machinery for dealing with health and safety complaints may account for the different treatment it had received compared with ASTMS for example.

David Gee - GMBATU

David Gee, who was appointed health and safety officer for the GMBATU, (then GMWU) in 1978 as a result of a national conference resolution, was not given the same national officer status as McKechnie and is still based in the union's research department. The differences which result from these varying spheres and strengths of influence are discussed in the next chapter. It seems likely that the appointment owed something to the change in leadership of the GMWU and an accompanying change in style which saw a new emphasis on high grade back-up staff at national and

regional level for the membership.

Gee was not one of those specifically interviewed for the research but as my external supervisor was on hand for discussion at various times during its progress.

Jim Watts - NUAAW

Jim Watts was another official (legal officer) of the NUAAW with part-time responsibility for health and safety. He saw the need for a full-timer but pointed to the union's lack of resources in achieving that goal. Thus, in an industry (agriculture), notoriously difficult to organize because of its scattered membership, the official with responsibility for health and safety was in a poor position to do much about the grassroots level organization for dealing with the issue. Despite speaking of the importance of the preventive approach, he was predisposed to legal remedies simply because of the department's own raison d'etre, (which was in the main to claim compensation).

Though the awareness of the health and safety problem is high on the agenda in most agricultural workers' union discussions, the union's response has tended to be in terms of national single issue campaigns (like pesticide hazards or the need for safety cabs on tractors) rather than grappling with organizational problems.

Roger Bibbings - AUEW

The AUEW Engineering Section, whose research assistant Roger Bibbings was interviewed, had yet another approach. He was a staff member based in the research and technical services.

Eaton and Gill (1981) explain that Britain's second biggest union, the AUEW, has members in the great majority of manufacturing establishments in the country, and a detailed coverage of the union is too complex to give here. The main industries where the union is concentrated include engineering, iron and steel, shipbuilding, chemicals, paper and boardmaking, electricity, synthetic fibres, rubber and plastics, road transport, motor vehicles, printing, construction, machine tools, government industrial establishments, local authorities, hospitals, railway workshops, sugar, agricultural machinery, aerospace, cooperative movement, oil refining, flour milling and nuclear power generation.

The union has developed a separation of powers limiting the scope of influence of particular officers. The constitution of the AUEW (Engineering) incorporates a conscious separation of executive, judicial and legislative powers, where a policy-making national committee legislated, and an elected final appeal court interprets

the rules in all contentious disciplinary cases. A separately elected executive administers the union's affairs from day to day.

In this position, Bibbings (who during the course of this research went to work for the TUC's Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Department - rather an archaic name, it might be noted, which indicates that the TUC as well has not separated off its health and safety work from other issues like pensions and social insurance), could provide information and advice in response to policy demands or requests, mainly channelled through district committees or Executive Council members - but he could not initiate policy moves. This would be a characteristic common to all but those health and safety specialists who had officer status.

Dr. Charles Clutterbuck - BSSRS

Dr Charles Clutterbuck was able to put the health and safety issue as a trade unionist, tutor on safety representatives' training courses and leading member of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science.

BSSRS defines itself, (<u>Science for People</u>, Summer 1983) as:

'a group of scientific and technical workers...
committed to fighting for the use of science

and technology by and for the benefit of working people, to demonstrating the political content of science and technology and to furthering the links between scientific and technical workers and the rest of the labour movement.'

With a network of BSSRS groups across the country and a number of area health and safety committees (which peaked in the late 1970s at about 40) influencing the thinking of trade unionists and helping to provide information and organizational direction, Clutterbuck was able to put the issue in a more general context. He was able to generalize about the approach of trade unions as a whole as well as to provide a view of the experience of trade unions abroad, notably in the USA, who were engaged in similar struggles but using different methods.

Sam Rowledge - AUEW Safety Representative

with Sam Rowledge, then a safety The interview representative at British Leyland Castle Bromwich plant in the Midlands, provided useful background in terms shopfloor perceptions of health and safety issues and whether the services the other interviewees were helping to provide from (mainly) national level were reaching people likehim as a target. In this respect valuable that he belonged to a union (the AUEW Engineering whom I had obtained a national level Section) from interview. Drawing upon his experience as a long-time safety representative and toolmaker he could also give an insight into how the relatively new Health and Safety at Work Act was influencing the shopfloor.

Summary

From these interviews a series of areas of interest emerged from which hypotheses could be formulated for later testing through a survey of trade union safety representatives. At this stage, a wealth of material had been gathered and it was necessary to limit the field of further investigation by jettisoning topics which had been, or were about to be, adequately covered by other research.

These included the role and quantity of safety committees (Brown 1981, Barratt and James 1981, Leopold and Coyle 1981, Beaumont and Deaton 1981, IRS 1978, No.35/36, Kochan et al. 1977, IDS 1979 and Beaumont et al. 1982.) These studies included an examination of union committees, joint union/management committees, how effective they were and management's response. They also included perception of the role of safety agreements (LRD 1980, IRS 1978) and safety policies (HSE 1981).

The formulation of hypotheses ran concurrently with the study of existing literature, the analysis of focussed interview findings and the incorporation of personal observations gained from my own position as a full-time union official.

Conducting the interviews

The general approach to the focussed interviews, was to conduct them as informally as possible at the level of 'one trade unionist to another' and witout using a rigid list of questions. This allowed for topics of interest to be followed without undue anxiety about not covering any precise area. The interviews sought to find out as much of relevance to the research topic as possible preparatory to drawing up the pre-pilot questionnaires for shopfloor safety representatives.

The list of topic areas which formed the basis of the focussed interviews endeavoured to establish the subject's job description and position in the union, (or other organization), the structure of the union, how it attempted to handle questions of health and safety and how it dealt with safety representative training. The questioning sought to establish which hazards were most common in the industries covered by the particular union and how the union tried to disseminate information. Finally, interviewees' attitudes to such areas as handling health and safety issues at national, industry and shopfloor level, the problems arising within unions and the role of the TUC were sought.

Perceptions of the issue of health and safety at work

Brief history

The trade unions' approach to the problems of industrial hazards are to a very large extent governed by the perceptions of certain key parties of the nature of the problem. The resources and priority they give to the issue will be determined by their own reading of its importance.

According to Sidney and Beatrice Webb in <u>Industrial</u> <u>Democracy</u> (1897), 'Sickness and casualties were regarded as "visitations of God" to be warded off by prayer and fasting up until the 1840s.' Thus, it comes as little surprise that trade unions demands for safe, healthy and comfortable conditions of work appear to date only from about 1840 and can scarcely be said to have become a definite part of trade union policy until about 1871. (There were exceptions such as the coal miners who were known to have been asking for better ventilation of the pits as early as 1662).

It is outside the scope of this study to go into a detailed description of the history of trade union involvement in attempting to improve working conditions beyond drawing attention to some of the work which has already been done in this field. These include such publications as Webb

and Webb (1897), quoted above; J. Williams (1960), particularly chapter 16 which deals with trade union activity; Grayson and Goddard (1975), especially Section 2; RoSPA (1976); R. Williams (1977); Cohn (1978), particularly the first two chapters on history and the role of the unions; Walters (1978); Clutterbuck (1980); TUC Annual Reports and Beddington (1983).

The first factory legislation in 1802 arose from the appalling conditions, long hours and child labour in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century industry, but it was not until 1833 that the factory inspectorate was set up with four inspectors policing 2,000 mills to ensure that child labour was not over-exploited. Subsequent legislation, for example, the length of the working day, owed much to pressure from the Chartists, liberal reformers and medical men who had by the 1860s discovered that widespread disease was connected with factory conditions.

Clutterbuck (1980) states: 'There seems to have been a growing awareness of poor working conditions, due to the publication of the Registrar General's statistics on occupational mortality and the growing confidence in trade union organization.'

As the Webbs noted some thirty years after the formation of the TUC in the 1890s, 'In the trade union world of today, there is no subject of which all workmen of all shades of opinion and variations of occupations are so unanimous and so ready to take combined action as the prevention of accidents and the provision of healthy work places.' (Webb and Webb, 1897). They based this rather sweeping assertion on their contention that trade union officials and 'the more thoughtful workmen' realised that extra money was no real compensation for injury and illness.

Prevention and/or compensation

The 1890s saw a spate of safety legislation: the Factories and Workshops Act of 1891 stated that factory inspectors had power to issue notice to employers to improve ventilation. The Act also insisted that employed people adopt increasingly stringent methods of personal protection, for example, respirators, head covering and overalls. This new development was highlighted at the time (Nash, 1983):

'This leaves alone the process of production. As long as dangerous processes remain, compulsory provision of a dispensary and free muzzle avails little.'

The Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897 for accidents at work (which was followed by a 1960 Act covering certain diseases) seems to have been primarily designed to help employers rebut claims for damages rather than to care for the health of the workers, suggests Clutterbuck (1980).

When it was first introduced workers were owed compensation irrespective of negligence by the employers. 'However,' states Clutterbuck (1980) 'the unions preferred to rely not on the legislation but on the judicial system to prove negligence in the courts.'

Of the interviewees, Ken Clarke (ISTC) and Jim Watts (NUAAW) explained most sympathetically the importance and evolution of the compensation approach. Ken Clarke stated:

'I think we have to recognise, and my union is no different from any others, that in the past it (the ISTC) tended to more concerned about compensation for those injured at work rather than stopping the accidents that injured them. It comes from the days when to be off work for whatever reason was a serious problem. It is serious today but hasn't the serious consequences I think it had prior to the First World War or shortly after it. The benefits that we know today were not paid out as readily. The trade movement were protecting membership by setting up effective legal departments.'

Jim Watts said:

'I am in favour of compensation once the damage is done, but I would much rather make this aspect of my work totally reducdant by preventive medicine. In a period of limited resources, you have to decide on your priorities. I think prevention is more important that compensation. There are divided views on this in the trade union movement because of the realities of trade unionism. Without compensation, you lose a huge recruiting lever for all unions — and with it goes the contribution as finance as the life blood of any organization. It is a factor to be considered.'

Examination of most newspapers or publications detailing the work of trade unions reveals a greater or lesser

preoccupation with compensation obtained for members sustaining injury or illness 'arising out of' work. I myself, as Editor of the Landworker and the Agricultural Workers' Annual Report and Diary maintained the tradition of inserting running totals each year to show how successful the legal department had been in pursuing claims for individual cases. It emphasizes what is essentially an individual rather than a collective approach to obtaining compensation and like most legal processes is time-consuming, costly and ultimately unrewarding to a large proportion of plaintiffs.

Whilst many who have recruited for the agricultural workers union confirm the pulling power of this 'selling point' of the union, there has been, to my knowledge, no study done of the attraction of a preventive approach to health and safety. This may prove a fruitful avenue for further research and will be discussed further in a later chapter. Agricultural workers' union District Officers have been delighted on recruiting drives they have been recognised as representatives of a union known to the person they are visiting along the lines, 'Hello. Yes, I know the agricultural workers union - you are trying to get a ban on 245-T!' One implication is that a public campaign on a preventive approach to a particular hazard may yield more in recruitment terms than is suspected by trade unions.

Glendon and Booth (1982) conclude, amongst other things,

that: 'There is evidence of a change in the trade unions' traditional role in health and safety, and, specifically, of the changing emphasis from compensation to prevention over the last ten years.' Walters (1978) lucidly chronicles the changing attitudes and growing pressure from trade unions which had considerable influence in leading to the setting up of the Robens Committee and subsequently the Health and Safety at Work Act. Using an analysis of trade union journals from four unions between 1964 and 1977, Walters found that:

- (a) overall health and safety content was very limited;
- (b) space devoted to this issue was increasing;
- (c) the predominantly compensation-oriented slant of the larger percentage of articles was decreasing as the prevention-oriented approach was growing.

Outstanding amongst unions setting the pace on health and safety, (whose agitation had much to do with the final introduction of safety representatives and whose union journal carried a greater percentage of health and safety copy) was the Foundry Workers' Union - an explanation of which is given in R. Williams (1977).

Clutterbuck in his interview sums up the 'preventive'

view when he states that the changes which have occurred recently in the organization of health and safety 'do not radically alter the conflicts between profits and health and between cleaning up the production process or relying on workers to cover themselves with protective clothing. The confused attitude towards compensation still exists, as does the lack of a coherent preventive policy on the part of unions.'

Clearly the reasons which persuaded trade unions to pursue compensation for their membership rather than devote their resources to a preventive approach, are deeply ingrained. It is unwise to ignore their origin - as genuine responses to immediate needs of workers often in desperate straits, or the beneficial (potentially preventive) by-products of pursuing claims through the courts. These include the establishment of legal case law which can in some cases set improved workplace statutory standards and the revelation of unforseen trends highlighting previously undetected hazards as a result of union legal departments building up records of members' accident claims.

Thus, underestimating these elements can diminish the strength of the argument of those, like myself, who would emphasize the preventive approach. In this context the trade unions' general attitude is much advanced from the 'visitations of God' theories of industrial hazards, propounded in the last century. But, on the whole, it can

that concentration on the compensation approach be takes the spotlight off the cause of industrial hazards, process of production. It is consistent with the encourages workers to seek personal which approach protection against hazards rather than tackle the source of In general, therefore, it will reinforce the the problem. argument of those who contend that it is the responsibility of the workers to protect themselves and not to 'careless' as against those who would alter the system of work to eliminate the hazard where possible. And it will strengthen the contention that there is an identity of interest between workers and employers about the need for health and safety at work because the onus put upon workers to avoid injury is far less costly and divisive than the contention that hazards must be dealt with at source.

The latter argument implies:

- (a) an important role for union representatives in identifying areas for improving systems of work (which implies increased industrial democracy through involvement in managerial decision making;) and
- (b) greatly increased costs to employers involved in redesigning work systems, changing equipment, substituting for dangerous substances and generally bringing in control-engineering.

It is in this context that the idea of health and safety as a consensus issue becomes untenable. These issues will be explored in the next section.

Perceptions of conflict versus consensus over health and safety at work

TUC reports show that the 1950s were a period when the TUC was pressing, 'although none too strongly, for the extension of voluntary safety committees throughout industry as the way to reduce workplace accidents' (Glendon and Booth, 1982). but a watershed in TUC policy proved to be the 1964 Annual Congress which revoked its previous stance and officially launched a campaign for legislation that would result in elected safety delegates, as they were termed, with powers of inspection. The setting up of safety committees, the right of union safety delegates to accompany a visiting factory inspector and for the inspector's advice to be available to union reprsentatives.

The Robens Committee

Following pressure from the TUC and elsewhere, the Robens Committee was set up by the Labour Government to look into health and safety organization and to propose changes. Its recommendations and philosophy (Robens 1972) served as the basis of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act of 1974 (HMSO).

The committee received 600 pages of evidence from companies, industrial associations, some unions, many government departments and individuals, a joint submission from the TUC and CBI and a number of research papers. It concluded that 'The single most important reason for accidents at work is apathy.' It also felt that there was 'less conflict of interest over matters of health and safety than most other areas of industrial relations.'

Countering this assumption of consensus, Clutterbuck (1980) states that 'Robens conveyed no indication that there was any conflict of interests between workers and management. Throughout the report profits were not mentioned, nor was the confict between labour and capital that had existed for the past 150 years. Instead of blaming the root cause of the problem, the production process, Robens blamed the crutch, the law, that tried to support the cripple.'

Robens' central approach and belief was that there was no requirement for an occupational health service or an active role for workers' representatives in conflict with management. He saw only that the rambling mass of legislation in the area of health and safety required a

rationalised approach. Regulations should be replaced by voluntary codes of practice. The implicit assumption was that apathy would be overcome by greater understanding of the law and involvement through joint safety committees which would give both sides of industry the chance to discuss health and safety problems and to govern themselves by 'in-plant voluntary self-regulation'. Worker representatives would be trained to peform a useful role on these joint committees, an idea which originated from the joint TUC/CBI submission to the Robens Committee.

Safe place versus safe worker

Against the background of the formative influence of the Robens Committee it is not surprising that the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act, in the view of Clutterbuck (1980) 'Avoids any substantial and effective intervention behalf of workers against the needs of production'. A11 liabilities on employers are qualified by the term, 'as far as is reasonably practicable', which legally means, 'a quantum of risk is placed on one scale and the sacrifices involved in the measures necessary (whether in money, time or trouble) is place on the other', (Lord Asquith, 1949). This is the view of many commentators on the Act, including Walters (1978) and returns us to the conflict versus consensus argument. The idea of 'mutual interest' is perhaps most succinctly opposed by Alan Flanders (1974): 'Neither side can be impartial for management is biased in

favour of production and workers in favour of protection.'
This view is backed by Caldwell, Croucher, Eva and Oswald
(1980). Summarising the experience of the first two years
of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees
regulations, they note:

'Time and time again it's been discovered that safety costs money, money that management is reluctant to spend, especially since the recession has bitten deeper into manufacturing industry and government has cut expenditure in the public sector. To get the money spent has required pressure, pressure from union members and representatives who themselves are faced with a vast range of problems.'

Thus, either consciously or unconsciously an increasing number of trade unionists at all levels have begun to find that 'consensus' with employers will not produce desired improvements in workplace health and safety, particularly in times of recession when employers are unwilling to spend and the pressure is on supervisors, foremen, middle and higher management to increase output without increasing spending. For tackling potential hazards at requires greater resources in terms of information. training, skills and cash then personal protection, certainly in the short term (the long term calculation is more difficult to make as it includes more variables such loss of production through chronic occupational as sickness, training of new operatives etc.)

Atherley and Booth's (1978) explanation of the 'safe place' versus 'safe person' strategy is one of the clearest

expositions available. They explained it thus:

'Safe place strategies are aimed at safe premises, plant, processes, materials, systems, means of access, adequate supervision and the employment of a trained and competent workforce. Safe person strategies are aimed at selective protection of the vulnerable...personal hygiene against self-contamination, the provision and use of protective equipment, observance of safety rules, and the inculcation of caution towards danger...'

'...Safe place strategies are always preferable to safe person strategies because safe place strategies aim directly at the danger, whereas safe person strategies acknowledge it without tackling it directly. Safe place strategies usually require skills and resources on a greater scale than safe person strategies.'

As result safe a place strategies are not always immediately feasible and safe person strategies may have to be adopted as a stop gap. There are many instances where protective clothing is realistically the only answer at In present. the choice of strategies considerable called for and discussion is this must involve employee's safety representative. It is in discussions like these that the inherent conflict of interests can clearly be seen unless exceptionally far-sighted employers are able to adapt to long-term investment in safety systems of work - which may ultimately save both lives and money.

Amongst the interviewees there was unanimity in the call for more research into safe work practices. Watts said:

^{&#}x27;I have a cardboard mannequin in this office, produced by a doctor who knows something about design. It is the ideal tractor

driver. The body is like nothing on earth. The chap has got a fully articulated neck - because of what you have to do on a tractor - and one arm at least a foot longer than the other, because of the controls; articulated hips; his hands and feet are different sizes and he has an extra hand. This is a man designed for a machine, when we ought to be able to design a machine to fit the man.'

Watts still saw the importance of protective gear, for example ear muffs for tractor drivers. He explained that the coming of safety cabs had brought with them hearing hazards, 'but our chaps don't like wearing ear muffs because it makes them look like something out of Star Wars'.

Powell et al. (1971) corroborate the suggestion that workers are unhappy wearing protective gear which is unattractive. My own experience suggests further reasons (Kaufman 1980, 1981, 1982) - impractical, cumbersome or uncomfortable - for these reasons, there is aversion to using it. To this list may be added the further cause for concern that such clothing can give a false security to the wearer. It emerged in a (Chemicals in Agriculture) HSE committee of which I am a member that research presently being undertaken (1985) by the Ministry of Agriculture had shown that there was no protective glove in existence which could remain impervious to certain pesticides for more than seven minutes.

Powell et al. (1971) saw safety clothing as 'in some ways...an admission of defeat: it ought to be possible to

design a system of work where the protection of the worker does not depend on what he wears.' However, this is an ideal yet to be achieved in many processes. Clutterbuck in his interview agreed by saying:

'If you had a gas leak in your house and the gas fitter came around, he would not give you a respirator and put up a notice saying "Beware of the Leak!" He would do something about it!'

He explained the BSSRS approach as:

'making work people focus on the production process rather than on themselves as the cause of the problem. We would try to suggest basic principles of control engineering. Basically, that would entail substitution, suppression, enclosure and ventilation. The research in these areas is way behind that in other areas, even of industrial health'.

Cape Asbestos was a classical example. The Factory Inspectorate had been criticised by the Ombudsman for not tackling the problem of high levels of asbestos at the Cape Asbestos factory at Hebden Bridge. The Factory

Inspectorate's defence was that their own engineers had said that they could not prosecute Cape because there wasn't the necessary control engineering to reduce the level of asbestos to less than a safe level. 'It was a Catch 22 situation', said Clutterbuck 'because you can't be prosecuted for not installing something which has not been researched and developed. So 60-70 years after asbestos was introduced, 50 years after it was recognised as causing asbestosis, 30 years after it was seen as causing cancers - still we hadn't got control engineering. Absolutely amazing!'

On the matter of personal responsibility for accidents amongst workers it is interesting to note one of the conclusions of Powell et al. (1971) which states:

'We see repeated injuries as a pointer for various kinds of actions. That action may be reallocation to another job, it may also be modification of the work, or the retraining of the workers. Someone knowledgeable about the work must go and look at it, see how the injuries are arising and chose appropriate preventative measures.'

this approach contrasts with Jim Watts' attitude in 1978, for whilst emphasising the importance of prevention he also applauded the tests carried out on forestry workers which showed - by injecting a liquid into the blood stream - whether they were particularly prone to 'white finger' or Raynaud's phenomenon (as the result of the capillaries not stretching to the extremities of the hand). Positive

results would mean the worker being warned off the job which involved working with vibrating rools such as chainsaws. Five years later a survey showed (Guardian, 30.6.83 Are you fit for your job) that the technique of genetic screening, predominantly used in the USA, had been used by about 15% of companies surveyed. This is a variant of the 'personal protection' approach to safety.

Pressures from employers can also result in encouraging corners to be cut (like spraying chemicals in windy conditions) to get work done quickly. Nicholas Armstrong (1973) quote similar examples and show that inexperienced operatives pushed too quickly into a job for which they had not been adequately trained can be another Whilst 'carelessness' was mentioed cause of accidents. by half the interviewees as a cause of accidents, the overall tendency was to see this in the larger context of the pressures mentioned above and the need for safer work systems.

Broadly speaking then, shopfloor attitudes on how to deal with the health and safety issue are liable to be strongly influenced by whether it is perceived as a matter for conflict or consensus between workers and management.

Attitudes can also be affected by the kind of industries operating in particular sectors. An example of this is agriculture, where the close working relationship of many

farmworkers to their employers, (who unlike many employers in industry get 'mud on their boots') may induce the worker to collude in ignoring hazards such as broken power take-off guards to the extent of, as Watts pointed out, hiding a faulty ladder in a nearby orchard rather than have it discovered by a visiting agricultural inspector. Nicholls and Armstrong (1973) give further examples of this type of situation.

Ken Clarke had no doubt that bonus pay could lead to an increase in accidents and he was therefore working to change the system to eliminate this method of payment. (Powell et al. 1971 had discovered a link between product output bonuses and accidents). It was a sign of the effects of the recession that when interviewed in 1983 he explained that after initial success in this regard 'the situation had slid back to the point where bonuses now made up 40% of steel workers' weekly or monthly earnings'. It was another instance of the conflicting pressures for production or safety.

It also emerged from the interviews that the cost versus safety conflict often becomes a jobs versus safety issue if the employer claims safety measures represent such a financial drain that it has to come to a choice between onr or the other. There is evidence (cited in a later chapter) to suggest that this type of conflict is occurring at plant and national level on a wide scale. Both

Clutterbuck and Rowledge in their interviews raise the other possibility, that in times of recession, when trade unions are being less successful in the pursuit of wage increases, they could turn their attention with more beneficial results to the health and safety field where the costs of management concessions were less obvious and thus easier to extract.

Clutterbuck goes further in his most recent remarks (June 1983) when he suggests that attention to the health and safety issue at many workplaces is having a cohesive effect, with a series of minor advances and maintaining trade unionists' morale at a higher level than would be expected, through these advances. However, Fairclough, who teaches safety representatives on courses run by the TUC, thought that this phenomenon was less prevalent in the of England where he taught as opposed to Clutterbuck's experience in the North. These diverging views raised the possibility that this 'enhancing' role of health and safety at work activity varied regionally. This, perhaps, suggests a fruitful field for further study, with questionnaires to workplaces or safety representatives across wide geographical and industrial spreads, asking what were the issues that workers had made most progress on in a specified recent period.

McKechnie used the cost/jobs versus safety conflict to underline the importance of the disclosure of information section of the Health and Safety at Work Act. She claimed that it would be harder for management to make baseless threats about the parlous state of their companies' finances and the consequent threat to jobs if the workforce were fully informed.

Degree of priority given to the health and safety issue

Just as union members' perception of the nature of the health and safety issue has a bearing upon the activity they undertake in its pursuit, so too does the priority which they attach to it in relation to other union activities.

Sam Rowledge like all the other interviewees, saw the health and safety issue as of great importance. One way in which he demonstrated this was to give what he called 'talks' to branch secretaries and shop stewards on health and safety and the question of representation at the union district office in Birmingham. Through this contact with other workers he was able to assess just how slow his own employers, British Leyland, had been in accepting safety representatives and committees and in allowing time-off for TUC training courses.

At the time that these interviewees were carried out (1977-78) there was a general lack of satisfaction with the amount of resources being devoted to health and safety by

the unions. This showed itself in various ways. All the union full-time staff professed to be run off their feet and unable to give the kind of service they thought was necessary for their members. McKechnie needed more assistance (since granted, but still insufficient she feels) - the legal departments' resources were far higher and she wanted the union to pay for having experts on tap. The lack of finance also meant, she thought, that unions were not always capable of running their own independent training courses.

Clutterbuck pointed out that BSSRS members were being employed by unions like GMBATU to run their training courses simply because they were not prepared to pay for full-time union safety officials. But if they were serious about taking a preventive approach they would have to remedy this (they have since appointed Dave Gee and organised training courses) and be prepared to take on back-up teams of experts like engineers equipped to go in in support of local union members.

Both Bibbings and Watts said that they were only giving part of their time to the job, which they found totally unsatisfactory. It meant, for example, that they were unable to undertake enough in-depth research; questionnaire evaluation (as with asbestos) or liaising with other bodies in the health and safety field - which

was a particular wish of Watts (having in mind bodies like RoSPA, The British Agrochemicals Association and the Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee).

Bibbings wanted to see the time when his union was able to train all their safety representatives to be self-reliant in using the Act and getting the answers they needed.

McKechnie looked forward to the time she could end the 'fire-fighting' side of her job and make health and safety a bargaining issue which she thought it ought to be as safety representatives took on a monitoring role.

Clarke bemoaned the popularity with the workers of abnormal conditions payments (danger money) which were a great temptation for men working in the most hazardous areas, like the rolling mills in the steel industry.

In early 1983 the GMBATU undertook a consultative exercise, which included a questionnaire sent to 7,500 union members, in order to review services provided by the union. The project was carried out as an aid to the union's executive committee in deciding on future priorities when it discussed the findings towards the end of 1983.

The unpublished survey was computer-analysed in the summer of 1983 and showed (see Table 2.1) that the issue of health and safety rated as important as negotiations on wages and

redundancies in rankings with a number of other issues.

Respondents were classed as both activists (office holders) and non-activists (non-office holders), but there were surprisingly no significant differences in the ways they answered except that activists were more critical of the level of service they received from the union. The only significant differences in answers (as related to me by the then Research Officer, Larry Whitty) were variations according to industry and region of origin of the respondents. A detailed breakdown along these lines was undertaken and showed, for example, that the issue of health and safety was ranked as less important by public sector GMBATU members than by those in the private sector.

Whitty thought this finding may reflect a lower level of awareness and risk in the public sector though Gee points to a marked discrepancy between professions of concern about health and safety in the public sector and practice at the workplace (a discussion on private and public sector health and safety problems is developed later in this study).

TABLE 2.1: IMPORTANCE TO MEMBERS OF THE GMBATU OF VARIOUS ISSUES IN WHICH TRADE UNIONS ARE INVOLVED

Ranking Value	Issue
1.89	Negotiations on wages
1.80	Health and safty
1.80	Redundancy
between	Union cash benefits
1.50	Legal services
and	Support for industrial action/
1.0	strike pay
between	Activity on training
1.0 and	Pensions and sick pay
0	Equal pay
Less than	
0	Political activity

NOTE: This table is not a complete representation of results

Key to ranking values:

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance a number of issues. Upper and lower limits of popularity were given values between 2 and -2 (thus, +2 was 'very important'; +1 'important' through to 0, -1 and -2 'not very important').

The questionnaire, which went out through branches and journals of the union with correspondence from the branches to members, was weighted according to sex, occupation and industry. It was not divided by type, for example, safety representative or shop steward, etc.

Corroborative evidence of shopfloor importance given to the health and safety issue is given by other studies. One such was an unpublished attitude survey of delegates to the National Conference for the Chemical and Associated Industries (another questionnaire by the then GMWU, this time of 40 delegates) analysed in April 1982 for internal information. When asked to rank in order of merit, wages, hours, holidays, closed shop, training, health and safety, job security and equal rights, health and safety rates consistently very high, coming a close third to job security and wages. In items thought to be of most value in bulletins coming from head office, health and safety ranked first.

Why the subject of health and safety should prove to rank so high is a matter for speculation. Is it a reflection of a diminution in wage militancy in a period of recession and of the variability of feelings about redundancy fears, which may come and go in waves? Is it an answer that respondents would think they ought to give rather than believe firmly? Or is it a genuine and enduring concern

about the perceived threat of industrial disease and injury which has maintained interest with the coming of safety representatives and the effects of the Health and Safety at Work Act?

A study by Clinton (1982) which questioned 129 trade union representatives from a wide variety of unions, occupations and geographical areas, found that 'general health and safety issues' came top (mentioned by 65 respondents) of a list of 18 activities which trade union representatives became involved in. The category 'health and safety cases of individuals' came third in the list of activities (mentioned by eight respondents). Thus it was on a par with 'overtime and related issues' (50%), 'sick pay' and 'submission of regular wage claim to management' and was higher than 'redundancies' and many other categories.

Such a preoccupation with health and safety issues may be accounted for in some degree by the wording of the question which seeks to establish the frequency with which activities involve the respondents rather than asking them to rank them in the order they consider the issues important. But striking poultry workers at Freemans in Gloucestershire whom I visited in October 1982, provided an example of genuine concern over a safety issue which is not uncommon in British industry — a longstanding grievance over occupational health and safety which emerged in the strength of feeling shown over a separate industrial

relations issue. Shop stewards immediately showed me members' arms which were scarred from the effects of tenosynovitis-relieving operations or accidents with knives at work. They complained that management had done nothing to respond to their demands about unsafe working conditions. The strike was ostensibly about union recognition.

Personal observation and experience in working for the NUAAW and subsequently the TGWU have underlined the degree of importance that lay members of the agricultural union (now a Trade Group of the TGWU) ascribe to the issue. Invariably at least a quarter of the resolutions at Area Conferences are on health and safety in farming or other rural industries.

This pattern is repeated both at branch level, where meetings are often solely devoted to a talk by the local agricultural inspector (followed by discussions), discussion of farm chemicals, chain saws or tractor safety, and at the national delegate conference level. Evidence for the former is contained in items sent up to the union newspaper, the Landworker both in the form of letters and news items for the Around the Counties column which carries reports of branch activity and from personal experience of attending branch meetings.

Resolutions to the Agricultural and Allied Workers

National Trade Group Conference, are a barometer of the level of importance given to the health and safety issue all through the Trade Group. At the 1982 Conference, for example, 36 resolutions - just under one fifth of all 195 resolutions submitted by branches for the public session of Conference - came under the Health, Safety and Welfare heading. Several others which had strong connections with the issue, such as protective clothing, appeared in other sections.

At the national level the TUC frequently ackowledges the importance it places on the health and safety issue. At the 1982 TUC Congress in Brighton, Ray Buckton, Chairman of the Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee, led in that section of debates with the following words:

'The struggle for improvement in health and safety at work standards continues, and, paradoxically, as more information becomes available on workplace hazards, so the economic and political pressures grow for a reduction in protection.' (TUC Report 1982; 489)

He was referring to the cuts in the HSC's budget which was restricting services in the field, a subject this study will look at further in a later section.

An unpublished compilation of answers from affiliated unions to a TUC questionnaire on its affiliated members' health and safety services (TUC 1983) added more weight to

the argument that unions are taking the health and safety issue seriously in providing services originating at national levels. It stated:

'The extent of activity described by unions demonstrates overwhelmingly that health and safety at work issues are seen as a major part of the functions of trade unions.'

The nature of this activity will be considered in more detail in the sections which follow.

Health vs. safety

National level interviewees were in no two minds about the importance of the need to underline the issue of health hazards. Gee and Clutterbuck were particularly emphatic. Gee related that he had made it a major aim on starting his job at the GMBATU as safety officer to concentrate on health issues because they had been so neglected:

'90% of all regulations are on safety. Most of the training is concentrated on safety because you can see the hazazds, can detect them, and they are not normally long term.'

In his estimate there were more people dying of work-related diseases than of industrial accidents, but the size of the problem was totally unknown because of the lack of data. He thought that a figure of around one third of all diseases being work-related was a reasonable guess.

It was for this reason that he had concentrated the efforts of his union so much onto the health issue, being instrumental in setting up amongst other things three seminars with ASTMS (which drew in sympathetic academic and scientific expertise) on criteria for carcinogenciity: Ames tests, 1978 (only the GMBATU); animal data, 1979 and epidemiology, 1980. He also concentrated on tackling particular industrial health hazards like 245-T, asbestos and vinyl chloride monomer and the broader issue of dust and fume control in which the union set the pace at the national level in producing jointly with the industry and the HSE a guide to controlling these hazards in the rubber industry, Clearing the air (1982), which should also, he hopes, act as a model for other industries in the attempt to rid industry of excess cancers and other diseases.

Clutterbuck saw the main role of BSSRS as: 'Setting out to supply technical information to groups of workers, particularly those who are involved in some kind of struggle over industrial health'. He bemoaned the fact that it was very hard to convince workers that the medical establishment was not 'on their side' and that 'family doctors probably have no idea about industrial health.' (They receive very little training on this issue). BSSRS, he thought, looked more at health issues partly because they had access to scientists who could provide relevant data and partly because their general field was



'substances rather than safety'.

Jim Watts of the NUAAW was acutely aware of the problem.

He wanted much more and co-ordinated research into the health problems of farmworkers. He said:

'Take health as distinct from safety: there's mounting evidence, but uncollated and unresearched for example to indicate that pulmonary disease in agriculture is higher than in the population at large.'

This would be a considerable improvement on what Clutterbuck called:

"The Generation Law" now well established in the mills, potteries and mines. In one generation a hazard is introduced; in the next the hazards might be recognised; and in the third a law may be introduced to control it. It then may take a fourth generation before the hazard is properly controlled but whatever the event, the law is always late in arriving."

Recent literature on occupational cancer (ASTMS 1981; Doyal et al. 1984) shares the concern earlier articulated by Ashford (1976) at 'the failure of the nation's injury reporting system...to recognise the severity of occupational health hazards' in the USA.

It is easy to underestimate the health problem even where one is aware of it. Beaumont (1982) in arguing that the real, long-term challenge is to 'come to terms with the effects of years of heretofore undetected or unknown exposure to toxic substances' assumed in the previous

sentence that 'accidents cause far more days lost than occupational disease.'

This is an assumption conveniently shared, for example, by the agrochemicals industry with whom I have frequently crossed swords (Kaufman 1981) over 'the fiction that pesticides have an enviable safety record in Britain - that people rarely die or become seriously ill as a result of exposure to them'.

However, to be fair, it is an assumption shared in all probability even by union activists. This was certainly the case in the ranking positions shown in Workplace Industrial Relations referring to the years 1966, 1972 and 1973. In these surveys, shop stewards, managers and foremen all ranked safety consistently higher than health when asked how important they saw them.

Role ascribed to trade unions

If trade unions are to play a positive role in the health and safety field it is important to attempt to understand how employers themselves view that role.

The CBI submission to the Robens Committee (Robens, 1972) argued that an employers' organization saw only a passive role for the unions whose best interests lay in seeking compensation, personal protection, vigilance and co-operation/consensus with management. Interviewees' experience confirmed this general picture of the employers' view of the trade unions' role being that of supplying the other side of 'consensus'. Thus, Rowledge found British Leyland intent on setting up safety committees in his workplace as a response to the SRSC Regulations. They also sought to select the unions' safety representatives for them and not to give them time off for TUC training.

Clarke was experiencing exactly the same two problems with British Steel management (though by the time he was approached again in 1983 he was pleased that a national agreement for permitting safety representatives to attend ten day TUC courses had been established with British Steel, who were also operating in-plant training on specific hazards). Bibbings confirmed this reluctance of employers to give time off for safety representative training.

The general picture to emerge from interviews and personal observation is of opposition to the 'active' participation of union representation in health and safety, unless the level of union organization has been sufficient to modify employer attitudes.

There would be more weight to the employers' arguments were they able to demonstrate the success of the approach they advocate through safety committees. Available information from studies which have been undertaken and which will be discussed in a later section, suggest that there is much room for improvement in present arrangements for safety committees, safety policies, safety agreements, the training of management and communication between management and the shopfloor.

In the infancy of the Health and Safety at Work Act a report by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE, 1976)

whilst laying great emphasis on the need to involve the workforce in safety policies found that joint consultation was often ineffective because action was inhibited by deferring matters to meetings which were infrequently held and because the ability of committees to make decisions was often limited. Informal consultation and worker involvement had proved to be of more value than formal consultation machinery.

This report also stated that it was disappointed by 'the minimal influence of the trade unions at any level to influence the poorer performers towards improvement'. It concluded that management, by not undertaking proper analysis of the safety situation and thus being in a position to provide the unions with proper and significant information, had a responsibility for the ineffective role of the union in many cases.

It would be of interest to assess from the fieldwork what degree of importance respondents attached to safety committees and safety representatives in their description of existing workplace procedure and the extent to which they saw management playing a positive role. A hypothesis to test could, therefore, be:

Safety representatives are satisfied with the contribution made by management in the field of health and safety at work. Data could emerge from questions asking whether respondents found their health and safety procedures effective, and also their management's co-operative in relation to information provision, training, and consultation.

The CBI submission, perhaps the clearest exposition of the employers' collective attitude (Robens, 1972), states:

'It is or should be the concern of trade unions...to encourage their members to prevent accidents to themselves and to others as well as to provide, under the present system, a legal aid service to assist their members to pursue claims for damages for personal injury when caused by negligence of others. The CBI is however under the impression that, while the majority of unions provide legal aid service, few adopt positive policies to engender the right attitude of mind towards accident prevention in their members.'

The CBI believes that trade unions could make a valuable contribution to accident prevention programmes if they would:

- '(1) Prepare and give the widest publicity to a statement of union policy which emphasises the importance of achieving a good safety record and the responsibility which this places on the employee. The statement should also indicate practical ways in which the unions and their members can help to achieve good safety performances;
- (2) Discuss and agree voluntarily with management at company and works level practical ways of helping to reduce industrial accidents and diseases;
- (3) Encourage their officers and members to co-operate with management in the continuous effort required to eliminate

unsafe acts and practices by means of union training courses and propaganda.'

This statement can only be characterised as astonishingly ignorant of the day-to-day practical problems faced by workers and their unions and devoid of thought about the role which organised workers can play in occupational health and safety.

Hence it mentions nothing about procedures for raising and arguing over workplace hazards, nothing of facilities which workplace representatives would require of both unions and management, nothing of tackling the hazards at source, nothing towards the provision of union-only training or of vital information for identifying and eliminating hazards, for measuring dangerous noise levels or a host of other preventive approaches.

Instead of a thoughtful evaluation of a positive role for trade unions which conveys some understanding of how and why they operate, the statement offers no solutions but those which had failed before and which by that time (1971) were being seen in that light by the more enlightened sections of the trade union and labour movement.

That is, it suggests the 'mixture as before', i.e. personal responsibility on individuals to 'prevent accidents to themselves' and legal services to obtain compensation if the worker proved incapable of managing the former.

The CBI perspective therefore placed the onus on the potential victim not to be a 'careless worker', rather than upon the employer to provide a safe system of work. It placed a duty on the union to obtain monetary compensation for the accident (which the employer could find through his budgeted-for insurance policy at much less expense than providing a safe working environment) rather than establish a workplace organization capable of tackling management over preventive strategies.

In short its approach prescribed for unions and their members a passive, quiescent role which accepted that management would neither accept responsibility for workplace health and safety nor engage in meaningful discussion with trade unionists to the extent that negotiations or bargaining (a 'pluralist' perspective discussed amongst other types of management/employee relationships by Fox, 1974) was envisaged over health and safety issues.

No active role for union safety representatives could be enshrined in this framework (a 'unitary' approach), nor suggestion of a possible conflict of interests between employers and unions over health and safety issues.

Instead the emphasis was on bromides such as 'voluntary agreements' and 'co-operation' with management;

'statements' about union policy etc. - all adding up to the 'consensus view which had manifestly failed in the past, with the ineffectual 'tea and biscuits' safety committees whose memory was involved in the focussed interviews.

A decade later Leopold & Beaumont (1982) showed that attitudes had not changed; 'management respondents were quite emphatic that strong trade union organization had little to contribute towards improving safety.'

(Safety officers, it should be added, disagreed with their management colleagues.)

These employers' fears are echoed by Manos (1980) in looking at union involvement at the national level:

'what disturbs the employers is the same as what is giving the union confidence to step up their pressure for stronger action (particularly on the control of toxic substances and health hazards in general) - the unions "success" is making the setting of health standards a matter of collective bargaining.'

'The unions' reject the concept of reasonable practicability and the compromises which it generates. For example, the concept inevitably leads to the consideration of the acceptability of different standards of control in different sectors of industry.

Gee (1980) points to TUC co-ordination of unions on hazards that affect more than one industry as vital in this report, with his union, GMBATU and ASTMS leading the 'bargaining' school of unions. (Others feel that consensus is the best

they can get at this level). It is an issue now squarely on the agenda of the TUC's health and safety specialists group.

Resources provided by trade unions for health and safety at work

The national level interviews and available relevant literature pointed to three major types of resource which trade unions could put into the health and safety sphere of activity. These were: manpower, information and training for those taking an active interest in the subject.

This section attempts to view those inputs firstly in terms of individual unions and then examines the role played by the TUC.

Bibbings has suggested that the individual unions have been happier to allow a larger role on health and safety than on other issues perhaps because it seems a less contentious issue than others such as the Industrial Relations Act or incomes policy over which unions tended to fall out over policy differences. It also seems clear that a standardised approach in this field is easier to determine - related to particular materials or work processes - than issues like wages which attach to varying skills, differentials, traditions and industries.

Manpower

All four head office interviewees complained that they did not have the time or staff to service the needs of their membership in the many and diverse demands which were arising in the health and safety field. At the outset of this study only the National Union of Mineworkers and ASTMS employed any full-time health and safety specialists (and Sheila McKechnie had been in her post at ASTMS for less than one year). However, by the time the Industrial Relations Services reported in a review (September, 1979) headed Unions Expand their Safety Services the print unions had appointed a union co-ordinator and the GMWU a full-time safety officer (Dave Gee). They added:

'Over the past year other unions have created posts of safety staff at varying levels and most have in some ways expanded their activity on safety issues - almost all the main unions have produced safety handbooks and now send their safety representatives on training courses. Full-time, technically-qualified officers are still very much the exception. But most of the big unions have at least one person working almost exclusively on health and safety matters. In many cases, this responsibility is housed in the unions' research department, or in some cases, a national officer takes a special interest in health and safety.'

By the time it reported again (Industrial Relations Services: March 1983) under the title <u>Union Safety</u>

<u>Services Continue Expansion</u> it was able to say:

'Despite the common philosophy in favour of devolved responsibility, the trend has been for unions to appoint full-time health and safety officers, particularly where there has not been commonly established or satisfactory arrangements for joint consultation on safety within the industry concerned. In such cases a full-time safety official is better able to act as a centre of information and encouragement for safety representatives.'

It went on to describe how in industries where serious hazards proliferate, an effective central union safety department is more likey to be required to support regional officials. best example is that of the GMBATU which The has a network of Regional Health and Safety Officers, one in each of the union's ten regions, who are regularly supplied with information from Head Office. These in turn support safety representatives whenever particular problems arise:

'The most prominent of the full-time safety officials have been those within the GMBATU, ASTMS and the print unions SOGAT and NGA (who at one time made do with a single health and safety co-ordinator covering all the print unions). However, active full-time (or effectively full-time) officials are now in place in electricians (EETPU), local government workers (NALGO), construction workers (UCATT), bakers (BAFWU), railways (NUR), electrical engineers (EPEA) and general engineering (AUEW) unions.'

The above uses a rather loose definition of the term 'official'. Strictly speaking, within the trade union hierarchy only Sheila McKechnie at ASTMS was appointed at a national official level. Thus she was able to instruct on policy matters and to relate to other national officials as an equal in status. This is an important distinction from the other health and safety specialists because they do

not have the 'clout' either internally (in suggesting policy, influencing the activities of other national officials, for example, who may be dealing with health and safety matters whilst negotiating on other issues, notably wages, at national industry, or plant level), or externally (being able to exert official pressure on policy decisions with the TUC or other bodies.)

Approximately 35 unions in 1985 have health and safety specialists attending the TUC Health and Safety Specialists Group quarterly meetings, the minutes of which are passed to the TUC Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee. An idea of the spread of the unions which now have health and safety specialists is given by the representation present at the December 1982 meeting. Representatives came from the NUS; NUM; IPCS; BIFU: NALGO: NGA; SOGAT; USDAW: NTGWU: AUEW(ES); EEPTU; UCATT; TGWU/AGRICULTURAL ASTMS; APEX; GMBATU; ISTC; NUPE; NUR; AUEW/FS; WORKERS; SCPS.

A number of these specialists also attend meetings of the Health and Safety Activists Group, a forum which links them with other kowledgeable people in the field working for bodies like The Labour Research Department, London and Birmingham Hazards Centres and educational establishments. This allows for co-ordination of work and best use of resources.

There has also been an increase in the TUC's own manpower in the last ten years. In the early 1970s the Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Department employed just two people - workers on health and safety, who concentrated upon national insurance and compensation questions. Far more extensive services are now available from five members of that department (described later in this chapter).

A strong theme to emerge from the focussed interviews and the follow-up discussions of 1983 was the need for union staff and officials at national level with health and safety responsibility to have sufficiently high status in relation to their fellow officers or staff to allow them enough influence to further the issue of health and safety. This applied in two respects. Firstly, in relation to the influence they could have upon their own colleagues and, secondly, in the influence they could have in national or industry level negotiations.

Most union's national officials have responsibility for negotiating wages and conditions for specific industries or groups of industries. the single issue role of health and safety has traditionally been accorded a less senior position within the union hierarchy. Of all the full-time health and safety specialists attending TUC health and safety specialist meetings, only McKechnie had national officer status. A few national officers with health and

safety responsibility, like Ken Clarke, do exist, but tend not to spend a lot of time on health and safety.

The question of 'clout' is reflected in the degree to which other union officials will consult or take the advice of their health and safety specialists. Thus, ASTMS national officials who are concerned about particular health and safety issues will feel able to come to McKechnie for advice and be able to mount an effective and well-informed campaign such as that carried out in the chemical industry in recent years.

Gee (1980) points out that full-time union officials take a 'wider' view of health and safety issues than their workplace members because of the fact that:

'They themselves survived possibly years of these so-called unhealthy conditions; the problems of knowing that safety representatives are getting information and training that they haven't had; the need to cope with yet another area of new laws and knowledge where "common sense" was sufficient before; and their proximity to managers and their work which can complicate both their own perception of the hazards and their ability to confront employers with charges of unnecessarily exposing workers to harm.'

There are additional pressures on the full-time official, without special interest in health and safety to play down the issue. In the context of wide-ranging negotiations the issue of health and safety may well be traded off against some other element, like a wage increase or a

reduction in hours. And it is not unknown for national officials to sign away the rights of safety representatives at national or industry level negotiations either through ignorance or lack of appreciation of the importance of the issue.

The role of the health and safety specialist who can constantly be drawing pitfalls of this kind to the attention of officials (as a colleague of equal standing) is therefore invaluable. But even Gee, overseeing a network of ten regional health and safety specialists is not, within the GMBATU, of national officer status - being based in the research department. The status he has gained has resulted from widespread recognition of the quality of his work.

It has, however, allowed him to show some noteworthy successes. Exercises such as questionnaires routed through to the shopfloor have revealed a number of hitherto unsuspected health issues (as in the chemical industry) which the union would otherwise have been unaware of: it has generated pressure from the shopfloor onto management over chemical hazards, for example. The union has then supplied its safety representatives with sheets of questions to put to management on the nature of these hazards and what steps it intends taking to rectify them.

On an industry level the union side with the GMBATU and

ASTMS taking the lead has taken the initiative in a tripartite collaboration with the HSE and rubber industry employers to produce a handbook (Clearing the Air, 1982) on controlling fumes and dust hazards, to set standards for individual firms to adhere to. The major input to the booklet came from the unions in an industry which is notorious for health hazards, particularly carcinogens—like beta napthylamine which can produce bladder cancer, vinyl chloride monomer which can lead to angiosarcoma and a series of other effects like respiratory and blood disorders, birth defects, etc.—which can arise from exposure to chemical fumes, solvents and dusts.

However, the effectiveness of any national or industry level initiatives depends on how the union is organized to get the information to the shopfloor to be used effectively by union members at that level and able to translate this into pressure for workplace improvements.

I had first hand experience of this in the water industry where excellent material was prepared by the Joint National Committee but it was becoming stuck in the pipe line at some point in either the management or union structure and not reaching the people it was designed for.

The effectiveness of the health and safety specialist even assuming a strong input from the union at national level, depends to a great extent on the structure, organization,

traditions and type of industry.

McKechnie pointed out that in her experience it was easier to deal with the university technicians and even the National Health Service (which has major health and safety problems) because of a central bargaining structure than, for example, the plastics industry which had to be dealt with on the basis of individual company negotiations. This made it far harder to draw up a mailing list for safety representatives and to work out a strategy for dealing with issues. Dealing with multi-national companies threw up a different set of problems where she found herself having to press for the establishment of safety representatives rather than on specific issues.

A difference in approach can also be detected in public and private sector industries. A higher proportion of the former are unionised and, as Glendon and Booth (1982) point out, there is a greater level of joint consultative and bargaining machinery at industry level:

'Private sector industry is largely characterised by an absence of formal machinery for joint discussions on health and safety much beyond the level of individual plant or company.'

Glendon and Booth (1982) instanced arrangements in British Telecom and the Electrical Industry while Atherley et al. (1975) describe the mining industry.

Gee found that public sector industries tend to take a high public profile on the issues of health and safety but that their efforts seem mainly concentrated upon those areas where their work comes into contact with the public. In contrast workplace conditions have taken a much lower priority.

Beaumont (1982) points out that there 'appears to be increasing evidence of the emergence of issues and problems that are very much specific to the public sector.' He does not find this surprising in view of the fact that it was this sector which was covered for the first time under the 1974 HASAWA statutorily, that 'crown immunity' still exists, that it was the local authorities' resistance to safety representatives which was largely instrumental in delaying their inception until 1978 (on the grounds of cost), that the Association of County Councils had since tried unsuccessfully to have the SRSC Regulations revoked for local authorities and that the public sector unions in any case had no strong tradition of workplace level bargaining strength. A study of union involvement in public sector health and safety issues, as suggested by Beaumont (1982) and building on that Levinson (1984), should prove rewarding.

The experience of both Ken Clarke and myself is that certain industries which have both public and private

sectors make a better effort on health and safety in the public than in the private. Clarke used the example of the Steel Industry and I have found that Government Experimental Farms (agricultural stations) and the Forestry Commission on the whole take a far more responsible attitude on health and safety than do their privately-owned counterparts.

The inputs of manpower and training by themselves are no single answer to overcoming the power relationships within industry and lack of activity on the health and safety front which existed since the industrial revolution. As Gee (1980) states:

'One hundred years of neglect needs some changing, especially when the status quo has powerful support. Many safety representatives have returned to work from attendance at TUC training courses full of enthusiasm, identified a host of problems and broken themselves against the reality which has hardly moved.'

He is supported in this argument by every trade union tutor I have discussed this issue with, for example, Gerry Mealor, Ann Greaves and Andy Fairclough, who see the problems of trying to effect change. All these tutors have had the experience of teaching the trade union approach to health and safety and then been told by disappointed students how difficult it has been to put into effect the desired changes. Problems are delineated by Gee as:

'Firstly, the safety representative is usually isolated because only a few in each workplace will have been away on a course. The information, enthusiasm, vision and support gained from courses is theirs alone, and it can put them apart from fellow stewards and members. Secondly, past neglect by employers and unions have resulted in workplaces that could indeed by "closed overnight". And, thirdly, the members, other stewards, full-time officials, management and government inspectors, have good reason to support the status quo.'

Union organization for health and safety at work

The TUC survey (TUC, 1983) noted that there was an immense variety of systems of organization adopted by unions to tackle health and safety at work issues:

'No common pattern can be discerned but the factors affecting the structures of organization include the unions' national structure, the distribution of unions' membership in areas and industry and the scale and nature of risks faced by union memberships. A large number of unions in sectors with common employment problems have established sub-committees of their own executive bodies to deal with health and safety issues exclusively. Into this category fall such unions as SOGAT, NUPE, POEU, NUM, BFAWU, ASTMA, GMABTU, and the Agricultural workers section of the TGWU. Others, like the NUT, with its Conditions of Service Committee and the SCPS deal with the issue through other executive sub-committees.'

It is common practice for all these executive sub-committees to be serviced and co-ordinated by either a senior national officer (like Watts or Clarke) or member of an executive (e.g. AUEW(ES)) who his been allocated the responsibility. For example, in SOGAT one general officer

spends one fifth of his time on work like this. The Agricultural Workers official spends a lesser proportion of his time.

The most interesting development in this field appears have been in the Bakers Union, which has produced parallel health and safety structure to the one based stewards. Thus, safety representatives can delegated by branches to Regional Safety Committees (parallel to Regional councils) and then to the National Safety Committee and finally to the Executive Committee. A spin-off effect here is that Nigel Bryson, the full-time national health and safety officer, is perhaps now the most 'powerful' of all health and safety specialists as he has the backing of a regional structure containing safety representatives as his 'constituency'. In this position he is able to go out and pick up problems from them whereas even the now well-established systems at GMBATU (with its paid regional safety officers, who in the current period of stretched resources are having to combine their posts with others who are leaving, thus reducing health and safety coverage) and ASTMS (with its lay divisional safety officers) have to wait until issues percolate upwards. The Bakers' Union experience may prove to be a useful 'bell-weather' for other unions to study in eradicating what seems to be a weakness at the intermediary level for dealing with health and safety problems. That is, a safety representative structure has been built at ground level, a large increase in personnel has been achieved at national level but little appears to have been done at the district/regional level in this regard.

Safety representatives

In April 1978 a TUC education service internal discussion paper deciding on future TUC teaching materials for ten-day health and safety courses projected an anticipated national figure of 150,000 safety representatives to be in post when the Regulations had come fully into implementation. When the SRSC Regulations had been in operation for two years, the TUC estimated that there were in excess of 100,000 safety representatives, of whom around half had received training on the TUC ten-day course (Gee, 1980).

Undoubtedly from the existing literature, personal observation and all known experience, there was a rapid burgeoning in the number of safety representatives after the 1978 regulations came intoforce as the TUC survey (TUC, 1983) points out:

'Without exception all unions stress the importance of ensuring the appointment and training of safety representatives at the workplace and the linking of safety representatives activity with local, regional and national structures and procedures.'

Suffice it to say that within a short space of time

following the long delayed introduction of the SRSC regulations over 100,000 shopfloor lay representatives had come into existence with the rights and functions (described earlier) ascribed to them under the Regulations. Some of them may have already been doing a similar job and many of them were shop stewards taking on an additioal role but, nevertheless, it represented a radical step.

The legislation which introduced safety representatives as worker participants in occupational health and safety in October 1978 is the Health and Safety at Work Act and the subsequent Safety Representatives and Safety Committees (SRSC) Regulations which arose from it. They are supported by two approved codes of practice, the code of practice on safety representatives and the codes of practice for time-off for training of safety representatives and by guidance notes.

Only safety representatives appointed by recognised trade unions have a statutory basis, a subject over which there was much debate in the Houses of Commons and Lords in the mid 1970s when great pressure was exerted by the trade union movement to ensure that this was the outcome. (The pros and cons of this debate have been adequately outlined elsewhere e.g. Hansard, 1974, CBI Conference, and need not be dwelt upon in this study beyond inspiring the question to respondents to the shopfloor survey as to how well they

could operate without trade union backing.)

Under the legislation, union appointed safety representatives were given a number of workplace functions and rights which may be summarised as (SRSC Regulations, 1977):

'representing employees in consultation with the employer;

investigating potential hazards and dangerous occurrences;

examining causes of accidents;

investigating relevant complaints from represented employees;

making representation to the employer on matters arising out of causes of accidents and on general matters affecting employees' health, safety or welfare;

inspecting the workplace by agreement with the employer at least every three months, or in the event of a notifiable accident, dangerous occurrence or notifiable disease;

representing employees in consultation with the appropriate enforcing agencies;

receiving relevant factual information from inspectors;

attending safety committee meetings.'

The teaching material which goes with the TUC training course for safety representatives (TUC, 1978) outlined the basis upon which the TUC intended to give safety representatives 'a sound trade union approach to their job'. Emphasis is laid upon 'getting organised', 'identifying problems' and 'getting things done'.

Cunningham (1978) pointed to a number of ways to organise on the shopfloor to mobilise the trade unions' resources. they include the right to stop work; health and safety inspections; effective use of health and safety documents and a training programme; facilities for representatives; regular medical checks for members and the analysis and control of materials which are used at work.

The above are suggestions to which many organised and unorganised workers can as yet only aspire. The degree to which workers are successful depends to a great extent on the kind of procedures they can agree with management. In turn, this has much to do with the kind of support safety representatives receive, notably from other union members, but also from the inspectorate and management and higher levels of the union. This topic will be returned to shortly.

Stopping the job

Examples of shopfloor organization along the lines suggested by Cunningham include stopping the job when any law is being or has been broken or there is actual or potential danger from the use of machinery, substances or an unsafe system of work.

Watts pointed out that poultry workers were far more

likely to be able to take action on behalf of their own members' safety standards than farmworkers who worked in greater isolation. They were in a more typically industrial situation with their own shop stewards structure and support from the other workers and it was not uncommon to have walk-outs in poultry factories when management speeded up production lines (increasing the dangers).

Health and safety inspection

Useful checklists for highlighting particular hazards, suggesting where to look for other dangers and for when and where safety representatives can hold health and safety inspections have now been produced by most unions. Examples appear in the TUC teaching material and in Kinnersley (1973) as well as in booklets provided by ASTMS and the Health and Safety Commission's Advice to Employers (HSC3).

Effective use of health and safety documents and training

Apart from official publications, legal documents and those emanating from union sources, (dealt with in a later section) health and safety documents can include fire appliance and machinery safety certificates, factory inspectors' reports (ensuring that any tests carried out by the inspector shows the result) and reports of surveys

carried out by government occupational health experts. A well organized system of safety representatives will ensure that these are scrutinized.

In the plant, health and safety training should cover elementary training for all new workers, refresher courses, training for new jobs and training in fire prevention and first aid. These are all legitimate trade union demands for training distinct from the training provided by trade unions or the TUC themselves which contain, 'the trade union dimension' (an area which is expanded upon later in this chapter).

Facilities for representatives

Facilities for representatives as recommended in the TUC handbook <u>Facilities</u> for <u>shop</u> <u>stewards</u> should also be available to safety representatives. These include:

'a room and desk at the workplace; facilities for storing correspondence; inspection reports and other papers; ready access to internal/external telephones; access to typing and duplication facilities; provision of notice boards; use of suitable room for reporting back to and consulting with members.' (TUC, 1975)

Representatives also require time off with pay to perform safety representative duties and to undergo training (see under 'Training' heading).

New ideas can surface from experience and from pooling ideas in union representatives' groups like BSSRS.

Clutterbuck (interview) was most emphatic that:

'one thing we did find out very early on is that there is no point in talking with unorganized workers.'

They were unable to arrange any kind of health and safety procedure and the suggestion of arguing with employers was, in the words of one employee, 'more than my job's worth.'

However, to unionised workers, BSSRS suggested ideas such as asking the management for a levy on the basis of one halfpenny per hour per employee to be paid into a fund for health and safety which could be jointly or singly controlled and available to buy books, films, measuring instruments, etc. Clutterbuck said:

'We got that trick from the States, from the Atomic Workers Union. They negotiated it at national level.'

And then, speculating, he said:

'Think of the TGWU negotiating that at national level! How much money that would bring into industrial health - millions! So you could pay for all the books and courses and information. You could hire your consultants on the union side when you needed them.'

BSSRS also suggested ideas like workers conducting their own surveys amongst the worforce on health hazards. This would not only have the effect of interesting the

membership in health and safety issues, but could also unearth a rich source of data.

Regular medical checks

Regular medical check-ups were particularly favoured by Watts who thought that farmworkers were especially prone to circulatory and respiratory diseases as well as to spinal problems arising from the nature of their job. Such check-ups should take into account the illnesses or diseases most likely to occur to workers in particular industries but in the light of the suggestion earlier in this study that the current recession is encouraging employers to lay-off workers with any infirmity, Cunningham's advice (1978) is soundly based when he states: 'If there are any grounds for suspecting the check-up might be used by management for the purposes of making certain workers redundant or for transferring others, all participation in the check-up must cease immediately.'

Analysis of materials

The training course tutors suggest that analysis of materials used at work should be undertaken in the knowledge that the union representatives are furnished with the results or, indeed, included in the sampling, analysis or monitoring processes on a joint basis.

Control of materials and work systems

Perhaps the most advanced in terms of industrial democracy aspirations, Gee, Clutterbuck and McKechnie suggested that the following issues are part of the bargaining system in an effort to eradicate health hazards; decisions about machinery to be bought, lay out, new work processes or new substances to be jointly discussed - all to be agreed by safety representatives before being brought into action.

Safety representatives and organization

lay officials with the statutory backing of the SRSC Regulations, safety representatives should represent their union membership and be accountable to them. This can set up the 'tension' with management which undermines the Robens concept of consensus over health and safety. represent a departure from the previous voluntaristic tradition of British industrial relations. In short, it was the radical basis of the safety representative concept. Glendon (1977) points out that though SRSC guidance notes offer advice on consulting and getting the interest and co-operation of workmates 'that may be easier said than This view is echoed by many other including Clarke, Gee, McKechnie and Bibbings. Gee (1980) states:

'The members are concerned about jobs, and increasingly so. Accidents and disease may

only affect some of them, whilst militancy on safety could affect the employment of them all.'

Gee also instances some of the arguments put up by workers turning a blind eye to potential hazards:

'"A cancer death is decades away, and only some of us may be affected..." "Isn't there more chance of me getting killed on the road?" "It won't happen to me." "It's their fault anyway if they get injured or diseased."

Then there's the danger of trusting sense data instead of common sense: "You can see there's no dust here..."; "You get used to the noise after a bit"; "The smell tells us when there's too much of that chemical"; "There's no disease hazard here, you should come on the pensioners' night out...".

Finally, when the risks are accepted, there's the argument that conditions have always been like that, and they're inevitable anyway, add to that the machismo arguments, and the lure of conditions money and you have some powerful opposition to doing anything.'

As something of a counterbalance, Nelkein and Brown (1983) showed workers well able to perceive the risk when they were interviewed.

Cook (1980) in a small scale study found that safety representatives became frustrated at times and responded in a number of ways amongst which were attributing workplace inactivity to apathy amongst the workforce and experiencing perceptions of powerlessness.

Leopold and Beaumont (1982) revealed a 'weakness in the relationship between committee members and the shopfloor'

which can be assumed to affect safety representatives as They reported that in their study of 51 safety well. committees, 'the vast majority of representatives reported that their members expressed little concern and interest in the work of the committee'. There may be a number of contributory reasons for this, not the least of which could be the members' lack of faith in the effectiveness of the committee. Leopold and Beaumont (1982) also cite the lack of adequate communication channels between union committee members and the shopfloor, using the essentially passive methodof reporting on the notice board rather than the verbal report backs and discussions to involve the membership.

Powell et al. (1971) had a similar approach concluding that attitudes to accident prevention may be improved if:

'Workers on the shop floor...were encouraged to feel that something ought to be done. Often it can. Shopfloor representatives could encourage this, if they can be taught what to look for.'

Both Bibbings and McKechnie in June 1983 volunteered reasons why safety representatives were not proving to be the force for change that many had hoped for in 1978. Bibbings isolated three defects: firstly, that safety representatives trade union structures were tending to operate separately from other trade union structures; secondly, that safety representatives were re-active, that is, that they did not initiate activity (which might

involve the members), but only tended to deal with problems as they cropped up; and thirdly, that they were essentially inductive rather than deductive, that is, that they tended to look at the risks rather than at the system which produced them. All these elements would make safety representatives less relevant to the perceived needs of the shopfloor member and, therefore, less likely to gain industrial support if needed. These areas could well prove fruitful for further research.

Six years after her original interview (see Appendix) McKechnie was aghast at some of her earlier 'innocence'. She said that many had assumed that the active safety representatives would soon find themselves part of a system which would transform collective bargaining by involving them in the process of decision-making on fundamental planning issues. In so doing the conflict between paying for healthy working conditions and maximising profits for company shareholders would be exposed. The problems of building up and maintaining an effective safety representative system had been underestimated. She said that the original idea of having a register of safety representatives to feed information to had proved unworkable because the time and manpower to service it had just not been available. But that in itself would have been no 'miracle answer' because the hard lesson she had learnt was 'that it is no good just pumping information out - you must be organized at the grassroots first. Time and

again when we had a really good issue come up, the level of union organization was not good enough to carry it off.'

By way of explanation she suggested that, 'we underestimate the way the structure prioritises the interests of specific groups of workers.'

The suggestion was that safety representatives have different power bases or constituencies of workers than shop stewards and that though stewards had taken the representatives' job on, in many cases they could not spare the time or follow up the cases. The shop stewards' traditional base of particular groups of workers raised demands for different things. The more militant were rarely militant over health and safety issues, taking the miners, for example: though they had workmen's inspectors and raised their voices over roof falls, they WERE not so vocal on issues of dust. In a similar way, groups of workers had a militant approach on other industrial issues like railwaymen, printers and shipbuilders did not 'take up the cudgels' (in general) over health and safety issues.

This could also be a fruitful subject for further research through a comparison of industrial militancy as against health and safety militancy in a range of industries. One starting point could be Department of Employment statistical records and ACAS Annual Reports which record disputes (for example 5% of strikes in the last year were reported to be over health and safety issues - ACAS Annual

Report 1982) though these figures are not always reliable.

In short, shop stewards and safety representatives had different constituencies and what was now required was concentration on assisting workplace organization for safety representatives and increasing their support.

Safety representative or shop steward?

As Leopold and Beaumont (1982) point out most of the manual workers' unions like the TGWU and the AUEW have as a policy that their safety representatives are shop stewards:

'One key reason for this was the fear that shop stewards and safety representatives could be making contradictory decisions if they were not the same person.'

Even unions which have this policy do not invoke it consistently and many safety representatives are not shop stewards. This can lead, say Leopold and Beaumont, to a most unsatisfactory report-back mechanism to the shopfloor:

'The potential problem of contradictory decisions is often tackled by having safety committee members report back to the membership. Thus the reporting back on safety committee business is secondhand and is dependent on how often the shop steward is able to have departmental meetings, if at all.'

Bibbings explained the mechanism in operation in the AUEW in 1977:

'Every steward is a potential safety

representative but in practice not every steward will assume that role or function. It will be only those people who have a special interest or expertise. In our case no formal appointments of stewards have been made. It's simply a question of stewards taking up and developing what has always been part of their work anyway...and becoming effective watchdogs.'

The AUEW carried out its own survey on 12,080 members, (reported in the AUEW Journal, November 1980). It found that 71.5% of its safety representatives were shop stewards as well. In 1981, 76% of AUEW safety representatives had received trade union training and the survey showed that some employers were 'neither allowing paid time off for training nor time to carry out their duties' (Glendon and Booth, 1982), in contravention of the SRSC regulations.

Rowledge's experience confirmed the difficulty experienced by his colleagues at British Leyland in obtaining time off. He also argued strongly for the safety representative function to be distinct from that of the shop steward:

'If the shop steward is a safety representative as well and a safety committee meeting happened to clash with one with the company about wages or, say, holidays, the obvious thing is that, as it has always been, the safety one would be neglected. Safety has taken a back seat for far too long as far as I am concerned.'

However, according to the TUC training course tutors like Fairclough and Clutterbuck in 1983 the vast majority of

safety representatives are shop stewards as well (over 75%).

A review of the policies followed by various trade unions on the role and function of safety representatives and shop stewards (Stevens, 1979) shows the diversity of approaches taken by different unions. Discussions over the past two years with trade unionists at all levels indicates a hardening of opinion in favour of combining the role of shop steward and safety representative. This has the merit of combining the legal backing of the safety representative with the power of the shop steward which derives from the established relationship he or she has with the shopfloor membership and the existing lines of communication with full-time union officials. However, the weight of opinion in favour of separate roles is not inconsiderable. This position does not deny the indispensible role of the established shop steward structure (using manual unions as an example) in health and safety issues, but suggests that 'single issue' safety representatives pursue initiatives so enthusiastically that they galvanise the whole machinery into action. Such a strategy may well have its successes. It does not, however, suggest that such successes can be maintained over day-to-day routine health and safety issues. experience of a TGWU convenor in a big Midlands engineering plant suggested that shop stewards got things done much faster ('in days') through their normal procedures, than safety representatives ('in weeks' if at all) through the health and safety procedure.

The question of whether the safety representative's duties fall on the shop steward or not has been faced in the TUC Training Course Teaching Material (TUC, 1977). It states:

'If at least some of the safety representatives in your workplace are not shop stewards, then it is important that you give some thought to how safety representatives can best work together with shop stewards and staff representatives.'

The necessity for evolving plans for joint co-operation is made clear by the following examples:

- (a) the fact that many health and safety issues are impossible to separate from everyday questions of industrial relations and collective bargaining, for example, refusal to work on an unsafe machine may bring into play the disciplinary procedure under some managements and thus bring the shop steward into the dispute;
- (b) a work stoppage due to unhealthy working conditions or payment by results systems could result in negotiations to protect earnings in such circumstances;
- (c) if a health and safety issue is not making any progress through the specific health and safety procedure it may be necessary to proceed through the normal collective bargaining procedure which would require the full co-operation of the shop stewards;
- (d) lastly, many aspects of company planning which management may discuss with union committees may contain health and safety aspects (for example, the bringing in of new plant would need close co-operation between shop stewards and safety representatives at the earlier possible stage to prevent any unwanted hazards being agreed to in ignorance).

These are just some examples of the close interlinking of functions which make it impossible to completely disentangle health and safety as a specialist pursuit. Yet the argument of Rowledge that if it does not receive special treatment it will take a back seat deserves much However, on balance, it seems likely that to attention. be effective the lay representative who deals with health and safety issues at shopfloor level, whatever his designation, requires the back-up of 'industrial muscle' to have the best chance of making progress. The issues are further discussed by Caldwell et al. (1980) and Cunningham (1978).

Procedures

Given a firmer industrial relations' base the unions can hope to achieve the necessary preconditions for an effective health and safety procedure which may well reproduce the normal grievance procedure. This notion is not confined to manual workers' unions. APEX advice to safety representatives (of which I was one) states:

'To be effective the health and safety work of negotiations has to form a fairly central place in the spectrum of collective bargaining procedures. It is, in fact, part of the collective bargaining process and, therefore, will rely on the work done by people at plant and office level. Hence the importance of safety representatives.' (APEX Research Department, 1978).

Many decisions which affect health and safety in a particular plant are taken by central management rather

than by local management. Examples include: buying new plant and equipment costing more than a certain amount; introduction of new technology and production methods, and decisions about the type and design of the products the firm produces (Cressey et al. 1981).

is therefore important for union representatives establish at what level vital decisions affecting health and safety issues are made so as to ensure that it is at that level that the discussions occur. An effective health and safety procedure would empower union representatives to bargain at these levels. In addition it would ensure that there were time limits written into all procedures so that there was no undue delay or prevarication about following up grievances. Further, should be a 'fast lane' procedure for emergency problems to be dealt with which would cut out any machinery such as safety committee 'ruminations' which would be an unnecessary delay to the required action.

Another essential element in an effective procedure is an agreement that discussions about long term planning decisions are undertaken with management and that changes are not made without discussion and agreement.

All the foregoing assumes that senior stewards and convenors where they exist at plant level are informed of developments so that they can be brought into the

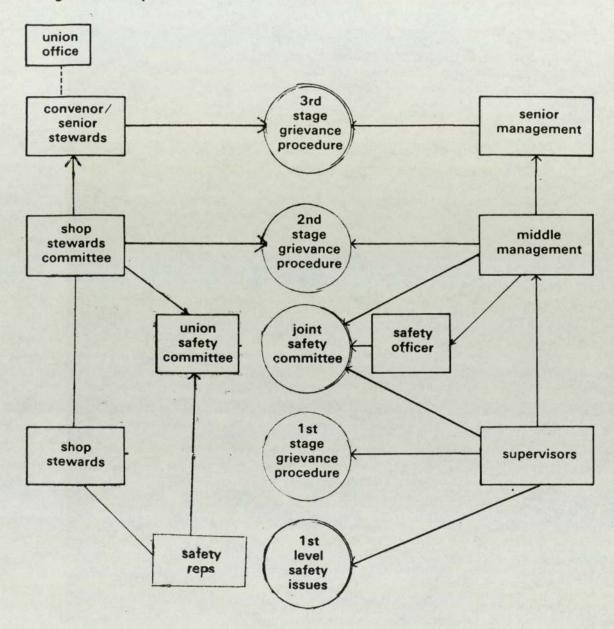
procedures if and when required to hold discussions with senior management. Provisions such as those outlined in a written procedure, can allow safety representatives and/or shop stewards to play a full and effective role in attempting to maintain workplace health and safety. But the safety 'nut' of Clarke's interview cannot hope to succeed consistently in isolation, requiring instead strong backing from his members at work and his back-up services at regional or national level.

Figure 1 (taken from the TUC teaching material) shows two types of procedure operating, with variations, in many workplaces. A special procedure for discussing safety matters which involves joint discussions between safety representatives and supervisors and the joint safety committee. The other procedure is the normal procedure for dealing with grievances and disputes. This distinction raises a number of issues.

The power of safety representatives to achieve their objectives depends, according to the majority view of the national level interviewees, upon the bargaining power of the safety representative. On this depends his or her capacity along with colleagues to set up the kind of procedure suggested by the TUC at the beginning of this section which presupposes as well that the safety committee system by itself lacks effectiveness to achieve these goals.

FIGURE (1)

dealing with safety issues



The contention of the Robens Committee (Robens, 1972) that. 'There is no legitimate scope for "bargaining" on and health issues. but much scope for constructive discussion, joint inspection, and participation in working out solutions' has not been borne out by the experiences of those interviewed. Their replies suggested that neither before nor after the Act in 1974 and the 1977 Regulations have committees performed the desired function. McKechnie suggested that pre-1974 they were seen by management as a by which to convey their views to the workforce means which, in many cases, concurred with them. Bibbings did see an important role for committees after the Act but only in conjunction with safety representatives.

It is not the intention of this study to go into detail about the workings of safety committees, policies and agreements subsequent to the Act except to point out that the majority of the few studies that have been carried out in the area suggest that their effectiveness leaves a lot to be desired. Glendon and Booth (1982), after reviewing the existing studies, state

'Although safety committees have become well established in the representation of employees in occupational health and safety, the important issue of the effectiveness of safety committees and of consultative arrangements in occupational health and safety in general in Britain remains an issue for research to clarify.'

Perhaps the most significant piece of research since this

observation adds weight to the other side of the scale (Bargaining Report, 1984) with the results of a survey showing that three-quarters of the safety representatives replying had a safety committee and that three out of four thought the committees effective in that they 'got things done'.

Management inputs

And what of the employers' contribution towards workplace health and safety?

few studies of the effectiveness of company One of the safety policies is contained in that published by the Plastics Processing Industrial Training Board (1983) which was far from flattering about management's efforts. The study's primary aim had been to evaluate policies as basis for identifying training needs and planning relevant training but it showed that 'the people responsible for drafting many of the policies reviewed appear to have a frighteningly shaky grasp of the basic elements effective safety management and organisation'. The study also 'identified serious shortcomings in safety training arrangements', and it added, 'although based on an evaluation of companies which process polymers, the lessons from this study may well be equally applicable in many other parts of the UK manufacturing industry.'

In the absence of an adequate input from management in a number of areas the need for a positive contribution from the unions takes on added importance. McKechnie said that she was appalled by the lack of expertise displayed by employers and the lack of experienced outside help they were calling upon. Both she and Clutterbuck emphasised the importance of unions being able to employ, either full-time or part-time consultants in various fields of expertise to back union arguments at the national or local level, for example, over standard setting, or when arguing over contentious issues. (I myself assembled such a team of sympathetic scientists around the 245-T issue, which was able to argue on the same level of expertise as their equivalents on the Ministry of Agriculture's Advisory Committee on Pesticides.) However, this is not always a success. As McKechnie pointed out in 1983 'experts have sometimes proved an expensive disappointment.'

The question of the role of the expert in backing union efforts (and those of the employers and Government) in health and safety issues would certainly reward further study. The efforts of the GMBATU (latterly with ASTMS) in establishing conferences and continuing studies on reproductive hazards, epidemiology and short term studies have struck out in a direction previously unknown for unions in Britain (Gee, 1980) as compared by Clutterbuck with the efforts of American unions.

The pervasive interviewees' view was that management's input was, at best, disappointing. Rowledge observed that his management (at British Leyland) did not want to get involved in health and safety issues and had not consulted, as they should have done under the terms of the HASAWA, over the appointment of safety representatives and committees. He was critical of the attitude displayed by middle management in avoiding their duties and gave an example of unsafe working practices undertaken by them at night when these were least detectable by the workforce. In addition he felt that management's own safety officers and assistants were insufficiently trained.

This view was echoed by Watts and other interviewees and by a study by Leopold (1981) which is examined briefly under the section on training. Watts was of the opinion that if farmers (as employers) were adequately trained they would see the merit of an initial short-term outlay on, say, tractor cabs, being returned on a longer term basis in the savings that accrued when a tractor turned over with subsequent loss of output and probably injury or death to a skilled worker. This argument presupposes, however, that safety measures always pay for themselves in the long run, which is not always the case.

Watts was also strongly of the view that applied engineering had a role to play in producing safety technology; a view shared by most interviewees who

instanced as examples the means of assessing hazards, measuring equipment, for example and, as Clutterbuck suggested, the means of producing substitutes for dangerous substances or ventilating polluted workplaces.

Information

The teaching material which goes with the TUC training course for safety representatives, book 3 <u>Information for Safety Representatives</u>, (TUC Education, 1979) explains that 'As a safety representative you will need two basic kinds of information: information to help you identify hazards and information to help you control hazards.' It gave as an an example:

'Accident statistics might help you spot the problem such as hand injuries from handling broken pallets. HSE official guidance could help you suggest improvements in the pallet handling system. Information from pallet suppliers could help you press for new types of pallets to be introduced.'

The training course aims to make the safety representative as self-sufficient as possible in identifying and eliciting the information required (in the words of Bibbings 'as self-reliant as possible') and points to a number of sources of information (such as the employer) under the following sections: legal rights to information (Factory Act; Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act; Health and Safety at Work Act; Information Rights for Safety

Representatives), records of accidents, sickness and dangerous incidents, recording 'near misses' (dangerous occurrences, occupational ill health records), safety committees safety policies (the employers' safety policies as a source of information) and facilities for storing and using information.

is information from manufacturers suggested Also and suppliers and official sources of information (HSE publications catalogue, information from the HSC, HSE, EMAS and inspectors, Government bookshops and Public Libraries.) Perhaps the source of information which is most trustworthy to union members is their own trade union which can call upon outside advisors and specialists, the TUC, the TUC Centenary Institute and other members of the union or wider Once having established exact trade union movement. information requirements, safety representatives are then advised to negotiate agreements on the collection of information (for example, accident statistics), disclosure and facilities for handling information effectively.

All interviewees were convinced of the importance of information. Clutterbuck saw it as a tool in the struggle, whilst McKechnie said it would give workers a bargaining position. Rowledge was very much aware of the lack of information on the shopfloor. Bibbings, McKechnie, Clutterbuck and Rowledge stressed the importance of information coming up from the ground level and of

pooling it with that from other members.

The TUC survey summarising some of the functions of health and safety specialists included a number which can broadly be grouped under the heading of Information Provision. They are:

advisory services to the membership dealing with case work and enquiries securing analysis of samples;

developing health and safety information resources, for example, health and safety files, health and safety libraries, access to on-line data, subscriptions to periodicals;

maintaining current awareness of health and safety issues for the union; surveying recent developments; maintaining contact with appropriate bodies; scanning periodicals and relevant literature;

preparing publications and guidance literature; for example safety representative handbooks, health and safety bulletins, alert guidelines and general information;

undertaking research into health and safety problems of commissioning research.

above section would suggest that there has been a The expansion in arrangements for trade unions to information to the shopfloor. Whether this information reaches its desired target will be examined shortly (further research might pursue a case study of information flows from head office through various levels. to answer such questions as 'Does it get to the safety representative?'). However, information is no use in a This study seeks to examine how it is used; vacuum. what power do safety representatives have at shopfloor level in terms of support from their own members and what power to health and safety specialists have at national level to use information for the maximum benefit of the membership?

Dissemination of information by trade unions

Ex-TUC General Secretary, Len Murray (1980) emphasised the importance of disseminating information to the shopfloor when he stated:

'One of the crucial areas in the health and safety fields is information...and I do not believe that it is well enough covered.'

An extensive range of guidance and information materials published by the unions on health and safety matters is available. Many unions reported on the publication of safety representatives' handbooks which aim to provide

basic information on hazards, the law and other matters to safety representatives. Unions having published such handbooks include ASTMS, AUEW (Foundry Section), GMBATU, SOGAT 82, TGWU, NUT, NUPE, AUEW (Engineering Section), BIFU, SCPS, BFAWU, NUS, EPEA and NUM.

In addition many unions have established systems for dissemination of circulars and other guidance material dealing with specific topics. ASTMS, for example, has produced three series of documents: major policy documents issued approximately once a year involving considerable research; special reports issued from time to time on special topics of interest to sections of their membership and health and safety information sheets (approximately six per year), on specific hazards such as chemical hazards, fume cupboards, VDU eyestrain, first aid, etc. SOGAT 82 also publish health and safety bulletins of which they have issued 15. The NUT have produced a series of now additional guidelines for inclusion in their safety representatives handbook. Separate pamphlets dealing with specific hazards of risk areas have been proposed. The first four in this series cover viral hepatitis, radioactive sources, asbestos and formaldehyde. has also produced posters highlighting heating problems. NUPE have produced an extensive range of health and safety guides for different parts of their membership, including: hazards in the home; safety in group dwellings; safety in refuse collection; safety in the use of herbicides;

health and safety problems of waste disposal; and health and safety for school caretakers. Other NUPE health and safety publicatios include a health services hazards file; 12 posters on different health and safety problems in local government and health services, a quarterly newsletter and a range of training material.

Although the majority of unions do not produce a wide of guidelines many have developed systems for circularising relevant officers and, in particular, safety representatives with the information on specific hazards. Information through the use of unions' normal communication channels is sent out. In particular, many unions use their journals to publicise information on hazards, recent developments from the Health and Safety Commission and Executive, the results of research studies etc. preparation of video or tape slide presentations on health and safety issues for their membership is now being consideredby a few unions like ASTMS. This position represents considerable progress from the position in 1979 (IRS, 1979) when most unions had not advanced very far in their arrangements for providing such a level of service, for example, few had produced safety representatives handbooks.

Indeed in 1977 at the time of the interviews, Watts suggested that very little was sent out to members of the NUAAW, the only stimulus for lay members being provided by

occasional advice and contact with district officers and national level speakers when they came to address county conferences which were manly attended by branch officers.

The dominant impression from the interviewees was that they had little idea of exactly how much information was getting down to the shopfloor (suggesting perhaps that unions have a task to do in monitoring the effectiveness of their own The general feeling was, however, that 'not services). very much' information was getting to representatives. There was the hope that safety representatives would be encouraged to become more self-reliant and by using the disclosure of information section of HASAWA extract it from manufacturers management, and suppliers (Bibbings. McKechnie and Clarke), pooling information with other workers (Rowledge, Clutterbuck) and building contacts with the inspectorate (Watts and Whittaker).

McKechnie, recognising that many workers were worried about job security, thought that this was one reason why information was so crucial. For without the information - for example about how much a particular health and safety demand would cost, management could threaten that that cost would be prohibitive and cause closure of the plant. She explained that:

'the biggest problem is resources and time for communicating information. There is very little coming up the way and not as much going down the way as there should be.' This touched upon another issue which had emerged as another common theme from interviews and personal observation and also referred to by Leopold and Beaumont, (1982) which is the lack of a system in most unions for sending information 'up the line' from shopfloor to representatives, to shop stewards and to divisional or national level. This deficiency meant that there was no 'early warning system' for developing trends to become evident and for the information and the warning of previously unforeseen hazards to be communicated to shopfloor level again.

This particular question does, however, emphasize one of the benefits of the work which is carried out in unions' legal departments (which in turn points up that the 'compensation versus prevention' issue is by no means 'black and white') which, if organized to keep effective records should pick up trends amongst cases being handled for compensation. In this way, I myself was able to detect, for example, an unsafe system of work amongst mushroom workers who were getting injured sliding off slippery wooden trays.

An example of the benefits of information for shopfloor bargaining was given by Rowledge. He had attended a training course at which he had learnt of the hazards of noise. At a subsequent safety committee (joint) meeting, he had been able to challenge management assumptions that

high intensities of noise did not constitute hazards by explaining that noise intensity doubled for every three decibels increase. However, he had never had any communication at all with the national level of his union, the AUEW, and had no flow of information from any level of the union upon which to draw.

Gee (1980) pointed out how new information to the workplace helped all parties to move from entrenched positions of inaction on particular dangers by being able to say as shop steward, full-time officials, management or the inspectorate, 'Ah, we didn't know that', and thus be allowed an escape route from a status quo position to which they were otherwise wed by previous inertia and had to seek justification for changing.

But Gee too pointed to the lack of information getting through to the shopfloor, except in a few instances in which case the effects in the form of improvements and feedback were often immediately noticeable.

Powell et al. (1971) are also critical of the unions' efforts at information/communication with the shopfloor. On the issue of information about the unions' legal services they criticise published material for not being written in language comprehensible to the lay member and add:

'What little we saw of union activity, aimed

at informing ther members about procedures for making a civil claim for damages for personal injury, was ineffective. The information was not reaching where it was needed, and some of it was given in an indigestible form. It would appear that the union organization also 'like management' has its "communication gap". This is hardly surprising, in the light of the even greater geographical separation of shopfloor and union district office. We recommend unions to improve their information services.'

Since 1971 there has undoubtedly been an improvement, though it obviously varies greatly from union to union. However, in many cases it has still failed to alter what Clutterbuck suggested from his experience of teaching safety representatives in 1983 was the 'legal approach' described by McKechnie as being adopted by many white collar members of ASTMS. Clutterbuck stated that:

'People are still looking at the law before they move forward, rather than doing what they think is right, and then seeing if the law supports them.'

Such attitudes will only change it seems when safety representatives are not only armed with adequate information and training, and backing from their own colleagues, but also develop the confidence to, in the words of Gee, 'tackle their management'.

McKechnie suggested in 1983 that it would not be sufficient to pump information out. The ASTMS service in this respect was renowned (though even that union's excellently researched and produced material on health and safety was by no means always getting through to the intended target). The lesson she had learnt in the years after our first interview, though she had always been aware of the problem to a lesser degree, was that:

'You must be organized at the grassroots first; time and again when a really good issue has come up, the level of union organization has not been good enough to carry it off.'

Clearly, despite great strides having been made in the last few years, there is a need for improving the dissemination of information to the shopfloor and management at least. The improvements which are being made in obtaining and organising is at national level.

The question of content is dealt with elsewhere in this study, but it must be stated that information and advice on workplace organization for health and safety was a major requirement emerging from interviews - this would include suggestions on how to set up safety representatives and safety committee systems; how to organize procedures for handling health and safety issues and what questions to put to management on a range of issues.

The suggestion of Powell et al. (1971) was echoed by Clutterbuck and Bibbings (Interviews - Appendix 2) that

information must be provided in layman's language or it will not be understood and therefore unusable.

This is a necessity of which BSSRS is very much aware - translating language into laymen's terms. This organization publishes <u>Hazards</u> with the express purpose of doing just that and of generalizing the experience of groups of workers who have had success in pressing a grievance over health and safety at work as an example for others.

The nationwide network of Hazards Groups - locally-based groups of trade union activists and concerned scientists and specialists from various fields, the first of which was formed in Coventry in 1977 - is an innovation which provides for the pooling of information and the provision of advice for local safety representatives. McKechnie and Clutterbuck encourage attendance at area health and safety meetings for the benefits to be derived from the pooling of information and experience of workers in similar industries or simply as trade unionists facing similar problems in relation to management and from which beneficial ideas could be gained as Rowledge found. In this connection it is of interest to note that from union journals (88%), other publications representative's unions (83%) and books and pamphlets of TUC and other unions (78%) Clinton (1982) in his study found that top of the list of other publications seen by union

representatives was <u>Hazards</u> <u>Bulletin</u> (forerunner of <u>Hazards</u>), the BSSRS publication, of whom about half found it 'very useful'. Kinnersley's <u>The Hazards of Work</u> (1973) also figures prominently among publications that are seen by representatives.

The Hazard Area Groups although they appear to be declining in numbers and vigour in the current recession, may perhaps act as an example to many unions which seem to be experiencing difficulties in disseminating and collecting information at the intermediate level. This issue has been touched upon elsewhere in relation to union organization and, in particular, the Bakers Union.

In the meantime unions will have to examine which, if any, of the following examples of information sources are being successful: union journals, district and branch circulars, health and safety handbooks and fact sheets. The question to be posed is whether these have proved adequate for this intended purpose and what other forms of publications are available.

Other sources of information, such as reference libraries at work, locally or with the Factory Inspectorate, can be provided as well as posters from organizations like the Labour Research Department. Perhaps a pointer to the future are the first trade union steps being taken in the use of video material. But the day is still some way off

when less sophisticated unions will be able to make use of them.

Training

TUC

One of the most impressive responses of any interested party to the Health and Safety at Work Act and its subsequent regulations for the appointment of safety representatives and safety committees was the quantity and quality of training course the TUC laid on.

Table 2.2 shows that the number of safety representatives taking part in TUC health and safety courses has now passed the 100,000 mark.

TABLE 2.2: DAY RELEASE PROVISION 1975-1984: HEALTH AND SAFETY

YEAR	COURSES	STUDENTS
1975/76	361	5,360
1976/77	578	7,803
1977/78	741	10,398
1978/79	1,744	27,361
1979/80	1,441	18,738
1980/81	879	12,067
1981/82	714	8,934
1982/83	526	6,737
1983/84	631	7,824
	TOTALS 7,615	105,222

SOURCE: TUC Reports and TUC Staff

The table shows that the peak intake of students was in 1978/79 as the Safety Representatives Regulations came into force. The subsequent decline in numbers is explained and the attitudes of affiliated unions to sending their members on these courses are dealt with later in this chapter. Of the 1981/82 714 Stage 1, ten day courses for safety representatives 191 (2,319 students) were arranged for representatives from specific industries and 523 (6,615 students) were on general courses.

The TUC education service has four main divisions:

- (a) The TUC College;
- (b) the postal course service;
- (c) the multi-media trade union studies project, and
- (d) the regional education service.

The TUC education service is centrally administrated with these four main services standardised where possible 'to allow for a maximum degree of integration' (Walters, 1978) of the education services offered on a national basis. Though planned centrally, the TUC Training College has a limited number of tutors and training facilities (though these have been extended recently with a new residential college, opened in Autumn 1984 in London). The bulk of the teaching is undertaken in polytechnics, universities, colleges of further education or other suitable

establishments. Finance comes from the trade unions but also increasingly in the last few years it has been coming from the State.

Walters (1978) gives an exhaustive and perceptive description of the development of TUC education and training and its policy from 1964 to 1977 and there is no need in this study to repeat his work. One theme which emerges strongly in Walters' description is the TUC determination to maintain control over all aspects of training. A TUC working party as far back as 1967 is quoted as saying (TUC Annual Report 1968) '...the training of workplace representatives, to be effective, must be conducted by or under the auspices of the trade unions or the TUC.'

The two major motivations for this stance are likely to be firstly the opportunity this affords to teach the 'trade union dimension', to the health and safety problem, which examination of current trade union teaching materials reveals to include demolition of the 'careless worker' argument and, secondly, that the danger of employers inculcating their own standards on to trade union members is thus avoided.

A TUC paper on <u>The Training of Union Safety</u>

Representatives presented to a national TUC Delegate

Conference (IRS, No. 6, 1976) re-states the position that:

'...trade unions have the sole responsibility for the education and training of their workplace representatives in their trade union functions as an essential condition for maintaining independent trade unions and for conducting trade union affairs effectively. For this reason, the movement consistently rejected pressures by employers to make such training a joint responsibility. safety representatives are no less responsible to their unions than are other union workplace representatives, acting as they do on behalf of the membership by implementing the union's agreed rules and policies. It would be unrealistic to think that the employers' views of the training of union safety representatives would be concerned to improve the effectiveness of trade union representatives without having regard to the implications for the employers' business.'

TUC reports (1977)show that through their training TUC set college, the up a national network of some 150 safety representatives training centres in polytechnics, of further education. colleges workers educational association districts and university extra-mural In these establishments, around 400 tutors, departments. 65% of part-time, taught whom were the safety representatives who obtained day release from their Glendon and Booth (1982) state: employers.

'The system was built up from the mid 1970s to cope with around 30,000 representatives per year while the TUC produced increasingly sophisticated material to accompany the tenday courses.'

The TUC explanation for the decrease in trainees since the 1978/79 peak of 28,000 (equivalent to 60% of the trainees in that year) is contained in a circular to the General Secretaries of all affiliated unions (February 10, 1983) headed Union participation in courses grant-aided from

<u>public funds</u> (1981/82). Dealing first with the general decline in attendance it said:

'The Education Committee ackowledged that the overall decrease in demand for TUC 10-day release courses was mainly due to the decline in employment in manufacturing industries and a further fall in the number of students attending TUC 10-day health and safety courses. The decline in demand for health and safety courses was anticipated, as over 90,000 safety representatives have attended TUC 10-day courses on safety in the past seven years. The fall in demand for places was particularly sharp during the extremely bad weather conditions in early 1982...'.

It added that the level had picked up again after the bad weather and was pleased to note increases in student numbers attending short courses and in women attending day release courses.

The assumption that the recession and the majority of existing safety representatives having already been trained explains the decline in student and course numbers is shared by all those subsequently interviewed.

Glendon and Booth (1982) point to the recession as a reason for the decline in numbers and note that it has been accompanied by a corresponding decline in numbers of part-time tutors employed.

Gee, in discussion in 1983, pointed to increasing difficulties experienced by safety representatives in

obtaining day release from their employment as one of the results of the recession which had given employers a stronger hand in refusing time off. McKechnie in 1977 had thought the TUC over-optimistic in laying down that safety representatives attend trade union-only courses. She cites the failure of individual unions to fund these courses or the members not being paid to have time off by their employers as major reasons. It then became a question of joint management/union courses or nothing. In such cases ASTMS made an agreement that it would have the right of veto over the course content and provide its own tutors where it thought it appropriate.

Fairclough of the TUC training college confirmed this impression. He thought that the general decline in the strength of unions at shopfloor, regional and national level had inhibited them from pursuing health and safety issues just as it had done in all other areas of union work with the threat of unemployment ever-present and with the consequent devaluation and cuts in union resources. Gee suggested this had also led to a decline in pressure from local union officials to get members released for courses. My own experience of trying to obtain release for agricultural and allied workers to attend day and weekend schools corroborated this impression.

As to potential students, these numbers had obviously declined as a result of the huge training effort put in in

the late 1970s. The numbers eligible to go on TUC courses diminished, despite the constant annual safety representative turnover estimated at 10-15% by Fairclough ('higher than shop stewards but lower if they have been on courses'), by the practice of some unions to run their own courses exclusively as a policy decision.

Leopold and Beaumont (1984) found, in a sample of 464 GMBATU safety representatives, a minimum turnover rate of 12%, though there was a wide divergence in individual plants and industry variation. This result was in line with Fairclough's suggested range of safety representative turnover and in line with those found in studies of shop stewards turnover (Winch, 1980). This latter point was at variance with Fairclough's estimate as with his opinion that attending courses slowed down turnover. There was no obvious reason for this divergence.

The findings were a source of some satisfaction to the GMBATU National Safety Officer, Gee, who stated in May 1985 (personal contact) that it was good to have demonstrated that there was not an abnormally high turnover (which would have meant a possibly wasteful use of the union's resources in paying for training, etc.) for safety representatives; that the most important reason for quitting the post was related to other factors (such as changing jobs) and that there was satisfaction with the union's level of servicing.

Course content

A turnover rate of only 13% would produce a further 20,000 newly elected safety representatives each year to add to the expected 150,000 in post. It was becoming apparent also that more emphasis had to be given to the role of safety courses as 'follow on' courses for convenors and stewards who were not safety representatives, if any imbalance between trained and untrained officers was to be avoided. An unpublished discussion paper on the future of TUC teaching materials for 10-day health and safety courses designed to stimulate debate in the TUC Education Service in April 1978 anticipated about half of the entire TUC regional programme being devoted to health and safety courses, providing over 20,000 student places for safety representatives. This meant a substantial influx of new tutors into the work and over 200 new tutors were briefed by the TUC in twelve months.

Faced with this very rapid expansion, a searching analysis of course content was undertaken by the TUC Education Department and new developments grafted onto the original objectives and syllabus of the TUC 10-day safety courses which had been set in relation to a 3-stage' plan for safety representatives' activities:

- to detect hazards;
- to locate standards;

to organize to achieve those standards.

Analysis of experience of teaching safety representatives suggested a number of changes (contained in an internal TUC Education Department discussion document) for example:

'Organizational procedures questions require better back up materials and more emphasis. Hazard detection needs to be dealt with actively through the use of discovery exercises. The use of information and standards has to be set firmly in context and exemplified through the use of discovery exercises and case studies.'

appraisal quoted above showed also that the assumption that safety representatives would already be experienced in facing industrial relations problems had proved erroneous in many instances. TUC 10-day safety courses had The originally been developed mainly as follow-on courses for shop stewards assuming a basic knowledge of industrial relations and procedures. The courses tended to concentrate upon the legal and technical aspects of health and safety but the discussion paper suggested that future courses took a different approach:

'The key issues of trade union organization, for example, facilities, time off, relationships between safety and stewards, relationships with members must be strongly emphasized.

Procedural questions - safety committee structure, the use of grievance procedures and the key ideas of "following issues through" and "getting things done" are vital.

A full analysis of the skills needed by the safety representatives is needed.'

With further experience and changing conditions intense discussion began on the content of follow-on courses, pilots of which took place in the first three months of 1981.

Resulting from this re-appraisal following discussions at the TUC Education Department amongst course organizers and tutors, a decision to change the emphasis in training policy was taken. Follow-on courses have now been designed to emphasize the importance of workplace organization and procedures to deal with organizational problems. This has meant a move away from identifying and dealing with hazards. Instead the teaching accent is on the 'trade union' approach rather than the teaching of technical expertise by tutors better qualified in these aspects. There is also now a trend to introduce more 'issue based' short courses, e.g. chemical hazards, though not on a sector basis.

In the 1982/83 period there were some 5,000-6,000 students and 400-500 courses on the stage 2 follow-on courses. The general aims of the follow-on safety courses (see Appendix for Stage I & II syllabi), are set out in a TUC Educational Department Discussion Paper for internal consumption (April 1981). It suggested broad agreement on the following points: developing safety representatives' work, including union organization, skills, procedures and detailed work on specific hazards; countering the

frustration and demoralisation felt by many safety representatives in the current climate and communicating with, educating and motivating members on safety issues.

Effects of training

A number of studies and observations had suggested that as a result of the initial training, safety representatives in many firms were better informed on health and safety than some of their managers and supervisors. Indeed Wyles and Graham (1982) note that in some cases line managers report reliance upon safety representatives as a primary source of health and safety information.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE Manufacturing and Services Industries, 1976) gave as their view that:

'inspectors feel that, in most cases, the trade union representative could become much better informed about matters of health and safety than their supervisors and middle management.'

Such views were borne out by the representatives themselves as suggested by Rowledge (interview) amongst others. A small scale study (Leopold, 1981) of safety representatives taken towards the end of the attendance of some on the TUC courses and others from 9 - 15 months afterwards, produced this remark from one of the representatives:

'Yes, the course is a lever. We've done the course and know that the person in

management we are trying to argue against has not done the course, so we are definitely one step ahead of him.'

this respect the demise of many industrial training In boards and curtailing of the activities of the others in 1982 was deplored in the TUC Evidence to the Select Committee (1982),the valuable role that they could play in in-plant training having been noted in Powell et al. (1971).

A comprehensive review of the effects of safety representative training has yet to be undertaken (though interesting research some is in progress (by Ruth Patterson) on the effects of trade union influence in the hotel and catering trades in comparison to unorganized firms of a similar description and this may provide some useful insights into the effects of training as well as the trade union influence at the workplace.

Initial findings in this study suggest that the general effect of union organization in this industry produces a more responsive management which in turn leads to better health and safety standards.

It is not easy to evaluate the effectiveness of this training. Cook (1980) in his study, found no detectable differences between small groups of safety representatives who had and had not undergone training. However Leopold (1981) found safety representatives who had undergone

training experienced increased expectations as a result. His study concluded:

'The impact of the TUC courses on safety representatives is not necessarily immediate, nor uniform, and there is certainly room for improvement. None-theless, if all the courses are having a similar impact then it must fully justify the TUC's decision to organize them and the government's decision to finance them.'

This view is shared by all those interviewed with the reservations already expressed that they can only effectively be used to maximum benefit with a strong workplace organization and procedure. There are clearly a good many organizational problems to overcome in arranging training: firstly on a sufficiently large scale and latterly in a climate hostile to trade unionists for union safety representatives.

TUC, however, does appear to have done remarkably well perceiving the need, making the arrangements in for the first generation of safety creating the courses representatives. Whilst student numbers have inevitably declined since the peak of 1978/79 and it has become more difficult for safety representatives to get time off to attend courses, the take-up remains encouraging and testimony to the reputation for quality that TUC for safety representatives and training courses the important follow-on (Stage 2) courses have acquired.

A number of questions were therefore drawn up for the safety representatives' survey to attempt to guage whether they thought that the 10-day course was valuable and to elicit criticisms and comments. (Some of the questions were inserted at the request of George Clark - Head of the TUC Training College).

Training by individual unions

A number of trade unions laid on their own health and safety training courses though most were far shorter than, and complementary to, the TUC 10-day courses. Examples of unions taking this approach were ASTMS, GMBATU, TGWU and several others who tend to organize courses around specific industry-related hazards.

There are several unions with members in particular sectors which do not take advantage of the TUC course, for example: post office workers, coal miners, electricity supply workers (who have arrangements for joint training with management), NUR railwaymen (who were taking part at the time of this study's fieldwork but who have since set up their own technical courses), some building workers who find difficulty in getting day release and so on. The civil service unions avoided TUC courses until 1979 when they changed their policy.

The TUC survey (1983) included in its summary of the work

of health and safety specialists 'organizing education and training in relation to health and safety; preparation of training materials; organization of courses and seminars on particular topics'. It could have added, 'publicising and recruiting safety representatives for TUC courses', for the individual unions, though many have made efforts of varying intensity to arrange their own training courses, in the main defer to the excellent job carried out by the TUC in organizing the vast majority of safety representatives' courses.

TUC Services

The TUC represents about half of the employed workforce, with members belonging to nearly 100 affiliated unions. This section draws for much of its information on two documents: a) the TUC Evidence to the Select Committee (TUC, 1982) and b) the unpublished evidence from the 'TUC Development Programme: Health and Safety Information and Advisory Services Pilot Project' (TUC, 1983).

The latter was produced (in response to a proposal in the TUC General Council's special report endorsed by the 1981 Congress) as a preliminary analysis of a questionnaire circulated to all unions which was in three parts: a) union organization for health and safety at work, b) unions' health and safety services, and c) the use by unions of the TUC's health and safety services. It was designed to 'ascertain the state of development of unions' organization for health and safety at work' and their

demands for information and advice on health and safety issues. In particular it aimed to ascertain sources of information and expertise currently available to unions'.

Detailed responses were received from more than 30 unions including BIFU, NALGO, SPSC, NUM, AUEW(FS) & (ES), NUPE, ASLEF, SOGAT 82, TGWU, NUT, POEU, ASTMS, FBU, CSU and GMBATU at which time a number of others were known to be preparing answers.

From these two new sources as well as from literature searching, personal observation and interviews with national level officials, a picture of the major activities undertaken by the TUC became clear.

The major roles of the TUC on health and safety are seen as the development of policy and the securing of improved health and safety standards by the procedures of the HSC, co-ordinating the activities of its member unions in pursuit of these objectives providing information and advisory servicing to affiliates and training of trade union safety representatives.

In his interview, Clutterbuck noted the increasing role that the TUC had begun to play in health and safety since the early 1970s.

'If you look at the Robens Report (1972), the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the arguments which went on in order to win the

introduction of safety representatives with full rights you can see the TUC's growing involvement.'

The trade union movement had to mount a concerted campaign to ensure that the Labour Government which came to power in 1974 stuck to the intentions of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations which envisaged that safety representatives could only exist if appointed by trade unions, had the right to inspect and were not legally liable - and even then the Government delayed the implementation of the regulations by about two years until October 1978.

The greatly enhanced training provisions laid on by the TUC Training College for the training of safety representatives was praised by Clutterbuck as one of the TUC's biggest achievements in the field of health and safety. Some of the other roles played by the TUC are now considered.

Policy decisions

Perhaps the most public of the roles the TUC plays is the formulation of health and safety policy at its Annual Congress at which affiliated unions debate motions. If passed they become TUC policy resolutions and a strategy for implementation is worked out by the Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee of General Council members

which deals with health and safety matters between Congresses, debating issues which are not covered by Congress Policy and implementing those that are through the General Council.

The range of resolutions passed since 1974 is shown in Appendix which shows that these have been a mixture of industry-specific problems and general health and safety issues.

Since the commencement of this study, I have contributed to TUC debates in various ways, either speaking on the hazards of farm noise and pesticides (1979 and 1982) or assisting in the drafting of speeches to Congress (see Appendix 3) or assisting in formulating motions and then seeing them through the pre-Congress compositing process (on topics like the weedkiller 245-T, the need for safety representatives on farms, and the need for more visits by the agricultural inspectorate).

The Health and Safety Commission

At the co-ordination level, quoting from the TUC Evidence to the Select Committee (TUC 1982):

'Congress has continued to pass resolutions calling for the effective implementation of the HSW Act and the development of new measures to control a broad range of occupational health and safety risks. The General Council's Social Insurance and

Industrial Welfare Committee has continued to play a major role in pursuing TUC objectives in the health and safety field and co-ordinating the response of the unions to new proposals coming from the Health and Safety Commission and Executive.'

The TUC states that it attaches special importance to participation of TW representatives in the Commission and its advisory committee structure and it consults its affiliated unions about the Commission's work to ensure that its three representatives on the Commission can give an effective voice to the 'unified and collective views' of a.11 its affiliates. The Commission has overall responsibility for occupational health and safety policy at national level (HASAWA) and also has three employer-nominated (CBI) representatives and two local authority members (the TUC would like to see a ninth member) plus a full-time chairman.

The Industry Advisory Committees under the HSC are regarded as very important by the TUC, which wants to see them extended to other industries such as rubber, coal mining, chemicals and general engineering. The TUC sees the IAC's importance not only in dealing with problems relating to particular industries, but also:

'the IACs provides a means for developing policy in relation to a number of general issues raised by the Robens Report - for example the development of Health and Safety training, the promotion of Health and Safety research, analysis of statistics and case studies, the development of safety policies, monitoring occupational health, or applying new across-the-board legislation,

for example, in relation to manual handling, noise or first aid. (TUC, 1982)

The TUC wants to see greater prominence given to the role of IACs in their own industries:

'they should be encouraged to publish guidance aimed at their respective sectors and serve as the focus for the promotion of new initiatives for health and safety within their industry.'

(The Construction IAC's 'Site Safe '83' being applauded as a good example of leadership aimed at changing attitudes).

There are obvious limitations to the areas of work which these essentially advisory bodies can operate within the 'consensus' approach. For example, the first meeting the Agriculture Industry Advisory Committee (AIAC) had before it a request from the NUAAW to discuss the question of safety representatives on farms. This is a vital question to farmworkers as agriculture is the only major industry which does not now have a system of safety The employers' representative body of representatives. the NFU refused to discuss the topic however, claiming that it was an 'industrial relations' issue not suitable for discussion at the AIAC.

Thus potentially very important ways of improving workplace health and safety in an industry with an appalling safety record (in the top six high risk industries) was not even discussed at the AIAC. This is an indication that IACs have a strictly limited role when it comes to attempts by

either side of industry to negotiate.

Since in the main it is the workers' representatives on these bodies who would wish to take new initiatives to protect the health, safety and welfare of their members, it is they who are frustrated by the 'consensus' rather than 'negotiating' style of the advisory committees.

Two other causes for concern to trade unions arose from the national level interviews and from my own observations and discussions about the way in which the HSC's advisory committees function.

The first concerns TUC nominations to these committees. The industry advisory committees have TUC nominees from the unions appropriate to the particular industry under discussion and can reasonably be expected to have the necessary background to deal with issues arising, assisted by briefs from their own unions and the TUC's Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Department.

However, nominations to subject advisory committees selected primarily from the Social Insurance Committee (members of the General Council) do not necessarily automatically have a particular knowledge of the hazards in that field. That is not to suggest that many who sit on subject HSC advisory committees for the TUC are not doing a vigorous job. However the degree of back-up from their

own unions in the majority of cases is likely to be less adequate on the specialist subject unless the union from which the nominee comes has a particular interest in the field. Thought should be given to ensuring that those selected to sit on the committees have as much experience of and back-up information on the specialist topics as possible. Too much at the moment depends upon the individual commitment and energy of the subject committee nominees and the service they receive from their own unions.

The comments of the TUC summary of union responses to the survey on its services show that:

'there was a general acknowledgement that the the role of the TUC in briefing trade union representatives involved at national/industry level discussions on health and safety policy issues was essential in order to provide information and to enable unions to arrive at a commonly agreed position on new proposals. Because of the breadth and complexity of many issues involved in representational work it was also suggested that high quality briefing was necessary to enable trade union representatives to match briefing resources at the disposal of employer representatives.'

Besides the implicit call for back-up to match that of the employers, the above reveals another role played by the written and pre-meeting briefing of trade union representatives on HSC committees. It is to co-ordinate the approaches of different unions facing the same industrial health and safety problems which very well may not have arisen without the stimulus which pre-meeting

briefings have given. Their value is demonstrated for example by the fact that the TUC Printing Industries Committee Health Safety Committee found the and briefing role less urgent and useful because it already had existence its own forum for working out common approaches unions faced with the same problems.

The secrecy of the advisory committees makes it more difficult to argue about safety standards because the evidence is not published. Sheila McKechnie of ASTMS (interview) stated:

'You can have major companies saying what they like, and putting in all sorts of figures about costs, benefits and hazards which you can only counter in a vacuum as they cannot be predicted in advance.'

My own experience in trying to argue the pros and cons of the safety for use of particular farm chemicals and giving advice to members of the union anxious to know whether they would be taking a risk by using a certain product confirms this kind of frustration. It was only after widespread publicity and union and public concern that the criteria by which the weedkiller 245-T was deemed to be safe for use were made available to the 'outside world' (Cook and Kaufman, 1982). Using that data the unions involved in discussion over 245-T (the NUAAW, GMWU, and ASTMS) found that their yardstick for what constituted a hazard and their interpretation of the evidence led them to the belief that the herbicide was too dangerous for their members to

risk using. However, there are approaching one thousand different pesticides formulations approved for sale, and our knowledge about the evidence by which all but 245-T were passed 'safe' ranges from 'sketchy' to non-existent.

The excuse of commercial secrecy and sometimes the need to protect individuals, though it may in certain rare circumstances have some validity, in general serves only to obscure knowledge of the hazards and thus prevent discussion of the safety or otherwise of particular substances, processes or work systems. That cannot assist the process of trying to improve workplace health and safety.

The tripartitism of the HSE's Advisory Committees and their consensus basis elicit differing responses from unions dealing with them.

Supporters praise their ability to set general standards, such as on levels of noise and dust control in industries where health and safety standards are often low and which enables union officials to go to the worst 'sinners' amongst companies to explain these standards and call for their implementation.

Those who are disillusioned by the system, see a slow and cumbersome piece of machinery which will not tackle fundamental industrial relations questions because of the

inherent compromising nature of the forum though it can have valuable spin-offs on particular issues where agreement is found.

However there does seem to be a tendency amongst unions like ASTMS and GMBATU which have put resources and no little thought into the question of health and safety at work, to move towards shifting human resources away from attending these committees in favour of assisting the organization of union workplace safety arrangements.

TUC circulars and liaison with HSE/EMAS, government departments and other bodies

The TUC has the task of ensuring that new proposals for legislation are circulated for comment to affiliated trade unions. In turn the TUC's Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Committee has the task of collating and combining comments received into memoranda of evidence for submission to the HSC.

Interviewees commented upon the value of the exercises which these functions forced them to undertake. Bibbings, for example (then at the AUEW - Engineering Section headquarters, now at the TUC on the 'receiving end') spoke of the rich seam of information and experience they then trawled into the AUEW head office after undertaking an evidence-collecting or reaction-discovering exercise through the union structure. This, he claimed had a stimulating effect upon the union.

TUC Survey (1983) showed that all the information The circulated to affiliated unions was much valued. was information on new legislation, HSE Reports, developments generally or HSC consultative documents it was often then re-routed to the members through the unions' channels including placing in the union journal. normal On HSC consultative documents 'there was strong support for the circulation by the TUC of memoranda of TUC evidence on new proposals in order to keep unions in touch with TUC's position on developing policy issues' - a position which has merit in my eyes in avoiding the feeling that individual unions after making their views known have little idea how much of their particular concern is raised at the highest level.

However, the other side of that coin was the centralising effect which might draw the fire of individual unions trying to pursue issues of particular concern to themselves which becomes enmeshed and slowed by passing into the machinery of the TUC.

The TUC's evidence to the Select Committee stated that

'Although it can be argued that the time necessary for the consultation on new proposals is sometimes lengthy, this is often necessary to secure sufficiently wide discussion and debate amongst interested parties. The TUC supports the general approach of the Commission in securing consensus agreement on new proposals. Unless such proposals command general

support, their effectiveness will be limited. This should not mean, however, that the development of health and safety controls at national level should inhibit unions and employers from implementing advanced standards in anticipation of new legislation.'

Though there is some truth in this argument it does, whatever the hope expressed in the last sentence, tend to militate against swift implementation of safety improvements.

This was illustrated by the evident frustration of McKechnie in having to send her evidence to TUC rather than straight to the HSC - she did send copies of the ASTMS evidence to the HSC anyway - because the HSC was statutorily bound to look at the TUC submission but those of individual unions. The inference may be that she fears also that comments to which the ASTMS ascribes great weight may be omitted or deemed less important in the TUC submission.

at the NUAAW experienced frustration of a different Watts kind. He was dismayed at the TUC's lack of sensitivity to the views of smaller unions - in this case it had been his against the introduction of 'no fault' compensation legislation which he felt had been largely ignored by a TUC paying more attention to the views of the 'big battalions'. Without the benefit of analysis of how the views of all affiliates are distilled into the final TUC 'view' it is impossible to comment upon the justice or

otherwise of his case.

Whilst it would be wrong to ignore the amount of work on health and safety which goes on between unions and outside bodies, for example existing communication channels between unions and Government departments — like the nationalised industries, one of the TUC survey's broad conclusions that 'the TUC is seen by unions as the natural representative channel through which they can make contact with appropriate health and safety authorities either in the HSE/EMAS or elsewhere' seemed acceptable to all those interviewed though there would be disagreement if the TUC were seen as the unions' only mouthpiece, with individual union's rights curtailed.

TUC Health and Safety Enquiry Service

This is a largely unpublicised service and is most used by smaller unions which do not have their own health and safety specialist services within their own headquarters and is generally much appreciated by them. Unions with their own expertise tend not to use this service whilst those with single industry memberships like seafaring and coalmining tend to go to their own industries in making their initial approaches. The Service tends to work on the basis of responses from any of the five staff dealing with health and safety in the TUC's Social Insurance and Industrial Welfare Department to demands for information on

policy matters or general health and safety issues (like: office overcrowding, machinery guards, how to get information from the HSE) from union officials. Bibbings contends that were this service better known, it would become overloaded.

Commissioning research

The TUC Survey shows that:

'where unions were unable to secure research into health and safety problems via contacts such as employers or industry research bodies, the TUC was seen as the natural channel through which approaches could be made to appropriate organizations at national level.'

It reports however that there was equal stress on the need for unions to improve mechanisms for a) identifying research needs, b) securing necessary research resources and expertise, and c) influencing research proposals and the way the research is carried out.

In discussion and interview, Clutterbuck, Gee, McKechnie and Watts all drew attention to the lack of development of research by the trade union movement and industry in the health and safety field. Clutterbuck drew attention to the strides that unions in the United States had made on this issue where not only did they have far readier access to sympathetic scientists who were willing to assist but they were also prepared to hire them for their services part or full-time.

Though change in this area is slow in coming a limited amount of research has been undertaken in recent years with unions such as the NUASW (e.g. G. Thomas, Imperial College on 245-T). The NUAAW's new parent union, the Transport and General Workers Union, agreed to provide £1,000 as a first instalment in the pursuit of research into the effects of 245-T on people who have come into contact with it: the first such venture it has undertaken.

The GMBATU has pointed to the difficulty of securing the commitment of sympathetic academic expertise to research projects of particular value in improving health subject of research funding and safety. The the TUC clearing house for trade union establishment of a health and safety research projects is expected to become a focus for discussion amongst health and safety specialists in the near future.

TUC health and safety publications

There has been wide praise for the TUC's publications in the health and safety field (from national level interviews, my own personal observation, particularly at union schools, safety representatives on TUC courses) and earning by far the strongest commendation for TUC services in the health and safety field in the TUC survey of affiliated unions.

¹ In June 1985 it granted it granted a similar sum towards a mortality study in the textile industry.

The hallmark of these publications has been the excellent design and readability combined with the relevance to the immediate practical needs of the shopfloor activist.

Major examples have been the TUC handbook on Health and Safety which has now sold over half a million copies in two editions, the series of superbly produced booklets to accompany the Stage 1 safety representatives' training course (The January 1985 3rd edition has combined the six booklets into one, plus two 'Hazard Files' and accomodates the expanded interest of white collar unions by including more on office hazards and so on) and the latter publications of which particular appreciation has been shown for the TUC handbook and leaflet on noise.

Amongst the perceived merits of this kind of publication are the avoidance of duplication of effort by individual unions, printing material on the same issues, the fostering of a common approach amongst groups of workers from different industries and unions and the sharing of knowledge and experience between unions.

Not all TUC guidance material could be considered appropriate for all industries but there were sufficient common problems to merit an expansion of this kind of publication and the most popular choice for the next topic, according to the survey, would be giving general

advice on chemicals used at work. Other subjects for pamphlets either produced or planned are the hazards of dusts, solvents, manual handling, office hazards, subcontractors and unguarded machinery. These ideas spring from the Health and Safety Specialists Group, and are then produced by the secretariat and members of the group or subcommittee and distributed through individual unions' journals, mailings, etc. There are plans suggested for future campaigns around the launch of these publications.

TUC Centenary Occupational Health Institute and TUC Doctor

Both these TUC 'institutions' share the characteristics that they are not widely known about by trade unions and what is known of their work provokes widely divergent views.

The Centenary Institute provides advice and information on request from affiliated unions. One such request from myself provided a useful literature search. It also provides 'service work' in its hygiene section. A number of unions have used these hygiene facilities for the analysis of samples of substances they would like to have tested.

On the other hand, there were considerable criticisms from those interviewed and from unions which had answered the TUC survey, (including SOGAT 82, BIFU and GMBATU) who felt that an already low level of service had deteriorated. This school of thought is perhaps best exemplified by Patrick Kinnersley (1973):

'So far this huge investment by the trade union movement has brought small returns because the Institute's information role is passive; it waits for enquiries to come in rather than generating information for workers so that they can develop knowledge and skills of their own. Some of the long term research work on occupational health is undoubtedly valuable but so long as the results are buried in learned journals, the information may not reach even managements, let alone workers.'

The 'Doctor', or medical adviser, presently Dr R Owen, answers occupational health enquiries from members, endeavours to keep abreast of medical developments and attends conferences and meetings on behalf of the TUC. The general impression from interviews and discussion is that his contribution is a considerable improvement on that of his predecessor, but that the task if done properly is capabilities of one person. My own beyond the insubstantial dealings with him suggest a busy man who will involved when he can - a visit to a poultry works to get investigate the causes of tenosynovitis (inflammation of the wrist) amongst poultry workers, the call for systematic epidemiological studies of workers exposed to pesticides, the passing on of contacts interested in occupational health risks in the rural workers' sector - all were ready responses to requirements of the union or initiatives of

his own which, though they make no major innovations, perform a useful function in the day-to-day work of trade unions trying to cut down on health hazards.

Seminars and conferences

The TUC has organized successful conferences and seminars on topics relevant to unions' particular interests, for example, construction, shipbuilding, printing, oil refineries, noise and violence to staff. Proposals for conferences and workshops include technical briefings on new proposals and specific problem areas and single sector/problem gatherings. My own experience as a delegate to TUC conferences in London discussing the early days of life under the Health and Safety at Work Act; how to surmount the problems which it raised at the workplace and subsequently on what problems were emerging over the Regulations, proved enlightening. The exchange of SRSC views on organizational hurdles to be surmounted might well be repeated with considerable benefit to union delegates from a diversity of industries reviewing the difficulties encountered in the current recession. Conferences and seminars are decided upon either in the resolutions or by the Social Insurance Committee of the TUC in response to perceived problems common to a number of unions. Too often, however, they become 'platform exercises' for the major speakers, whilst many delegates are listening but not contributing. The TUC is now addressing itself to this

problem and may change its method of organizing these meetings.

Site visits and TUC speakers

Both these TUC services are little known to affiliated members and rarely used when they are, unions in the main tending to use their own officials where this kind of need arises. Site visits by the medical adviser, (as in the instance quoted above) may prove to be the service which is more appreciated.

Health and safety specialists meetings

Since she was interviewed, at least one of the developments McKechnie sought regarding the TUC has come about. She said:

'There is no set-up in the existing system for people like myself to meet people from other unions. There are no meetings at the TUC...'

However, by the time the TUC was submitting evidence to the Select Committee in July 1982, it was able to say:

'Further evidence of the growing emphasis on accident and disease prevention amongst unions can be seen by the appointment to many trade unions of health and safety specialists. The TUC has started to convene regular meetings of the group of health and safety specialists representing some 26 affiliated unions (a list is given in a later section). The TUC intends to continue this work in order to promote the exchange of information and views among

unions on health and safety.'

The Health and Safety Specialists Group is thought to have originated after a number of requests from union 'safety activists' like McKechnie and Gee, which found resonance within the TUC structure because several such 'subject' committees already existed within the organization. Notably under the aegis of the SIIW Department, similar committees of legal officers and pension specialists were operating, as was a social security working party. Thus, the specialists' group which brought together health and safety specialists from many unions was a logical step, though it was less uniform than the others, including as it does legal officers, national officers with health and safety responsibility, and eight full-time staff from research departments.

Responses from unions to the TUC survey suggest that they all find the meetings valuable. They felt that the main benefits lay in enabling those attending to exchange information and experience; to keep in touch with new developments via the TUC (this includes health and safety initiatives from the European Economic Community, which might subsequently become directives or recommendations); to co-ordinate approaches so as not to subsequently 'step on the corns' of unions which operate in different spheres; to identify new areas requiring attention and to co-operate

in joint ventures such as preparation of publications (the activity thought by many to be the most important aspect of the group's work), like those on noise, manual handling, dust, etc.

White collar unions were particularly enthusiastic about the establishment of the Office Hazards Sub-Group, which they hope will prove to be the precursor to producing common TUC guidelines on issues pertinent to the health and safety problems of white collar workers - a demand increasingly recognized by the training courses.

Having attended one or two of these specialists' meetings, I welcome the development, but see circumstances arising which might limit the ultimate effectiveness of these There is little discussion at these meetings exercises. strategies for ensuring that the enhanced levels of information training and servicing are effectively used at the workplace; that is, that the plant level union organization is sufficient to obtain its objectives 'armed' with all that the union backroom team can provide. even supposing that such strategies were on the agenda, their implementation would require that health and safety specialists carry the weight within their own unions (and TUC 'bureaucracy') to be able to impose the requirements of health and safety organization established practices.

International links

There is an <u>international</u> <u>dimension</u> to the work of the TUC exemplified by its work in a number of fields of health and safety. Amongst the most prominent of these are:

- (a) through the International Labour Office to press for the preparation of Conventions and Recommendations to influence governments to raise safety standards;
- (b) involvement with various European Economic Community tripartite committees particularly the 54-man Advisory Committee on Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work which produce directives and action programmes on occupational health, injury and general problems of the working environment. Standards are proposed, sometimes well in advance of those existing in Britain, and meet with a mixed response in terms of compliance (even where they were officially approved by government directives on pesticides were not carried out in practice which raises serious questions about the effectiveness of enforcement).
- (c) working through the OECD particularly on standard setting committees for chemicals and toxic substances which are the subject of international trade. Amongst its main concerns are the harmonisation of testing requirements and controls and the dissemination of information.

However, it would make an interesting background to the survey results to consider one possible hypothesis: 'the role played by the TUC in health and safety issues is appreciated by safety representatives'.

Respondents' attitudes would also be established in terms of the training courses laid on by the TUC Training College, but questions on this area would emerge in the section on training.

Conclusion

The TUC survey (1983) was part of its response to a longstanding commitment to expand its information and advisory services to affiliated members. The dilemma about where to place the emphasis for such services is best exemplified by the enquiry service which does the major part of its work for those unions which are not themselves organized to provide information.

The question now is whether greater resources should be devoted to helping these smaller unions or to seek out common needs amongst all unions (like the production of publications on multi-industry hazards) for attention.

The Chairman of the SIIW Committee planned to visit the following unions: TGWU; GMBATU; UCATT; ASTMS; FTAT; NUFLAT and NALGO to elicit the priority needs of a wide

variety of unions from the TUC.

If a way can be found to place greater emphasis on the need for discussing and implementing policy decisions (which do not pre-empt the sovereignty of Congress decisions) on the basis of workplace organization for health and safety, then the back-up services will be rendered considerably more valuable.

This chapter has focussed on the views of trade union officials and their perceptions of how unions organize to influence health and safety at work. These views have been compared with others' perceptions, lay members, commentators, employers and my own observations.

Of central interest has been the ideology or thinking behind the kind and quantity of resources that unions decide to devote to health and safety and whether those resources meet union members' perceived demands.

Such questions unearth a host of imponderables which defeat any attempt at precise answers. However, they suggest areas of enquiry and the formulation of hypotheses to test by means of the survey of shopfloor health and safety activists - the questionnaire completed by safety representatives, findings from which are described in the next chapter.

Given the views expressed in this chapter it was thought potentially productive to frame questions to establish the views of safety representatives on the nature of the health and safety problem to test the following hypotheses:

The safety representatives approached for this survey:

- (a) see health and safety at work as an important issue,
- (b) think that their trade unions devote enough resources to the issue,
- (c) conside carelessness a more likely cause of accidents than badly designed work systems,
- (d) feel that management and workforce have an identity of interest over health and safety at work rather than being in conflict,
- (e) perceive consultation to be more important than negotiation with management over health and safety issues,
- (f) consider it more important to direct resources to preventing occupational injury and disease than giving compensation for them,
- (g) think that their health and safety procedures are effective,
- (h) think that management give health and safety enough importance.

In testing the above hypotheses it is likely that a great deal of additional material would become available.

Further hypotheses suggested as a result of the focussed interviews and other material relate to the resources devoted to health and safety by the unions. They would include:

Safety representatives in general:

- (i) receive sufficient information on health and safety to satisfy them,
- (j) are satisfied with union health and safety courses,
- (k) are satisfied with the role of the TUC in health and safety,
- (1) feel they could not do their jobs effectively without the backing of their unions.

Whilst examining these question areas an attempt to assess whether there is any variation in response between different categories of health and safety activist would be made - as explained in the next chapter. It is also proposed to formulate further hypotheses during the course of the analysis.

CHAPTER 3

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The objectives of the safety representatives' questionnaire were to try to obtain a picture of respondents' perceptions of the problems of health and safety at work, to discover what type of back-up, if any, they required from their unions and whether they thought they were receiving it. Where possible, the picture so formed would be compared with the evidence available from the focussed interviews and literature search as to other perceptions of the issue.

Where possible the findings will be used to test the hypotheses formulated in the course of this study. Simultaneously it is hoped to obtain a factual description of different types of workplace health and safety procedures, background information on the characteristics of safety representatives and to derive insights into grassroots activists' needs and attitudes.

Such a survey was thought to be desirable in the light of the lack of any substantial of its type of this field at that time. Smaller scale or less detailed surveys were carried out before this study. Gregory (TURU 1976) surveyed 123 shopfloor workers and 37 foremen and supervisors in 13 separate establishments (the survey

undertaken in 1975 sought to determine and evaluate differences in attitudes to health and safety at work of shopfloor workers, shop stewards and foremen/supervisors). Other surveys by Gregory (a small sample of TGWU workers -TURU 1976) and the Labour Research Department (1977) covered limited areas of safety representatives' functions and servicing but in a less exhaustive fashion, whilst Cook (1980) and Leopold (1981) carried out small scale studies in an attempt to examine the effects of training on safety representatives attending TUC training courses. Beaumont (1980, 1981) surveyed safety representatives to gain insight into perceptions of their functions to consult or negotiate and relationship with their 'constituent' workforces (discussed elsewhere in this thesis). The LRD undertook the largest survey of safety representatives' rights yet attempted following the more limited efforts of the AUEW (1980) and Beaumont (1983).

The survey was distributed by tutors on my behalf to safety representatives attending TUC courses. Safety representatives were deliberately chosen as respondents as health and safety 'activists' who would, hopefully, be keen to answer a questionnaire. This proved to be correct, with a high rate of returns (aided by reminders from the tutors who had distributed them). However, instances the returns hoped for did not materialise and the tutor in question criticised the length of the questionnaire which, he said, had not allowed the

respondents time to complete it in one teaching period.

Thus, the 152 respondents could not be considered a typical workforce cross-section for they were all activists willing to take on someresponsibility on behalf of their fellow union members. Nor were they a cross-section of trade unions affiliated to the TUC as a number of unions did not take advantage of TUC safety representative training courses (a fuller explanation is given in an earlier chapter) such as the civil service unions which did not begin using the courses till a little However, this was no drawback because the study later. was aimed at obtaining as much knowledge as possible and saw no particular merit in trying to examine a more typical cross-section of the workforce.

The numbers of respondents replying provided a wealth of material for analysis but no extravagant claims can be made (see next section) about the status of the evidence to emerge from a sample of this size and composition. Therefore, the findings from this survey can only be a pointer to some of the question areas examined.

Having fined down the question areas to emerge from the focussed interviews, a series of questions were drawn up for a written questionnaire to be completed by union safety representatives attending TUC training courses. The questions were formulated with the purpose of producing

evidence capable of testing the hypotheses.

Union safety representatives were chosen as respondents as the most aware group of trade union activists in the health and safety field who would best articulate the attitudes and requirements of the shopfloor in this field.

Pre-pilot and pilot questionnaires were tested on small samples of safety representatives (18 and 10 respectively in respondent numbers) before evolving the questionnaire proper. There was no deliberate discrimination between industries, unions or other categories, though the surveys did have a preponderance of GMBATU members on occasions through using one of that union's courses for a pilot survey.

The final questionnaire took as a starting point the following criteria:

Why is the question being asked?

What information is hoped for?

How will the information obtained be used?

Could the question be asked in a different way?

Is the question absolutely necessary?

Can the question be understood by all respondents?

How does this help towards the final research objectives?

In the final questionnaire the layout was made easier to follow and the questions easier to answer by giving more space and simplifying a number of questions which had adjacent columns of options in earlier pilots. Answers to some questions clearly showed that clarification was needed both for ease of the respondent's understanding and for the quality of the final data, e.g. in several instances 'regional', which might have different meanings for different unions, was changed to 'local'.

While open-ended questions yield more information, they are difficult to analyse and more demanding of the respondents. In addition the format of the questionnaire should not be such as to lead respondents, consciously or unconsciously, to answer in a particular way. Personal background questions appeared at the end of the questionnaire and other changes were made as a result of piloting.

Final questionnaires

The final questionnaires were distributed by TUC tutors to safety representatives taking the TUC 10-day course, with the exception of 11 which were completed by GMBATU members attending a course run by the union. Two kinds of questionnaire were drawn up: a shorter (20 question version) to be completed by respondents before they had started the course and a longer (47 questions) version to be completed at the end of the course.

Questionnaire responses were computer-analysed and this enabled cross-tabulation of the main explanatory variables with dependent variables to be undertaken. Correlation matrix and Mann-Whitney U Tests were carried out to test for possible differences in response beween groups of respondents.

Effects of main explanatory variables

The main explanatory variables - those taken to be fixed for the purpose of the analysis - were recoded to investigate whether they had an effect upon the dependent variables (or those which were hypothesised to be dependent) such as respondent attitudes.

The major explanatory variables thought to be worth further investigation were related to respondents belonging to 'committed' or 'uncommitted' unions; length of time at the job; number employed at respondent's workplace; degree of unionisation at the workplace; trade union position held by respondent; length of time respondent has been a safety representative; age; whether employed in the public or private sectors; whether employed in a blue or white collar capacity. How these explanatory variables are defined is explained under the respondents' profile heading.

Bi-variate analyses only would be carried out on the grounds that the data set is both insufficiently large and probably not representative to make any further analyses meaningful. A number of relationships between variables appear but are not statistically significant. Had the sample size been larger it is likely that a greater number of relationships would have been found statistically significant. Those findings which are suggestive rather than significant are developed as hypotheses to test in future research. These are discused in this chapter.

Summary of findings from correlation matrix and Mann-Whitney U tests

75 correlations were carried out:

7 of these were significant at the 1% level and 3 more were significant at the 5% level.

Only those significant at the 1% level are cosidered. The results from the correlation matrix suggest that, at least with this sample size, there are very few discernable relationships between the main variables. The few that have been revealed by these analyses do not show large correlation co-efficients. Because of the ordinal nature of the data, in each case, Spearman Rank Order Correlation Co-efficients were computed.

A total of 52 Mann-Whitney U Tests were carried out to test

for possible differences between groups of respondents on the basis of the degree of commitment of their union to health and safety, the length of time spent in their present job, their union position and a number of other factors. Only one of the mean differences was significant at the 1% level, while another was significant at the 2% level. While a larger sample size and more discriminating measures might have revealed more significant mean differences, only those which were actually found significant from this study are considered here.

Description of questionnaire findings

176 questionnaires were completed by 152 respondents (24 filled in both the pre- and post-course questionnaires). The pre-course questionnaire contained 20 questions (see Appendix5), whilst the post-course questionnaire contained 47 questions (see Appendix 6).

11 respondents attended a GMBATU Health and Safety course; 85 respondents attended a TUC Health and Safety course at West Ham Poly;

56 respondents attended at TUC Health and Safety course at Enfield Poly.

Questionnaires completed were as follows:

Before (completed before star	ting West Ham 20
the course):	Enfield 46
	Total 66
After (completed after the con	urse West Ham 68
the course was finished	ed): Enfield 31
	GMBATU 11
	Total 110
Both before and after:	West Ham 3
	Enfield 21
	Total 24

Of the 152 respondents, 123 were male and 6 were female. The other 23 did not make it clear, but the likelihood is that 21 were male and 2 female.

ANALYSIS DESCRIPTION

Respondents' profile

Of the 152 respondents, the largest numbers originated from the following unions: (for a complete breakdown see Appendix 7)

21 AUEW (presumed to be Engineering Section)
19 TGWU (including one from the white collar section ACTSS)

16 AUEW (Foundry Section)

16 GMBATU (including 11 from a GMBATU-run training course, one of whom belonged to the white collar section MATSA)

13 UCATT

12 FTAT

10 NALGO

This indicated that there was preponderance of members from particular unions on the courses respondents came from (which may or may not be a measure of the enthusiasm of particular unions for training their members). Certainly in this population the Foundry Section of the AUEW was represented by a far larger number of members than its size would suggest, but it would come as no surprise in view of that union's reputation for action on health and safety issues (R. Williams, 1977).

To assist in establishing the source of any variation in response, re-coding was undertaken to cross-tabulate of explanatory variables against dependent variables. Thus unions were divided into 'committed', 'other large' and 'small' (the last two categories portraying 'uncommitted' unions).

The 'committed' union category comprised ASTMS, GMBATU and AUEW (Foundry Section). These unions are outstanding 'in terms of making concerted efforts to provide a comprehensive technical health and safety service to ther members via their safety representatives. The GMBATU is noteworthy in rspect of its regional network of health and

safety officers' (Glendon & Booth, 1982).

ASTMS is another union with a full-time official in charge of health and safety (as this is written, Sheila McKechnie has left her employment at the ASTMS, leaving two assistants and a vacancy) who has built up national and local 'machinery' for handling the issue. The post is that of a national official.

The Foundry Section of the AUEW (now merged into the parent union, but separate when this survey was being conducted) has a long tradition of health and safety consciousness and battling on behalf of both its own members and the wider trade union movement (Williams, 1977).

The other respondents' unions could not be said to display the same level of commitment on the health and safety front. The figure of 250,000 members was used as the cut-off point between large and small unions.

42 of the respondents who completed the first questionnaire only, did not provide answers to several of the 'personal background' questions as they had not been included at that stage. Of the 110 who provided relevant background detail, 15 had white collar jobs, 92 had blue collar jobs, 46 were employed in the public sector and 61 were employed in the private sector (definitions: Standard Industrial Classification).

57 had worked at their present job for less than 10 years (only one for less than two years), whilst 49 had worked at their jobs for more than 10 years. The categories decided for cross-tabulation were 2-10 years and over 10 years.

TABLE 3.1: BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY SIZE OF EMPLOYING FIRM

NO. OF RESPONDENTS	NO. OF EMPLOYEES
13	less than 50
44	50 - 200
22	200 - 1000
29	over 1000

Cross-tabulations were carried out on the basis of the numbers employed shown in the right-hand column.

Degree of unionisation

31 respondents worked for companies which were less than 90% (under 50%) organized. 77 respondents worked for companies which were more than 90% organized (of which 54 were 100%). Four categories were used for cross-tabulation purposes.

Status

74 were both shop stewards and safety representatives, 29 safety representatives only and a number of resondents held

other posts. As explanatory variables for cross-tabulation these two categories were used as well as a separate one for shop stewards alone, though this latter constituted an insignificant sample.

Age

23 were 21-35; 47 were 36-50; 30 were over 50 years. These were the categories used in recoding.

Safety representatives' characteristics

Of the 110 respondents, 75% said they were elected as safety representatives whilst 18% were not (further research might try to establish what proportion of safety representatives volunteered or are press-ganged).

14 had been safety representatives for less than three months at the time they completed the final questionnaire, 48 for 3-9 months and 38 for over nine months. (The Regulations had not been in force very long, but this also argues that unions at that time tried to get their safety representatives onto TUC courses as soon as they could.) It was thus difficult to measure the turnover of safety representatives as so many 'new boys' existed. These three categories were recoded for cross-tabulation purposes.

86% thought that they would continue as a safety representative more than a year after completing the questionnaire and course, while only 5% thought that they would not do so.

Issue involvement

An idea of the kind of health and safety issues in which the respondents became involved is given by their answers to question 29. This asked them to describe the most recent health and safety issue which they had been involved in at work.

This proved to encompass a wide variety of activities of which the major categories (of the 110 respondents receiving this question) were:

28% taking up particular hazard issues;
18% on fumes and dust and ventilation systems;
9% on chemicals/materials/asbestos.

43% had been trying to improve work systems, which included specific hazards associated with the surroundings: heating, lighting, overcrowding, neglect, oily floors, leaky roofs, drainage, etc. and improvement in the fire drill system. Other activities were widely varied but statistically insignificant.

Some features suggested by cross-tabulation of explanatory variables with dependent variables

Features particular to the chosen sample of respondents to emerge from recoding on the computer describing some more obvious characteristics are outlined below. Unless commented upon in the text no 'deeper meaning' can be read into them other than a descriptive one.

'Committed union' respondents were significantly more likely to have members in the private sector. Large firms with over 200 workers are significantly more likely to be in the private sector amongst the respondent sample. There is a trend for respondents with white collar jobs to be in the smaller workplaces. Private sector respondents' firms are far more likely to be 100% unionised.

white collar respondents in the Overall the number of sample was not sufficient to make significant distinctions behaviour of white between the and blue collar safety Safety representatives in the private representatives. sector have held that post for a longer period than those in the public sector in this sample. Blue collar safety representatives tend to have stayed in the post longer than collar equivalents. Older safety representatives are more likely to come from the public sector in this The bulk of the white collar workers were in the sample. middle, 36-50 year old age group, but not in sufficient

numbers to be very significant.

Other observations arising from cross-tabulation

The more significant results from the recoding exercise are given hereunder with discussion of their implications delayed until the end of this description.

Committed vs uncommitted unions

Committed union respondents were significantly more likely to be satisfied with the efforts of their head offices on health and safety matters than those in both large and small (the more satisfied of the two) uncommitted unions. The latter groups were also more likely to have had no contact over health and safety issues with their head offices. The same trend was was recorded in response to their union's efforts at the local level but not to the same degree of significance.

A Mann-Whitney U value of 684.5 (Z = 6.64, p < 0.0001) resulted from a large difference between the means of a computed variable representing the amount of material which respondents reported that they received from full-time officials and whether they were from one of the three unions designated as 'committed' (ASTMS, GMBATU and AUEW - Foundry Section). The variable was computed by summing weighted values of 13 variables from the questionnaire

concerned with help received by respondents from full-time officials of their union. The interval scale produced showed different mean values for the groups of respondents from 'committed' unions and others which could have been examined using a t-test. However, the large difference revealed by the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test made this unnecessary and showed that there was indeed a highly significant difference in the greater amount of help of various kinds received by respondents from three 'committed' unions in comparison with respondents from other unions. One important aspect of this finding is that it does validate the ascription of respondents these two groups, while at the same time drawing attention to the point that there are few other statistically significant differences to emerge from the analysis which distinguish between them. Again, sample size and degree of sophistication of measurement may be factors here.

Respondents from committed unions were more likely to rank the importance of negotiating over health and safety issues higher than receiving compensation for accidents, though not significantly so. Small uncommitted unions' respondents were significantly more likely to consider that management gave them health and safety information on request. Those from committed unions were the next most

likely to receive such information. Committeed union respondents were significantly more likely to consider that their unions devoted enough resources to health and safety. Committed union respondents were more likely to consider their health and safety procedure effective.

There was no significant difference between the views of respondents on the question of whether they thought unions and management had conflicting interests over the health and safety issue. More than three in four of each sample thought there was a conflict.

On the question of the people and stages involved in the health and safety procedure, a trend in the second set of recoded figures suggested that safety representatives from committed unions were more likely to be involved in the procedure than those from uncommitted unions. There was no significant difference between committed and uncommitted unions when it came to the question of whether safety committees were part of respondents' health and safety procedures. About 40% said 'yes' in each case.

Where the involvement of middle management/foremen and safety officers was concerned there was no significant difference between responses from the two groups, but the percentages showed a wide divergence with roughly 70% testifying to the involvement of middle management/foremen, but less than a third to safety officers.

Length of time employed at job

Respondents who had been employed at the same job for the longer period, more than ten years, were significantly more likely to point to boredom as the most important factor in causing accidents than those who had been a shorter time at the job. The other cross-tabulations in this section revealed no other results of any great importance. Some trends are suggested but numbers are not large enough to be significant.

Numbers employed

Respondents at larger workplaces were less likely to think that they were getting enough information from their full-time officers on health and safety issues than their counterparts at smaller firms - but not significantly so. Health and safety procedures at large firms were, according to respondents, more likely to include both safety representatives and safety committees, according to the trend revealed.

Another trend amongst responses showed higher management more likely to be involved in the health and safety procedure than with larger firms. A similar finding was made with safety officers. There was a negative correlation (r = -0.24, p< 0.01) between the number of

employees at the respondents' workplace and whether the respondent received has information from management on request. This suggests that respondents from smaller workplaces were more likely to receive health and safety information from their management when they requested it.

There was also a negative correlation (r = -0.28, p < 0.01) between the number of employees in a respondent's workplace and the respondent ranking of boredom as a cause of accidents. This finding suggests that respondents from smaller workplaces tend to rank boredom as an accident 'cause' higher than do respondents from larger workplaces.

It is interesting to note that the number of workplace employees did not correlate significantly with any other ranked variable and at first sight the one significant correlation is an unexpected one. In order to derive a complete explanation for it, one might need to consider carefully the nature of work undertaken at the various workplaces from where respondents came. However, the amount of variance in the dependent variable which is actually explained by workplace size is so small that this exercise is not worthwhile with this sample size.

Degree of unionisation

There was a negative correlation (r = -0.32, p < 0.001)

between degree of unionisation at the respondent's workplace and the ranked importance of bargaining for pension rights. This finding suggests that respondents from more highly unionised workplaces were more likely than other respondents to rank bargaining on pension rights highly. Correlations between degree of workplace unionisation and respondent ranking of other 'negotiable' issues - including compensation and improved health and safety, were low and insignificant.

Degree of union organization in respondent's workplace correlated negatively (r = -0.26, p < 0.01) with respondent ranking of the importance of factory inspector's visits to improve health and safety and positively (r = 0.23, p < 0.01) with respondent ranking of the importance of more health and safety training to improve health and safety at work.

Trade union position

A trend (but not significant) suggests that respondents who are both safety representatives and shop stewards are more likely to consider that they have more effective health and safety procedures than safety representatives (or shop stewards alone, of whom there were a negligible number in the sample) alone.

Respondents with the dual safety representative/shop steward role were less likely to see a conflict of interests on health and safety issues between management and unions, though a large proportion (74%) did.

Another suggested trend was for safety representatives to be involved in health and safety procedures a greater amount if the respondents were safety representatives alone than if they were shop stewards as well. The same could be said for the involvement of safety committees under the same circumstances.

Both sets of respondents saw middle management and foremen involved frequently (over 75% suggested this) in the procedure for health and safety with no significant difference apparent. Higher management was more likely to be involved in the procedure for health and safety when the dual role respondents answered. Safety officers were more likely to be involved with health and safety procedures where safety representatives alone answered.

On the question of whether respondents considered that their unions devoted enough resources to health and safety, safety representatives who were also shop stewards (and shop stewards alone) were significantly more likely to answer 'yes' and safety representatives alone to answer 'no'.

The only other Mann-Whitney U Test to reach statistical significant (U = 697.0, Z = 2.52, p < 0.02) revealed a difference between safety representatives who were and who were not also shop stewards in their ranking of the importance of lack of health and safety training as a factor in accident causation. The safety representatives who were also shop stewards were likely to rank this item lower than were safety representatives who were not shop stewards.

How long had respondent been safety representative?

When the survey was carried out the Regulations giving safety representatives powers and functions had not been in force for long so that few of the respondents could write as experienced safety representatives of very long standing. The demarcations made in the question were those of below three months, between three and nine months and over nine months.

Respondents who thought their health and safety procedures effective tended to be the longer serving safety representatives. This same group was more likely to perceive a conflict of interests between management and unions on health and safety and to feel that they were not getting enough information on the issue from full-time officers of their unions.

It was also suggested that safety committees were more likely to be involved in the health and safety procedures where the safety representative had been longer in post. However, safety officers were more likely to be involved on the procedure where the safety representatives had only been operating for less than three months.

In all the above cases, there had been a gradation with the group of respondents in the three to nine month range of experience as a safety representative taking a middle view between the extremes of longest and shortest time as a safety representative. Respondents who had been safety representatives for less than three months were less likely to feel that management were giving them the health and safety information they requested than those who had been in post longer.

Age groups

The middle age group (36-50 years) were significantly the most likely to perceive the health and safety procedure as ineffective, with the older group (over 50) more likely to find it effective and the youngest group (21-35) less so. The younger group of respondents was also significantly more likely to perceive a conflict between the interests of management and union on the health and safety issue, with a gradation to the perception of less conflict as the age of respondents increased.

Respondent age group correlated positively (r = 0.25, p < 0.01) with respondent ranking of the importance of union organization to improve health and ssafety at work, and correlated negatively (r = -0.28, p < 0.01) with respondent ranking of the importance of better management involvement as a factor in improving health and safety at work.

Many of the relationships described in this section between explanatory and dependent variables are suggestive rather than significant. They might prove a useful basis for further research rather than a platform for contributing generalised conclusions, particularly as the sample of respondents could not be described as random or very large.

How the problem of health and safety at work is perceived

This research suggested at an early stage that the response of trade union workplace activists, specifically in this case safety representatives, to health and safety problems at work would be closely linked to their perceptions of the issue.

The most important conclusions to draw in this area from the questionnaire are that the safety representatives in this sample see the health and safety issue as very important and that a large majority see a conflict of interests between workers and management over the issue. They are disappointed with the level of assistance given by management which makes more necessary an adequate back-up service for their unions.

The question asking them to rank activities which unions undertake in order of importance showed health and safety at the top (see Table 3.2). The analysis suggested reasons why this might have been 'artificially high' as a placing. Respondents were answering the survey whilst on a health and safety course; the new Safety Representatives Regulations and indeed the Health and Safety at Work Act had not long been in existence and there was a 'honeymoon period'; some who shy away from the wages issue which can be seen as too 'political' are prepared to tackle health and safety as a 'clean issue' on which the unions are 'on the side of the angels'. Nonetheless the result must be considered significant in view of the corroboratory findings of exercises like the GMBATU survey cited elsewhere.

The following table shows activities undertaken by trade unions ranked in order of importance to respondents. NB: the lowest ranking value indicates 'most important'. The activity rated most important was ascribed a ranking value of "1" down to "8" for the least important, before totalling up for the table following.

TABLE 3.2: TRADE UNION ACTIVITIES RANKED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

ACTIVITY	RANKING VALUE	RANKED FIRST	RANKED LAST
Negotiating workplace health and safety	350	61	1
Bargaining on wages	369	50	4
Bargaining on working hours	502	5	2
Seeking compensation on accident claims	718	2	13
Solidarity with other union	s 723	14	27
Bargaining on pension rights	s 777	5	14
Bargaining on holiday entitlement	782	0	23
Obtaining equal pay for men and women	907	4	57

Note: the average ranking value was calculated to be "624"

Respondents saw health and safety at the most important in terms of all the activities that unions undertake even putting 'negotiating workplace health and safety' above 'bargaining on wages' - though only just.

Overall, respondents thought the issue of health and safety approximately half as important as seeking compensation on accident claims, solidarity with other unions, bargaining on pension rights and bargaining on holiday entitlements, and almost three times as important as obtaining equal pay for women.

By using a different measurement and looking at the breakdown of first and last rankings it is even more clearly seen that 'negotiating workplace safety and health' (40% of respondents) and 'bargaining on wages' (33% of respondents) are thought by far to be the most important aspects of trade union work. Incidental points to emerge were that 'solidarity with other unions' scored far higher (3rd) when given first or last rankings as against ranking values (5th) which is perhaps an indication of the high degree of importance attached to this aspect of trade union work felt strongly by relatively few (about 10% of respondents).

In addition the more highly unionised group of respondents showed a marked trends to stress the importance of bargaining on pension rights. The reasons for this particular finding are not obvious, although it is possible that in the more highly unionised workplaces - particularly perhaps in the public sector, pension rights assume a greater importance than in the case in less well unionised workplaces for reasons that relate to members' expectations for secure employment and post-employment conditions.

The low level of priority accorded to equal pay for women may also reflect the low number of female respondents and, indeed, participants on the course.

Prevention versus compensation

Table 3.2 also reveals that respondents rated 'negotiating workplace health and safety' as far more important than 'seeking compensation on accident claims'. In fact, twice as important according to the ranking values. This difference in weightings was even further underlined when measured in terms that 87% put 'negotiating workplace health and safety' above 'seeking compensation', whereas only 7% did the reverse.

This can be interpreted as a most emphatic vote for prevention as against the compensation approach. This fairly large 2:1 ratio for prevention policies suggests a switch of emphasis in recent years. It tends to support a Walters (1978) study which found increasing union journal space being devoted to prevention as against the previous disproportionate emphasis on compensation. Discussion elsewhere in this research suggests however that it would be incorrect to pose the two approaches as exactly opposing because there are elements (though not large) of one in the other.

Are management and unions seen to have conflicting interests over health and safety?

Linked to these changing attitudes is the perception, clearly shown by the questionnaire, that respondents in this sample see a conflict of interests between themselves and the employers over health and safety issues. They

came down heavily (76% to 18%) for this view largely because they said that management would be unwilling to lose production or profit in devoting time and resources to producing healthy and safe work systems. 70% of all respondents gave this answer.

Attitude to unsafe working conditions

To point up this 'conflict' view, nine out of ten respondents said they would refuse to work on a job they considered unsafe (91% saying they would refuse and only 7% saying they would not). Though that response may have to be scaled down somewhat to allow for bravado in the face of such a clear cut question when work situations may be far less clear (for example, it may not be obvious that a work system is unsafe, it may not be easy in the present recession to risk losing a job whilst standing up on a matter of principle) it is still a strong indicator of attitudes.

The question brings out starkly the potential conflict situation built into the whole issue which is exemplified by the number who said 'would not start again until job made safe'. Many safety agreements, like that of the TGWU at Bass Breweries in Sheffield, have a 'stop the job' clause in them.

Question 31 asked what further steps the respondent would

take if asked to carry out an unsafe job apart from, as the vast majority said, stopping the job. The major trends repeated the picture which emerged from their view of emergency procedures (examined shortly in this chapter), viz. the importance of the involvement of safety representatives, lower and middle management (the biggest category) and the lack of importance of the safety committee and routine inspections. Those who did not feel that the job should be stopped shared the views of the majority about what steps to take next.

However, equally interesting was the significant number of suggestions of steps to take which had not been brought up by respondents answering the earlier question on health and safety procedures. These included 20% who would call in the shop steward, branch secretary or convenor (a far larger percentage than emerged in the 'procedure' questions), 15% who said they would make it their jobs to advise all other workers not to work on the job and/or mobilise the workforce and 10% who said they would check the legislation and quote it.

This all suggested an additional informal procedure which can come into play when there is an emergency on or which can be enacted outside the procedures completely. The tendency then seems to be to by-pass many of the 'purely' health and safety structures and bring into play procedures which are more capable of exerting 'industrial muscle'.

Thus there was more talk of mobilising the workforce, bringing in the shop steward, etc.

Management's approach to the health and safety issue

Disappointment with management's role, however, was a clear message to emerge from the respondents' replies and therefore, by extension, reflected on management's perceptions of trade unionists' role in the area.

On the whole the picture emerging was of management doing little to assist safety representatives. What effort was being made seemed to favour joint safety committee workings. For example, 'better management involvement', ranked second in a list of ways of improving health and safety standards at work, showed how little effort employers seemed to be making.

Typical comments in answer to the question as to whether unions and management were in conflict over health and safety were: 'management doesn't want the union speaking with authority in this area'. This is an exact echo of the employers' (NFU) position in the farming industry where the introduction of safety representatives have been resisted in the union's view for exactly that reason. Another comment 'management is outdated compared with the union' and 'management has no knowledge of health and safety' and 'management doesn't want to get involved'

squares with the comments of all interviewees and most of the available literature. For example, Leopold (1982) showed TUC trained safety representatives being better informed than lower management, an opinion corroborated by the Chief Factory Inspector earlier.

Indeed, two of the most often quoted functions of the union at the workplace amongst respondents' answers were 'to put pressure on management' and 'to gain access to management'. In the first category, purposes mentioned most often were in order to management to live up to its responsibility, to carry out demands, to take swift action and to point out bad work practices - all of which imply a perceived lack of responsiveness to union efforts to improve health and safety practice. In addition, access to management was seen as most desirable so as to initiate negotiations, agreements and recognition of the union.

It can also be argued that if management recognised an active role for safety representatives then they would be far more forthcoming with the information required by them to carry out their functions as safety representatives. However, only 14.5% of respondents said they were always given information by management as a matter of routine and only twice that number when they requested it. One of the questionnaire findings which is most condemnatory of management co-operation is that which showed more than half the respondents rarely or never received information from

management as a matter of routine and a quarter rarely or never even on request. These findings are corroborated by the LRD (1984) survey wich showed only one in three safety representatives questionned, receiving adequate health and safety information from employers. Of those who said they did not always get information from management, 60% felt that their procedures were not always effective.

Replies to the question on procedures on health and safety suggested too that higher management was involved in less than one tenth of procedures. The implication may be drawn that either employers do not consider the issue important enough to involve higher management or do not allow effective procedures which would involve management representatives with decision-making powers to become established.

Health and safety procedures

Respondents replied on how they were able to exercise most influence at the workplace. They suggest the existence of a number of types of procedure: the health and safety procedure which two-thirds of respondents said was the same as the existing grievance procedure for raising and pursuing issues at the workplace, an emergency procedure for dealing with urgent problems (which only 13% of respondents mentioned they had at their own workplaces -

approximately evenly split between public and private sector firms) and an informal emergency procedure (which was discovered as a result of a question asking respondents to describe what further steps they would take had they just refused to undertake what they considered to be an unsafe job) which comes into operation either when there is an emergency or when the established procedure plays no part in dealing with the issue.

Whilst not displaying conclusive trends, the analysis of this unique data assembled through the questionnaire on the process by which workplace health and safety issues are raised and pursued, provided an illuminating picture of safety representatives' perceptions of what constitute effective methods of dealing with these issues.

General conclusions suggest that normal procedures can be just as effective, if not more so, than health and safety procedures in which safety representatives may experience longer delays than by shop stewards using regular procedures. Successful procedures, it is suggested, would include more co-operation from managements and for the safety representative to have greater direct access to higher management.

Other suggestions with substantial support were for more urgency to be written into procedures by reducing the number of stages and delays and for the union to have more

plant level power.

Analysis also suggested that grievances which go through union channels first and/or which involve a shop steward are likely to be more successful. A high proportion of those who took their grievance straight to supervisors, lower or middle management were disappointed. This also supported the suggestion made elsewhere in this study that the safety representative system whose traditional power base may obtain a speedier and more effective hearing.

Questionnaire findings on procedures

Respondents were asked to describe the procedure for raising and pursuing health and safety problems at work and whether these were the same as existing grievance procedure. This enabled a unique picture to emerge of the workplace level methods of dealing with health and safety questions and, later, how effective they were considered. The shopfloor organization and involvement in the local level procedure, utilizes the back-up of training, information etc. provided by various levels of the union.

Normal procedures

All respondents were asked whether the procedure they used for health and safety issues was the same as the 'existing grievance procedure'. 63% said it was the same and 31.5% said it was different. Asked whether the procedure they had for dealing with health and safety at work was effective, 42% said 'yes', while 49% said 'sometimes'. Thus, 55% said it was not always effective.

Further analysis undertaken in the following pages examines components of the procedures against respondents' views of their effectiveness.

Urgent/emergency procedures

Of the 151 who answered question 1, which should to obtain a feeling of the method by which health and safety issues were dealt with at the workplace, only 13% made mention of an emergency procedure for handling urgent problems.

The only major points to emerge from a breakdown/comparison of the two sorts of procdeure were that:

Safety representatives played an important role in both (mentioned 16 times out of a possible 20 in both urgent and regular procedures); safety officers and factory engineers were brought in more often in emergencies (8 as against 4 times); middle management was brought in more on emergencies (6 as against 4 times) whilst the intervention of safety committees (down from 15 to 6) and regular inspections/meetings (down from 10 to 0) was understandably diminished.

These results also show that in only one case was higher management formally involved in the emergency procedure, that there was a greater involvement of middle management and the management's safety officers in the urgent cases as against the supervisory level (down from 7 to 4) in normal circumstances.

It would have been surprising had there not been a marked decline in safety committee involvement and featuring of regular meetings and inspections in the emergency procedures as the necessity would be to save time. The small numbers in the sample preclude any sweeping conclusions.

People and bodies involved in the procedure

Reference is made here to the normal procedure. Analysis of the results showed that 50% of respondents mentioned that the safety representative was involved in the procedure at some stage with only 8% saying that issues were first raised by the safety representative. (One might expect a higher proportion but many may have been working on the assumption that this would be expected anyway; there were no prompts, it being an open-ended question which sought to get a feeling of the process in operation).

The shop steward, father of the chapel or union representative, was mentioned in 12% of replies, the convenor, the next stage up the union ladder in 6% and the full-time officer in only 2% of replies. The union branch too was indicated as having very little role to play in the formal procedural structure as perceived by respondents.

Management

The lowest level of management involved, the supervisor, was mentioned in 40% of answers. Middle management/departmental heads 51%, higher management 9% and managerial safety officers 30%. The plant or factory engineer was mentioned on 5% of answers.

Joint management/union safety committees

Safety committees were mentioned in 40% of answers, but it was not always clear whether these were union-only or joint management/union. It was therefore thought advisable to treat this figure with caution when attempting to draw any conclusions.

The Inspectorate

The factory or railway inspectorate received mention in 6.5% of answers.

Sequences

It is evident that even where the routine procedure is also described as the same as the grievance procedure there is a wide range of difference in the routes that health and safety grievances pursue.

Perhaps the easiest trend to detect was that of the initial move once an issue had been raised. It was found that 43% of respondents said that grievances were taken initially from the worker to management (of whatever description), 31.5% took them to their union (safety representative or whoever) first, and 11% straight to the safety committee. This was an interesting finding in itself - suggesting that even in unionised workplaces, only working through their workers are union representatives as soon as the grievance arose, in about a third of the cases, and going straight to management (normally the supervisor) in 4 out of 10 instances.

On the sample of 20 who had defined a procedure for emergencies the union was initially to play a greater role and the safety committee a smaller one with management roughly the same or slightly down. Thus, in 45% of cases (compared with 31.5%) the union's help was sought first; 40% the management (roughly the same percentage as in the routine procedure) and only 5% used the safety committee (compared with 11%).

Frequency of inspections, safety committee meetings and time limits at various stages of procedure and hazard forms

In 21.5% of cases respondents included a sense of urgency in their workplace procedures, following the advice of the TUC training course, with stipulations for frequency of workplace inspections and safety committee meetings and time limits for various stages of the procedure.

14% of respondents indicated that completion of hazard forms or reports was part of the procedure.

Miscellaneous

A very small number of repsondents said they had no procedure (6) but four of those were expecting one. Another four mentioned that they would count 'stopping the job' as part of the procedure in certain circumstances.

 $\frac{\text{Factors}}{\text{procedures}} \stackrel{\text{be}}{=} \frac{\text{by}}{\text{procedures}} \stackrel{\text{respondents}}{=} \frac{\text{as}}{\text{contributing}} \stackrel{\text{to}}{=} \frac{\text{effective}}{\text{procedures}}$

Referring to question 1, respondents were asked if they did not think their procedures were effective to explain how they would improve them.

Analysis of answers to the question 'do you think the procedure is effective' had broken down, basically, into

42% saying 'yes' and 55% saying 'sometimes, hardly ever, never, or don't know.'

54% did not answer the question asking 'how would you improve the procedure?' Of those 71 respondents that did answer, there was no over-whelmingly dominant feeling, but a number of themes emerged as 'front runners'. They were:

Need for safety committee/joint meetings - 18%

Need for more co-operation from and communication with management - 18%

Safety representative to have more direct access to higher management - 10%

Safety representative to have more direct access to supervisor - 5%

Cut down number of stages in procedure/stop delays - 8.5%

More power to implement the law/stop the job/stop delays 7%

Use union pressure - 7%

More visits from and power to factory inspector - 7%

Involve factory engineer/district engineer/safety officer 7%

This revealed a desire amongst respondents for more co-operation and interest from management; (this may be symptomatic of a desire to ensure that there is discussion and agreement over changes) for the safety representative

to have greater access to higher management where, presumably, decisions could be taken and which would cement the status of the safety representative as well by showing that he officially had access as a union representative. It also revealed a desire for:

- more urgency to be enshrined in the procedures;
- or the union to have more power at plant level and to use pressure for more and more effective interventions by the inspectorate and by factory engineers or safety officers.

Procedures favoured by safety representatives

of the 64 respondents who said their procedures were effective, 72% were using what they described as the normal grievance procedure and could therefore be assumed to be satisfied with it. However, 96 respondents in all said they were using a normal grievance procedure and looked at in this light only 48% of those using the normal grievance procedure thought that it was an effective procedure for settling their health and safety grievances. (It should not be forgotten that there may be similar disenchantment over its capacity to settle normal grievances).

A number of interesting trends emerge from further analysis. Though only a very small number (four) of all the respondents included 'stopping the job' as part of their

procedure when a hazard was considered too dangerous, they all considered their procedures effective.

A high proportion of those citing the capacity to take grievances straight to the union thought their procedures effective (79%) and 61% of those who involve shop stewards, fathers of chapel or union representatives were struck by its effectiveness. In contrast, a high proportion of those citing grievances going straight to management did not think their procedures effective.

Of respondents suggesting that their health and safety procedures were the same as normal grievance procedures, half saw it as effective and half ineffective. Of those with emergency procedures, they too were split in examining its effectiveness.

Without wishing to overplay the significance of these results (a very high proportion after all who were classified as not saying their procedure was always effective had said that they 'sometimes' were) it does seem to reveal that there is no great enthusiasm for the effectiveness of the role played by a number of the parties mentioned: supervisor; middle management; higher management; safety officer; safety committee; safety representative or the filling-in of hazard forms. There was slightly more enthusiasm for the health and safety procedure being the same as normal procedure and the

procedure containing an emergency route, and for the intervention of convenor or full-time official or other slightly higher level union presence.

Most persuasive figures from the findings are the recognition that taking grievances straight to the union (in whatever shape that may be) is an essential component of an effective procedure and that taking them straight to management is likely to result in an ineffective procedure. Those who thought that their procedures were effective were in the main impressed by the role of the shop steward, father of the chapel or union representative (who have power bases elsewhere within the plant or workplace).

Some of these trends are underlined by taking a different approach to the analysis. One such approach is that of taking percentages (of those who mentioned certain factors) of all those either saying the procedure was effective or not always effective.

In this way the popularity of going straight to the union with grievances is underlined with five times (59% as against 12%) as many of those who thought of their procedures as effective mentioning this factor as against those who saw their procedures as not always effective. Likewise the unpopularity of taking issues straight to management was underscored 2 to 1 with the percentage of those saying it was not an effective move being about twice

as high as the percentage of those who included it as an element in procedures which are always effective.

However, factors which were a shade more welcome to those who thought their procedures ineffective on the previous analysis did not come out ahead when the comparison based on popularity within those two categories was made. The popularity of taking grievances to supervisors, middle and higher management as well as to safety officers were close enough together to make it difficult to draw hard and fast conclusions.

Also on this basis the participation of safey representatives was mentioned by 52% of those who thought their procedures either effective or not always effective. This varied from the previous figure which suggested that there was less merit seen in the role of safety representative.

Some confirmation of the value of the shop steward's role (and that of the father of the chapel and union representative) was provided by a 2:1 ratio in their favour by the second method.

Perception of workplace procedures: management provision

Question 20 asked whether respondents considered that workplace management co-operated in providing information on health and safety issues. Their answers, relating to

representatives' perception of procedures, showed:

14% saying 'yes always' as a matter of routine;
28% saying 'yes always' on request from management;
21% saying 'yes often' as a matter of routine;
31% saying 'yes often' on request from management;
54% saying 'rarely' or 'no never' as a matter of routine;

25% saying 'rarely' or 'no never' on request from management;

with 8 saying that they had never asked for information as a matter of routine.

Of those who said they did not always get information from management, 60% had said their procedures were not always effective.

Further discussion

Some of the points arising from the questionnaire analysis and discussion relating to respondents' perceptions of the issue of health and safety at work require further examination in the light of hypotheses formulated and any variations in responses (explanatory variables).

There may seem to be a contradiction in respondents' attitudes to management. On the one hand results show that the majority of respondents were disappointed with the

amount and kinds of co-operation they were receiving from management whilst on the other hand they clearly perceived a conflict of interests with their employers.

Are these respondents justified in feeling that management should take a greater interest against this background? The way in which the question on conflict was posed in the questionnaire to safety representatives (despite refinements in the pilot stages) did not allow respondents much scope to develop on their replies.

Thus, although it was clear that the majority saw the needs of the production and profit taking precedence for management over the costs of health and safety at the workplace, there was no follow up question relating to long and short term perspectives.

Several HSE studies (HSE 1976, 1981, 1985) stress the long-term benefits to management of expenditure on health and safety. Using examples of spending on safety on construction sites the latest HSE (1985) publication demonstrates that as safety went higher in priority terms, the cost of employers' liability went down. After estimating the cost of a three day absence accident in 1984 at £ 1,240 made up of items such as administration, replacement and repair and legal costs the study concludes that expenditure on safety and health can 'show dividends not only in regard to accident and ill health records but

also in efficiency of the firm'. It argues that safety means saving money for employers; that a well run company is the company which organizes itself best to maximise production in the most healthy and safe surroundings.

Gee of GMBATU frequently suggests to safety representatives that they use these arguments with management. 'You can often tell which companies are going to do best in the future by looking at how conscious of risk they are and how they organise production to take account of it' said Gee. Conversely the worst organized firms are often a good bet to go out of business imminently. Thus whilst it can be argued that long term investment in safety is in the employers' interests and there exists the basis for an identity of interests on both sides of industry that would be an oversimplification.

It is by no means easy to demonstrate to employers' satisfaction that investment in safety improvements is always in their interests. Carpet manufacturers in the Midlands would undoubtedly have to close down if they had to find the money to comply with the noise regulations. British rubber and plastics manufacturers argue that they have to remain competitive with their rivals in the European Economic Community and cannot afford the extra costs of health and safety demands.

The perception of conflict in these cases is therefore quite comprehensible and reinforces the impression that the respondents would be foolish to rely upon arguments that there was identity of interests. In most cases it still seems likely that the best way to ensure a responsive management is through well-serviced trade union organization.

In examining the explanatory variables after recoding, the breakdown of committed against uncommitted unions was subdivided with the latter category into large and small The small unions were significantly more likely unions. to receive information on request from management. Given that correlation between workplace size and receiving health and safety information from management on a routine basis was not significant - although it was in the same direction, a reason for this finding might be that safety representatives in smaller workplaces have managed to establish a better working relationship with their managements than have representatives from larger workplaces and that this has enabled them to obtain health and safety information on request with greater readiness.

Respondents at smaller workplaces were more likely to find boredom an important cause of accidents. It may be surmised that the negative correlation could be explained by representatives from smaller workplaces actually experiencing fewer accident injuries - as would be expected

statistically and perhaps assuming that in larger workplace because of the repetitive nature of much of the work that boredom was likely to be a factor because accidents in larger workplaces were more common. This hypothesis would need to be tested before such a possible relationship could be entertained beyond the speculative level.

When examining degree of unionisation as an explanatory variable, the correlation findings suggest first that respondents from more highly unionised workplaces are more likely than those from less highly unionised workplaces to consider that factory inspector visits are an important factor in improving workplace health and safety, but are likely to consider health and safety training to be important in achieving the same end. From these findings, it may be suggested that safety representatives from more highly unionised workplaces are more likely to importance to the external legal control or attach sanctions which can be imposed by the inspectorate, whereas safety representatives from less highly organized more likely to see improvements in health workplaces are and safety as being brought about by attempts to change individual behaviour - as through health and safety training in this case. This evidence could form the basis for a hypothesis which could be tested by further work.

In terms of the size of the workforce, the health and

safety procedure was more likely to include safety representatives and safety committees in larger workplaces. These were suggested rather than significant results and are a logical finding. So too was the reading that higher management is more likely to be involved in the procedure in smaller firms (with below 200 workers) simply because fewer levels of management would be expected.

With trade union positions being analysed in relation to dependent variables, a number of trends were suggested; that joint role (shop steward and safety representative) holders in the sample thought they had more effective procedures. It is possible that this helps to explain the safety representatives (alone) seeing a conflict between management and unions on health and safety and their seen as less successful or procedures are effective. Safety representatives and safety committees were most likely to be involved in the procedure than the joint role holder with safety representative respondents and middle management in one guise or another was involved in the great majority of procedures. The joint role holders are more likely to go to higher management as part of the procedure and that safety representatives are more likely to go to management safety officers.

A Mann-Whitney U Test suggested that joint role holders were less likely to see health and safety training as an important factor in reducing accidents. This finding

might suggest that safety representatives who have 'broader' union involvement - through being shop stewards as well, could be less inclined to view an 'individual' approach to accident reduction - in this case through provision of training, as being likely to succeed. Safety representatives who were not also shop stewards might be expected to be more wedded to the notion of health and safety training as a useful took in reducing accidents.

These suggested relationships do not present a coherent picture; rather they suggest a series of hypotheses to test in future research.

In terms of how long safety representatives had been in post, those who had been there longest it was suggested, thought the procedure the most effective; they were also most likely to see a confict of interests between union and management. This could be construed to suggest that the longer the safety representatives had been in post the more they were able to shape a procedure which was able to best deal with the perceived conflict of interests.

In this regard it is also interesting to note that the longer-lived safety representatives were more likely to have safety committees involved in their workplace health and safety procedures - though still less than half were mentioned in this context. this may show a leaning towards safety committee involvement amongst more

experienced safety representatives but the findings were not significant enough to be more than slightly suggestive.

In the case of requesting information from management on health and safety issues there was an unusual pattern. Safety representatives with the shortest experience, it was suggested, said they rarely if ever received information of this sort. However, the group that had been in post for 3-9 months suggested they were very satisfied on this score (which may argue that they were 'getting the hang of things' by this time). The older hands of nine months and over were satisfied, but less enthusiastically so than the previous group, which suggested that by this stage they had established a reasonable relationship with management which was responding to their requirements.

The younger age group of respondents was significantly more likely to see a conflict between union and management. The older age group was significantly more likely to see the procedure as effective. The older age group was also significantly more likely to see management involvement as being an important way of improving health and safety at work.

However, correlations showed younger respondents attached greater importance than older respondents to union organization as a factor in improving workplace health and safety involvement. It may be that, fired with enthusiasm

generated by the union health and safety courses, younger respondents were more alive to the importance of effective union organization, whereas with their greater experience, older respondents were more aware of structural factors - such as management involvement as being important in improving workplace health and safety.

TABLE 3.3: RESPONDENT VIEWS ON WHETHER HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURE IS EFFECTIVE

AGE GROUP	YES ALWAYS	SOMETIMES
21-35	10 (43.5%)	13 (18.5%)
36-50	12 (25.5%)	35 (74.5%)
OVER 50	20 (67%)	10 (33%)

 $\chi^2 = 12.74$, df = 2, p < 0.01

TABLE 3.4: RESPONDENT VIEWS ON WHETHER THERE IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST IN HEALTH AND SAFETY BETWEEN MANAGEMENT AND UNIONS

2 (9%)
4 (90
8 (18%)
10 (37%)

From the above it is possible to hypothesise that the younger safety representatives in the sample are more likely to perceive conflicting interests between unions and

management on health and safety and are less likely to consider existing health and safety procedures to Older respondents were also significantly more likely to be employed in the public sector. be possible that this is one of a multiplicity of factors which causes them to see less of a conflicting role between management and unions if their own sectors have not experienced such conflict over health and safety. This in turn could be causally linked to the older respondents' experience of management playing a constructive role in th Two-thirds of the older safety representatives area. very highly the importance of better management involvement to influence workplace health and safety - a significantly higher proportion than those under 50 years old.

The management versus union conflict of interest question (over health and safety) on the face of it is closely linked to the question of whether the role of safety representatives is to be a consultative one or a negotiating one. However in practice the distinction between the two processes - the unitary and the pluralist perspective is difficult, indeed impossible to make as there is no universally accepted boundary between the two.

Cressey et al. (1981) in a Scottish survey showed that whilst both management and safety representatives believed they had been participating in discussions over health and

safety, a quarter of the latter said they had taken part in negotiations whilst more of the management sample said negotiations had occurred.

Most available studies such as Ramsay (1975), Beaumont (1980) and Leopold (1981) suggest a mixture of the two approaches which is reproduced in the respondent safety representatives they have chosen. Leopold quotes a senior shop steward talking about the safety committee of which he was a member 'It is a bit of both. It is consultation, but negotiating is just sitting below the surface if need be.'

Beaumont found two-thirds of his safety representative sample feeling that unions and management were basically trying to achieve the same things whilst a third saw an essential difference between their aims on health safety. He also found that where safety representatives assumed their was close to an identity of aims with management they were more likely to see their role as a consultative one. Where management reacted against worker involvement in decision-making, the safety representatives likely to perceive a negotiating role were more for themselves (which would require the backing of the workforce).

Whilst the representatives in this study showed no marked enthusiasm for the role of safety committees in their health and safety procedures, and more for using established 'industrial relations' routes for resolving problems in this area - which could be taken to indicate a desire for decisive action on health and safety, there remains a perception amongst a sizeable minority of respondents that accidents and ill health were caused by carelessness.

The table below, where items mentioned were given ranking values of "1" (most important) down to "6" shows 'lack of training' to be the most commonly perceived cause of accidents and ill health at work.

TABLE 3.5: PERCEPTIONS OF CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS AND ILL HEALTH IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

CAUSES	RANKING VALUE	
Lack of training	420	
Bonus schemes	472	
Bad systems of work	505	
Carelessness	576	
Boredom	605	
Lack of information	612	

Note: the average ranking value was calculated to be "532"

On these results 'bad systems of work' are seen to be felt a bigger contributor to accidents and ill health at work than 'carelessness', one being above and one being below the average score, but not dramatically so and indicates that TUC training materials have a way to go before changing ingrained 'careless worker' attitudes.

This finding was supported by the analysis that 56% put 'bad work systems' ahead of 'carelessness' as a cause of accidents and ilness at work, whereas 42% said the reverse.

After recoding the only significant result was the finding that those in the job the longest were more likely to find boredom an important factor in causing accidents than those who had been less than ten years at the job. One explanation could be that having had longer opportunity to grow bored with the work themselves, longer employed respondents see the potential for accidents.

The Labour Research Department has shown how management and unions have attempted to meet the challenge of bargaining over health and safety matters. One way is through safety agreements (LRD, 1980) which have included issues like appointment and status of safety representatives, defining safety representatives constituencies, training for safety representatives and other workers on health and safety, procedures for carrying out safety representative functions, conflict and grievance procedures, safety committee conflict and sphere of operation and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace.

The LRD (1984) Survey of Safety Representatives' Rights

shows that those legal rights were not spelled out in detail in the SRSC Regulations and accompanying Code of Practice and Guidance Notes. In practice those rights often have to be negotiated between employers and recognised trade unions. But the survey showed that three out of four safety representatives thought the low had improved their trade union organization. The 'key' issues for negotiation highlighted by the survey of 4,314 safety representatives at 406 workplaces covering 272,480 employees were: the ratio of safety representatives to employees, trade union health and safety training. workplace inspections, paid time off for safety representatives, health and safety information from employers, safety representatives facilities, safety representativesknowledge and use of experts, safety committee and enforcing the SRSC Regulations.

The respondents in the large majority favouring a preventive to a 'compensation' approach to workplace health and safety were likely to press for negotiations in whichever setting was appropriate. Such views are a far cry from those of the Robens Committee which saw voluntary (consensus approach) safety committees as an effective means of resolving workplace health and safety problems. However, it would seem that the statutorily based coming of the safety representative system and the training received by a large proportion in the 'trade union approach' to the question has strengthened support amongst safety

representatives for the 'conflict' view.

In this context it is interesting to note that the recoding exercise suggested higher management was more likely to be involved in health and safety procedures with safety representatives who were also shop stewards than with those who were safety representatives alone. With the latter group, safety officers were significantly more likely to be involved in the health and safety procedure.

It is thus possible to hypothesise that safety representatives alone are more likely to go to the firm's safety officer when they wish to air a health and safety problem, whilst dual role holders are more likely to go straight to higher management.

The recoding analysis also suggests that safety representatives are the more likely than joint-role holders to have as part of their health and safety procedures the involvement of safety committees and of safety The further breakdown of explanatory representatives. variables has produced an analysis weakly suggestive of the possibility that safety representatives who are also shop stewards are more likely to feel that their health and safety procedures are more effective than those of safety representatives alone who follow a slight trend in being more likely to see a union/management conflict on health and safety issues. These two suggestions could make hypotheses for further testing with larger samples.

Trade union resources: provision and mobilisation

One of the unmistakable conclusions arising from analysis of the questionnaires was the importance ascribed by respondents to the provision and use of information and training.

Does the union devote enough resources to health and safety?

In recognition of the importance respondents allocated to the issue of health and safety, did they think that their unions were devoting sufficient resources to the issue?

This question was designed to establish the respondents' attitude to the question of how high a priority they thought health and safety should have and whether they judged their union to be meeting it. There was a fairly even split on analysis, with 42% feeling that their own union did devote enough resources to health and safety with 49% saying they did not.

Of those who thought their unions were not devoting enough resources to the issue, practically all (82%) of them wanted more training (refresher, intensive, specific, local, available for all members) and/or more information

(leaflets, handbooks, publicity, newsletters, instruction packs for all members). The information demand received a number of new adherents amongst those who filled in the questionnaire after the TUC courses.

Amongst other suggetions were: full-time union officers devoting their time to health and safety and more contact with members.

Recoding showed that committed union safety representatives were significantly more likely to think that their unions devoted enough resources to health and safety.

TABLE 3.6: RESPONDENT VIEWS ON ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES DEVOTED TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

DEGREE OF UNION COMMITMENT	YES, ADEQUATE	NO, NOT ADEQUATE
Committed union	23 (62%)	14 (38%)
Other unions	41 (40%)	61 (60%)

 $\chi^2 = 4.42$, df = 1, p < 0.05

Shop stewards who were also safety representatives were also significantly more likely than safety representatives (the very small sample of shop stewards only was even more likely) to think that other unions devoted enough resources to health and safety.

It is possible to hypothesise on linking the two findings

that safety representatives who were also shop stewards and who were from committed unions are more likely to be satisfied with the adequacy of the resources provided by their unions and perceived themselves as more successful at dealing with health and safety issues. This could make a useful study point for further research.

How to improve health and safety standards at work

Training, better management involvement and more information (in that order) were thought by respondents to be the most important means of improving health and safety at work.

Rankings to the question 'What do you think would be the most effective way of improving health and safety standards at work?' were as follows (items were given ranking values of "1" for most important up to "6" for least important to obtain the final total ranking value):

TABLE 3.7: PERCEPTION OF MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS OF IMPROVING HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

ITEM	RANKING VALUE
More health and safety training	367
Better management involvement	474
More information	527
Better safety officers	586
More visits from factory inspectors	605
Better union organization at work	614

Note: the average ranking value was calculated to be "530"

The fact that 'better union organization' proved so unpopular was surprising but may be explained in the light of the greater enthusiasm for the concept shown by respondents when it was spelt out in more concrete and practical forms elsewhere.

More information and training at the shopfloor in both quality and quantity was called for by health and safety activists. In answer to the question asking how respondents would suggest increasing the interest of their workmates in health and safety at work, four out of five respondents answered 'through education and training'. (Of these, management-run courses were the most popular suggestion - an interesting finding which may imply that they see little likelihood of their workmates going away on day release TUC courses or that they see in-plant management-run courses as complementary to trade union-run training).

The recoding had indicated however that respondents in more highly unionised workplaces and those who held the dual role of shop steward and safety representative wrere less likely to see health and safety training as important. Whether this indicates particular disenchantmant with management-run courses (which lack the 'trade union

dimension') or a greater attachment of importance to other factors would make a useful study for future research.

The total of respondents in support of information on materials and machinery as a stimulus for workplace interest in health and safety was nearly as high as that for training. Publicity and better union organization were other categories which found considerable favour in answer to the question.

The question takes on additional significance in view of the prevailing view in this study that health and safety initiatives at workplace level by unions can only succeed consistently with the backing of the plant level membership.

When asked what had done most to increase their knowledge of workplace health and safety, 78% of all respondents replied 'training courses'. Not all stipulated TUC-run courses but there was a high level of appreciation of these courses indicated by the 95% who thought they were either very good or good and the five respondents who had not praised the training in the first questionnaire changing their minds by the time they completed the second one. The LRD Survey (1984) in corroboration found well over half of the safety representatives who had attended ten-day TUC courses saying 'very good' or 'excellent'.

Though there was widespread praise for the trade union-run

courses respondents were not loathe to suggest improvements. These included the use of more visual aids, practical work and general comments on the presentation of the courses together with suggestions about the organization in length and time which included calls for courses to be run continuously so that the lessons could be more easily assimilated.

Asked whether they thought they received enough information on health and safety from their unions' full-time officers more than half the respondents answered 'no'. The kind of information they felt they were lacking included information about toxic substances and information specific to their own industries. Overall the answers (see Table 3.8) revealed a general hunger for information and publications of all sorts on health and safety from health and safety handbooks and bulletins to information about legal rights. (A follow-up study to compare respondents' answers five years later would test whether unions' expanded services were going further to meet these needs).

TABLE 3.8: INFORMATION RECEIVED BY RESPONDENTS FROM UNION FULL-TIME OFFICERS

RECEIVED FROM FULL-TIME OFFICERS	%
Accident forms	25
Help with filling in accident forms	15
Details of successful claims for compensation	22
Details about toxic substances	20
Information about other hazards, (e.g. machinery, dust, etc.)	17
Health and safety circulars or bulletins	39
Health and safety handbooks	48
Information about training courses (health and safety)	64
Information about legal rights on health and safety	35
Advice on workplace level organization for health and safety	25
Advice on identifying hazards	21
Advice on action to take when health and safety grievances arise	24

Information from other sources

From the foregoing it would seem that information from union sources was somewhat more forthcoming than from management. Many of the same patterns emerged in the quest for particular types of information like information on chemicals and the calls on management for more information and for discussions on forward planning and so on complemented the desire to get information from the

union upon which they felt they should be able to reply.

When asked whether they had ever been in touch with the Health and Safety Executive, in this case the factory inspectorate, 22% of respondents answered 'yes' and 77% 'no', the figure, though seemingly low, demonstrating any kind of contact with the inspectorate was nevertheless no smaller than that which had had contact with their own union full-time officials.

In addition, twice this number expressed the view that if they had a health and safety problem which required outside assistance they would go to the HSE for assistance. this was the most popular 'port of call', with 'union local office' next on the list, 'union area safety committee' next combined with 'local Hazards Group' and 'union head office' a distant fourth. Other suggestions which carried some support were to approach the senior shop steward or convenor or plant representative.

Of those who had contacted the inspectorate in the past, the issues raised included, 'working conditions and systems'; 'injuries and accidents' (these were the two most common) and 'fumes', 'dust', 'official visit', 'complaints against inspector not doing his stuff under 28:8 (of the HASAWA) and not contacting me when in the area'.

It served to underscore the potential loss to workplace health and safety which may be brought about by cuts to the Health and Safety Executive.

Do respondents get enough health and safety information?

Asked whether they thought they got enough health and safety information from their union full-time officers, 44% said 'yes' and 56% replied 'no'.

A breakdown of the type of information they would like to receive that they 'now rarely get or not at all' produced a wide spread of answers mainly in line with the answers to the previous question. Most popular were, 'information about toxic substances', 'information about other hazards' (besides toxic substances), which, together with 'information specific to one/my industry' suggested a hunger for knowledge about hazards which may arise at their places of work and which they were not confident would be brought to light by their own management, hence an increased reliance on their own union to forewarn them. With the same degree or popularity were 'health and safety bulletins, circulars and handbooks' and 'information about legal rights on health and safety'.

The most interesting of the unprompted answers (the previous question prompts being fresh in respondents' minds) was the biggest category of all saying 'everything/

anything on health and safety' and 'results of contesting health and safety issues with management, progress of claims', showing a desire to follow up action taken either over some issue of conflict at work or conflict through the courts or insurers on health and safety.

Recoding showed a trend for respondents who had been safety representatives for over nine months to be less satisfied with the health and safety information they got from union full-time officers than those who had been less time in the role. This could be interpreted to mean that the newer safety representatives were keener to get more information and felt frustrated, or that they were less aware of how to obtain the required information. These and other theories could be examined whilst researching further on the topic.

Respondents employed at smaller firms felt that they were more likely to receive health and safety information from their full-time union officials than their counterparts at larger firms. This might suggest better treatment for union members who are white-collared or in the public sector. It would require further information to isolate any of the multiplicity of factors.

In relation to obtaining information from other sources, respondents from small unions were significantly more likely to get health and safety information on request from

management than those from other uncommitted unions of over 250,000 members and from committed unions. Further investigation of the nature of the unions, jobs and industries involved may give a pointer to explanations.

Training

One of the most important services frequently referred to by respondents was the provision of training courses. Of the 110 respondents who answered the questions on training, 11 were taking part in the GMBATU course. 56% said that the TUC course had provided their only training in health and safety whilst 38% cited other training they had received on health and safety.

Of all respondents about a quarter had attended courses run by individual trade unions (such as the 11 GMBATU course members), one sixth had attended courses put on by management and just a handful on joint management/union or RoSPA courses.

Asked about their general opinion of the TUC course, of the 107 respondents who answered practically all (95%) thought it either very good (64%) or good (31%). However, there were a number of suggestions for improving these courses. Most popular suggestions (approaching half the respondents in each case) were: more visual aids films; longer courses; more practical work; more case studies, more

continuous courses (i.e. not spaced out over several weeks). Smaller numbers suggested better instruction, revision courses, specialist courses for particular industries and stressed that there should be no loss of earnings for safety representatives attending courses.

Perceived role for full-time union officials

The provision of information was clearly one of the major perceived roles for union full-time officers when respondents were asked for their views. 67% saw their role as providing information, back up, facilities, contact, advice and laying on talks for safety representatives/shop stewards.

Other suggestions which recurred frequently (and unprompted) were: 'laying on and encouraging training', 'visiting and inspecting workplaces', 'meeting, stimulating, lecturing and informing the membership', 'pressing management when there is a sticking point, on safety policies, on enforcing the Act, on making arrangements'.

There were also fairly frequent suggestions about the full-timers' general approach to health and safety. 10% said there should be full-time appointments devoted to health and safety; significant numbers also said there

should 'be more involvement in health and safety; more commitment to health and safety as being as important was wages' and the full-time officer should be equipped to 'service particular industries and sectors, have expertise on particular materials', 'be able to co-ordinate information and branches', 'get opinion of members, feel of the workplace'.

Contact with full-time officers

Of the 110 respondents who completed the longer questionnaire only 23% had ever been in contact with a full-time officer of their union on a particular issue on health and safety.

$\frac{\text{Nature of health}}{\text{been contact with }} \; \underbrace{\frac{\text{and safety issues}}{\text{full-time officers}}} \; \underbrace{\text{over which there had}}_{} \; \underbrace{\text{had}}_{}$

The small proportion (23%) of respondents who had been in contact with full-time officials did so over a wide range of issues in which none predominated. They included dust, fumes, ventilation, the use and effects of chemicals (one fifth of those who had been in contact), noise, radiation, protective clothing, health enquiries (e.g. on cancer), unsafe work systems, machinery and materials.

Satisfaction with assistance from full-time officers

Of the number who did have contact with full-time officers,

most were satisfied (66%) with the assistance they had received. Only 18.5% expressed themselves as positively 'not satisfied'.

Perception of effect of the union at different levels on workplace health and safety

The demand for full-time officials which emerged from the survey (presumably at Head Office) seemed to conflict with perceptions of where the union could act most effectively. one third of respondents thought that Head Office health and safety improved the activity on workplace About one half thought that the regional situation. level of the union had a beneficial effect whilst more than two-thirds thought that it was at the workplace itself that the union could have the most effect. The apparent conflict could perhaps be reconciled if the assumption were that the full-time officers spent their time servicing the shopfloor level.

Three questions were asked to test the appreciation of respondents both of the role that different union levels can play and of the value they ascribe to their efforts.

In reply to the question, 'do you think that the efforts of your union make the workplace a healthier or a safer place?', the answers broke down as follows:

TABLE 3.9: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS THINKING THAT UNION ACTIVITY AT VARIOUS LEVELS IMPROVES WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

LEVEL	YES %	NO %	
Head office	36	59	
Local (regional)	44	51	
Workplace	73	22	

This demonstrated clearly how important respondents perceived workplace union activity to be in comparison to regional and head office level. Influence waned the further away it was removed from the workplace.

Respondents were invited to suggest why efforts at these various levels had an influence at the workplace. Only approximately one-third had any idea of what contribution the union head office could make (see the TUC Survey 1983 on health and safety specialist services), if any. Of these, the most frequently mentioned were: 'pressure on the government for legislation, Health and Safety at Work Act, for safety representatives', 'providing information to make more aware and co-ordinating research'. 'training and arranging to send members on courses', 'back up and pressure on management to enforce agreement - head office taken more notice of'.

A small study (Walters, 1985) found printworkers

appreciative of the national role of the NGA on health and safety, 'particularly in the provision of information' and heightened support for 'the hard-pressed workplace representative'.

A slightly higher number of respondents had suggestions about the influence that local (regional) level could have on the workplace. They were very similar to those for Head Office level, viz: 'training; fixing up local courses; getting on TUC courses'; 'putting pressure on management as next stage up'; 'available for information'; available for advice, guidance, back up, contact'. At the workplace level there was a far higher response over what contribution the union made at the workplace. Major influences were considered to be:

<u>Safety</u> <u>representatives</u>: effort; inspections; existence; commitment; attempts to make safe.

The next most popular category was:

<u>Pressure</u> on <u>management</u>: to live up to responsibility; to carry out demands; to take swift action; to point out bad work practices.

Also:

Access to management: to recognise union; to have

agreements with union; to negotiate.

Other categories which 'polled' fairly high were:

Active involvement on the job; know the problems; safety committees; liaison with shop stewards; distribution of literature; making members aware; union meetings; training and knowledge of Act.

Satisfaction with union services

In answer to a question about how satisfied respondents were with their union services from Head Office and regional (or local) office level there was a very 'lukewarm' response. The majority in both cases (who had had any contact at all; more than a fifth had not had any contact in both cases) assessed themselves as quite satisfied, not at all satisfied or neither one nor the other.

Their suggestions for improvements in the service supported the recurring theme of the analysis, the requirement for more information (on hazards in specific industries, on union policy and on legislation) using publicity, posters, etc. Other suggestions with significant support were: more contact with full-time officers; more meetings (e.g. to pool information) and

more training.

As was shown earlier, representatives from committed unions were significantly more likely to think that their unions devoted enough resources to health and safety. Further recoding shows also that committed union representatives were significantly more likely to be satisfied with their main head office over health and safety issues than respondents from uncommitted unions.

In addition, representatives from uncommitted unions were more likely to have had no contact with their union head office and to be dissatisfied with them over health and safety issues.

TABLE 3.10: DEGREE OF SATISFACTION OF RESPONDENTS WITH UNION HEAD OFFICE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

TYPE OF UNION	NEVER ANY CONTACT	QUITE SATISFIED	NEITHER SATISFIED NOR DISSATISFIED	NOT AT ALL SATISFIED
Committed	7 (20%)	15 (43%)	8 (23%)	5 (14%)
Uncommitted	30 (28%)	22 (20.5%) 18 (17%)	37 (34.5%)

Exactly the same findings were repeated but to a less significant degree in respondent attitudes to their local (regional) office of the union. The clear implication would seem to be that committed unions both at local (regional) levels and to a more significant extreme at local office level, give a better service on health and

safety issues to their safety representatives than do uncommitted unions. A hypothesis to this effect can be formulated.

It may then be combined with the previous observation to suggest that the services seen by respondents on health and safety is better for committed unions at both local (regional) level and head office level because the committed unions devote a satisfactory amount of resources to this issue compared with the uncommitted unions.

The need for a trade union

Designed to find out the respondent's view of the importance and influence of trade unions on health and safety at work the question was asked: 'Do you think you could operate effectively on health and safety issues at work if you were not a trade union member?' 19% said 'yes', but they were far outnumbered (by four to one) by the 76% who said 'no'. The biggest single reason was that union backing was needed for a general feeling of strength, authority and backing for any action that shopfloor representatives might decide to take.

A large number said that union backing made management take notice and that union organization (at all levels) gets things done 'easier', 'gives the power to achieve', 'pressure goes a long way', and 'gets recognition from

management'. Others thought union backing important 'for trade union and/or shop steward organization at work, 'for enforcement of recommendations' (strike if necessary).

Recognition of the role of shop stewards came from those who commented: 'as shop steward I have experience of representing'; 'I am known by management'; 'I see work going on'. And those who said membership of the union gives access to other union officials, shop stewards and full-time officers. A number pointed out the benefits of belonging to a union. On the one hand, 'workers must recognise me, come to me, and would not if I were non-union'. On the other - 'union experience gives me confidence in tackling management', and 'management can ignore or victimise individuals'. A number also pointed out the benefits of union backing in terms of provision of information and training.

First and second questionnaires

Unlike Cook (1980) who found little difference in the attitudes of safety representatives before and after they had undertaken the TUC training courses, the analysis in this study suggest a number of changes in perception. They are not overwhelming changes but, nevertheless, are perceptible, being more in keeping with the suggestion in Leopold's study (1981).

These changes have already been brought out in this chapter and a few examples are summarised below.

Students exhibited more inclination for trade union 'solidarity' at the end of the course. They appreciated the value of traini more, they understood more about procedures, recognised the importance of 'better organization' and thought there should be more in-plant training.

Conclusions

Respondents wanted more back-up from their unions in terms of training, information, manpower and resources and a higher priority given to health and safety. They required support at the workplace from management whose role had disappointed respondents greatly, from factory inspectorate and from their own members and shop steward colleagues to give them the power to bargain effectively.

In terms of the hypotheses raised in the course of this research and discussed in this chapter, the inferences arising from the questionnaire analysis within the limits of the reliability of its design are as follows:

The safety representatives' approached for this survey:

(a) see health and safety at work as an important issue,

with a significantly high proportion ranking it as the most important for trade union activity;

- (b) are split fairly evenly on whether they think their unions devote enough resources to health and safety. However, respondents for 'committed' unions are significantly more likely to feel that their unions devote adequate resources to the issue and to have been in contact with their unions at head office and (less significantly) at local level;
- (c) only marginally perceive unsafe systems of work to be more likely to cause accidents or ill health than carelessness. However, both those who had been in the job for a long period and those who worked in smaller workplaces were more likely to see boredom as a cause of accidents than other respondents;
- (d) consider it (by 2:1) more important to direct resources to preventing occupational injury and disease than to obtaining compensation for them (when posed in this simple way);
- (e) exhibit no firm tendency on the question of consultation or negotiation with management on health and safety matters primarily as the two modes of handling the issue shade into each other. It seems likely that both methods are widely used with this sample of respondents

revealing a tendency to want to cut down on procedural steps where urgent matters require attention - giving an impression that negotiation is a bargaining method to bring into play where consultation is not yielding the desired results;

- (f) considered by a ratio of 4:1 that management and unions have conflicting interests over health and safety issues though the phrasing of the question may have exaggerated the perception of conflict, which in essence was felt to be the interests of short-term advantage in production and profit against health and safety. Younger safety representatives (and not in the main those who are also shop stewards) were more likely to perceive this conflict and less likely to think of their health and safety procedures as effective for the reasons suggested in this chapter;
- (g) of those respondents that thought their health and safety procedure effective. The most important features were perceived to be more co-operation from, and direct access to, higher management, a procedure similar to or the same as the normal procedure which reproduces the industrial relations 'weight' that shop stewards have, and time limits to introduce urgency into the procedure. For the reasons considered in this chapter safety representatives who are also shop stewards are more likely to feel they have effective health and safety procedures,

as are the safety representatives who have held the post for the longest period and the middle age group;

- (h) are on the whole critical of the lack of positive involvement by management in the health and safety area as described in this chapter. Management involvement is seen as important by other respondents who are more likely to have seen its beneficial effects over a more lengthy career;
- (i) feel that they are insufficiently supplied with information by unions, management and the factory inspectorate. However, the smaller workplace respondents are more likely to feel they are getting enough information from their full-time union officials and from management on request, whilst safety representatives who have been longer than three months in their post are more likely to think they are getting the information they request from management than their counterparts who are less-experienced (and perhaps who had not had time to ask for it);
- (j) are in the majority highly satisfied with the union health and safety courses, though critical of aspects of the course and their arrangements;
- (k) are in the main ignorant of the role of the TUC and their own unions at head office level;

(1) consider by a 4:1 ratio that they could not do their jobs adequately without the backing of the union - the biggest reason given being the general feeling of strength, authority and backing for action that the shopfloor may wish to take.

The non-significant analyses which formed the basis for discussion, along with the significant findings, in this chapter produced several hypotheses for future testing which are noted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

Overview

At the start of this research there was an air of optimism amongst those trade unionists who were concerned with occupational health and safety. The Robens Committee approach of voluntary self-regulation by consensus and joint safety committees which promised little in the way of change had been supplanted by the statute-backed safety representative system which was to come into effect some eighteen months later (alongside safety committees) and hopefully add teeth to the efforts of workplace union organization and to the implementation of the new provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

With safety representatives' newly acquired rights and functions, most interviewees in this study hoped that they would introduce a new element of democracy into British industrial life at the same time exposing the conflict between the interests of employers and unions over the cost of safety and health against the cost of maintaining production and profit.

Trade unions organize basically to attempt to improve the wages and conditions of their members. The annual argument over wage rises normally presents a challenge only to the way in which the employers' profits are divided into more or less acceptable wage increases. Attempts to

improve conditions of health and safety at work can mean a more fundamental challenge to the very way in which the work is organized. This goes beyond the bounds of industrial democracy which companies in a capitalist society are prepared to concede.

Perceptions unions and management have of the health and safety problem, the amount and quality of resources unions are prepared to put in and how unions organize those resources are factors of considerable importance. The trade union movement poured in considerable resources in the period under review (1977-1985). The TUC's (and individual union's) organization of training courses for safety representatives was a major achievement both in terms of numbers trained and course content which attempted to transmit the trade union dimension.

Trade union's information and advisory services were also greatly expanded and augmented by the valuable work of the network of Area Health and Safety Committees. The results could be seen in the comments of the Chief Factory Inspector and others that safety representatives tained by the unions were considerably in advance and better informed than most managments. A larger number of trade unionists were also more likely to perceive the nature of a conflict of interests with management, think safety representatives more effective than safety committees and consider prevention policies as more important than compensation for

workplace accidents. At a national level too trade unions were becoming involved in standard setting exercises and there was an expansion of industry and particular hazard committees under the umbrella of the Health and Safety Executive.

But life is never that smooth! Firstly the ingrained attitudes of two centuries cannot evaporate overnight. As the questionnaire shows, only a bare majority of the safety representatives had rejected the 'careless worker' theory of industrial accidents — and it has to be remembered that they are the 'activists' who had just attended a course heavily weighted to undermine that type of argument.

Secondly, employers in general continued to view the union role as one of joint safety committee members in a consensus which does not challenge 'management's right to manage'. Faced with the reality that employers would not in general accept the new powers of safety representatives if they wanted to use them effectively (particularly in small, less organized firms such as abound in agriculture and construction) unions were to find that safety representatives needed more than legal backing. they needed some industrial muscle. That in turn means organization at the grassroots and raises the question of how strongly supported safety representatives are at their places of work.

The answer seems to be that health and safety procedures (as shown by the fieldwork) are less 'well-oiled' than normal procedures and that when normal procedures are used, as they are in many cases, the additional 'clout' of the shop steward is required to get things done. In both instances the requirement is for speedy action, access to decision-making levels of management and support from the shopfloor. Where dual role respondents' reactions were compared with those of safety representatives only, they were found to be less likely to see a union/management conflict of interests and more likely to think they get enough resources contributed from their unions, that their health and safety procedures are effective and involve higher management. The implication may be that shop stewards who are safety representatives are able to wield more bargaining 'weight' and thus achieve arrangements which are more effective and therefore more satisfactory to them.

At the same time other influences were working against the effective operation of safety representatives, notably the recession. This had the effect of diminishing the industrial strength of all organized workers through the fear of unemployment and cutting back on other possible areas of support like the factory inspectorate, which has been mercilessly pruned, and most employers, even sympathetic ones, were looking to save money.

It therefore comes as little surprise that the interviewees spoken to towards the end of the research were feeling deflated. Earlier high hopes of far-reaching changes through HSE committees had been tempered by the realisation that their tripartite structures only allowed for 'lowest common denominator' consensus with all parties. Despite great efforts expended to service and train workplace safety representatives, the lack of adequate organization at the that level prevented them from pressing home their demands.

However, it would seem that this is a time neither for optimism nor pessimism, but for an appraisal of how far the situation has developed since the inception of the safety representative's system and which direction union policies can follow now.

The questionnaires clearly showed that safety representatives had a hunger for information and training and a desire for management to show an increased interest and commitment over the issue.

There is evidence to suggest that the safety representatives in the coalmining industry and the quarrying industry are showing declining enthusiasm and effectiveness. Will the newer generation of safety representatives in other industries go the same way, given

that the recession and other influences described in this study are diminishing the numbers attending TUC training courses?

Alternatively, will the initiatives exemplified by the TUC follow-on course to concentrate on how to organize at the workplace, bear fruit and will they be copied in other areas?

Considerable sections of this study have described the many and varied ways in which trade unions exert influence on health and safety at work. Ken Clarke perhaps best explained the central conflict seen by many when he spoke of the foreman who had asked him:

'How do I bring the sacred cow of production into line with health and safety when on the one hand management is pushing me for maximum output and, on the other, people for maximum safety?'

Yet a Lincolnshire farmworker, perhaps concerned with less revered cows, showed the degree of priority many workers give to the issue when he said ('To be a Yellowbelly?' Channel 4 TV, May 1985) of an industry which has seen 820 occupational deaths between 1974-1984:

'Health and safety is more important to workers in our industry than wages.... and wages are on the poverty line, a scandal.'

It may be that the effect of management failure to respond

positively to the issue (suggested in this study) could be to impel safety representatives to put more pressure on their own unions for both back-up services and workplace organization to obtain more bargaining 'muscle'.

The significant conclusions of this safety representatives survey (others are stressed earlier) that committed unions respondents were more likely to be satisfied with the resources put into health and safety and to be in contact with their union full-time official may help to inform the unions classified thus far as 'uncommitted' to health and safety.

Despite the growing body of research on the issue the field of health and safety at work and in particular the influences that trade unions can have on it, is wide open for further study.

Suggestions for further research

This exploratory study in an essentially underdeveloped field briefly illuminated many uncharted areas.

It has been suggested that safety repesentatives' trade union structures are tending to operate separately from other union structures. Rather than initiating activity, safety representatives tend to be reactive - dealing with

problems as they crop up. Lastly, safety representatives are said to be essentially inductive rather than deductive - tending to examine the risks rather than the system that has produced them.

A study which has yet to be carried out in any depth is that touched upon in this research on a very minor scale and also by Leopold (1981) and Cook (1980) in attempting to detect the effects on safety representatives of undergoing a TUC training course. A questionnaire-based study may be indicated.

A similar suggestion can be made of a follow-up study to this piece of research. The questionnaires were completed between April and June 1979. It would be instructive to learn how responses have changed in the intervening period in the intensified economic depression. In particular, would safety representatives be more satisfied now with the flow of information they are receiving bearing in mind the expansion of union informatin and advisory services in the meantime?

Also suggested are the following research areas:

Charting the information flow from union head office level through to the shopfloor. How often does it reach the intended target?

Studying the role of the 'expert' (sympathetic or unsympathetic to trade unions) in arguments between unions and regulatory bodies or employers over whether particular hazards are acceptable.

How effective are preventive campaigns in acting as a recruitment lever for trade unions? (A study might be designed by seeking out unions like the GMBATU, ASTMS or TGWU - agricultural workers which have run 'high profile' campaigns over particular hazards to see whether their local officials consider that their recruitment has been improved by the publicity and opportunity to gain introduction to non-members).

Finally, studies under the following headings may prove fruitful:

Would 'no-fault' compensation lead to more risk-taking by workers?

Why is it that traditionally militant groups of workers appear to take less interest in health and safety issues?

Do trade union's inputs to health and safety at work affect the outputs in terms of accident and illness figures, levels of organization for dealing with hazards and other selected criteria? Finally, a number of further research areas were suggested following analysis of the recoded variables:

To determine whether safety representatives from 'committed' unions are more likely a) to have effective health and safety procedures, b) to have health and safety procedures that include them, c) to have had contact with their union's head office and d) to be satisfied with the service from head office.

Are safety representatives in small unions more likely to get information on health and safety from management and, if so, why?

Is boredom seen as an important cause of workplace accidents by those in smaller workplaces and those who have worked for over ten years at a job?

Are safety representatives as well as safety committees more likely to be used in larger workplaces as part of the health and safety procedure?

Are larger firm's managements more likely to give safety representatives more information as a matter of routine and on request?

Are safety representatives of 100% unionised workplaces

more likely to be given health and safety information by management both as a matter of routine and on request?

Are joint safety representatives and shop stewards more likely to have effective procedures, less likely to see health and safety training as important and to go to higher management as part of those procedures whilst safety representatives only are more likely to go to safety officers and to perceive a conflict of interests between unions and management?

Are safety representatives only and safety committees more likely to be involved in health and safety procedures where they work rather than dual role holders?

Are safety representatives who have been in post longer, more likely to think their health and safety procedure is effective, their unions and managements in conflict on the issue and their full-time union officers not giving them enough information?

Are safety committees more likely to be involved with the health and safety procedures of longer established safety representatives and safety officers in those of shorter established safety representatives?

Which safety representatives, in terms of how long they have been in post, find it easiest to obtain information

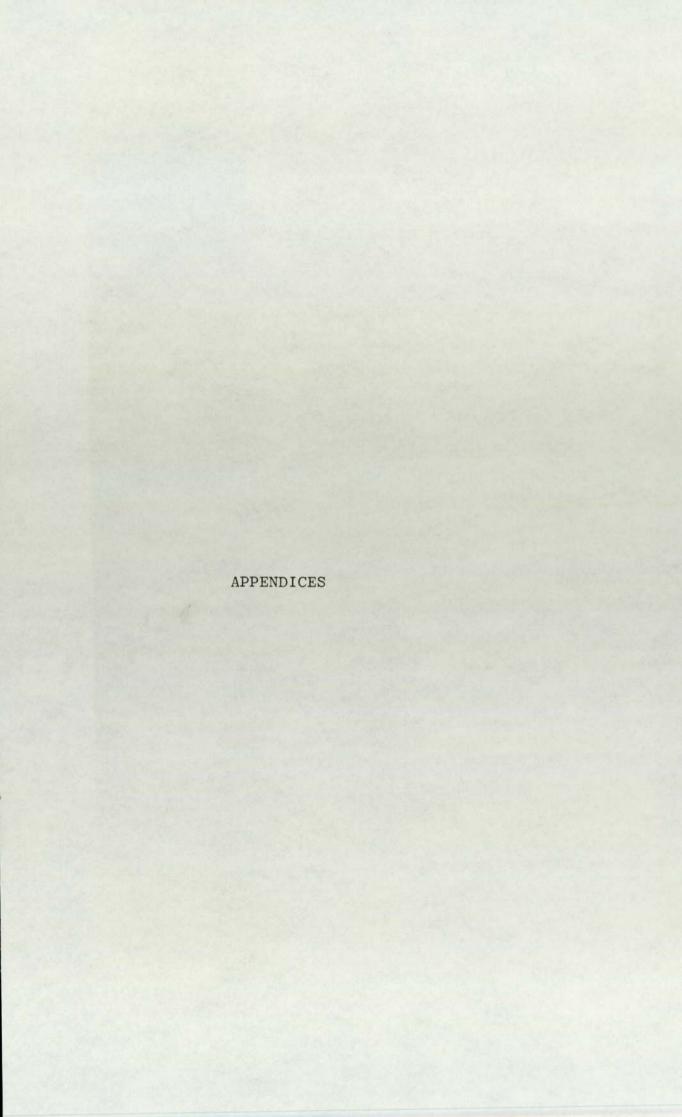
from management on request?

Are younger safety representatives more likely to perceive conflicting union/management interests on health and safety and less likely to think their procedures effective?

Are older safety representatives more likely to see better management involvement as an important means of improving health and safety at work?

Are safety representatives at highly unionised workplaces more likely to attach importance to external legal control and sanctions which can be enforced by the factory inspectorate than safety representatives in less highly organized workplaces who are more likely to see improvements in health and safety being prompted by attempts to improve individual behaviour through health and safety training?

How do safety representatives of differing descriptions and in differing circumstances view the relative merits of health and safety training laid on by union, management orjointly by union and management?



APPENDIX 1: FOCUSSED INTERVIEWS

- A. Interview with Dr. Charles Clutterbuck of the British
 Society for Social Responsibility in Science March 29, 1977
- CK: What does BSSRS do?
- CC: Basically it sets out to supply technical information to groups of workers, particularly those in some sort of struggle over industrial health. We have lots of political analyses around about the importance of information and what sort of information: I think it's found to still be the crux of the work we do, in the sense that it involves the scientists who go out and dig out the information which otherwise wouldn't be around, although it often is around, in the back of some medical files in some academic's office. So it's very often not secret information. A lot of people have the idea that the problem is the Official Secrets Act. I think the basic problem is that there is a lot of work which is so wrapped up in technical jargon as to be useless to workers. And so most of our job is transforming and translating that into an accessible sort of language.

But also the job we find hardest is to convince workers that the medical establishment is not on their side and that a lot of the work that is available is grossly distorted. That they have asked certain sorts of questions which we are not interested in. We spend quite a lot of time demolishing people's perceptions that the medical profession is all-knowing.

Family doctors probably have no idea about industrial health. They get between 120 hours and 2 hours training on a 5-7 year course. So they have no knowledge. That's the knowledge of old diseases, old, well-recognised hazards, and that obviously doesn't include the new hazards like PVC, the new ones at Seveso, a lot of the chlorinated hydro-carbon group, pesticides, all those they won't have any knowledge of at all.

And we would also say that in the medical profession there isn't an occupational health service which would be picking up the hazards before they arose, rather than waiting until they are blatant before anything is done about them

For instance, I was up at the ASTMS branch at Stavely a couple of weeks ago, and I said that in that branch meeting there were members from Staveley and from Coalite, an incredibly unusual situation, where you've got two factories, both with the same problem of chloracne, and they were all still waiting for the medical profession to come up with the information. And I was saying, 'no, it's up to you to get that information and then we can use it, we can pass it around to everybody else.'

I can give examples of where workers have actually generated scientific information, one in a print shop in America, where they substituted something called MEK for MBK,

CC: (methyl ethyl ketone for butyl) and sixty of seventy of them had various forms of nervous disease, (losing the ability to feel, touch, hear, dizziness of vision; the peripheral nervous system was going wonky), and it was only because they had organised themselves that they found out after carrying out a questionnaire that there were a lot of them with this problem. One or two of them thought it was just something wrong with themselves. And it wasn't till they had done that and gone on strike for three weeks to get the establishment occupational health service, (NIOSH in the US) that it actually became a recognised hazard, new to the scientific profession. It was workergenerated.

I think there are a lot of cases where this happens, which get written out of the scientific records. The obvious one is PVC which, if you trace it back, was a bloke called Earl Parks taking Goodrich to court twice and getting it recognised that working with PVC caused cancer.

So the main thing is information but in amongst that we try and get over various other things like how the legal profession isn't coping with the way we see the problem. We don't just supply information, that's a very 'liberal' thing. Our line is a very straightforward one which confronts the production process, rather than the basically medical establishment line of putting the onus on the individual to look after the problems. So that we would argue against personal protection and say, 'no, the answer is to alter the process'.

The classic way of looking at that is by saying, 'if you had a gas leak in your house and the gas fitter came round he would not give you a respirator and put a notice up saying "beware of the leak", he would do something about it! Yet exactly the opposite happens in industry time and again. People have personal protection: helmets; wellies; goggles,; parachutes; whatever's appropriate. So we argue against that. We take what is considered to be a classical industrial hygiene approach. You measure the problem, assess it and you control it. That's the procedure — and then disclose.

In some ways our line is not unlike the Factory Inspectors'. But the difference is that we don't veer away from it - we don't get bought off in the process. We can see that the assessment is riddled with all sorts of ideological and economic constraints. We don't accept that and we'd argue that workers set their own standards instead of somebody else deciding.

That would lead into the challenge to the actual production process. To get people to focus on the production process rather than on themselves as the cause of the problem.

And we'd try to suggest basic principles of control engineering. Basically: substitution, suppression, enclosure,

and ventilation. The research in those areas is way behind that CC: in other areas, even of industrial health. Because no manufacturers are going to research that. The classic example is Cape Asbestos. At Hebden Bridge, about a year ago, the Ombudsman's report blaming the factory inspector for not looking after it before. And the factory inspector's defence was that their own engineers said they couldn't prosecute Cape because there wasn't the necessary control engineering to reduce the level of asbestos to less than a safe level. In other words. there was nothing that could be done about it technically. which is like a Catch 22 situation, you can't be prosecuted for not installing something which you didn't research and develop. so, sixty to seventy years after asbestos was introduced, fifty years after it was recognised as causing asbestosis. thirty years after it was seen as causing cancers, still hadn't got the control engineering. Absolutely amazing!

So we try to put the onus onto groups of workers as organised labour to think up for themselves ways of installing the necessary preventative gear. Our line is very much prevention rather than personal protection but also rather than finding out levels of toxicity, levels of acceptibility and also rather than compensation which we see as a very anaemic form of legislation. It hasn't achieved very much, only in rare circumstances has it brought about the desired changes.

- CK: Are all these things that you think unions should be doing or do you think that some of those functions are best left to outside bodies?
- CC: I think what surprised us, we stumbled on it while I was working on PVC, was that we suddenly realised that with all these problems, (it didn't just apply to PVC and cancers), it applied to oil mists, to noise, backache problems, to a thousand and one different diseases, some of which were seen as important, like the cancers, but a lot were considered trivial, like deafness and chloracne and backache, people just don't consider them important.

I think the unions can do a lot more and still maintain their social democratic image. The unions in the States, for instance, are totally different from this country. I would argue that they are more reactionary in general and yet they do more on health and safety. I think part of the reason is because it can be seen as a clean image. Union leaders can stand up and say, 'None of our men are going to be exposed to these risks. We're not having our men cripples', (perhaps never mentioning women). They can come out as militant, without necessarily doing very much. But what that means is that they actually do employ, most of them, the Automobile Workers, the Oil and Chemical Workers, the Rubber Workers, teams of people working on industrial health. Up to a dozen sometimes. And they are willing to pay consultants a lot of money to back up major court cases. They tend to fight in the courts much stronger than over here, and it's all open debate.

CK: But do you think that the difference in approach between the British and American unions has anything to do with pressure from below, or is it more an expression of what the leadership wants to do?

It was noticeable for example over the PVC business that the demands in the USA were for 'no detectable level'. whereas here the General and Municipal, which is playing a leading role, would say, 'Well, we've got to take economics into account. We don't want to close the plants down.'

CC: I think if we use the PVC example we can see quite clearly the difference. Whether that's generalisable to all the others, I don't know.

What I saw was not that the unions were different, but the structure within which they were operating was different. In the States they handle everything nowadays, as a probable spin-off from the Nader-type of approach, (but also the whole Watergate thing showed up the difference between the two approaches, their politics and ours). They have certain battles out in the public, debate, out in court, all the publicity, the media, and in that situation the unions have got to stand up and be seen to protect their members.

Whereas over here there's a much more mish-mashy democracy operating, whereby even the contentious issues are handled by committees. PVC was a classic, nine members: three TUC, three CBI and three inspectors discussing it round a table in private. They came up with recommendations which weren't dissimilar to the American ones, but you had no way of knowing what the evidence was that they based the argument on and how they reached that decision. Whereas with a court case in the States you can actually see the various positions and you can find out how they were arrived at.

I think the difference in the two levels is probably not due to any scientific arguments but more to the fact that NIOSH and OSHA at that time were going through a period of public criticism because it had been shown that Nixon had been manipulating, and after that came out they had to react very strongly and come out clean on one particular issue which was PVC.

The union leaders in this country, because the're so much part of the establishment, don't have to come out and be shown... We know there's a lot of wheeling and dealing going on, trade union leaders might know that they are selling out on a health and safety issue to get a tax rebate in a few years time on a pay policy, or something like that. We can probably assume that's going on but we can't actually see it.

But it does mean that groups like us have quite a major say, whereas in the States the same sort of groups are not listened to quite so keenly

CC: The TUC now recognises the newly-organised Health and Safety Executive. The factory inspectors will make redundant the necessity for the Centenary Institute, (the group which is supposed to look after industrial health in this country for the unions). It means that though they are accepting the idea that there is no conflict of interest. If the Health and Safety Executive are okay then that implies that there is no conflict, which we, obviously, totally disagree with.

We think there is a conflict and the only reason it hasn't been exposed till recently is not because members are apathetic, which is what Robens always goes on about, but because they just haven't been informed and they have got nothing to fight on. So you can see why just the supply of information is more than a liberal thing: it supplies people with the necessary means of struggle.

- CK: Would you say that another explanation for the poor dissemination of information in the past has been the TUC clasping health and safety to its bosom? Whenever a question had to be dealt with it never got circulated to unions, it was always one or two experts at the TUC dealing with it...
- CC: That's part of it, but not just for health and safety. As you say, there's hierarchies in any union whereby the information is always passed up and not passed back.
- CK: But it seems particularly noticeable with health...
- CC: I think the reason is that they probably rightly had a mistrust of most people they could work with. The people in the medical establishment, apart from limited exceptions like Professor Bob Case and Haldane, have been antagonistic to the trade unions, and they've been sceptical of any technical advice. That profession has never been committed to the unions.
- CK: What's the official response to your position?
- CC: We do very regular courses and the GMW. They do shop stewards courses. We always do the chemical section for them and often are quite critical of the GMW's approach. But I think they realise that we are committed and that we are doing a reasonable job and they accept us as a bit of a thorn in their side as well. It is also a cheap way out for them, for us to go down for an afternoon for £20, is cheaper than having a safety officer.

We do a number of WEA courses and have been organising them totally on our own for quite a number of weeks. Some union people are very sympathetic. Some of them, not so, believing that everything will be done on a legal basis.

Apart from that we've done courses at the TUC. Just odd case studies.

- CC: studies. I think ASTMS has drawn on us most at a local level our major influence.
- CK: You mean rather than pick up the phone and ring the factory inspectorate they would ring you lot.
- CC: They might ring the factory inspectorate but they also know that we're not only useful on mundane sorts of hazards but we're actually well-informed on modern hazards because we have good access to the States where a lot of the work is published. Whereas a lot of factory inspectors don't have that kind of access or time.

So if it is a long-term problem, one the're not immediately going to pull members out on, where they are trying to initiate action on a difficult hazard, like TDI or styrene or some chemical. They'll probably try their own management and the factory inspectorate then come to us as well (rather than in place of).

But it's noticeable that Hazards Bulletin sells most to ASTMS members. Lots of branches take 10 to 15 and one or two take 50 to 60 copies each. So it's the big petrochemical plants where we have quite a lot of influence rather than everyday production workers.

We concentrate on diseases and substances rather than on safety. We can't do much work on safety at all, in part because it's probably being reasonable well covered in other circles but more because diseases and chemicals relate with science and we can pick up engineers, medical people, chemists, biochemists, physiologists.

We want to do some work on, (apart from pesticides and farmworkers) shiftwork patterns and the hazards associated with those, which is a difficult nut to crack because it's very hard to organise around one of those issues. On stress, ulcers, just breakdown of normal relationships with your family or whatever. A lot of people recognise these quite pronounced effects, but there's nothing they can do about them. It's difficult because we don't have the resources.

At BSSRS, I tend to keep on the complex chemicals, partly because one of the other things we would like to see is the radicalisation of ASTMS members into seeing their class position. That they are not part of management, a lot of them although they are in this ambiguous role of being part of management while also designing jobs for workers. So we want to try and involve them taking over a lot of our work. And I think we are beginning to actually get that idea across. That in any one factory they are far more capable than we are of supplying that information.

CK: Do the ones who get in touch with you normally have a union position?

CC: They are normally safety representatives or shop stewards. Sometimes branch or local officials. It's interesting that local organisers want information and I always ask for it back, (that is, I prefer to meet people fact-to-face and have a talk about what they know as well). They are less amenable to that kind of relationship than shopfloor workers. Local officials just want a piece of information and are very clear about what piece and, while I'm prepared to give that information, I don't feel it's very satisfactory. I would rather get to the shopfloor and talk about how to mobilise around that issue.

I think that's part of the process which can get left out. We don't want to become just an information-giving source.

- CK: How do you approach the business of mobilising people?
- CC: Phew! It's very difficult isn't it? We're always in this position of wanting to encourage people to take action but not tell them to or how to.

The way we tend to play that is by just throwing up a whole series of ideas of organisation. Like conveners or shop stewards going round doing questionnaires to find out about health hazards etc., which takes a bit of organisation, but is very good once it's done, and it has been done on a number of occasions. Because it involves people, they start talking about the health hazard and also actually it collects some data which is hard to argue against.

Getting people to try and get information from other sources; the manufacturers, playing games with them; setting up courses; blacking particular parts of the process, we'd encourage them to do that. In many ways the safety representatives document now establishes quite a few of these things. We'd like to take it a stage or two further in certain instances but very often just to establish what's written down in the law as a practical working relationship.

One thing we did find out very early on is that there is no point in talking with unorganised workers. It was hopeless. We had a thing down at Brighton about trichlorethylene. We had all the information, everything to prove that it was a hazard. But they were a group who weren't unionised. So there was nothing they could do. They saw it as a complete threat to their jobs. So we work more and more with organised shop stewards. That's why we tend to be with petrochemicals and places like that where the're already organised. So we are not telling them.

And so we just throw out all these ideas. That one for a levy. The safety committee every time they want something, having to go to management and bargain for it: whether it's a measuring instrument, a couple of books, a film, etc... We said, 'why don't you get a levy organised?' So the management pays a $\frac{1}{2}$ d/hour into this fund, over which you have control or at least jointly.

CC: That's been done, yes, at one place. We got that trick from the States, from the Atomic Workers. They negotiated it at national level. Think of the T & G negotiating that at national level! How much money that would bring into industrial health—millions. So you could pay for all the books and courses and information. You could buy it, you could hire your consultants on the union side when you needed them. All sorts of things. At the moment everybody says, 'you lot are very idealistic.'

We have an ideal which is a clean-up process. And we have now worked out a whole series of demands leading to that ideal. But even those demands, in the current economic situation are stifled. So we suggest all sorts of ideas and build from that.

- CK: Tell me how the levy was worked?
- CC: Just on a penny an hour for every person at work going into a fund to be organised by the joint Health and Safety Committee. Dead easy, and it's the sort of thing that everyone will mobilise around.
- CK: And the management didn't object?
- CC: Well, they did to start with. I don't know what's happened exactly to that one because while they agreed to it they also introduced redundancy notices about three days later.
- CK: Once an issue has come up and been mobilised around, how permanent are the effects? Is the level of consciousness raised to such an extent that people are, (a) on the lookout for things and (b) knowing what to do about hazards and prevention?
- CC: I think the only way to make it last is to have courses, teaching say a day a week for ten weeks. It takes three or four weeks for people to cotton-on to what we're up to. We have had the most success from those situations. Otherwise I think people just use our stuff and get a little victory, which we might hear about or might not. But it doesn't always get generalised.

That's why we had Hazards Bulletin. If we had any developments we could publicise them and generalise them.

I think the best one was the PVC at Baglan. The production workers really did have a mystique about the management. They knew management were on the other side but they at least felt that they were technically very competent. That they had everything going for them and, thus, they couldn't take them on on technical issues. I think that after the vinyl chloride thing they found out that the management weren't that good and they were just challenging them right, left and centre. They said afterwards that they won't believe anything that the management come up with in future. They won't necessarily know how to challenge it but they will not just accept it automatically.

- CC: But that takes months of growing relationships and very often we find ourselves in the position of going in for just a day or half a day school, doing a sort of circus, trying to get things over, and I find that very unsatisfactory. There's no way we can get through to people in a day, with all the ideas and all that needs to be done.
- CK: How deeply ingrained do you think is the ideas that there is an identity of interests between management and workers?
- CC: The people we meet are obviously the more militant section, who don't hold this belief. But, apart from them, it's still pretty thorough-going. Even some branch secretaries and people like that take our information, but still see there is an identity of interests and will often co-operate with management when working on health and safety issues. The only way is to give people more confidence in that situation. It's a strike which brings that out and even people on strike feel bemused at the outset: "Why aren't management doing something about this trifling issue?"

Management don't want unhealthy workers, I'm perhaps painting a picture that they do. The really confusing thing is the mass of technical information which is behind them which can shield the otherwise conflict situation beeing apparent. Probably the most obvious case at the moment at our section is the stuff on acceptable levels of pollutants, threshold limit values. That's the one we come across most, the notion that there is such a thing as a safe level of a toxic substance. It helps make their case, that there is this glorious body of technical experts. I don't think it's merely workers, there is this dominant myth around in society at large, that technology is neutral and that obviously helps to substantiate the idea that there is no conflict of interest on industrial health. To pick figures out of the wind and say that is a safe level is just a joke, a very sick joke, but it does support that i ea that there is an identity of interests.

- CK: Do you find that safety issues come up more nowadays in collective bargaining? Do people get in touch with you before they go into a bargaining session?
- CC: I think in the last two years, and this is probably a reflection of the success of the TUC courses on industrial health, there have been so many of them, a lot of people have been pretty tuned—in to the sort of rights which a safety representative should have, irrelevant of what the technical issues are. I think most union people can now do that on their own anyway. They can bargain around the rights to inspection and to information which don't require any technical knowledge, and I think they are pretty competent on those.

It's hard to know whether people are using us pre-bargaining, we are so overloaded anyway. And now we've got groups in Sheffield. Birmingham, Liverpool and Brighton handling that

CC: sort of information. We are no handling less and less at national level because those groups are taking the slack.

We still seem overworked and I feel that most of the response is more due to how much we publicise ourselves. Most queries, I think, come from those people who have actually come into contact with us. So it depends on how much we can commit ourselves to do in the first place.

The commonest thing is, somebody thinks there is a problem: fibre glass, TDI or a current difficult one on the hazards of micro-waves. Often very specific, which implies that they have got all the rest covered and just want the very specific question answered. The sorts of questions are getting more difficult as time goes on. It might just be that they have tried the factory inspectorate who are answering better and covering some of the thing and so we are left with all the difficult stuff.

- CK: Do you have any contact with factory inspectors?
- CC: We have one in our group who will have to remain nameless!
 But otherwise very poor contact. Certainly at national level
 they hate us. I think what annoys me most about the factory
 inspectors is that most of them know they are in a conflict.
 Most of them know they can't handle what's going on. The figures
 are, what, 530 odd inspectors, so-called, in the field, but
 if you start taking off the number of specialists, the number
 of trainees and others it comes down to about 250 actually in
 the field. They know they can't handle that situation and I
 just wish they'd admit it sometimes. Come out in public and
 say, 'we can't do the job properly'.
- CK: They have to the extent that they leaked to the Guardian a couple of years ago... Which must mean that some of them were pretty disquieted.
- CC: Yes, but there aren't that many leaky factory inspectors. I think they are riddled with the notion that they know best and this attitude permeates through the organisation.
- CK: But back to what unions can do ...
- CC: Obviously most union activity on health and safety is legal:
 Blyghton, (T&G), Jim Watts, (NUAAW), all fighting compensation
 or ACAS or whatever. Whereas we see prevention as the only
 way to cut through all the difficulties, cut through the medical
 profession, the legal difficulties, personal protection and
 all that. Prevention cuts through the technical questions
 of what is toxic, etc... Generally the only way of finding
 out what is toxic is leaving the stuff to the human guinea
 pigs and then, perhaps, collecting the data years afterwards.

The unions have got to start to get some prevention people in. I can't believe that safety officers for each union would be crippling to the funds of most unions. But it has to go further than that.

CC: At ASTMS, Sheila McKechnie just can't cope with all the problems she has thrown at her. She has to rummage around all over the place. What's required very often is a sort of team of medical and engineering people to go into a place to back up or to confront the factory inspectorate on the particular problem. It would be very handy for a union member to know that he could just call on the union to get a team of three or four in and I can't believe that it would be crippling. I also think it would be a good saleable item to recruit members, like the NUM, if they are fighting on health and safety and can be seen to have that resource.

The slight problem with the NUM is that they may be against it as perhaps they want to maintain the workers inspectors. The great deficit does seem to be that while there's now a lot of health and safety courses organised by the TUC, people still don't understand the technical aspects. You will need these teams. Also, another thing you can do is organise national agreements on levies to safety committees.

I think unions have generally been better in the last couple of years, since the Robens Report they have been improving all along. If you look at Robens, the Health and Safety at Work Act and safety representatives you can see the TUC's involvement increasing at each stage.

I would have thought there was a place for single unions to do various campaigns. Like ASTMS trying to get a Toxic Substances Bill passed like in the States. And the agricultural workers because, as we were saying, of the difficulties in organisation, you can't rely on groups of farmworkers getting together to push these demands: the obvious place is the national level. There are some very straightforward demands that can be raised. Tractor cabs is a success. It is the only part of industry where there is onus on the manufacturer not to produce things above 90 decibels. In the rest of industry the guidelines are that if a machine is produced over 90 decibels then there is the onus on the manufacturers to tell the buyer this fact. Which is a pretty low level; not even a label on them, indelibly marked on them, 'this machine is dangerous to your' health'. Until that happens then we are going to have deafness problems for many years. It will take a long time to work through - tractor cabs will take at least ten years to work through, but at least you know that in the end it's going to happen, and that's why the onus has got to be on the manufacturers.

There are all sorts of campaigns that national unions can fight on single issues.

- CK: Do you think that people working at the local level are being properly serviced by the unions and are they organised themselves where it matters?
- CC: Well, it's hard to say, as it's such a general question, but I think generally not. If they've been on a decent health and

CC: safety course, (one of the TUC organised ones), then they've at least learnt that in-plant training is a myth. They've got to get union training outside the plant which teaches them the fundamentals of a union approach. Once they've got that, then I think they are better equipped to do all sorts of other things. But even so I think the information is diabolical. We know management has got videos and secretaries, telephones, photostating - all these things which even we take for granted.

These just aren't available. There's a few books now on it, but even Pat Kinnersley's still hasn't been seen by a lot of people. Hazards Bulletin, 'Work is Dangerous'... All these things are not available in bookshops and the normal sources. The obvious source is through the union. Unfortunately the experience I've had, especially on PVC, is that books can be sat in union offices and just not get through. The classic was a book on PVC from the ICFTU, by Levenson on vinyl chloride, and that was sitting at the T&G and GMWU and just didn't get through to the members. And yet it doesn't seem that difficult - we go around at half-time and say, 'well, here you are.'

There is this development of the factory inspectors of having information centres at big plants. Again there, I think, the thing is that unions should be producing their own pamphlets now. Why aren't they producing guides on the safety representatives document? When the safety representatives document was put down, most union members didn't even know about it. They should be producing pamphlets on various hazards like we are doing.

It should be much more widespread. Like they did in the States. The OCOW workers have produced ones on benzene, styrene, TDI, noise, backache, etc:.. If the unions don't do it then it's really up to us and we haven't got the resources, and we shouldn't be doing that sort of thing.

- CK: What's the circulation of Hazards?
- CC: About 2,000 most of which is going to the shop floor. So we're having to distribute outside bookshops. Generally it's through the groups straight to the shopfloor, management as well, which we charge a higher rate for! So we've done very well because it's difficult to organise.

- B. Interview with Ken Clarke, National Officer with Safety Responsibilities, British Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, April 1, 1977
- CK: Can I ask you first why the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation decided to appoint a safety officer after all this time?
- KC: Obviously the Health and Safety at Work Act of 1974 created a new set of conditions in the view of our Executive Council and this was accentuated by the fact that having now entered the Common Market we suddenly find that we are not innovators in the safety field, in fact we are following on. It became more and more obvious as our organisation became more involved in the European Coal and Steel Community that there was a lot of committee work, a lot of research work going on which involved the conditions of work of people employed in the steel industry.

Bill Sirs, the General Secretary, became involved with a number of committees in Europe and this country, all dealing with this sort of problem, and this highlighted really the need for somebody with a special responsibility in this particular area.

I think the TUC also felt that in the light of the 1974 Act unions should think seriously about the idea of a national officer with this particular responsibility. It was not a directive, just a recommendation that unions ought to consider this sort of situation. For that reason the ISTC decided to appoint a national officer.

CK: I find that interesting. In a way it's saying that we are behind other European countries.

Was your job ever defined? What do you consider to be your main functions?

KC: Well, the job hasn't been defined in as much as it's been put down as a number of particular points which I am especially responsible for, for example, as a national officer it's possible that I may occasionally, or frequently, if the situation arose, become involved in some of the more normal negotiable matters which exist in the industry. If Bill Sirs or the Assistant General Secretary is off work, then I've no doubt that I would become involved in the National Sub-Committee negotiations which happen frequently. We have a disputes procedure which has been operating since 1919 actually. If a works delegate cannot resolve a problem he calls in the divisional office. If they can't resolve it it goes to what is called a neutral committee, which is a committee of two from the employers' side, (outside the works where the dispute is), two from the

KC: trade union side, again outside the works, who consider the cases and make a decision. That decision is binding on both sides. However, occasionally they can't make a decision, they fail to agree, in which case it goes to a national sub-committee. There again, in similar circumstances, with all the neutral committee members there and the management team and the branch team, they consider the case and make a decision which is binding on both parties.

These committees consider all sorts of questions, including, for example. dismissals.

- CK: Do safety questions come up?
- KC: Now, that system has existed long before the Health and Safety at Work Act. I think we have to recognise, and my union is no different from many others, that in the past we tended to be more concerned about compensation for those injured at work rather than stopping the accidents that injured them.

I think you have to look at this one carefully and try to see a reason for it. Quite simply, it comes from the days when to be off work for whatever reason was a serious problem. It's serious today, but it hasn't the serious consequences I think it had prior to the first world war or shortly after it. The benefits that we know today were not paid out as readily. The trade union movement were protecting the membership by setting up effective legal departments. We would claim to have one which is second to none.

Certainly now, in hindsight, we can look at it and say, 'well, I think we did the wrong thing.' We should have been pressing for health and safety at work and using the factories acts which allowed for regulations to be made. I don't think we've pushed the Secretary of State sufficiently. To say, well, we ought to have some particular regulation covering this particular practice or process. So I would say that ISTC can be criticised in this respect along with many others.

There are some unions which have done the opposite. O.k., they have had an effective legal department for injuries but also, at the same time have had a running campaign for improved safety. The miners is a splendid example. Believe it or not the miners have had safety representatives since the twenties, appointed by the trade union. And there are one or two other unions that can say, 'we've tried over the years.'

CK: Can you tell us something about the particular hazards faced by ISTC members? I suppose you could gauge it in terms of the compensation cases that most regularly crop up?

KC: You've got to first of all break down the industry into its basic parts.

First, the problem of turning iron ore into iron. Second, you have to convert the iron into steel and issue it in the form of ingots, slabs, etc, to the rolling mills. These then finish the material into customer requirements: sections, plates, sheets, etc...

The iron ore is mostly imported. Then it is graded, sorted and cintered, (made into a kind of pellet form, more acceptable for the furnace). This part is a dirty process: very dusty and it raises bronchial problems from inhalation of dust. Coke is needed to feed the blast furnace to carry out the melting process.

The manufacture of coke, creating gasses from the coal is one which has been causing concern in the steel industry and in the gas-making industry prior to natural gas, for many years. Indeed, doing some research this week I was surprised to find that in 1931 the Registrar General was making some comments about the significance of cancer of the lung and bronchus of gas and coke over workers. He was saying that there were significan numbers and that it must have some relationship to benzene products. This was in his Decentennial Report.

Dr. Bill Lloyd of the United Steel Workers of America in the occupational hygiene unit, issued a report based on a number of workers in the coke-oven areas which showed with figures that it was pretty evident that people who work in those areas, (especially topside of the coke-oven), are more likely to die of lung cancer than other people.

In the blast furnace area we have the problems of dust and hot metal flowing about here there and everywhere and the danger of explosion, which in fact we had at Scunthorpe two years ago when water in a torpedo ladle was trapped and eventually erupted the metal.

Having got the iron, we then take it over to the steel plant to be converted to steel. In the old days it was by the open hearth steel plants but today, with modern technology, it's done in what is known as the Osherdon vessels. As opposed to the ten hours to make 350 tons of steel, now in forty minutes we can convert up to 350 tons of iron into steel. So you can see that the process has been speeded up and there still remains the problem of hot metal running about into ingot mills, etc., dust and fumes.

With modern techniques we can now take the steel direct from the steel plant and, with what is known as continuous casting, can cast slabs or blooms continuously. The great

- KC: benefit to the industry is that we can now get yields of about 95-96% from any particular cast of material whereas an ingot would at best be about 87% yield.
- CK: Are these modern processes safer? Do they have safer processes built into them?
- KC: Well I think we have made progress and the BSC is certainly a responsible employer. Since the days of the BSC I think there has been much more emphasis on health and safety at work. It would be unfair to say that the private section which remains does not take cognisance of the health and safety problems but the BSC approach, as a public company, is more responsible.
- CK: Is there much particularly dangerous work and, if so, is the demand for danger money rather than that the process be made safer?
- KC: Well, there has been this problem and I think this is a question of individuals really. You would, for example, get one branch official who is 'nuts' on safety being the key word and danger money, as you call it, or abnormal conditions payments, were something to him that were secondary. But, on the other hand, this would be one of the prime things that they would go for.

The steel industry is particularly hazardous in certain areas, in rolling mills, for example. If you fall down in a rolling mill it's not just a simple matter. It can be extremely serious. Here you have hot metal, perhaps about 1,100 degrees wafting in and out of the rolling mills, sometimes at speeds of up to 60 mph. If it breaks out in a rod mill, for example, you can have these great bars whizzing through the air. And the machinery is so very heavy because of its function, and if anybody or anything falls there can be serious injuries. Very unforgiving is the steel industry.

- CK: Can I ask you about the resources that the union puts in at a national level on health and safety? In terms of the dissemination of information, and again in terms of the standard making committees, etc...
- KC: Well, the appointment that I've taken up is new. This was in January of this year. I felt I had rather an open field in which to take this one up so the first thing that I did was to take the opportunity of writing an article which was published in our monthly book Man and Metal, outlining some of the areas which I felt we needed to be thinking about to make an effective organisation in each of the steel works. I followed this one up by producing in full the regulations issued by the Health and Safety Committee regarding safety representatives and safety committees. Because one of the dangers I see in this one

KC: is that management may well attempt to maintain the status quo which exists in many works, to say, for example, that safety committees already exist, and 'why do we want to upturn those procedures and practices which have existed for many years?'

The reason I would give is that while it's not general there are many works where these committees were known as the 'tea and biscuit functions'. Rather akin to garden fetes when they did meet. Indeed one could think of safety committee minutes where the pattern was complaints being made in one particular month. The next month it's raised again and no action had been taken and so on and so on.

I think we ought to get away from that image because the Health and Safety at Work Act to me, anyway, means the total involvement of the workforce. Now, when I say 'workforce', I don't care whether he is a managing director or a labourer who sweeps up in a rolling mill - to me they are all part of that particular workforce.

I would like to see it a perfectly natural thing for anybody that works in, say, a rolling mill, to pick up a safety helmet and put it on before he goes into that mill. And if it is a particularly hazardous area in regard to eye dangers, then he should pick up the goggles and use them automatically. So, I'm looking for total involvement of the workforce.

- CK: How did the original safety committees come into being?
- KC: There was legislation, of course, certain factory acts that said if you had a certain number of employees then you had to set up safety committees, and that was it. I mean, it left it in that particular setting. You can see that it is wide open to interpretation as to what the safety committee functions should be or what the members should do. It was a result of the wideness of the possible interpretation that the tea-and-biscuits committees grew up.

They weren't all tea-and-biscuits committees. Again it's a question of individuals: if you get somebody that's red-hot on safety, then obviously he will do all he can to make the committee effective. The fault is not all the management's; we could have used some muscle to affect good safety committees.

- CK: What is the response to the current set of circumstances? Safety representatives and safety committees under the Health and Safety at Work Act, what is the response at a local level?
- KC: This is one of the areas about which I am a little bit concerned at the moment, and I hope over the last few days I have put the brakes on. It would appear to me that the

KC: BSC has got a viewpoint about power at the works level, though I think perhaps the events of the last few weeks might set them re-thinking a bit. That power must be on the shop floor.

Well, I think this is all very well, but at the same time they seem to be advocating a programme at national level, that we should have national negotiations on conditions within the steel industry. Following from that, it may be a good thing, although I'm not convinced, we find that at the same time they are going hell-for-leather at local level to appoint safety representatives and committees and get the thing set up. And I am a bit disturbed about this because it would appear that what we may be doing is setting up different systems within the various divisions of the BSC.

While it may be desirable to have flexibility in approach, I think there ought to be guidelines, so that one can say within these parameters we can establish a system that suits your works. But I can see a danger, for example, if we set up one system at Port Talbot and then suddenly they find there's one at Scunthorpe which they consider to be a lot better as regard to training facilities, for example, or the time off work for training. Then I think we may find that the Port Talbot people suddenly become very unsettled and seek to change it. So I think we ought to have national guidelines put down and then they can operate within them in the various divisions of the steel corporation.

Now, I hope that over the last few weeks I have put the brakes on. I've certainly been trying because I don't think management have thought it out in full, and all I'm saying is just let's sit back and think and see where we are going on this thing.

What I am emphasising to our members is that the appointment of safety representatives is their business, nobody else's. Management don't come along and ask them who they should appoint as safety officers. Similarly, don't let them come along and say, 'we feel it ought to be Billy Bloggs because he's been on safety committees for the last two years.' It's the branch's job to say so and not to be interfered with.

CK: What is the set-up for discussing safety with the management?

KC: Well, at the moment the steel industry has a joint consultative machinery and management are suggesting that we ought to use this existing machinery for this new facet. I don't know whether I'm against that particular approach providing safety is not something that is just tagged on at the end of the joint consultative meeting (when everybody's looking at the clock). Providing it's something

- KC: separate there's no reason why it couldn't be under those facilities, because they've got the secretariat and the printing, etc., to make it effective.
- CK: Yes, I think you are right to guard aginst that...
- KC: Well, it's the status quo again isn't it? Let's not rock the boat...
- CK: I myself go along to Water Services safety subcommittee meetings an am pleasantly surprised at how keen people are. Once you make it a single subject, then people do their homework on it and find out what the members are talking about...

BREAK

KC: I was saying about the overlapping of health and safety and ordinary day-to-day negotiations. For example, if you, as branch secretary, make an agreement with management which will yield pounds per shift, for a number of tonnes per shift, (say 300 tonnes), and then six months later people say, 'My God! Your number of accidents is high in your mill.' It could be that getting 300 tonne out is exposing people to risks that they shouldn't be taking. So management say we will have to adjust the output per shift so that it goes down to 260. Immediately there's a negotiation problem here because your members are not going to accept that they take a reduction of 40 tonnes per shift. They are going to demand a re-equation at least of the tonnage rates.

So you see there's an overlapping there, and what I'm saying to the Corporation is that we ought to be thinking about this one and within these guidelines having some means of resolving that ype of problem, either with the existing machinery or some new machinery, otherwise we are going to have the branches' muscle being used to win those particular arguments.

- CK: It also raises the question of the veracity of Robens' argument that there is an identity of interest between management and workers on safety.
- KC: Well, I don't know because the argument that we get from a lot of the members is that providing it doesn't interfere with production then, o.k. safety is alright. As soon as it starts to interfere with production then the person responsbile for production is under pressure from somebody else.

Las week at Scunthorpe I gave a talk at the Occupational Hygiene Unit, and one of the question asked at the end was by a foremen:

- KC: 'How do I bring the sacred cow of production into line with health and safety when, on the one hand, management are pushing me for maximum output and on the other people are asking for maximum safety?' He was making the argument that they are not compatible. I wouldn't accept that in total, but it might mean that in some processes we have to accept that there's going to be a slight loss of output with exisiting machinery.
- CK: The same crops up with piecework ...
- KC: There again there's a complete new thinking here isn't there? Most of the people in the steel industry on the production side these people that you are always hearing about getting fabulous wages, (which they only get when its churning it out), all their earnings were based on tonnage: if they didn't do anything they didn't get anything. If they rolled full shift then they got a hell of a wage. There's no doubt about it.

They've gone away from that. Round about 80% of earnings is a datal rate, paid for being there and about 20% allied to production. It varies.

We're now thinking in terms of it being a single-status industry, which would mean that it doesn't matter what your job is, you are all employed under one particular status. And, if we can achieve that, then I think it makes the question of safety more acceptable in production shops.

- CK: The other reason that I am suggesting that there is a conflict of interests is, if you look at, for example at the reasons put forward for postponing the official inauguration of safety representatives, it came down to a question of money. Inevitably it will come down to this question when dangerous processes have to be changed...
 - KC: Yes, I would accept that up to a point, but I think that the Act itself, when it says that those people who design, import or manufacture articles for use at work, are also now to be held responsbile... I think we shall now get a different approach.

At one time you were asked to supply me with a machine. Your sole concern was the function of the machine, the cost of manufacturing it to beat you competitors. Really, safety was only secondary to you, unless specified by the purchaser. Now, with this Act, you can't operate in this way. Because he can be held responsible. He can also be asked for information about his new machine.

If management are going to put a new machine in a plant, the union officials can say, 'Another one of them bloody things! Look at the trouble we've had about noise with it.' And they can turn round and ask the designer or the manufacturer, 'what have you done about the noise problem on that machine?', and start asking questions before it's installed.

- KC: Now I think this could bring about a different approach. But I agree with you, on existing plant there's a little bit about getting down to capital.
- CK: At the moment, would you say there are many members who would immediately take it up with management and say, 'What's going on here?' My feeling is that in the past management have had a monopoly of information, in terms of technology, etc...
- KC: Yes, they have had the monopoly simply because there was no redress for the workers' representatives: they couldn't insist on this information, but now they can. The Act exists and they are entitled to seek any information which they require.
- CK: They are entitled to, but do they all know they are entitled to?
- KC: Well, I keep telling them, and I would like to see this side of it growing.

We have a manual, guidelines on how branch officials should run a branch, etc... I intend to put in there a section on health and safety and it will stress this type of thing. In fact, I've printed from the Act the general duties in total. And say you refer to that, you can insist on this information and ask for it. If they can't get any satisfaction they should refer to me or to the divisional office.

- CK: The Foundry Section of the AUEW seems to be the only union with a safety section in their rule book...
- KC: It's no coincidence that Bill Simpson is chairman of the Health and Safety Executive and also a member of the Foundry Section. He was always one of the people to proclaim loudly the necessity of trade unions thinking about safety.
- CK: Relating to this question of shop-floor people knowing what their rights are, what kind of education and training programmes are available to them?
- KC: As an organisation we are split into seven divisions.

 Each division runs two schools per year of three days each.

 In the past it has been training for new branch officials and health and safety occupied perhaps one and a half hours at the school. We have extended that already.

Next we have two national schools per year of five days at York University. These are more advanced. Health and safety takes up a morning. We are hoping to extend that or eliminate it completely and set up three-day national KC: schools purely on health and safety and, say, the Employment Protection Act. That would be the soul subject, and we would let them retain the national schools for discussion of negotiating, etc... Keep it separate.

Again the Health and Safety at Work Act comes in here because there is a requirement under the Act for management to give them time off work for training. So I believe we have to agree nationally on how we are going to do this training. Are we going to allow them to go to TUC-run schools, (which the BSC are refusing at present)...

- CK: On what grounds?
- KC: On the grounds that they have no say in the curriculum.
- CK: Why should they have?
- KC: Well, it's debatable. All they are saying is that we are not stopping anybody going to the school but we're not contributing to the costs of anybody having time of work, etc...
 - So, I think that this is an area where we need these national guidelines. We could agree, perhaps, with management that we'll run 50-50 courses, Management TU).
- CK: That's one we put a stop to on the Water Services. There were mixed feelings, but overall we thought they should be union-run.
- KC: Well, I would ask the question, I think it's a fair point, if I'm talking about total involvement of the workforce, how can I then insist that one section should go their own separate way? And, of course, I use this argument against management and say, 'you don't ask me about your training schools for your managers'. They normally reply, 'Well, we don't ask you to pay for it'. Which is fair comment.
- CK: When policy questions come up, for example, when circulars come out from the TUC or the legislature about safety representatives or noise regulations etc., how are they handled at the national level? What committees look at them? Who makes comments on them?
- KC: We sit on a number of committees. For example, the Health and Safety Executive is at present discussing the lead regulations. Now, we make leaded steel. There's a pile of documents about three inches thick covering a little factory here manufacturing batteries, another one covers somebody there that manufacture this... And the Health and Safety Executive is saying, 'well, let's bring them all into one.' All people who use lead will be expected to

KC: follow a certain pattern, and lay down the regulations on that basis. We have discussions, consultations with the Health and Safety Executive, in as far as it affects our membership we put forward our point of view.

On noise, again this is an example of where we slipped up in the past. Occupational deafness is now accepted as an occupational disease but the wording of that particular thing is such that steel workers are not covered. It say, 'anybody who has used pneumatic hammers or chisels for more than twenty years.' The wording of that document takes us outside of its remit. Now, the fault must lie with this organisation because when those regulations were drawn up, we should have been aware, (hells bells! We have a seat on the General Council!), we must have been asked the question.

We are trying to rectify it at present but it comes back to the point you were making, the Ministry is saying it's a question of money to set up the medical facilities.

- CK: In other words, when that question arose, it would have gathered dust somewhere in Swinton House and not been answered by anybody.
- KC: Somewhere along the line we must have been aware of what was happening, without realising the implications, and not acting.
- CK: If the same thing came up now who would discuss it, the Executive?
- KC: Usually any questions of 'how does it affect your members?' come through the TUC from the General Council. We are of course on the General Council and what happens is the minutes relating to health and safety are copied and sent to me for comment and observations. So I am able to say to Bill Sirs, 'Bill, this might involve our lads in such and such a place, we ought to have a say on this one.' Bill can then make our voice heard in the appropriate places.
- CK: How can union members be made more active on health and safety? How can the union stimulate interest?
- KC: Well, I'm trying by publishing in the monthly union magazine, Man and Metal, varying articles on health and safety at work. If we can start to get them thinking that there is a responsibility on them to ensure that they are not doing things which are silly and not risking injury to themselves or their workmates. We'll get them thinking along these lines, educate them, then we can start being a bit more positive in the way they should approach it. But it's not something which will happen overnight.

KC: I can tell you of grown men that stand on roller gear, on a narrow strip, and there's a fall of about 30 feet down underneath them, with hot bars coming down each side of them...

Interview with Sheila McKechnie - ASTMS Safety Officer, April 4 1977

(She began by describing the chain through which health and safety issues pass on their journey around the ASTMS structure).

EM: Groups would refer motions to branches, then to Divisional Councils, then to the Executive Council, then (on safety or health) the majority of issues to Health and Safety sub-committee, then back to the Executive Council after report or investigation. This is the kind of lay representative policy structure. It is not the way in which 'industrial problems' are dealt with.

If a group has a problem on health and safety they would refer it to the Divisuonal Officer. If he/she couldn't deal with it or wanted some help or back-up information, or wanted my involvement it would come to me. I get involved at both divisional and national level.

Up at Staveley Chemicals, for example, when we asked for a formal meeting with management to discuss what the problem was and what they shad been doing, etc., the Divisional Officer asked me to go to that meeting, so although he was there I actually asked all the questions and followed it up, and did the report etc... Anything done at that level is copied to the National Official (who has sector responsibilities, this one being for chemicals).

A lot of routine requests for information comes through Divisional Officers like that, for example, proposals for setting up safety committees, the safety representatives system, straight-forward questions on dangerous substances. A lot, however, comes in writing direct from members, although it should come from Divisional Officers and then I usually send copies to Divisional Officers to keep them informed.

Because health and safety information doesn't work in a vaccum, what we are interested in doing is not giving our groups academic information but to give them a negotiating position. Say somebody wrote to me about benzene and they were using it in pretty awful conditions, and I wrote back and said, 'stop it immediately until this, this and this has been done,' what you have created there is a dispute situation and the Divisional Officer must deal with that, so he must know what's going on.

The other reason for working through Divisional Officer is that they can be instructed to adhere to union policy, whereas you can't instruct lay representatives in the same way.

To some extent these systems have to fit together so that the policy-making structure isn't separate from this one.

SM: Divisional Officers will be involved in Divisional Council health and safety committees, etc... So that is the basis of the structure.

The point is: how do you get stuff down from national level, (my level), to the groups and actually service the representatives. To some extent that's done on general issues through Divisional Council minutes, Divisional Safety Officers. The Divisional Council may decide to circulate all branches on a particular subject that's come down from this office.

CK: Such as ...?

SM: Well, for example, everything I do on TUC evidence that's evidence on the stuff circulated from the Health and Safety Commission goes to the Divisional Safety Officer and it's his/her job to consult all the groups involved with that particular problem. The Divisional Officers will know who are the relevant groups in relation to that particular problem. I cross-check that in some instances with the National Officers, for example with the Major Hazards report in the chemical industry, in addition to the Divisional Safety Officers, all our conveners in major chemical plants got a copy of our draft evidence, sent comments and then I collated the final stuff.

One problem is, how do you directly service group representatives? The negotiating structure of the union isn't really that useful for health and safety information. It fits in when you are talking, for example, about the National Health Service, because they are all organised under one National Officer and bargaining is centralised, etc., but there's no easy way with our system to circulate all the groups in any particular area or industry. If you send information to group representatives who do deal with health and safety then your chances of getting the information to the people who can actually use it are limited. So what we have decided to do is to ask all groups to appoint safety representatives, obviously, and then to notify Divisional Officers and that then comes through to me. So we are trying to compile a register of safety representatives right across the union and then we are going to keep that on health and safety basis, if you like. In the chemical industry, we'll divide that into sectors: pharmaceutical, general chemicals, etc... So that if I get something through, say, on the problems of handling or making a particular drug, then I can simply circulate that to the group directly involved because I will have all the names of the pharmaceutical representatives.

It's quite a problem. Already we have 1,200 safety representatives registered. That's nothing like the number we'll have finally and to keep the register up to date is a fairly major problem. If you depend on you lay-representatives to tell you every time there is a change the register would be out of date in a year or two. So

SM: the check we have is to ask the Divisional Officers to keep a list of all the group representatives within the areas of their particular responsibility. So there are in fact two registers: the Divisional Officer's one and these same safety representatives are then classified across into hazard areas or industrial areas where they have got problems in common. Each year the Divisional Officers will be asked to check that the list is up to date. And then the system will go on from there.

It's a long way round to do it and it does obviously have administrative and cost problems, but we can't see any other way.

It's different with a single-industry union but we've got members everywhere so the range of issues is fantastic.

The Health and Safety Officer is central to this system. I service it at every level. One of the main functions is research. I get queries about particular problems then I go to other people to get the information and send the information to that group. We are in a good position in that we have a lot of so-called experts within the union and I have been trying to compile a list of union members who would be prepared to advise me. It's been really difficult. There's no way of doing it other than every time I go to a meeting asking people, 'can I please have your name', and putting a bit in the journal. etc...

We have an annual meeting of the Divisional Safety Officers for a week, and that becomes a sort of thrashing out ground for all kinds of issues. They've accepted the responsibility for trying to compile a list of experts in the divisions. There is a need to de-centralise. At the moment, (because I exist), everything is coming in here...

- CK: Yes. This is one of the hypotheses which I am hoping to test. That is the way in which, in the past, things have tended to gravitate towards the TUC, one of the reasons unions haven't done very much, as with a lot of other issues.
- SM: Well, with some issues you are not quite sure what to do with them. We've got a motion in, (which went to the Executive), on maximum temperatures and humidity. Now something like that you can make a local negotiating issue, but the actual intent was to get new legal standards. The way the unions, the TUC and the Health and Safety Executive function, we do not approach the HSC direct, it has to go through the TUC. That is the formalised system of consultation. But if the HSC put out any document, individual unions can submit evidence. I normally give and Health and Safety Executive copies of our evidence. The actual evidence that they have to take into account is the TUC evidence. They statutorily have to take into account TUC evidence but not individual evidence.

SM: The other thing we have, (which is always being pushed in ASTMS), is a fairly effective parliamentary committee. Anything we want to organise our own campaign on, we can do and raise the issue in Parliament, (how effective that is, I don't know). It is certainly no problem for me to have a question asked in the House. And I do that directly, nothing to do with the TUC.

So in a sense what we've done in ASTMS is to say, 'o.k., at the top end we'll do as much as we can, but what we've got to do is put our own house in order.' Once you get the stuff to the grass roots activity there will be a groundswell of pressure which the system at the top end isn't actually going to be able to contain.

Certainly as far as the Health and Safety Committee is concerned, I am very worried about the way it works and about the way it represents the interests of our members, (and anybody else's for that matter), because for a start the evidence isn't published, (evidence to those committees). So therefore you can have major companies saying what they like and putting in all kinds of figures about costs and benefits and hazards. You can't counter that evidence. In a sense you've got to counter it in a vacuum. You've got to try and predict what the companies are saying...

- CK: Like Philip Agee?
- SM: Yes, and because the committees sit in private there is no kind of scrutiny of the work done as there is in the States.
- CK: Do you think that the reason it's been tolerated so far is a lack of interest at the TUC level or is it a byproduct of their policy?
- SM: The British trade union movement has the the TUC it deserves. You can't say the TUC constitutes the problem.

 Because the structure of the TUC has stemmed totally from the attitude of the individual unions to national cooperation. There have, however, been some major changes in the last few years which has given the TUC increased power in all those areas, but with no equal change in the relationship between the TUC and individual unions.

The representation on the TUC is ridiculous, the white collar unions, for example. It comes out in things like health and safety courses. A lot of my members find they are not wanted on health and safety courses because they are members of white-collar unions. The TUC perpetuates this in the educational material that's going out.

That's just one aspect. It's also affected the kind of areas they prioritise. They have gone for priority in the areas in which they see their major problems, instead of dealing with organisational problems. It seems to

SM: me that to see a certain industry in relation to the problem it has with a hazard is to miss the trade union dimension. The area where we have most health and safety problems are the areas where we are weakest, for example, in the hospitals. We've got lost of problems in the National Health Service to do with health hazards, and the least structured mechanism for dealing with it.

O.k., all white-collar unions have got problems in terms of the attitudes of their own members. We obviously organise in a lot of areas where the supervisors and management are not that trade union oriented. But it seems to us that it's our job to make them into good trade unionists and we are not helped in that by the back-up in the TUC.

These are my views not those of ASTMS or the Executive Committee, which has always tended to play a pretty low-profile role in the TUC. This changed to some extent when Clive Jenkins got on the General Council. Clive Jenkins is the only person from ASTMS who can take up health and safety issues on the General Council; because of the structure you are entirely dependent on the attitude and commitment of your General Secretary. And again it depends on how much weight his opnions carry.

CK: Why did they appoint you at the time that they did?

SM: It was a motion from one particular D Council which went to the annual delegate conference. At the time it was opposed by the Executive Committee who thought that it wasn't a necessary appointment. I don't know for what reasons, (you would have to look at the minutes), but they were voted down, defeated.

That was about two years ago. There were two big influences for the appointment: one was Flixborough - in the health and safety field as soon as you get some bodies you've half-way won the day - and the other angiosarcoma in the PVC industry.

I came in with a pretty open brief, but at least the people responsible for my appointment, basically the Executive Committee and the Health and Safety sub-committee, had some understanding about the nature of health and safety as an issue. They didn't appoint just a research person. That is really crucial. I am a full officer of the union, accountable the same way as every other officer, and responsible for everything I do, in other words, a field officer. Whereas if they had just appointed a research officer you wouldn't have had the whole emphasis on the organisation side. Most of my efforts in the last eight months, apart from dealing with routine queries, etc., are to set up the structure the bones of which were there before I came, but to make the structure work in a way which would actually service the representatives.

SM: It really is more than a job for just one person. And you still have the inbalance of resources. Our legal department has a much bigger budget. A lot of that is fees to lawyers, but it has one assistant General Secretary, (in overall charge), three research assistants, quite a big secretariat, whilst the Health and Safety Department has one officer and one secretary, and no budget as such. That is not to say I have no resources, (I've probably got more than other officers), but the spending of money is sanctioned on an ad hoc basis, through the Health and Safety Committee.

If I, say wanted to have a large health and safety library, which I doubt the liability of, then that would be out of the question. Whether unions should have their own libraries given the field, I'm very doubtful whether it would be of much use. To be useful on a day-to-day basis would need a full-time librarian to keep the stuff indexed in such a way as you could find. So I'm not sure that's a realistic proposition.

The biggest problem in terms of resources is the unwillingness of the union to pay for external experts on a consultancy basis. There's a lot of resistance to that.

One reason is a very good trade union objection, what you
should do is negotiate with the Company to get in a jointly
agreed expert. The Company should pay the cost, it's
them that's creating the problem. But I think in certain
instances we would like to employ our own people and we
don't get the service in that respect that we could get
from the TUC Centenary Institute.

There is no set-up in the existing system, for people like myself to meet people from other unions. There is no meeting at the TUC...

- CK: But you haven't got many counterparts ...
- SM: Not in one sense, but yes in another. Most unions will have national officers who are responsible nominally for health and safety. Maybe, o.k., they don't do much, but at least if there were some structure... Perhaps not a full-time officers structure, maybe full-time officers and lay-representatives, but nothing like that exists.

I make a point, purely on a personal basis, of when I get something in which I could affect the members of another union if I have a contact, sending them a copy. I had some stuff from Sellikoff on carbon black, (a specific query) and he mentioned a survey that was being done on the mortality rates amongst print workers. So I sent it to Natsopa.

One of the most useful people is going to be Dr. Owen, but his function within the TUC organisation is pretty loosely defined. If he could convene a meeting of people involved

- SM: then perhaps that would work.
- CK: Can you tell me something about the courses that you put on?
- SM: I haven't got any direct responsibility for organising health and safety courses. We have an education officer and a lecturer attached to the college and an education sub-committee, etc... I have a commitment to teach half a day a week on the lay representatives courses here at Whitehall. That's a class of 24-25 people a week. This is often on a company or sector basis.

Courses outside: the majority of health and safety courses are run by the Divisional Councils. One day or weekend schools. We do joint employer courses in certain areas, for example, we are involved with the Chemical Industries Association programme for health and safety representatives.

- CK: The employers have a say in the curriculum?
- SM: Yes.
- CK: And does this conflict with the union's views? The Iron and Steel Trades Association fellow is having trouble. The employers are not allowing time off to go the TUC courses. They are saying, 'you have to come along to our courses'.
- SM: Well, the TUC policy is nominally that such courses should be done by the unions independently, but the resources just are not there. So in lots of areas we've got involved with doing joint courses with employers, where we've got a veto, if you like over the curriculum, an agreement about who's actually going to teach them and, thirdly, a section for an officer, (either myself or a Divisional Officer) to put the ASTMS position.

It's not an ideal situation.

As far as possible we encourage people to go on those courses and, as far as I am aware, we have never signed an agreement to say this this is a substitute for TUC courses. But there is not that much push, except in certain areas, to get on TUC courses because most people don't think that they are suitable for them

What we are thinking of doing is a crash programme, (I haven't been involved in the discussions yet), of one or two-day ASTMS courses for safety representatives. Just covering the approach and whole setting-up of the system and how it should work, etc., and the kind of things I've been saying to you about the ASTMS structure.

You're not training safety representatives in that time. What you are doing is getting them to take a trade union

SM: line. Not outlining or telling them how to deal with hazards. You could do a brief session but you're not actually doing any training, (to do inspections, for example, would take much longer.)

We don't have the resources in the Union to do that kind of massive training programme.

We are going to train the Divisional Officers fairly soon - half pensions and half health and safety. That's partly my protection so that they can deal with routine issues.

Because I've got to have time to sit in here to do the kind of writing-up work that's required, the research work, the policy writing-up plus doing the fire-fighting side of the work, such as Stavely Chemicals, another place with TDI problems. etc...

It's a bit difficult to balance the two. But what I am concerned about in this office is setting up a system which will work independent of the person doing the job. We've started already a kind of filing system, a distribution system, a safety representative register. So that you have a trade union structure. As soon as the divisional people start to get their areas off the ground, and some places have been very good, we can start pushing work back right down the line.

The biggest problem is resources and time for communicating information. There is very little coming up the way and not as much going down the way as there ought to be. Soon after I took this job I decided that what we really needed was a health and safety bulletin. Now I'm not so sure, although it would be alright for a one-industry union. Anything we did along those lines would have to cover insurance, banking, chemicals, manufacturing, electronic engineering, hospitals, universities. So that a safety representative could get a magazine, 90% of which was totally irrelevant to him or her. So this is why we try and do it informally. But, even so, if I was circulating information to each of the main groups once a month, the actual time involved would be considerable. What we really need is a report-back system, because what helps safety representatives most is an account from another group of union members, how they dealt with problems, the agreement we got when we resolved it. Now, that is the kind of crucial information to circulate but it's not actually coming to me at the moment except in those cases that I have been directly involved in.

CK: You've been taling about getting people together on a national level. I should imagine it would be equally rewarding to get safety representatives together on a local level, particularly in areas where you have factories that are doing the same thing, using the same processes?

SM: Yes. We have been encourging people to get involved in local Hazards groups. Because the resources of our members are probably greater, in terms of doing literature searches or straightforward information on chemicals. We would like to get our members more involved in servicing at local level. But you can't do that from this office. That is dependent on how they set themselves up locally and who's active locally.

The health and safety issue is a very strange one from the point of view of polarisation of left and right. It doesn't happen. Some of the most active people on health and safety in ASTMS would be classified as our 'right-wing' members.

- CK: Yes, I suppose people get bees in their bonnets, but when it comes to seeing the question in terms of whether there is an identity of interests or a conflict between management and unions, I wonder how far the right-wingers are prepared to push management for resources to render processes safe? Or to bring in safer machinery or reduce toxic levels and those kinds of things?
- SM: The difference would be between those of our members who are still in what I call the 'good ship lollypop' mould of industrial relations, that is those who think management and unions have a total community of interests, etc., (and there are some people who would take exactly the same line on health and safety), and there would obviously be a split along those lines.

But actually, the problems at local level, in particular places of work, are often totally dependent on the issue of job security, and that doesn't split along the same lines.

That is the biggest problem that we've got to contend with. That's why things like information is fairly crucial. Because at the moment most employers have got our local representatives over a barrel, when they say, 'if you want us to introduce that, then that will cost so much, and that will mean this plant has to close. etc.. etc...

- CK: How aware are people of their rights under the Health and Safety at Work Act? Aware, for example, of their rights to ask for information?
- SM: I can assess it from the kind of queries that I get, very little. They get very, very little information. So that one of the things that we've really been emphasising is demands on the disclosure of information, and we will be pushing that in quite specific areas. What we have done is to draw up a policy document, which is meant to be the basic approach and guide. But if you take sections, like

SM: the disclosure of information section which is pretty general. What we will want to do is make specific demands in relation to, say, the health service, the universities, the chemical industry.

And that is one of the reasons we need this safety representative register. It won't be just for circulating
things like, 'we have received information from the
Chemical Workers Federation that this is a new hazard.'
It will be much more back-up, checklists and stuff like
the disclosure of information.

Remember we have additional problems to other unions in the health and safety field, in that a lot of our members have managerial responsibilities. And one of the things we've been having to look at quite closely is the whole problem of management structures in relation to health and safety. Because if you start to look, say, at a big company, like Lucas or Vauxhall. If there is a problem at supervisory level about fantastic responsibilities which the supervisors can't possibly meet, the problem doesn't start at that level, it starts with the whole commitment right up to the managerial level. What a lot of companies lack totally, (and this is what's frightened me most since I came into the job), is competent professional advice on certain issues.

A recent example was at Stavely where the engineer, the doctor, etc., who turned up to the meeting that I went to, really did not have, in my opinion, a very good grasp of what was involved. They've had to go outside Staveleys to get someone in because they've got a real problem.

Apart from the resources of very big companies, like ICI, Shell, etc., there are a lot of companies in the field who really don't have a clue.

There is a big issue on the role of the Safety Officer, identified in the recent report of the Health and Safety Committee on the average safety officer's job. So in addition to the things that shopfloor unions must push for, we have got to push at that level for the protection of our own members in terms of legal liability, etc.

ASTMS members are inclined to be a little legal oriented. 'What does the law say about what is required?' The number of queries that I get that start like that! And I have to write back and say the law's useless, 'it says this, this and this, and it will get you nowhere. Here's the sort of demands you should be making and should be negotiating through the normal bargaining system.'

SM: The reason why safety representative training is so crucial is that we have the feeling, (and I don't think we will be different from a lot of other unions in this respect) that the kind of people who become safety representatives might not be the most trade-union oriented of our members. They tend to look around and say, 'who's good at this, who' is involved in their job capacity in health and safety?'

In some areas I think we are going to have to send out specific instructions that people who are nominally safety officers or have a safety responsibility, as advisers to management, should not be safety representatives because it's like checking on themselves. But there is an inclination not to see that distinction.

- CK: To what extent does safety now feature in the collective bargaining context? Or is it still a question of responding to specific hazards or fire-fighting as you call it?
- SM: I think it's a fire-fighting issue in a lot of places.
 As soon as you set up safety representatives with a continuous monitoring function, then you will find a very big difference. We have to make sure that they see their job in that way and that they actually become representatives in the full trade-union sense.

It's difficult for me to assess that really because the groups in contact with me would tend to be the most active in the collective bargaining sense. Although I must admit that I've had groups in contact with me because they don't like the line that we are taking on certain issues, asbestos for example, but there are not many of these. We've come right out in the open saying there needs to be a new standard, etc., and, of course, members in companies, particularly Turner and Newell, are worried about job security.

Interview with Roger Bibbings of the AUEW (Engineering Section), Research Assistant within the Research and Technical Services Department, May 16, 1977.

RB: One of my main responsibilities amongst the other work that I do is to handle all the work that comes through this department connected with industrial health and safety. That comprises work that is referred to us by members of the executive council or through the offices of the General Secretary or the President.

That means in effect that I deal with enquiries and requests for information from district committees, (the local organisation of this union). I also carry out work through the President of General Secretary's office of a general nature and that can include submission of evidence on particular questions to the TUC or commenting on consultative documents or carrying out surveys of industrial hazards arising from decisions of the National Committee or National Conference of the AUEW. So it covers quite a full range.

I don't have a lot of contact with members at shopfloor level. So I tend to work in isolation. But then, on the other hand, it gives me much more time to supply information in depth to members. It's an increasing amount of work as interest in health and safety is growing as a result of the Health and Safety at Work Act. We are trying to respond to that in various ways, by preparing standard notes on the more common enquiries that we get, for example, oil, noise, eye protection or the things that affect every engineering worker.

We have also recently designed a booklet which is intended to follow the same kind of approach that the TUC courses are promoting. To try to encourage more self-reliance amongst AUEW members to go and seek the answers for themselves; to know how to make the best use of the Act; to know the legislation; how to get hold of information; how to interpret it; how to exploit the thing to the full.

That's a brief summary of my work.

- CK: How does the union handle safety hazards when they surface?
- RB: The 'local government' of the union is in the hands of district committees who have a wide measure of autonomy in relation to all matters related to wages and working conditions, which includes health and safety. They are the first line in any industrial relations question.

What we are doing here is to supply advice, from the Executive Committee man whose division covers that district, to the district committee to enable them to deal with the problem they face.

Typically how it works is: something comes to the attention of a steward, (say they are working with a new material, an adhesive, and someone's complaining about the smell and there are signs of ill-health), and they raise the matter with management, (who RB: then go off and pursue their line of enquiry). They also raise it with the district committee, through their branch. The district secretary would write to the Executive Committee man concerned, saying, 'what can you tell us about this material?' Or they may send some information from the manufacturer or supplier, or they may send a sample or the observation of a hygienist or a report on the substance invoked, i.e. the documentation available to them.

We have to answer that. What we are doing is providing as much information as possible to help them solve the problem through the existing machinery.

Taking the example of the sample sent in. We would send if for analysis at the TUC. That takes a long time. So we would send an interim reply along the lines of, 'do you know that information regarding this material has got to be supplied to you under Sections 2 and 6 of the Health and Safety at Work Act? Have you done that? Have you involved your local Health and Safety Executive and Employment Medical Advisory Service bodies? What investigations have been carried out?', etc... If we know what the chemical composition of the substance is we can give advice from standard texts and say, 'you should know that this material contains mercury or whatever and these things can be harmful', and send a brief resumé of the toxicology of the thing in layman's terms.

If any legislation applies we make a brief resumé: the following sections of the Factories Act apply..., the following regulations, those aspects of the Health and Safety at Work Act which may be useful to you...'

For 90% of the cases that is sufficient. We don't know what happens to it after that. They will take that information and then use it as an opinion in their negotiations with an employer.

In most cases the employer would have been forewarned and they would come up with their response. There are occasions when that response is thought to be insufficient, in which case we would be asked to give another opinion.

We always have to say that because we are not 'on the ground' and because we are not ourselves absolute experts, all we can do is give people general information, general points to look for, and tell them to use their own local facilities to get the information they want. Working at a distance all the time you always have to say: such and such a dust may contain, say, beryllium; or, take, for example, asbestos: give a full account of the dangers, Threshold Limit Values, explanation of ways and means of dealing with the problem, and then say, 'now it's up to you, that's the position, you're in the firing line; you've got to apply it, seek answers.'

In other words, it's very much an advisory job.

The union handles health and safety issues in the same way that all industrial relations are handled, that is, through local representatives and the local district committee and, finally,

- RB: (if it were to go all the way through procedure) to national level. In that sense, there isn't any hot line for health and safety advice. It all has to go through the usual procedure.
- CK: What if you can't supply enough information?
- RB: If you were to take a sample of the questions and enquiries that come across my desk in the course of a month, perhaps 85% would be ABC questions, non-contentious ones, (not ' is this an acceptable TLV?' Or, 'is this management's interpretation of the survey correct?')

So far as information goes, our attitude would be, how can our members get this information, (on dermatitis, or noise levels, etc). Our interpretation of Section 2 of the Act and also the information provisions of the proposed regulations is that a certain minimum amount of statutory literature should be provided. So we should say Section 2 means in this case the employer must procide the following publications. Then you would give the relevant technical data notes, the Health and Safety at Work series of booklet titles and any other things that you think would be relevant. You need those things to start with to study, and that should be made available by the employer, as part of his general duties.

We also encourage members to take things a bit further with regard to information and say, 'well, if that's the case, then surely the employer if he's really fulfilling Section 2 should have a reference library available for stewards with their relevant publications in it.' One of the aims of the draft booklet is to develop the understanding of how to get information and to give a minimum list of the kind of books that members need at their fingertips. The whole approach is to encourage maximum interpretation of the Health and Safety at Work Act, (through collective bargaining), and to encourage maximum self-reliance in the first phase of dealing with a health and safety problem.

Let me show you an example of the kind of work we do. This is an amendment to a resolution to be put before the Confederation conference in June. We are going to add to it that the TUC proposals on asbestos be endorsed.

This is the kind of thing we have to do in relation to policy matters. We also review resolutions that go to the various conferences which the union is represented at. Also taking policy decisions and translating them into various forms of action, for example, if a policy matter arrives at a conference, say three years running, it's not unlikely that we would be asked to do a survey of that particular problem, like noise-induced deafness and national insurance qualification. We did a survey of all districts on that question and received replies from stewards and shop stewards' committees in all sorts of places of work, and you get a very rich idea of (a) the level of understanding amongst members of the sorts of problems that affect them and (b) the way in which they are dealt with.

- RB: As we are a bit isolated in terms of getting out and about, it makes our job much easier. And it means that if we use an exercise like that to gather information to send to the TUC of Health and Safety Executive we get a much richer, more developed submission than if you write it off the top of your head. It's a summary of practical experience rather than a theoretical piece.
- CK: When you are doing this type of survey, who do you send the questionnaires to?
- RB: It depends how detailed you want the survey to be. Generally speaking, I find that questionnaires are not the best method to use. It's best to give a brief document of background, saying what the problems are and can we have information.

Our asbestos enquiry had two origins. One was the decision of National (amalgamated union) Conference. But the main stimulus for our survey came from a letter from the TUC which brought the attention of affiliated unions to the fact that the advisory committee on asbestos which had been set up after Hebden Bridge, was now receiving evidence. They wanted evidence which could be submitted on behalf of the whole trade union movement. Normally with this consultation process there isn't enought time to consult stewards. But this time, since it was a serious question, we asked for more time to try to do that. We used the medium of a district circular to outline the request of the TUC and to ask members to supply any knowledge which they had about this problem, the way in which they came into contact with asbestos, the problems they had, and any health hazards there were.

We got quite a substantial response to that, which was very rich in terms of experience. We then had the job of digesting it and using it to illustrate the points which we already had in mind to make on questions of substitute alternative materials, adequacy of dust-levels, kinds of action which can be taken to minimize hazards, plus also our criticism of the asbestos industry's own publicity which was being called into question.

We were able to do all that and make quite a substantial report which was then sent to the TUC. The TUC then composited that with all other union submissions and that became the basis of their view. We are quite proud of the fact that the TUC's document and our own were mainly the same, only their's was more detailed. A number of other unions made their submissions but I think we went into it in a little more technical detail in terms of our recommendations.

Then that went to the advisory committee and, of course, they have made their interim statement with more stringent recommendations for a TLV. It illustrates the way things are initiated through the trade union movement. It's all done largely through the TUC, by way of the Social Insurance Department, (the medium through which all these things are progressed). In a case like this it is possible to take members' views, condense them together and send them to the TUC and to get it put before the appropriate body. But in many cases we find that that kind of exercise isn't

- RB: possible, particularly where you have a lot of consultative documents now being issued on, for example, proposed safety representative regulations, safety officers, labelling of dangerous substances, etc... So, instead of the many-sided view that we would like to make from such an exercise, it is only possible for us to make a few brief comments because we don't have the resources to carry out a really full consultation.
- CK: This being the case, where should criticism be directed?
- RB: Well, I think we've all got to develop better ways of doing this in future. For instance, on the dangerous substances question, it is the recorded policy of this union to seek testing of all new materials before taking them into industry which obviously involves Section 6 and also the toxic substances advisory structure within the Health and Safety Executive.

So far as the labelling of dangerous materials is concerned, maybe we should have made a summary of proposals and sent them out for comment to districts. But you then have to consider costs and time. etc...

Where the consultation machinery doesn't work very well, it can tend to be just a few people like myself sitting in offices, giving their opinion on behalf of the whole union. It can reflect the policy but not the experience so to that extent it can just be a sort of public relations exercise in the forming of new measures and regulations. Maybe we do need to develop a better system.

- CK: To enlarge on that, how can the union improve on the present set—up, get more members involved in health and safety? Is the TUC doing as much as it can? Or is it being obstructive? For example, are you the best person to be handling health and safety as the AUEW is structured?
- RB: The responsibility for health and safety matters is the responsibility of elected local officials, then regional and national. What we're here to do is to try and service their requirements. The other thing to bear in mind is that the volume of work which we handle is not indicative of the union's countrywide involvement in health and safety. If I deal with thirty of forty major enquiries a month there may well be hundreds or thousands of health and safety issues being dealt with by the AUEW across the country. Many of them don't reach us because they are resolved locally. I'd like to see the position where that was the case universally. In other words, where resources were available for members to resolve health and safety questions through negotiations with employers and what have you, without recourse to us. But there has to be that expertise... So we've got that job to do.

What I suspect will happen is that as the Health and Safety at Work Act starts to take root, and interest grows then we will have more enquiries, and the more documentation we put out emouraging people to take a local initiative the more things will be referred to us. So that eventually the sheer pressure on this department and myself will make us rethink the approach.

RB: Whether or not there is a case for setting up a special safety adviser or someone with a special name, I am not so sure. I don't think names or special offices mean a lot, what does count in the long run is what sort of expertise you can build up to actually service members, (which is what we are trying to do in here). Maybe what it will mean is that there will have to be three or four of us instead of just me. If there was that volume of work we would have to develop an expertise, a division of labour.

But the main emphasis has got to be, not on having people at head offices who can answer questions on safety problems, but on training and generating interest and giving members the resources, (general educational ones) to help them operate where they are.

- CK: What happens at the moment with training?
- RB: The position at the moment is that training of safety representatives, in our case shop stewards, is the responsibility of the TUC, both at Congress House, (the training college), and locally. The union encourages all members who are interested to take part in these. They get the information and sign on through district committees.

Also, the policy of the union is that shop stewards should be safety representatives and should be trained, and we give publicity to that in the journal and tell them about the TUC courses.

The union also has its own educational set—up which deals with many subjects, including health and safety. But it can't really give the same time and treatment to the Health and Safety at Work Act that the TUC and their tutors can.

Although the principle of time-off is enshrined in the regulations many employers aren't recognising it and there seems to be evidence that employers are not keen. Many are saying, 'we will let you go on a course which is organised by our employers' association or by a group of companies or by an independent body but not the TUC'. And they raise objections like the TUC's course is too general, it is not related to our particular industry, etc... Wouldn't it be more useful if you went on one that was related to foundries or motor manufacture or to aircraft? And so on... Whereas that's not the point of the TUC course.

The Confederation Executive Committee have issued instructions that no time off is to be taken to attend TUC courses unless the employer agrees first of all to pay wages for lost time. This is to establish the principle that this training does not involve loss of pay. Regulation 4:2 lays down, I think, the provisions for time off; and the attached schedules to that which detail the rate of remuneration, etc... In other words, it's laid down there. It's just a question of getting the employers to agree to them prior to the introduction of the regulations.

- CK: How are decisions about courses and training in general come ot? Who makes these decisions?
- RB: The Assistant General Secretary, (a full-time officer), has

- RB: responsibility for educational matters. He's accountable to the Executive Committee, so he would make a report based on his assess ment of what could be done. He could either say we will go in with the TUC course because that's what everyone else is doing -
- CK: Though he might not know anything about health and safety?
- RB: That's right, yes. Or we can try and pioneer our own thing.

It's more likely to follow the TUC course. You see health and safety, as I say, is a 'safe' area of contention. You can be with the angels most of the time. Whereas with more contentious things it is less likely that it would be left to the TUC. A good example of that was the Industrial Relations Act, where the union pursued its own policy of education to bring its own policy to the attention of members and which was different from that of the TUC in terms of emphasis, and on the question of recognising the Industrial Relations Court, etc... Perhaps health and safety should be more contentious...

- CK: How many safety representatives has the union? There's a widely held belief that the AUEW has a policy of forging ahead and appointing safety representatives even though the legislation doesn't come into effect untill October next year.
- RB: The local representative of the union at the place of work is the shop steward. They are elected at work and 'ratified' by the district committee by whom they are controlled. There's no provision in the rules for any other sort of representative, for example, on pensions, welfare, safety, etc... The shop steward is the all-in-one representative for anything relating to wages and conditions of employment, (including health and safety.)

From that point of view every steward is a potential safety representative but in practice not every steward will assume their role and functions. It will be only those people who have an especial interest or expertise... If they go to the District Secretary for details of training courses and go on them, then it will be understood that they have a special responsibility for safety. Many unions are now doing what we predicted would happen, that is, in a place of work sharing responsibility for safety work; having someone who is principally responsible and other stewards under him. So in our case no formal appointments of stewards have been made. It's simply a question of stewards taking up and developing what always was part of their work anyway.

Developing their expertise and generally becoming effective watchdogs. No special appointments have been made but every effort has been made to see that the national policy of having safety committees set up in every place of work under the Health and Safety at Work Act has come about. There is unlikely to be a change or rules creating new officials in the workplace, but a renewed effort to see that the work is done better.

On safety policies: management should have their policy and trade unions should have their own. It should not be bargained over and it should not be negotiable.

A useful survey for trade unions would be one which would enable them to say, 'Look, organisation means safety', and then quote a RB: survey on the effects of trade union organisation on similar firms, (organised or unorganised). It would require the use of accident statistics which could be pried out through the disclosure of information provisions contained in the Act.

- E.

 Interview with Mr. Sam Rowledge, AUEW, (Engineering Section),

 'safety representative' at British Leyland, Castle Bromwich, May 26,

 1977.
- CK: Can I ask first of all how you come to be involved with safety and what your present involvement is?
- SR: I first became involved in safety mainly on the introduction of the Health and Safety at Work Act in 1974. Previously we had a safety committee in the toolroom where I work at British Leyland. An incident occurred many years ago whereby the management refused to pay a safety representative who stayed over from the nightshift to speak to them. They refused to pay him for the extra overtime and the safety committee fell by the board. Consequently we were never involved again in any specifically safety role again until the 1974 Act came out, when I was appointed as the AEU safety representative to represent the toolroom orbit (which is quite a few hundred people).
- CK: You mean there was a direct link between the Act coming out and your being made a safety representative even though the provision for safety representatives still had not come into force?
- SR: That's right. I knew something about the Act prior to it becoming law. I did get the Act itself and read it cover to cover. I knew that safety representatives were to be appointed and that we had got safety committees, (three, in fact at the time), at the company. But they were purely safety committees by name where a lot was said but very little was done. We didn't have a safety committee in the toolroom which is quite a large place with a lot of employees. We have an experimental department in there, a pattern shop and quite a lot of machinery; bench hands, crane drivers, slingers, labourers, etc...

We had no representation whatever and I joined the press shop committee (safety) because we hadn't got one. Now the company is in the process of setting up four new safety committees to cover the main areas; the body building shop, the press shop area and the toolroom area, which will obviously take in other smaller areas like the garage and small assembly areas close by, and also the office block.

As yet it still hasn't got off the ground. Discussions are going on about the numbers on and formulation of these committees. It's in the melting pot.

Management is co-operating to a certain degree but it's taking a hell of a long time to get formed. I don't think they have gone about it in the correct manner. Certainly not in accordance with the regulations whereby it should be done with discussion with union representatives and safety representatives. The're simply going around asking for names in the different areas - hoping to form a committee in that manner. Obviously some people are going to get missed and you'll have disproportionate representation from different unions.

SR: What I think they should be doing is firstly get all the shop stewards together in the areas that they intend to cover. Then ask the shop stewards who are the appointed safety representatives to submit the names in accordance with the regulations (Section 2:4 I think).

They can sort out the representatives for different areas. The areas can be geographical or unionwise. It doesn't much matter because safety representatives can represent people from other unions if it's agreable. I myself have represented the pattern makers and our crare drivers and slingers (those incidentally are in our union, but they've got their own stewards) and it's worked well. But obviously in a shop of our size, where there are a few hundred people, it would be a full-time job to cope with everything.

We've got some shop stewards who are safety representative and some safety representatives who are not shop stewards. There is no regular pattern. I am not a steward, purely and simply a safety representative. I know of some over in the press shop (in the Transport and General) who are not stewards. I think that safety and the legislation that's coming out at the present moment virtually wants somebody to specialise in it. Whether they are safety stewards of safety representatives, I think that they should specialise.

We've got five shop stewards in the toolroom. (There's a a lot going on about participation at Leyland at the present moment - but that's another story). I look at it like this: if the shop steward is a safety representative as well and a safety committee meeting happened to clash with one with the company about wages or holidays, etc..., the obvious thing is that as it has always been, the safety one would be neglected. Safety has taken a back-seat for far too long as far as I am concerned.

We've got a case in our section. We've had a chap just lose a thumb and to me it's a tragedy that a bloke has to get injured. Safety still hasn't got off the ground really.

I don't think management, senior management is as involved as it should be. I think there's far too much concentration on production. You get management who think the whole work rests on their shoulders. You bring certain points to their attention and they just don't want to know.

- CK: That brings me to ask what are the factors that militate against safety consciousness? Production is obviously one...
- SR: To my knowledge, throughout the company we don't have any sort of danger or dirt money. We don't have any piece work at the moment on the production side. They are on measured day work. I don't think this is having an adverse effect on safety. There is no rushing to get the work done which does increase the accident rate.

SR: I think it's just that many things are by-passed that need proper care and attention and proper systems of work.

For example: we have tools coming to the toolroom for repair or maintenance or modifications that have come from the press shop. Now the press shop is a huge place and has got presses of all shapes and sizes; quite a number of them are hydraulics and they leak oil (gallons). In the casting cores in the top of the tools the oil collects. So it should, in my opinion, be cleaned before it is brought into the toolroom... taken to an area which we have got, incidentally, but it's under-used. It's brought to the toolroom, handled by cranedrivers and slingers. Then the oil has to be cleaned up... tipped or ladled out and the tool has to be cleaned with paraffin - which puts deposits on the floor, etc... Consequently the atmosphere becomes a bit pungent from the smell of paraffin, especially in the warm weather.

You've got the floor all covered with oil and they put this absorbent down to soak up the excess on the floor and it gets all over your boots and makes the place a bit mucky. So, when you are handling the steels, as you are taking them off the tool to either repair or sharpen, (when you're stripping the tool down), you've got gloves I know, but in no time at all you get really messed up and I don't think there's any need for it. I think that if tools have got to be serviced and so forth, that when they come out of the press shop they should go to the steam cleaner and be cleansed properly, then bought into the toolroom, stripped down...

- CK: Why are you suggesting that they don't do that?
- SR: Because there is no system of work laid on. There's no sort of linkage or co-ordination between the different departments.
- CK: You mean it's more a lack of thought rather than trying to speed it up?
- SR: I think it's a lack of thought because a good many of the tools that come in to the area have probably been in the die park (place where tools are kept when not in use) for weeks. After the run when they've come out of the press shop on the previous occasion they've known that there's probably been a fault in the panel and they've thought they could get away with it, and then they've put it back in the press again, it's just not on.

I think that if there were a proper system of work and co-ordination throughout the company it would be much better. I've got a letter from the manager of our department (superintendent) who agrees about some of the tools coming into the toolroom... I've had to involve the safety department to get them taken out again and sent over to the steam cleaner. And it doesn't speed the job up, it delays it. It's a bit crazy.

- CK: How much contact do you have with the Head Office? How much comes through from the national level to the local level on safety issues? For example, what information do you get on hazards or the Act?
- SR: Very little.

- CK: Do you need it?
- SR: I think so. I think we should have some sort of lines of communication, especially in a big company like ours where we have quite a few members (AEU).

The only contact that I have is when I go to the head quarters at Holloway Circus. I go along with Kenny Cure and give talks to whoever turns up, branch secretaries and shop stewards, who come along to learn about health and safety and safety representation.

- CK: So that kind of contact is one that you've initiated?
- SR: Yes. Kenny Cure, the district secretary asks me to go down.

 He knows of my interest in it because he used to work at Leylands.

 I give talks on safety... tell them what they should be doing...

 even though in my particular instance the company itself is not doing it! It's moving towards it...
- CK: What do you think the union should be doing?
- SR: I think the union should give some sort of guidelines as regards what sort of safety courses should be attended, (I know there are ten-day TUC courses available). But no one to my knowledge has been able to get time off, under Section 57, at Castle Bromwich where I am under the Employment Protection Act, to go to these courses. I don't know of anyone from Leylands who'se gone to one. I think there ought to be pressure from the unions in this particular to see that safety representatives can have time off.

I agree the company is talking of implementing some sort of in-plant training but I don't think that's sufficient. You need outside contact.

I've noticed at the talks that I've given, the different questions that come from different people. You find that they have probably experienced quite a few different problems and you can find out how they have overcome them or where they have been to. It's suprising, the different hazards that have been overcome and it's surprising that some companies have really got on with the health and safety of their employees. I am amazed at the gains of some of the stewards.

There's a chap called Alec Rowbury (works at Alcan Booth). They get prescription (safety) lenses, which we haven't got yet - I think they are essential for people who have to wear glasses - and they get free overalls and have them serviced, and safety boots and quite a number of other benefits and welfare benefits, (I think they get subsidised on the meals, etc...). To me it's a question of getting something in this period of wage restraint. If you can benefit safety-wise or in other areas, well, great! I'm all for it.

- CK: How did the in-plant training idea originate?
- SR: Well, the in-plant training within British Leyland at the present moment, I think, is in a bit of a turmoil. Because there's participation at different levels. There's participation at plant level and at a higher level representatives meet. Then there's another level of joint management council. We've got our own works council. I think it's in a bit of a turmoil and I don't think safety is getting the attention that it deserves.

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SR: The old safety committees haven't met for the last couple of months and they are in the process of disbanding them and setting up the new ones.

It seems as though the idea has come from the top, Leyland Head Office at Coventry, and that there's not a lot of negotiation going on to get it off the ground. I think management is more or less just laying it down. I have seen a folder and had a look through it. It's o.k. but I don't think very much of it. As I've said, in-plant training is o.k. but I still prefer to have external training.

- CK: I don't see why you can't have both.
- SR: Yes. I think the better trained safety representatives get, the less problems will be created because, obviously, if safety representatives have got no idea of what they are, they could probably forsee hazards that aren't there. But if they can identify potential problems they will cut them down.
- CK: Can we talk about identifying hazards. How complaints arise. How you spot what's going wrong and through what channels it is brought up?
- I usually get complaints: the lads from the shopfloor will come down and tell me... Well, I'll take an instance from last year and it's cropped up again this year. We had these large skips SR: they put waste in. One was parked right outside the fire door. Obviously it was against the law because it was causing an obstruction. Apart from that the weather was warm and the door was open and it was stinking to high heaven. The lads asked for it to be moved. The foreman in the section said there wasn't much he could do about it so he'd come down to see me. What I usually do is speak to the foreman again on the section and if he can't do anything I take it up with management. I go and see the stewards in the first place and ask if any of them want to go along with me. Sometimes they do and I go and see the manager of the particular area that I think it's in or, if I'm uncertain, I find out which area it's in and ask them to move it. Otherwise I contact the safety officer and get him over.

As a matter of fact there are a number of times when problems have come up that have not caused an accident but could do.

And I've got on to the safety department and we've even had the photographers over.

We've got a system laid down which is the usual procedure for anything. If there's any complaints, approach the foreman first, me second (if it's safety). Then, if I get no satisfaction with the foreman I take it up with the toolroom supervisor (whilst mentioning it to the steward).

- CK: How often does it happen that you don't get what you want?
- SR: Well, I wouldn't put it like that. I'd say that sometimes there are things that need the involvement of other departments and as a result we have to take it to the safety committee.

An instance: we have tools transported within the company on low loaders which are difficult to manipulate and are driven by SR: diesel. Well, as you can imagine, when you are trying to manipulate the long vehicles in a narrow space you get a lot of diesel fumes. The lads and the crane drivers used to complain. So I took this complaint up with the management and it was getting nowhere. The problem still persisted. Complaints came up every day. So I took it to the safety committee. And what we did was to have some Engelard exhaust purifiers fitted to the vehicles so as to cut down the amount of exhaust.

It cut down the exhaust but it's till not the answer and when the new committees get formed I shall take it up again. I think they should try alternative forms of transport such as electric trucks with more sturdy trailers to take the weight of the tools and eliminate the diesel lorries altogether. We got rid of the forklift trucks (diesel) many moons ago. We've got all electric trucks now. I admit that we've got one very heavy one, but that one's mainly used outside, but all the other diesel forklift trucks are no longer in use.

So, what we have to do is to involve other departments. When I sat on C-block committee we used to have managers of other departments attending meetings, i.e. the press shop committee. When I sat on that one we used to have different departmental managers come and we talked about a system of maintenance on the presses (that I've already told you about), the tools with the oil leaks, to see if we could get the presses checked over on a regular basis. Also a lot of the pallets that they carry the work about in get badly damaged through handling and transport problems, etc..., and they create problems when people are getting the sides off to get the work out. So, what they are trying to do now is to implement another system whereby they go through a checkout to see that they are maintained properly. Occasionally there still are complaints and we have to get the department manager up and he outlines what they are doing and trying to do.

There was one particular meeting that I went to that involved the laboratory and the doctor. We were talking about the noise levels in the press shop. They were talking about it being 93 decibels in one area, 97 in another and 100 plus, etc... They were just rattling off figures and nobody at the time on the committee had any idea what they were talking about. But I'd been to a lecture a few months previously and I knew that 90dba was the maximum you should be exposed to and that an increase of 3dba was a doubling of the intensity. When the laboratory chap was talking about this, (it being 110 in one area), and I saw that nobody was saying anything, I promptly spoke up and said, 'do you mind explaining to them that 90 is supposed to be the maximum for an 8-hour day, and an increase of 3 is a doubling of the intensity?' I don't think it went down very well.

The lads in the press shop used to complain abou the noise levels before the legislation. The air exhausts on the presses hadn't any silencers on. They'd had a noise survey done in the press shop. When they presented us with the figures and the plan, well, it was just pathetic. It was just like a smudged piece of paper, the plan, the layout, (I've got copies of it somewhere which you can have a look at iffthey'd be any use to you) and everything. You couldn't even read where the presses were.

- SR: I believe it was the lads on the shop floor who initiated the survey and, suprisingly, our company, (I don't know how many thousand people we've got working there, six to seven thousand, probably), hasn't even got its own noise meter. We have to borrow one from Longbridge.
- CK: What does the safety department do?
- SR: In our safety department we have a safety officer and four advisors and another joining in a month and two secretaries. Each advisor is appointed to a particular area. If there are any problems in our area I ring Bates and he comes over. But that's only recently been instituted. Previously it used to be anybody who was in the office. That's their function. Some of them go away on courses to ROSPA and different specialised courses, e.g. some go to Coventry Climax to learn about forklift truck driving and other aspects. They are only short ones of a week or a fortnight.
- CK: Do they contribute much? You mention there's no noise meter...
- SR: To be honest, I think they've not got the training that they should have in a company of our size. I think they should be better qualified. It's all very well attending one-week courses and then to come back and start talking about kinetic lifting, etc... In actual fact they should be looking for chemical hazards, things like that. I certainly think that to be effective they should be better qualified or at least have the prospects of further training.
- CK: What will you be aiming to do as safety representative?
- SR: That's a difficult one to answer, really. What I should like to be doing, I think, if it were possible, is that, having been here at Aston and having a fairly broad idea of what safety is about, such as noise levels, extraction, etc., I should like to help in training safety representatives. What I am doing now, and all credit to the company for allowing me to do it, is that, since the accident occurred to this lad on our section who lost his thumb on a driller, we've had these spin-checks attached as safety devices. I am now involved in going along with the safety advisors and telling them how they are fitted and why they should be used by the workers. I tell them that they, as well as the company, have an obligation to comply with the regulations.

I don't tell off other workers. This is not the safety representative's responsibility. If there is a serious risk it is a question of telling the foreman.

Management do try to avoid safety precautions. I know of instances of doing things at night to get round rules when they think nobody is looking.

There is more safety awareness now on the shopfloor. Things are seen to be done. The safety representative has his opinion asked.

- F. Interview with Jim Watts, Legal Officer, National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, June, 1978
- CK: What do you see as your job with the union as far as safety and health is concerned?
- JW: Effectively I'm the only one with the responsibility administratively for promoting our policy on safety. It's a task that I have to slot in with my other departmental duties and I think therein lies the weakness.

It's an overall undefined function. Our policy is determined by biennial conference where there's always a large number of motions. When they are turned into resolutions it's my task to make recommendations to the Executive as to action to take and then take that action. But in taking that action I have no recourse to any kind of research facilities or any assistance. It has to be slotted in in the day to day work of what is a litigation and advisory department.

- CK: How much time would you say you spend on it?
- JW: If the function was carried out as it should be, it would be a full-time job for one person. But because of our shortage of resources it has to be slotted in. I have to tackle health, safety and welfare tasks when and where they crop up. Whereas I ought to be engaged in various exercises. I ought to be sending out questionnaires, evaluating the replies, doing research, liasing much more closely and effectively with other organisations who have the facilities that we lack.
- CK: How are safety and health questions considered by the NUAAW and through what channels to they pass?
- JW: The machinery operates at various levels. It starts at the branches, usually inspired by an accident that has taken place in the district. That forms itself either into a branch resolution or sometimes direct correspondence with Head Office and the branch secretary. The usual route is for it to form a resolution which then goes to the County Committee which may endorse it there and then or, indeed, it may find its way onto the agenda at a County Conference.

Either way it comes up to head office to the Organising Department as a County Conference resolution and then to the appropriate department. Then, if it is a question of existing policy, the Legal Department writes to the County Secretary.

But if it's one where we don't have a policy or there's any doubt about it at all it goes to the Executive Committee.

JW: The Safety, Health and Welfare subcommittee of the Executive Committee meet three times a year and consider all this, adopt a policy and, if that is ratified by the Executive, I'm instructed to act upon it.

In between all this you have issues that are being raised from other quarters: correspondence from the Health and Safety Executive, the National Farmers' Union, the Ministry of Agriculture and a thousand and one outside bodies, particularly in relation to aerial spraying and chemicals in general. Various associations contact us for policy views.

We also have membership, and I am the sole delegate to: the Agricultural Industry Advisory Committee, a subcommittee of the Health and Safety Executive concerned with just the risks in a particular industry; the ROSPA National Agricultural Safety Committee; The British Agrochemicals Association; the Socialist Medical Association; the British Occupational Hygiene Society and so on , with which we liase and attend meetings.

But because of the premium on our time, it's just me with other responsibilities, you cannot really do the follow-up exercises which, in my view, the task demands. The demand is not only now, but, indeed, it is a developing function. Because as the 1974 Act becomes fully implemented you will have a repeal of all the existing fragmented legislation and the new across-the-board legislation which is going to bring into cover areas of our membership which hitherto haven't been covered at all.

But mainly we need research facilities because agriculture is an isolated industry, its problems are different from the broiler factories where standards are tending to be much higher, (mainly because we are thick on the ground, we have a shop steward structure and there's a tendency, quite rightly, to solve problems at shop floor level. But this is a virtual impossibility on a farm where the man's working in isolation, under the influence of the employer. Moreover, he understands his employers problems, financial and economic to a degree that any other employee wouldn't concern himself with).

The agricultural worker knows the implication of a guard on a power take off breaking, stopping work and waiting for the contractors or engineers to come in. He knows the loss to the employer in this and there's a natural tendency for him to say, 'The old Peak Freans biscuit tin lid will have to do till tomorrow.'

He knows the consequences to his employer whereas the man at Fords or even the chicken factory doesn't. This is one of the problems we have to overcome.

- JW: The pressure of the Sword of Damocles, the fear of evictions from the tied cottage has come off now. There was a tendency to accept a risk for fear of offending the employer and losing your house. That's gone and so we do have this educational programme in front of us.
- CK: What kind of research did you have in mind?
- JW: Take health as distinct from safety. There's mounting evidence, but uncollated and unresearched, for example, to indicate that pulmonary disease in agriculture is higher than in the population at large. It's understandable when you think that they have to work in all weathers. Bronchitis and emphesema, for example, are not industrial diseases. There's no onus on an employer to protect his agricultural workers from contracting these diseases or pneumonia or whatever, other than the general provisions of the 1974 Act, which in my view are not nearly strong enough to cover that kind of risk.

We tried for a long time to persuade the old Ministry of Agriculture to set up an occupational health service so that the health of agricultural workers could be monitored and the trends identified at an early stage. One stands a reasonable chance with an organisation like the Forestry Commission. But fragmented agriculture with seventy thousand individual employers, it's no good looking to the NFU. We could agree a policy with the NFU but it would then be ignored by the individual NFU members.

We have seventy thousand employers to deal with, all of whom have got their own individual priorities, their own ways of looking at things.

We've long suspected, (I personally am convinced of it), that if you were to do a proper controlled survey of the health of agricultural workers you'd find a higher incidence of bronchitis and emphesema. If you did a radiological survey of, say, spines, you would find the incidence of spinal deformities, osteoarthritis, was much higher, at a given point in time, than his counterpart in other industries or the public at large. This is the kind of research we need.

- CK: In other words, it's not the union which would be doing the research, it should be putting the pressure on other bodies?
- JW: Yes. Certainly Government-funded through one of their agencies and the most likely candidate is the EMAS who we recently, after a struggle, convinced to do a survey into health risks in the broiler industry.
- CK: Why have they so far not taken it up in agriculture?

JW: There are many possible reasons. It depends how charitable you want to be. My own view is the same reason that the TUC has been unable to get the Government to accept injury by process as compensatable under the Industrial Injuries Act: because it carries with it certain financial implications.

I know that the contra argument is that if a person, because of a work process catches a disease or acquires a condition to which the public at large are also subject, such as bronchitis, then it's difficult to determine whether it's caused by employment or whether he would have had it anyway. But if each case were treated on its medical merits then you would achieve justice.

Certainly in the case of spinal arthritis there would be little problem, I think, in obtaining medical evidence to show that a chap's spinal deformity is due to driving on a vibrating tractor seat for twenty-five years.

We know the same with Reynaud's Phenomenon with forestry workers, the vibration syndrome, that it is present with the population at large, but not to the same extent as among forestry workers who use vibrating chain saws. Neither the degree of disability nor the incidence.

The Government is frightened of what their research might come up with and the financial implications of their findings.

- CK: So we are looking also for technological research from people like the tractor manufacturers?
- JW: To a large extent that is going on. The National Institute of Agricultural Engineering is continually looking at problems like vibration but anything they come up with the industry has got to buy.

For example: tractor cabs were on the market long before the legislation made them mandatory, but the industry by and large wouldn't buy them. Now it's mandatory and it has become established and it's accepted as part of the industry. So you really have to educate your employer as well as the worker.

- CK: Take the goal of an occupational health service as an example: how would the union set out to achieve that ideally?
- JW: We're not looking for a health service. That's there (with all its defects) to be used. What we want is know-ledge, health monitoring, for example.

I was very impressed at a conference to hear of an experiment in America where they injected potential foresters before they came into the industry with a certain fluid which illuminated their blood vessels. They could find people whose capillaries did not go right down to their

JW: finger tips and warn them against becoming a forester because they were likely candidates for Reynaud's Phenomenon if they used chain saws. The result of a physical peculiarity which, were the system introduced, would be identified before they became at risk.

This is the type of thing we want. It's the information. A monitoring of the health of agricultural workers.

- CK: How would that work mechanically?
- JW: By regular, periodic examinations. Not a blanket system. One would say, for example, dependant on the type of risk, persons who apply chemicals for more than so many hours per annum should be subject to quarterly checks: tractor drivers or operators of vibrating machinery would be subject to radiological tests at a frequency suggested by medical men that would show changes in the spine. In other words, an early warning system.

At the moment if a tractor driver goes to the doctor with a back pain he's told, 'you've got a touch of lumbago', is given a lotion or potion and he carries on for another ten years.

- CK: In other words, the medical profession does not have a preventative approach.
- JW: In fairness the medical authorities that consider these things have got terms of reference laid down by the Government through someroute or other, the Industrial Diseases subcommittee of the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council, for example, on which the TUC are represented whose terms of reference are laid down by the Minister of Health.

On Reynaud's phenomenon, it was turned down because the incidence was not high enough to warrant prescription. Not because it wasn't due to a person's employment, (forestry), although it occurs in other industries, in the foundry industry, for example, where they use grinding wheels. It was a political decision, not a medical one. In other words, you have to obtain the political will before you can make progress.

Tenosynovitis is a prescribed disease, subject to it arising in the prescribed conditions (contrary to popular belief). But that doesn't stop the condition it merely gives compensation. We're not stopping it recurring. In my view, say, occupational health, safety and Welfare should have a much heavier preventative emphasis than it has at the moment.

We have compensation and punishment but we don't have much prevention. Mainly, because as Robens says, it is for those who create the risks to remedy them and that can only be the employer.

- CK: Is it fair to pose compensation against prevention? Do Unions have a vested interest in keeping compensation going?
- JW: Yes, I don't want to be misunderstood here. I am in favour of compensation once the damage is done. But I would rather make this aspect of my work totally redundant by preventative medicine. I suppose if you come to the crunch in a period of limited resources, you have to decide on your priorities, I think prevention is more important than compensation.

There are divided views on this in the trade union movement because of the realities of trade unionism. Without compensation you lose a huge recruiting lever for all unions, and with it goes the contributions. As finance is the lifeblood of any organisation it is a factor to be considered.

But I don't know of a union, nevertheless, that wouldn't support the concept of preventitive medicine.

There is divided opinion on the question of automatic compensation. The Pearson Commission has just reported. This union gave evidence through the TUC from its working party of which I was a member and on which there was division as to automatic or 'without fault' liability.

There are precedents in so far as we have the Employers' Liability Defective Machinery Act which places total liability on an employer if he has defective machinery. There is no defence, whereas there used to be, if the employer had bought the machine in good faith and the manufacturer had done all the right things, it was being maintained. inspected and so on, but there was a latent defect, say metal fatigue unbeknown, if the worker was injured and there was no negligence proved. The man must now be compensated, come what may. But, of course, it would be much better if he didn't have the accident in the first place.

- CK: What are your views on the principles being discussed by the Pearson Commission?
- JW: I must confess I have reservations. In fact I was outvoted on the TUC working party. I think the unions who deal with the grass roots flesh and blood can be much more authoritative on this than the TUC parent body. The unions have much more experience but the TUC gets listened to at the end of the day. I would have thought the affiliated unions should carry more weight. They can advise the TUC but they (the TUC), are listened to. I still have reservations, I wouldn't put it higher than that, because I still think there's one hell of an educational job necessary amongs workers. Because there is a tendency, hopefully diminishing, that workers will take a risk: it's still evident for a variety of reasons, such as: they can't see any other way to do the task or because they are being paid for it.

W: I don't like the concept of danger money and never have done, but the idea of automatic compensation, in my view, will take away an incentive on the part of the worker not to get injured. Because most of our members know, I hope, that if they get injured they won't get damages if it was their own fault. They will only get damages if it was their employer's fault.

If they know that they are going to get damages even though it was their own fault, that the employer wasn't negligent, it's arguable that they would take risks that they otherwise would not take on the basis that if it goes wrong at least they are certain of compensation.

Secondly I do not know if Pearson's recommendations are implemented how they would be administered. There would be a grave danger of a lot more people getting a lot less money. Because, at the end of the day, there's only a limited pot and I wouldn't like to see the man who might get £25,000 now, for some ghastly injury, suddenly find himself with a much smaller figure spread over weekly or monthly payments. This is a possibility depending if and how they decide to implement the Pearson recommendations.

But these recommendations should become irrelevant if preventative medicine gets the emphasis it deserves. This is where the Health and Safety at Work Act, if it develops the way I hope, can play a leading role. The central theme of the Act is to solve your problems where they begin, on the shop floor. This is a very viable proposition in industry but has very grave difficulties in agriculture.

- CK: What are the difficulties of organising for safety in agriculture?
- JW: First of all, there's the legal difficulty. You can't have effective safety organisation at shop floor level withouta system of representatives and committees because the regulations state that this particular right shall only be given to recognised unions. The Trade Union Labour Relations Act definition of a recognised union does not include agriculture as an industry because the individual employer does not recognise the NUAAW despite the fact that we negotiate wages with their representatives on a Central Wages Board. The same impediment applies to any group of workers who negotiate through a central Waves Board or Council.

In individual cases they are Co-op farms for example or some of the estates or even some individual farms where our organiser has managed to establish recognition. Even that has to be proved if it is challenged: does the farmer talking to you as a representative of his men, (say about mending a gate), constitute recognition? That impediment can be overcome given the political will of the Government.

JW: But the real impediment is a practical one. How do you set up a system of safety representatives and safety committees in agriculture where you have one man working on one farm, two on another, etc... Where there are more self-employed than employed? Something like seventy thousand who employ labour and something like double that number who don't?

My own solution to that practical difficulty, which has been voiced to the Health and Safety Executive, would be to set up safety committees for the industry on an area basis, not by county, (that would be too large), with individual employees on selected farms in that area to constitute the committee and assume the status of safety representatives. Employers would also serve on the committee with the same status but instead of the committee representing one holding it would represent a group in that area.

But otherwise be given the same semi-statutory teeth that a shopfloor factory would be given. With the same access to servicing.

You would have minor administrative problems but they could be overcome. In a factory, for example, the employer would have to service the committee once it was set up, he would have to provide the facilities. Obviously the Health and Safety Executive would have to do this on an area basis.

But at least it would be a forum where the chaps on that committee could focus on their problems. And the representatives on the committee would then have the same rights of inspection on every farm as they will have, come October, in, say, our broiler factories.

This does not meet with the approval of the NFU or the Country Landowners Association and, indeed, we are meeting with them on the 27th to try and resolve it.

The CLA is more inclined to talk than the NFU but we've seen Bill Simpson about this and we've now got to see the NFU and subject to what emerges we will see the Ministers.

But what we must do is to get away from the idea that you solve your problems by getting more inspections. You do not do this.

What is the point of having a routine inspection when everything in your garden is lovely. You're merely keeping that inspector away from somewhere else where he is needed.

What I would like to see, and this is the Health and Safety Executive's own view, is the shop steward and the committee monitoring their situation and solving their own problems, only calling in the Health and Safety Executive when they can't resolve it themselves. Thus leaving him free to go to other establishments where he really is needed.

- JW: We have the recognition and the geographical, (structural), problem, but we have got to solve it because the proximity of farmer to worker, he's one of the few employers who actually gets his feet dirty, not at all the concept of the fellow who turns up once in a while in a Mercedes and is never seen again.
- CK: How are we going to change the attitude of the farmworker in the Archers who fell through the barn roof and then spent all his time thanking the farmer for visiting him in hospital? He thought it was his fault for not watching his step rather than the farmer's fault for having the barn in a dangerous condition to start with.
- JW: There's no panacea for this one because what you have been describing is the traditional paternalism which has permeated this industry of ours for generations.

It started out as feudalism and at its best became paternalism. You have to evolve this away. You can't legislate for attitudes. But I think we've taken the first major step towards it with the removal of the tied cottage problem in terms of security at least.

I think it will lead to a slowly evolving change and the next generation of farmworkers will see the tied cottage problem as we know it as something in books.

- CK: What can the union do to influence attitudes?
- JW: You can only do it by a constant programme of education.

 Again there are certain financial implications in that too.

I hope that the different attitude will show itself in working conditions as well as safety when a man realises the strength of his position but you are always going to have the isolation factor which nullifies the advantages. A man who has got the only job of its kind within a radius of fifteen miles, and one does get that kind of situation, say, in the West Country, the man in the middle of Widdicombe may have freedom but if he loses his job he's got to get out of the house anyway because he's got to find work. So he's still beholden. I think you'll always have that. But your point was that it has been a general attitude even where the isolation doesn't apply.

- CK: What would the average branch secretary be getting from the union in terms of upping his safety consciousness, if you like?
- JW: At the moment all he would be getting would be what is delivered to him at his county conference or at any weekend or Winter School that he attends. And he might get material in branch circulars from time to time. But there's no programme as such.

JW: But basically his information comes from speakers attending his area. Essentially that is the Organiser because under our structure your National Officers are chairbound here, which poses the next question, 'Who educates the Organisers?'.

We tend to throw our new Organisers in at the deep end again because of financial restrictions. We ought to have a continuous education programme but it has to be funded. Farmworkers are similar to farmers perhaps in one respect, they want services but when it comes to paying the brakes go on a bit.

This is your problem: you can't have safety on the cheap. We've always said this to the employers. Robens said it: 'Safety costs money'. But at the end of the day it's a productive use of money because it pays off. But it also costs the union a lot of money. The members have got to realise that and ultimately the money comes back plus a bonus because you're suddenly finding that you're not spending that money any more because you have eliminated the hazard.

I also think the system of monitoring accidents ought to be looked at because at the moment any remedial action we do (the trade union movement and government), is based on a false premise, the number of casualties, dead and injured. An accident is an unplanned event. Everybody investigates accidents where there are injuries. For every fatal accident there are ten near misses and a hundred non fatal accidents. The Heinrich pyramid.

We find out everything about the fatal accident but ignore the near misses. We base our remedial measures on the circumstances of the fatal accident but ignore those surrounding the ten near misses.

We should also be looking at the actual cost of an unplanned incident. 'Damage and loss control'. If you have a mock-up trailor-linkage and in the middle of harvest it snaps and the loaded trailor goes into a ditch then you have to measure the cost of regular maintenance by engineers to make sure it never happened, against the cost of losing part of the harvest and paying contractors to come and finish it for you. Doing these exercises you find it is cheaper to prevent the accident than to pay for the consequences.

Similarly, before we had tractor cabs and a tractor turned over killing the driver, that reflected in increased insurance premia. Now they turn over with an £800 cab on and £7,000 worth of machinery is back on duty the next morning. So you've saved £7,000 but you can't tell that to the individual farmer who has to pay the £800 before it happens. This is the educational programme that is our problem.

- CK: What issues or areas do you find that the membership does get enthusiastic about to the extent of taking action or being ready to push you into doing something?
- JW: I'm not sure that enthusiastic is the right word. There are issues that generate emotion more than others. Chemicals is one that generates more heat than any other single issue but, to be fair, we don't have a body count on chemicals. There's many more people hurt from trailer floorboards, haystacks and unguarded power take offs etc...

I think there is an inbuilt fear of chemicals, not just the trauma of being saturated but the continuing fear that there may be some long term effect that will not manifest itself till much later. In some cases it could be genuine, in other cases irrational. Either way it is there. If people feel ill they look back and blame the chemicals. They may be right or they may be wrong.

There is a tendency amongst agricultural workers to ask the Union to do something about it rather than refuse to engage in it in the first place. We can do something to a limited extent, but it's difficult with individual employers. Whereas, with the Forestry Commission we were able to persuade them to suspend the use of 245-T for a year. Now it's used again in minute quantities but the Forestry Commission has agreed that a person who feels unhappy about using it doesn't have to.

But most of the incidents I have come across have been through mis-use in aerial spraying, pilot error or aerial skylarking. But I don't think we can criticise the monitoring programme too much. The research is very stringent most of the problem comes after that. You can say any deadly chemical should be banned but there's one in any grocer's shop.

There are other hazards such as asbestos roofs, especially in potato clamps. Asbestos degenerates with the weather and goes powdery and the birds like to peck at it. Asbestos dust descends onto the straw lying around, the wind blows it around and our chaps inhale it. We've got EMAS investigating some members at the moment, but again we haven't a casualty list as yet and this is a possible hazard that we're trying to eliminate before we get a list of casualties.

I think it also must be said that the old 1956 Act did work, not perfectly, but it had an effect. We no longer get fingers being lopped off by circular saws; injury by PTO has diminished to a trickle; we're not getting deaths from overturning tractors that we used to have, indeed we're not even getting the injuries. The only deaths we've had since the advent of tractor cabs is where people have tried to get out. This is an argument for the mandatory wearing of safety harnesses inside safety cabs.

But like most safety hazards, the moment you solve one problem you tend to create a new one with it. Safety cabs brought with them the hearing hazard. Then we had a hell

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JW: of an educational problem: Massey Ferguson, for example, issued earmuffs with every new machine that was cabbed, but our chaps didn't like them because it made them look like something out of Star Wars.

It was a hell of a job to get them to wear them. Of course the problem is resolving itself as we are now coming into the accoustic cab era. But hearing is a particularly nasty condition because unlike any other condition the victim doesn't know he's affected. You're deaf for a long time before you become aware of it. It's a gradual process.

I think this will be one of the key issues in industry in the future. Mechanical hazards are solved but new machines are arising all the time, new chemicals developed, new techniques. etc...

In agriculture, as the prime implement is the tractor, I think it's time somebody recognised that the modern tractor hasn't changed in design since the very first one. Originally it was a mechanical horse. Now it is a prime power source. But the design hasn't changed. It still has a rigidly mounted engine and seat which means that all the vibration is transferred back to the driver, its centre of gravity is still too high. I think it's not beyond the wit of the mechanical side of the industry to develop a flexibly mounted engine as one has in the ordinary motor car, to develop a floating, gyroscopic type seat and to reduce the centre of gravity to eliminate the overturn.

In other words, research in agriculture has lagged behind industry in general in terms of ergonomics. Industry in general recognised that a comfortable, safe worker was also a more productive worker and, therefore, you had an economic kickback by taking ergonomic factors into design.

Somewhere in the office I have a cardboard manikin produced by a doctor who knew something about design. The body is like nothing on earth. The chap's got a fully articulated neck, because of what you have to do on a tractor, and one arm is at least a foot longer than the other, because of the controls, articulated hips; his hands and feet were different sizes and he had an extra hand. This is a man designed for the machine, when we ought to be able to design a machine to fit the man.

But in agriculture it was the product that mattered and nothing else. Only now are we beginning to realise that you can achieve that aim by adapting the machine to the man.

CK: There are at the moment in existence local safety committees. How effective are they and what do they do?

JW: In our terms they are not very effective. There's one in every county. They are voluntary and they are joint, that is, workers, farmers, young farmers, Womens Institutes, Uncle Tom Cobbley and all are affiliated and elect their own chairman.

MAFF used to service these committees but they gradually withdrew with financial cutbacks. We are represented on each county. Some are effective, some are moribund. The Holland, (Lincs.) one is very effective, with Stan Hall, an activist. But they have no power. They are no more than a forum in which the hazards can be debated and possible solutions recommended but toothless as distinct from the Committees envisaged by the Health and Safety at Work Act where the representatives at least have some statutory powers. But in agriculture it is a semi-statutory revamping of those committees on a smaller area basis and given the statutory teeth that the other industry committees will have, that is the only possible system of safety representatives and committees that I can see being set up.

You certainly can't have a committee on every farm that employs a bloke. He's going to be his own representative and his own committee but in the interim I certainly think we ought to educate our people into making direct contact with the Health and Safety Executive. I'm forever telling branch secretaries that they should find the name and address of their local Health and Safety Executive inspector (from their nearby Department of Employment) and should call him in if they have cause.

I do it myself. I get a complaint from a certain farm. I investigate it by post. I get the Chief Safety Inspector in London. He gets onto his local man for a report and months go by, whereas if the chap at ground level could short-circuit all that, (the branch secretary of the district organiser) and go straight to his local inspector and only if he thinks the inspector is not up to his job need he bring us into it. Because when you bring it up to this level it has to percolate back down the line again.

But we've got several problems in agriculture: the lobbying power of the NFU is the greatest stumbling block; the fact that agriculture is not a heavy-weight in political terms, (there's not many Labour MPs depending on an agricultural vote, a political fact of life); in TUC circles we do not carry the weight of the big battalions with their block votes at Congress; added to which is the feudal approach that still exists between farmer and farmworker, (and some of our people are difficult to evolve out of this); and the most important of all are the limitations under which we as an organisation have to work.

We're thin on the ground anyway. We haven't got a safety officer and most of the other effective unions have got them; no research facilities, it's done as a piecemeal job. I feel it is a task for one person, (unlike many of my colleagues.)

JW: This union has to decide whether it wants to fulfil the safety function and develop it. If it does, the present structure is inadequate even without the developing function.

It goes beyond the things I've said are requirements. The Health and Safety at Work Act is soon going to start repealing and bringing in new blanket legislation. On the industry committee we've got new codes and regulations coming in on animals, slurry pits, etc., the uncovered risks which are going to develop.

I get an exercise which might require me to send out branch circulars, analyse them, follow them up and then produce a document, say, for the Health and Safety Executive, and I just can't do it. I have to answer the telephone, supervise a department and get a report in for the monthly Executive, that's far more important to them than doing a safety exercise.

Interview with Jim Whittaker, H.M. Chief Inspector, Agriculture, published in The Landworker, (Newspaper of the N.U.A.A.W.), November, 1981.

- CK: I think from the point of view of the Landworker's readers what they would like to know is something about what they can get from your Organisation; how they should approach it. What is its structure?
- JW: Well the organisation of the Agricultural Inspectorate is based primarily on inspectors in the field located at Area Offices and satellite offices in agricultural areas. In each county there is an office where an agricultural inspector can be contacted. They are listed in the local telephone directories if you need to check on the address.

The inspectors make a pattern of visits to farms and in the course of those inspections should be seeing the workers employed on the farm, sometimes all of them but if that is not possible a representative group of those who are at work. Then we have, over and above that, the management structure of senior inspectors giving guidance to the groups of agricultural inspectors and principal inspectors managing regions.

- CK: When the inspector goes onto a farm who will he seek to talk to amongst the workers?
- JW: Normally he meets the farmer before starting the inspection of the premises and then having undertaken an inspection of the premises will expect to see the work that is currently in progress. In the course of seeing the work in progress and machinery in use he will talk to people who are doing it. He may well suggest to the farmer that if there is a group of workers it might be advantageous for them to be gathered together so that he can speak to them as a group.
- CK: From the workers' point of view would you advise them to build up a relationship with their local inspector to get in touch with him? One of the constant complaints from the area conference is that they see inspectors once in a blue moon.
- JW: Clearly we would like to be able to visit farms more frequently than we are able to and consequently see the workers more often, but I would agree with you on the importance of establishing a relationship with the inspector. I certainly think that the local organiser ought to be well known to the local inspector and I hope that your branches and conferences invite the local inspector to join the discussions.

We are very pleased to be able to talk to local meetings about safety work and what needs to be done. Individual members, of course, if they have any queries can always approach an inspector for guidance and advice. Contact him at the office.

CK: If something crops up at work, say a farmworkers finds that he is being asked to use a tractor without a guard on the power takeoff what should his immediate reaction be?

JW: The first reaction if somebody is expected to use a machine without satisfactory guards is to discuss the problem with his employer. Clearly there is a safety problem here and the best thing to do is not to be put at risk. If it is not possible to resolve it in these circumstances then by all means involve the inspector.

But you've identified a situation where the people on the ground, those that work in the ultimate have got to protect their own safety. The inspector is really only in the position of being the enforcement officer and he will of course take the appropriate action if it is established that the machine is unguarded and is likely to be dangerous if it's used.

- CK: We've come to an area which is a bit of a sore point with the Union. We don't have a system of safety representatives in agriculture as exists in other industries. In fact it's TUC policy to get such a system going. What's your view on this one?
- JW: Well, as you say, the regulations as they stand don't really provide for statutory safety representatives in agriculture and that's the position as it exists. It is open to the Union, of course, to endeavour to change this. As it stands I think the thing to do is to work within those constraints as far as possible to achieve safety and I think on many farms it is acknowledged that with the one to one labour force, one worker and one employer, the worker inevitably has got to do his own discussions with the employer about safety. Formally appointing him as a safety representative is not going to change very much the extent to which he can engage in such discussions.
- CK: But it would give him certain rights and functions wouldn't it that he wouldn't have otherwise?
- JW: Oh yes, that's true, although as you appreciate many of the rights and functions are related to circumstances where the man is involved in representing a larger group. It is clearly more important that he is given time off to undertake the safety inspection of the workplace where his colleagues are at work. Once we get into larger numbers then I think that most people recognise that there can be advantages in the formal situation.
- CK: Isn't it up to the employer to ensure safe systems of work? It isn't always easy to go up to the boss and complain.
- JW: Certainly the need for safe systems of work is very important indeed and this does as you rightly say involve the worker and the employer in deciding an agreed system which is acceptable to both and is seen by both as achieving the necessary standard of safety. It is an industry that I think on many occasions achieves this with willing agreement.

There are equally examples where the employer would like to see safer practices being adopted and the workers are not as concerned for their own safety as they should be, as there are the cases that you pointed out where the employer endeavours to impose on the workers the need to adopt dangerous practices. We in the inspectorate would like to stop both these dangerous situations equally.

- JW: In the inspectorate we are faced with the job of enforcing regulations as they exist, of setting safety standards within the constraints of statutory situations. Yes, I agree that safety representatives for industry generally have proved satisfactory, have proved their worth in many industries but I think that the question of whether or not there should be safety representatives for the agricultural industry is clearly a matter on which you have strong views and you need to press this in the political field to change the regulations. Then we in the inspectorate will endeavour to operate any changes that are achieved.
- CK: But in the present situation, of course, there have been cuts in the inspectorate.
- JW: Yes.
- CK: Which in our view makes it all the more important to have a first line defence. How are you coping with those cuts?
- JW: The cuts have been across the board. Within the Health and Safety Executive the Agricultural Inspectorate has suffered perhaps slightly less than some of the other inspectorates.
- CK: Can you spell out what's happened?
- JW: To quote the Commission report, the agricultural inspectorate on a percentage basis had a drop of 7% whereas some other inspectorates had cuts of up to 8%.
- CK: What would that mean in terms of visits to farms and so on?
- JW: Certainly there will be a cutback in the number of visits to farms because when you've less people you've inevitably got to make less visits to farms. But what we have done is to change the pattern of types of farms we visit and we have tried to achieve better planning of the work. We are cutting back much more on the visits to farms where there is no labour employed.

For some time now we have been working towards a system of assessing the hazard-rating of different types of farms and so our planning for the future will take this into account. We shall endeavour to ensure that we maintain and perhaps increase the frequency of visits to farms where we think the potential hazards are greater.

- CK: Apart from injuries and accidents of a physical kind one of the things that the NUAAW has always been very keen on is an occupational health service including a system of monitoring diseases like circulatory or breathing difficulties. Is there anything that the inspectorate or the Health and Safety Executive can do on this?
- JW: Yes, we work very closely with our colleagues in the Employment Medical Advisory Service and a lot of work has been done particularly on farmers lung, where I this over the last few years there has been a marked change in the attitude of people towards

- JW: wearing respiratory protection. A lot of improvement has been achieved in many areas and certainly there has been also a lot of follow up research to endeavour to reduce the hazard at source by better making of hay so that there is less risk. Although with the sort of weather we get in the haymaking areas that's not entirely easy.
- CK: Talking of long term hazards brings us onto pesticides, an issue which has caused a lot of concern with union members.
- JW: Yes, I too am concerned that we shouldn't become involved in the situation where pesticides create a hazard for the user. An important aspect of user confidence is that they have an opportunity to comment on the ways in which they will be expected to use chemicals at the stage when agreement is being reached on the guidance which should be given.
- CK: Which, in other words, in the present set-up would centre around the remit of the Pesticides Advisory Committee. Our objections to the present agreements for dealing with the safe use of agrochemicals are that the decisions are made very close to the Ministry of Agriculture and that they don't include workers' representatives who understand the practical hazards.

You yourself were attached to the Ministry of Agriculture before the Inspectorate moved over to the Health and Safety Executive. What differences has this made?

- JW: The main difference, I think, is that we've become part of an organisation which is concerned solely with the achievement of improvements in Health and Safety, and an organisation with all the necessary technical back-up on the medical, the research, the engineering side, and as part of it I think we are able to achieve more more quickly. We always had links with medical and engineering colleagues but they were a little bit more remote when we were part of the Ministry of Agriculture, whereas now it's all part of the same team.
- CK: Can you give us an example of how that works?
- JW: Yes. I think one example, if you like, was the farmers lung issue and the links we have with EMAS. We are also concerned about silos containing silage which has collapsed. We are able to have immediately on site, engineering advice from our field consultants group to solve the problem.
- CK: Talking of workers being involved in prevention of accidents, how about on the machinery side? Is it feasible to have workers' representatives on, say, the design stage of machinery, tractors and equipment that they use?
- JW: Well, I think in one sense they already are deeply involved. For one thing a significant proportion of our inspectors have had practical experience in the industry before they became inspectors. We do get involved in discussions with farmworkers both formally and informally from time to time; there is the Industry Advisory Committee, there is the NUAAW Conferences, and there are the many other occasions on which discussion takes place, Safety Committees, Shows, and so on. As inspectors we certainly listen to the

- JW: views expressed by the users of machines and endeavour to see that these are brought forward to manufacturers where they contribute to safety. I don't know whether you'll see a more formal arrangement in which the user could have an input to the manufacturing industry, perhaps there is a need for this and perhaps it's something that the union should be looking into with the representatives of the manufacturers, the Agricultural Engineers' Association.
- CK: Finally, Jim, I know you've worked as a tractor driver in your time. Do you have a message for farmworkers?
- JW: Yes, Chris, I'd say always be safety conscious, check guards on machines, use safe working practices, point out inadequacies to employers, develop safe working practices in conjunction with colleagues and employers. Tidiness is very important because so many accidents are falls, work starts or finishes in the dark. It's easy to slip on icy or slippery surfaces, tripping over equipment not put away. Never trust animals, especially bulls and don't carry kids on tractors. Remember all that and we'll start to see those accident figures go down.

APPENDIX 2:

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK: RESOLUTIONS

CARRIED BY THE TRADE UNION CONGRESS 1974-84

1974

Accidents in Industry

"Congress wishes to express its concern over the number of reported accidents in industry and calls on the General Council to press for reform within the Factory Inspectorate, in order to increase the number of inspectors, and to provide a better service for the benefit of all employees.

Congress further calls upon the General Council to urge the Government a the first opportunity to amend the Safety and Health at Work Act to bring the agriculture industry under the supervision of the Health and Safety Commission being set up under the Act.

It is urged therefore that the proposed reform of the Factory
Inspectorate which seeks to diminish the number of local offices
is immediately reappraised as the proposals are detrimental to
all trade unionists and the employees of the Factory Inspectorate."

Industrial Accidents

"Congress calls for stronger measures to be taken for the prevention of industrial accidents, including:

- (a) Heavier penalties against employers who abuse the Factory Act;
- (b) the introduction of more factory inspectors; and
- (c) the compulsory introduction of joint safety committees with statutory powers."

Safety and Health at Work

"Congress, mindful of the new Health and Safety at Work Bill, calls upon the General Council to mount a comprehensive training scheme for union representatives on health and safety at work.

Health of Workers

"Congress is convinced that too often the danger to a workers' health and life are only brought to notice as a result of a coroner's inquest.

Workers must take their share of the blame by not reporting upsurging in ill-health among their fellow workers engaged on any particular process.

Health of Workers (cont'd)

Congress supports the introduction of a Medical Register similar to the Accident Register which we believe would highlight any health hazards far more quickly than waiting for the coroner's inquest."

Industrial Disease

"Congress calls upon the General Council as a matter of urgency to seek to establish with the Government that all chest diseases, e.g. emphysema and bronchitis, etc., suffered by workers in dusty industries, such as miners, foundry workers, steel workers, cotton operatives, be scheduled as industrial diseases."

Dust Hazards

"Congress demands that there must be far greater protection for workers who are exposed to dangerous substances and that this protection be extended, through the compulsory use of wet methods of dust control and the installation of local exhaust and dilution ventilation systems, to include dust hazards."

1975

Occupational Deafness and Raynaud's Phenomenon

"Congress compliments the General Council and the Social Insurance

Committee on their continuous efforts to establish occupational deafness and Raynaud's Phenomenon on the list of prescribed industrial diseases under the Industrial Injuries Act. Occupational deafness has now been included in the list of Prescribed Diseases No. 48 but the new legislation is too restrictive in regard to the list of occupations covered and the limitation on the workers covered in the specified jobs and the qualifications for industrial injury benefits. In addition, the description of the disease omits noise-induced tinnitus and the nature of the occupation omits telecommunications.

Congress calls on the General Council to press for an immediate extension of the present legislation to cover all workers subject to hearing loss or noise-induced damage to hearing, including tinnitus, arising from their employment without any restriction on their period of service; and to continue to press for Raynaud's Phenomenon to be scheduled as an industrial disease."

1976

Noise and Occupational Deafness

"Congress appreciates the wide range of efforts made by the General Council in relation to the many health and safety matters both at the place of work and in the home, and urges particularly that the hazards created by noise be given intensified attention. It requests the Government to define noise levels in industry that are harmful to hearing as those above 80 decibels. Furthermore, Congress requests that all occupations which are in excess of that level should be covered for occupational deafness.

Congress calls on the General Council to make representation to the Industrial Health Advisory Sub-Committee on Noise with the object of providing legislation which will include statutory provision for audiometric tests for those classes of workpeople whose occupations put them at risk of occupationally-induced noise damage to hearing and whose duties are such that suitable ear protection cannot be provided. In addition Congress urges the General Council to seek the prescription of tinnitus for industrial injury compensation purposes."

1977

Asbestos

"Congress welcomes the establishment of the Advisory Committee on Asbestos by HM Government but is seriously concerned with the lack of knowledge of the risks to health and long term effects of exposure to Asbestos.

Congress supports a planned phasing out of all asbestos based materials as early as possible and as a matter of utmost urgency

calls for an interim report from the Advisory Committee forthwith and further insists upon a more stringent application of the Asbestos Regulations by the Factory Inspectorate prior to workpeople commencing work in an asbestos environment and for a stringent system of licensing of all companies, contractors or sub-contractors, who undertake or tender for contracts for work which includes to any extent the handling, application, finishing, refurbishing or stipping of thermal acoustic or structural insulation in such circumstances as involve or are likely to involve contact with asbestos. This licensing system should be supported by penalties on clients engaging non-licensed contractors and by a system of union approved safety inspectors drawn from the workforce with appropriate legal powers to back up the Health and Safety Inspectorate."

Fire Precautions Act, 1971

"Congress considers that there should be no further delay in the Government tabling enabling orders attached to the 1971 Fire Precautions Act in relation to fire precautions in hospitals and old people's homes.

Congress, aware that the initial enforcement of such regulations would be costly, calls on the Government in the interests of safety in hospitals and old people's homes, to meet a substantial portion of the initial cost by way of grants."

Vibration Syndrome

"Congress asks the General Council to continue its efforts to establish Vibration White Finger (Raynaud's Phenomenon) as an industrial disease on the list of prescribed diseases under the Industrial Injuries Act.

Congress also urges unions to collate evidence of the incidence of Vibration Syndrome in their respective industries and supply General Council with the results of their investigations.

Congress asks the General Council to give consideration to the need for research work to be carried out to reduce the effects of vibration syndrome on workpeople who are subject to exposure to vibration in their employment."

Industrial Disease

"This Congress calls upon the Department of Health and Social Security to establish that when a post mortem is held on a suspected Pneumoconiosis case, the cause of death be defined clearly and as early as possible by the Pneumoconiosis Board, thereby eliminating the prolonged and unnecessary suffering to the dependants of the deceased."

1978

Health and Safety at Work

"Congress deeply regrets the delay in the implementing of the

Health and Safety at Work (Cont'd.)

Regulations governing Safety Representatives and Safety Committees.

It calls on the Government to enact legislation providing for the appointment of safety representatives in those areas where wages are fixed by Wages Boards and Wages Councils.

It calls upon the Government to ensure the successful implementation of the Health and Safety at Work Act:

- (a) by the encouragement and sponsorship of training schemes organised by recognised trade unions for safety representatives;
- (b) by giving safety representatives full protection against civil and criminal liability; and
- (c) by substantially increasing the number of factory inspectors to allow the thorough investigation of industries such as construction infamous for their atrocious safety record.

Congress is also concerned at the low level of fines imposed by the Courts on employers for breaches of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Congress notes that despite the provisions within the Act for stringent penalties, the average level of fines levied in the first year of operation was £75. In view of the seriousness of many of the offences involved, Congress is convinced that penalties must be substantially increased in order that they act as an effective deterrent.

Congress believes that the Health and Safety Commission have not made adequate arrangements for the establishment of National Advisory Committees to deal with the different sectors of employment and it calls upon the Commission to review existing arrangements in order to ensure the provision of a comprehensive coverage of all sectors of employment. Noting the urgent need for the training of safety representatives. Congress requests the General Council to continue and extend the valuable work which has already been undertaken in the preparation of training programmes and provision of courses in public institutions; to encourage and assist member unions in the exercise of their responsibility to secure time off for training; to consider and advise member unions on schemes of co-operation between them for the training of representatives and to consider with relevant unions the best use of resources in the public sector, including the use of public sector institutions, for the training of representatives."

1979

Health and Safety at Work

"Congress views with alarm the findings of the Health and Safety Executive Report on the Construction Industry published in March 1978. The Report clearly underlines the responsibility of company management for a large percentage of accidents remaining at a shockingly high level within the construction industry.

Congress demands Government measures to reduce construction industry accidents and calls for:

- (a) a campaign throughout the industry making companies and line management more aware of their serious responsibilities and of the dangers inherent in construction.
- (b) an increase in the number of inspectors to expedite enforcement of Health and Safety legislation;
- (c) increased penalties and more strenuous prosecuting of offending Companies through the Courts;
- (d) a campaign designed to ensure that all notifiable accidents within the industry are properly reported and recorded so that the full extent of the problem can be made clear; and
- (e) the introduction of an induction course on Health and
 Safety (to include health education) for all entrants to
 the construction industry who should be made aware of the
 safety procedures with which they should comply.

Congress deplores the decision of HM Government not to make the necessary additional funds available for the implementation of the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act in respect of those employed in the public sector. It particularly deplores

the requirement on public service employers to meet the costs of fully implementing the HSC Regulations concerning safety representatives and safety committees out of existing budgets which have been seriously cut back in recent years. Congress, therefore, calls upon the General Council to make strong representations to the Government in order to ensure that the necessary additional funds are made available to ensure full implementation of the Act without there being a need for compensatory savings elsewhere in the services concerned. Congress further calls on the General Council to ask the HSE to intimate by October 1978 that they will exert no less pressure on Crown employers to obey the Health and Safety at Work Act than they do on those private and public sector employers who fail to meet the new legal standards.

Congress calls on the Government to amend the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) so that employers in agriculture are compelled to recognise trade union safety representatives in instances where at present they are refusing to recognise the Union.

Congress recognises that no real progress will be made in this field in either the public or private sector until there is an Occupational Health Service, rejects as inadequate "The Occupational Health Services - The Way Ahead" recently produced by the Health and Safety Executive, and calls for the establishment of a comprehensive Occupational Health Service, financed by a levy on employers, and jointly managed by employers, trade unions, and the National Health Service.

Health and Safety at Work (1979 Cont'd.)

Congress also calls on the General Council to ensure that adequate sources of information and expertise are made available to trade unions in the health and safety area."

1980

Work Hazards in Wholesale and Retail Distribution

"Congress believes that insufficient attention has been given to the hazards that may occur in wholesale and retail distribution centres as a direct result of the type and variety of merchandise which is handled. It notes with disquiet that little attention is given in establishments which deal with potentially hazardous products to the need to maintain the same safety standards that are normally provided during the manufacturing processes.

Congress calls on the General Council to investigate these problems and to come forward with concrete proposals that would guarantee a safe environment both for the shopping public and for those who work in wholesale and retail distribution."

Pesticides

"The campaign to ban the use of the weedkiller 245-T in Britain has exposed the system of control of pesticides to be a shambles. Congress calls for the Health and Safety Commission to take over responsibility for decisions on the safety and control of pesticides - a move which would involve the winding up of the Ministry of Agriculture's Pesticides Advisory Committee.

Pesticides (Cont'd.)

Congress also reaffirms the TUC demands for the Government to ban the use of 245-T."

Women's Health

"Congress notes that the reduction in public spending is leading to a reduction in the health facilities that women need, such as well women clinics, day care abortion services, and humane maternity services.

Congress recognises that such services could, at quite small cost, make a major contribution to the health of women and therefore calls for these provisions to be properly funded and for the trade union movement to continue campaigning to this end.

Congress notes that reduction in health and social services will impose an especial burden on those who traditionally have care of the sick and condemns this part of a general policy of returning women to the home.

Congress welcomes the Social Services Select Committee Report, published in July, concerning perinatal and neonatal mortality and in particular the recommendations affecting pregnant women at work. Congress calls upon the General Council to take steps to ensure that women at work become more aware of their entitlement to paid time-off for antenatal care and to respond positively to the recommendations of the Select Committee. Congress also

Women's Health (Cont'd.)

calls upon all affiliated unions to ensure that appropriate changes in conditions of service are firmly written into all agreements."

1981

Health and Safety at Work

"Congress deplores the continued high level of risk to workers' health and safety associated with many areas of employment, despite the progress made since the passage of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Congress also deplores the recent cuts in the budget of the Health and Safety Commission."

Congress calls for a continued Government commitment in this area with:

- (i) a new legislative initiative to ensure improvements in occupational health and safety services, with particular reference to those industries with continuing special problems;
- (ii) an increase in the number of inspectors to further the enforcement of health and safety legislation;
- (iii) more strenuous enforcement and tougher penalties for the infringement of existing legislation; and
 - (iv)positive legislation to give the status of law to the many desirable elements that are currently in 'codes of practice'.

Assaults

"Congress welcomes the enactment of the Licensed Premises (Exclusion of Certain Persons) Act, 1980 but expresses its concern that Courts in many areas are failing to give full implementation to its provisions.

Congress believes that all convictions following from attacks on licensees, their staff and freelance performers should result in a ban for a period appropriate to the seriousness of the offence.

Congress therefore calls on the Home Office to issue guidelines to the Courts urgning them to use the powers invested in them by the Act in accordance with the wishes of Parliament."

Microwave Radiation

"Congress expresses its concern that research undertaken in the USA and USSR on the effects of exposure to microwave radiation has not been followed up in the UK.

It asks the General Council to press the Government to sponsor an appropriate research project to ensure that adequate safeguards are introduced at the workplace."

Industrial Disease

"Congress calls upon the Department of Health and Social Security to include osteoarthritis in the Schedule of Prescribed Diseases."

Health and Safety

"Congress condemns the cuts in the Health and Safety Executive. These cuts, which involve reductions in routine inspections, in the number of accidents Inspectors are able to investigate, in the number of enforcement notices that are issued, and in provision for research, make it impossible to achieve satisfactory standards of health and safety at work.

Congress calls on the Government to increase the resources allocated to the Health and Safety Executive to enable it to carry out its responsibility to ensure that proper and effective health and safety standards are maintained at all work-places."

Safety in Agriculture

"Congress condemns farmers' refusal to allow trade union safety representatives in agriculture, the country's third most dangerous industry, and their use of a legislative loophole to enable them to refuse to recognise safety representatives, and asks the General Council to seek a change in the law to ensure the appointment of trade union safety representatives in agriculture.

Agriculture (Cont'd.)

It demands furthermore that the Health and Safety Executive should be sufficiently funded to allow it to make many more spot checks on farms; that these visits should be unannounced and the workers consulted on each visit; and there should be more in-depth farm inspections."

Health and Safety

"Congress recognises that the persistence of high death rates from accidents at work continues to make seafaring one of the most dangerous of occupations.

Congress therefore calls upon the General Council to:

- (i) Campaign for the inclusion of seafarers within the 1974
 Health and Safety at Work Act; and
- (ii) Demand that full statutory responsibility for seafarer health and safety be transferred from the Department of Trade to the Health and Safety Executive."

Lead Pollution

The TUC has long recognised and deplored the dangers that exist from contamination by lead poisoning. However, the use of lead additives in petrol constitutes a far more insidious threat than lead used in paint or water supplies, particularly to the mental

Lead Pollution (Cont'd.)

health of children and both the mental and the physical well-being of those as yet unborn. Congress therefore demands that the Government insists that all new cars sold on the British market after January 1, 1985, should be manufactured to run on lead-free petrol and that all petrol stations should be required to supply it, so that this extremely dangerous practice will be ultimately eradicated.

1983

Disability Income

"Congress notes that the National League of the Blind and Disabled has campaigned for more than 12 years for the introduction of an allowance to offset the cost of blindness. Successive governments have accepted the case presented by blind people stating that their case is unanswerable.

In 1979 the Conservative Government stated that it accepted the need for an allowance to off-set the cost of blindness, but this would have to be taken in conjunction with other disabled groups who also have a just claim, and would have to wait until the economy could meet such a provision.

Congress believes that the resources are now available, not only to introduce a blindness allowance, but also to introduce a disability income to all registered disabled people, to off-set the additional cost that their disability imposes. Further, Congress believes that it is the wish of the citizens of the United Kingdom

Disability Income (Cont'd)

that proper financial provision should be made by the state for the blind and disabled, as shown by the half million signatures collected in three months for a petition, presented to Parliament in December, 1980.

Therefore, Congress urges a concerted campaign by all its affiliates and members to bring about a success ful and justifiable conclusion to this campaign by provision of financial assistance to all registered disabled people.

Industrial Health

Congress is concerned that workers involved in gas mask manufacturing involving blue asbestos during the Second World War are now contracting mesothelioma but are unable to claim compensation.

Congress, therefore, calls for provision to allow for adequate compensation for these workers who played a vital role in our war effort.

Dumping of Nuclear Waste at Sea

Congress condemns the irresponsibility of using the world's oceans as dumping grounds for nuclear waste and expresses grave concern at the incalculably harmful consequences which could result from such actions.

Dumping of Nuclear Waste at Sea (Cont'd)

Congress notes with alarm that the UK Government is intent on ignoring the view of the London Dumping Convention, the United Nations sponsored agency which regulates the disposal of hazardous wastes at sea. In February the LDC voted by 19 votes to six in favour of a two year moaratorium on nuclear wastes at sea, pending the results of an expert analysis of its impact on the marine environment.

Congress further notes that Britain is responsible for dumping more nuclear waste at sea than any other country (80 per cent of the world total in 1982) and that for 1983 it was planned to dump 3,900 tonnes of nuclear waste 500 miles south west of Land's End compared to 2,700 tonnes last year.

Congress calls on the Government to stop dumping waste at sea and, in line with the LDC decision, to store all such waste securely on land for two years while a scientific inquiry takes place. Congress also calls on the Government to investigate the long term alternatives to sea dumping.

Congress applauds the decision of those transport unions which have called on their members not to handle or transport by road, rail or sea any nuclear waste to be dumped at sea.

Congress pledges full support for this action and calls on the General Council to urge other affiliated unions to support the boycott of nuclear waste imposed by the transport unions.

Conditions in Small Factories

"Congress is concerned at the growing evidence of bad working conditions in many of the smaller factories in the United Kingdom, particularly those in inner-city areas. Wages and conditions in many of these premises are far below acceptable levels, and health, safety and fire precautions are often below the minimum legal requirements.

Congress deplores the cut backs in the resources available to the bodies which monitor health and safety, fire precautions and wages. Increased resources should be made available to local authorities, the Fire Service, the Health and Safety Inspectorate and the Wages Inspectorate to ensure that the minimum standards required by the law are enforced in all premises where people are employed.

Congress calls for a concerted campaign to expose these issues and to endeavour to improve the conditions of work in these particular areas of employment. Action to include the following:

- (i) a concerted trade union campaign to expose these employers and their blatant exploitation of their employees;
- (ii) campaigns to organise workers in these areas of employment;
- (iii) an increase in the surveillance of these small factories, including resources for the Health and Safety Inspectorate, the Fire Service and the Wages Inspectorate.
- (iv) an increase in the penalties imposed for breaking the current legislation governing factory premises, health and safety, and terms and conditions of employment;
- (v) opposition to any attempts to dilute current legislation, e.g. abolition of Wages Councils, exclusion of small firms, etc: and

Conditions in Small Factories (Cont'd)

(vi) statutory protection for employees who register complaints with Wages Councils, the Health and Safety Executive and the Fire Service.

Amendment - In line 1 delete 'Congress is concerned at' and insert:

'Congress condemns both the general attack by the present

Government on the right of workpeople to a job, an adequate

wage and a safe and healthy working environment, and the

very specific campaign to drive women out of the labour

market. Congress believes that this is directly contributory

to'

In both paragraph 1, line 2 and in paragraph 3, subparagraph (iii) delete 'factories' and insert 'workplaces'.

After paragraph 2 insert:

'Congress is deeply concerned that the workpeople in these smaller workplaces, many of whom are women, are largely unorganised and therefore unable to protect themselves.'"

Noise

"Congress recognises that noise at work exposes workers to the danger of hearing loss and other adverse effects on their health. It urges that the present recommended limit of 90 dB (A) - which has been confirmed by scientists to be excessive and dangerous - be reduced to 85 dB (A) and the reduced level made the legal limit. It calls for action to ensure full implementation of the health and safety at

Noise (Cont'd)

work legislation and the Code of Practice on Noise at Work and for adequate health surveillance of workers likely to be exposed to a level of noise which exceeds the authorised limit. It also recognises a need for more regular breaks from a noisy environment.

Congress also declares in favour of the following points of policy in relations to this problem:

- (i) the application of new technology to remove harmful noise at source;
- (ii) legislation to establish a maximum permissable level of 85 dB (A) during exposure to noise for eight hours;
- (iii) ensuring that all workers are properly informed of the dangers arising from the noise to which they are exposed, plus suitable ear protection that is properly fitted, supervised and maintained by skilled and responsible people; and
- (iv) amending legislation to enable workers with hearing damaged by working conditions to qualify more easily for National Insurance Occupational Deafness Benefit.

The following Amendment was accepted by the Mover

Amendment - In line 2, after 'health' insert 'Noise at work includes, in addition to that occurring in manufacturing processes and industries such as construction, the dangerously loud muzac emanating from many retail clothing outlets and similar premises and which is not capable of amelioration by ear defenders since the staff need to be able to communicate with customers.'"

Funding of the National Health Service

"Congress condemns the gradual but ever-increasing rate at which our Health Service is being destroyed due to lack of adequate capital and revenue funding.

Over the last five years this lack of funding has resulted in a backlog of over £2 billion of repairs urgently needed to bring the capital infrastructure back to a reasonable standard. It has also led to a continuing decline of the services provided, cuts in manpower for the first time in 30 years and appalling levels of pay for the skilled and dedicated staff who provide this essential service, many of whom are living below the Government's own official poverty line.

At a time when the demands being placed upon the service are continuing to rise and are likely to increase for the foreseeable future, Congress views it as immoral that the NHS is not ebing given the funding it urgently requires to ensure the type of service the British population has rightly come to expect.

Congress further demands that the NHS be freed from the rigid straitjacket that cash limits have imposed and require funding to be provided
to regenerate the infrastructure, improve services to meed demand and
hence reduce waiting lists, and increase the pay of a committed
workforce, so ending poverty levels of pay in the NHS once and for all.

The following Amendments were accepted by the Mover.

Funding of the National Health Service (Cont'd)

Amendment - Add at end:

'Congress in 1984 reaffirms the basic principle of the National Health Service which underpinned its creation in 1948. The NHS must provide a comprehensive service for the prevention and treatment of ill health provided on the basis of need and free at the point of use.

Congress calls for a continued campaign to bring about:

- (1) an increase in resources for the NHS of at least 3 per cent a year in real terms;
- (ii) an end to privatisation;
- (iii) withdrawal of incentives to private medicine and abolition of private practice in the NHS
- (iv) the abolition of charges for prescriptions and NHS services;
- (v) increased democratic control of health authorities; and
- (vi) an end to low pay for health service workers together with proper agreed pay machinery to safeguard NHS workers.'"

ILO Convention 159

"Congress noteswith satisfaction the decision of the International Labour Organisation to adopt Recommendation 168 and Convention 159 concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons). Congress further notes that the TUC-CBI and British Government voted in support of both items at the ILO Conference in June 1983. But that the British Government has not yet ratified Convention 159

ILO Convention 159 (Cont'd)

and therefore calls on the Trades Union Congress and all affiliated organisations to bring pressure to bear on Her Majesty's Government to ratify Convention 159 and lead the way in showing people with disabilities the commitment of the United Kingdom to take positive action to improve services, facilities and financial assistance to people with disabilities, as set out in Convention 159, so as to achieve full integration of disabled people into the community.

1979

Mr. C. Kaufman (National Union of Agricultural & Allied Workers):

"Industrial deafness can be fatal. If you do not believe me look what happened to the Labour Government when Jim Callaghan turned a deaf ear to this Congress last year.

What of farm workers. Many people in this hall, and beyond, still have a completely false image of a farmworker s life. They see a picture of a straw-sucking yokel, sweating away as he listens to the sounds of the dawn chorus. Nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is that farm workers are a bunch of highly skilled men and women operating complicated and dangerous machinery for very low wages, and they cannot hear the dawn chorus, either because of the noise or because they have already been deafened.

Dr James Robinson, an eminent medical man, has recently been doing some very valuable research on deafness amongst farm workers. He has been conduting tests on their hearing and he has been taking his box of tricks round to agricultural shows. He has found that more than half the people he tested were suffering from hearing loss. It is not difficult to see why - defective tractors, unsilenced saws and livestock as well. You cannot fit silencers on pigs, and they squeal at a level of about 105 decibels. But what you can do is look at the system of work which puts the pigman in the pig, unit, in an enclosed space, for long spells at a time, and this is really what we should be looking at - systems of work. We have to get noise controls built into those systems otherwise the cost of cutting corners is inevitably paid at the expense of workers' health and safety.

The message of employers that I would like to see ringing out from this Congress is that it is a criminal act to put your workers into conditions that will deafen them. It is a hazard throughout industry, any industry you care to name. I can think of mining, or the carpet workers. It is a hazard throughout industry and our Movement must mobilise to prevent it happening, and those who are already casualties must have the right to compensation and to injury benefit."

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Mr. C. Kaufman (Transport & General Workers' Union, Agricultural & Allied Workers' National Trade Group):

referring to paragraph 132 of the General Council's Report, said:

"I will weed out some of the remarks I was going to make because I thought the previous contribution was excellent. I want to tell you about a man I know. Some think he is an eccentric. He is a rural doctor who keeps beehives at the bottom of his garden. It is not a normal thing, and quite a number of people who are told about it ask why he keeps beehives there. He tells me that he uses them in the same way as miners used to take canaries down the mines, because if his bees have died he knows that the farmers roundabout have been using pesticides. If he has a farm worker coming into him with some poisoning symptoms, he whips down to the bottom of his garden to see if the bees are dead.

The reason why he has to do this, the reason why he is reduced to this kind of crude analysis, is that the pesticides manufacturing industry and the Government have succeeded in conning everybody into believing that there is nothing to worry about from pesti-Our estimation from conferences up cides. and down the country, in various counties and at national conferences of forestry and farm and horticultural workers, is that their experience is different. They come to us with tale after tale of the short-term effects of pesticide poisoning. Those effects never show up in the facts and figures that the Health and Safety Executive puts out because they are in the nature of things very short-term. We are convinced, on the experience of our members, that there must be hundreds of farm workers and members of the public who have been killed by the long-term effects of these pesticides because nobody has every thought to link the effects with the causes.

I will make the point because the Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances - that is what this paragraph is all about - has done some very valuable work, but it has also left a few gaps. I am sure that Clive Jenkins and Jack Boddy and Jack Eccles who are on that Committee will agree. We would like to see the Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances taking a greater interest in pesticides to the extent that they now set up a sub-committee which will look solely at the question of pesticides.

"That is the first point. The second point is that we warn all workers, who in one way or another come into contact with pesticides - and that includes lorry drivers, dockers, local authority workers and a whole range of workers - that pesticides which have been passed by the Pesticides Advisory Committee are potentially dangerous because a committee such as the Pesticides Advisory Committee which can allow 245-T through can allow all sorts of other things through that we have to suspect.

Therefore, I say to you as a final message that what our union has done is to back up any worker who refuse- to work with dangerous chemicals. The full backing of the union is pledged to anybody who refuses to do this. We stand four square behind the hospital workers in their demand for just living standards. We also want to cut down on the number of people who come in there with pesticide poisoning."

APPENDIX 4

Α.

TUC training course syllabus

		SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4		
1		WOLL OF THE		THE TRADE UNION APPROAGE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY - developing union organisation			
2		BAC	KGROUND TO HEALTH	AND SAFETY LAW Case study			
	Review	Health and Sa	uction to fety at Work Act				
3 Paviou		HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW					
	N.C. T.C.	Facto	ories Acts, OSRP, A	Regulations etc			
4							
	Review	- Further other source	Official and	Case studies			
5	Review		HAZARDS AT WOR	i.			
6	Review						
7		Chemical Hazards,		Dust			
R				otection, etc			
0	Review	UNION ORGANISATION AND SAFETY REP FUNCTION		S	SAFETY COMMITTEES		
9	Review	INSPECTIONS AND EMPLOYERS' SAFETY BOLICIES		ROLE OF THE INSPECTORATE	SAFETY AGREEMENTS		
10	Review	UNION STRATEGIES ON HEALTH AND SAFETY					
	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	2 Review 3 Review 4 Review 5 Review 6 Review 7 Review 8 Review 9 Review	INTRODUCTION Course Aims 2 Review BAC Introde Health and Sa the SRSC 3 Review Facto 4 Review - Further other source 5 Review 6 Review 7 Review Machiner 8 Review AND 9 Review INSPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS 0 Review UNION STR	INTRODUCTION Course Aims BACKGROUND TO HEALTH Introduction to Health and Safety at Work Act, the SRSC Regulations Review Factories Acts, OSRP, or HEALTH AND SAFETY Factories Acts, OSRP, or Further official and other sources of standards Review Factories Acts, OSRP, or HEALTH AND SAFETY Further official and other sources of standards Review Factories Acts, OSRP, or Further official and other sources of standards MAZARDS AT WOR eg Noise, Fire Chemical Hazards, Machinery, Lighting, Eye Pr UNION ORGANISATION AND SAFETY REP FUNCTION Review INSPECTIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS Or Review UNION STRATEGIES ON	INTRODUCTION ROLE OF THE TO HEALTH Course Aims BACKGROUND TO HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW Introduction to Health and Safety at Work Act, the SRSC Regulations Review HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW Factories Acts, OSRP, Regulations etc the SRSC Regulations Review Factories Acts, OSRP, Regulations etc of Standards Review HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS Further official and other sources of standards Case standards Review HAZARDS AT WORK eg Noise, Fire Chemical Hazards, Dust Machinery, Lighting, Eye Protection, etc of Standards Case Standards		

В.

HEALTH AND SAFETY Stage 2



	SESSION 1	SESSION 2	SESSION 3	SESSION 4	WORKPLACE REPORT
DAY 1	Introduction	- course a	Review of work and problems course aims issues, approach and methods		Members' views Obtaining documents
DAYS 2 and 3	- takir - work		organisatio		Handling problems
DAYS 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8	- workplace union organisation - involving and educating members TAKING EFFECTIVE ACTION Issues - handling safety problems - keeping up-to-date - improving procedures - improving inspections - action on hazards - action on accidents - management organisation - Occupational Health Services Skills - identifying hazards - planning strategies - using information - communicating with members - handling meetings - negotiating		Inspections Procedures Accidents Management Investigating hazards Taking up problems		
DAYS 9 and 10	F	eports and uture strat ourse revie			

	cedure for raising and pursuing health
and safety issues at your workplace	
2 To the proceedings you have first a	
2. Is the procedure you have just en	rplained the same as the existing
grievance procedure?	
Please circle appropriate numb	per 1 Yes
	2 No
3. Do you think the procedure you de	
Flease circle appropriate numb	per 1 Yes, always
	2 Sometimes
	3 Hardly ever
	4 Never
	5 Don't know
improve the procedure.	
5. What do you think would get your	workmates to take more interest in
health and safety at work?	
Please circle appropriate numb	er/s
1 1	Education and training
2	Publicity
3	Better union organisation
	Information on materials used
5	Information on machinery used
	Other suggestions (please state)

suggestions you have in mind (s in	ing, if possible, who should be
responsible; e.g. management,	unia	ing, if possible, who should be
Toopondies, o.B. management,	unito	n, inspectorate etc.)
7		
/. How satisfied are you with t	the s	service you get on health and safety
issues (a) from your union loca	l of	fice, (b) head office (HO)?
Please circle appropriate	num	nbers .
(a) Local Office	(b)	<u>HO</u>
1	1	Never had any contact
2 .	2	Very Satisfied
3	3	Quite Satisfied
4	4	Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied
5	5	Not at all satisfied
. How would you improve, if at	all	, your union's service to the work-
lace membership?		, some work-
	_1	
The following are all activity		
ime or other Places were the	iles	undertaken by trade unions at some
O Voll. by writing the fi	e 11	tems 1-8 in order of their importance
o on).	side	e each item (1 = most important and
Bargaining on pensi		
Seeking compensation		The state of the s
Solidarity with oth		nions
Bargaining on wages		
Bargaining on worki		
Negotiating workpla		
Bargaining on holid		
Obtaining equal pay	for	women

	you think is responsible for caus	
	rk? Flease rank these items 1-6	
to you, by w	riting the figure beside each ite	m (1 = most important and
so on).		
	Bonus schemes	
	Boredom	
	Carelessness	
	Lack of training	Control of the Contro
	Lack of information	
	Bad systems of work	
11. What do	you think would be the most effect	ctive way of improving health
and safety s	tandards at work? Please rank th	nese items 1-6 in order of
their import	cance to you, by writing the figur	re beside each item (1 = most
important an		
	More information	
	Better union organisation at wo	rk
	Better safety officers	
	Better management involvement	
	More visits from factory inspec	tors
	More health and safety training	
12. What has	s done most to increase your know	ledge of health and safety
at work?	*	
13. Do you	think that the efforts of your un	ion at head office level
	orkplace a healthier or safer env	
Please	e circle appropriate number 1	Yes
	2	No
If 'y	es! please state why.	
	think that the efforts of your w	
make your w	orkplace a healthier or safer en	vironment?
Fleas	se circle appropriate number 1	Yes
74	2	No
If 'y	ves' please state why.	

LIEGGE CITCLE GUIDIUM LA LE MUNICIPA	ron	Yes
Please circle appropriate number	2	
If 'yes' please state why.	-	No
What role do you think that full-time ay in the health and safety field:		
Do you think your union devotes enough	gh r 1 2	esources to health and safe Yes
Do you think that unions and management far as safety and health are concerned	1?	
Please circle appropriate number	1	Yes
	2	No .
ase give your main reson/s for this a		

lease give your name

you very much for taking the trouble to complete this questionnaire.

a would like to make any further comments, please write them in the below.

Kaufman April 1979

lease explain in detail the safety issues at your workpl		re fo	or raising an	APPENDIX ad pursuing	_
Is the procedure you have jus	t explai	ined	the same as	the existing	ng .
evance procedure?					
Please circle appropriate	number		Yes		
	H-44	2	No		
Do you think the procedure yo					
Please circle appropriate	number	1 2	Yes, always Sometimes		
		3	Hardly ever		
		4	Never		
		5	Don't know		
If you did not answer yes in	qn. 3, 1	pleas	e explain ho	w you would	1
rove the procedure.					
Met do you think would not we					
That do you think would get y th and safety at work?	our work	ona te	s to take mo	re interest	in
Please circle appropriate	number/s				
* * *	and the same		n and traini	n <i>g</i>	
		icit		***	
			nion organis	ation	
			ion on mater		
	5 Info	rmat	ion on machi	nery used	
	6 Othe	r su	gestions (p	lease state)

PTO

f you have circled answer/s in qn. 5, please give any specific						
estions you have in mind (stating, if possible, who should be						
onsible; e.g. management, union, inspectorate etc.)						
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Please circle appropriate numbers						
(a) Local Office (b) HO						
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2 Very Satisfied						
3 Quite Satisfied						
4 Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied						
5 Not at all satisfied						
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e membership?						
ne following are all activities undertaken by trade unions at some						
or other. Please rank these items 1-8 in order of their importance						
ou, by writing the figure beside each item (1 = most important and						
n).						
Bargaining on pension rights						
Seeking compensation on accident claims						
Solidarity with other unions						
Bargaining on wages						
Bargaining on working hours						
Negotiating workplace health and safety						
Bargaining on holiday entitlement						
Obtaining equal pay for women						

Bonus schemes Boredom Warelessness Lack of training Lack of information Bad systems of work to do you think would be the most effective way of improving health sty standards at work? Please rank these items 1-6 in order of aportance to you, by writing the figure beside each item (1 = most at and so on). More information Better union organization at work Better safety officers Better management involvement More visits from factory inspectors More health and safety training thas done most to increase your knowledge of health and safety? Tou think that the efforts of your union at head office level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No Tyes! please state why. Tou think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level are workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No Tyes! please state why.	at work? Flease rank these items 1-6 in order of their importance
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thas done most to increase your knowledge of health and safety ou think that the efforts of your union at head office level are workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No T'yes' please state why. The workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No Tyes' please state why.	More visits from factory inspectors
cou think that the efforts of your union at head office level are workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No 1 'yes' please state why. 2 No 2 No 3 'yes' please a healthier or safer environment? 3 Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 4 No 5 'yes' please state why.	More health and safety training
rou think that the efforts of your union at head office level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No ''yes' please state why. Tou think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No ''yes' please state are	
r workplace a healthier or safer environment? lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No f 'yes' please state why. you think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No f 'yes' please state way.	
you think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	you think that the efforts of your union at head office level ur workplace a healthier or safer environment?
you think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level or workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes
you think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level ar workplace a healthier or safer environment? Lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	2 No
lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	'yes' please state why.
lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	
lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	
lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes 2 No	
2 No	you think that the efforts of your union at local (regional) level ur workplace a healthier or safer environment?
2 No	lease circle appropriate number 1 Yes
'yes' please state wry.	
	f 'yes' please state wry.

you think that the efforts of your union at the workplace make
orkplace a healthier or safer environment?
Please circle appropriate number 1 Yes
2 No
If 'yes' please state why.
at walls do you think that full time officers of your union should
at role do you think that full-time officers of your union should
n the health and safety field?
you think your union devotes enough resources to health and safety?
Please circle appropriate number 1 Yes
2 No
If 'no', in what way/s would you like to see increased resources
applied?

you think that unions and management have conflicting interests
as safety and health are concerned?
Please circle appropriate number 1 Yes
2 No
give your main reson/s for this answer

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 7 1 1 2 2 3 3 4 5 5 6 7 7 7 7 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9 9
2 3 4 5 6 7 7 1 2 3 3 4 5 5
2 3 4 5 6 7 7 1 2 3 3 4 5 5
3 4 5 6 7
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2

ny of the	following?		
Please	circle appropriate number/s		
	Accident forms		1
	Help with filling in accident for	orms	2
	Details of successful claims for	r compensation	.3
	Details about toxic substances		4
	Information about other hazards	(e.g. machinery, dusts etc)	5
	Health and safety bulletins or	circulars	6
	Health and safety handbooks		7
	Information about training cour	ses (health and safety)	8(
	Information on legal rights on	health and safety	9
	Advice on workplace level organ		10
	Advice on identifying hazards		1
	Advice on action to take when h	ealth and safety grievances arise	12
	Other communications (please st		1
f you and	ered 'no', what type of informati	No No like to	2
.ee21v3 mo	re frequently, that you now get r	rarely of hot at all:	
	you ever been in contact with a f particular health and safety iss		Qu
Pleas	e circle appropriate number	Yes	1
		No	2
If 'NO' pl	ease go on to question 29.		
27. If your recent iss	ou answered 'yes' to Question 26,	please describe the mo	st
	you satisfied with the assistance union official/s on the issue you		

24. Have you ever received from full-time officials of your union

O. Do you think you could operate effects	tively on health and a f a trade union?	safety
Please circle appropriate number	Yes	1
	No	2
If you answered 'no', please give your re	ason/s.	
31. If you were asked to work on a job w	hich you considered to	o be
unsafe would you refuse to do it?		
Please circle appropriate number	Yes	1
	No	2
Whether you ansered 'yes' or 'no' please you would take in these circumstances.	explain any further s	teps
Jou would said in sheet offeandsaides.		
		•
you would take in these official takes.		
you would state in sheet offeanous.		
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety?	have you had any oth	er
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course,	have you had any oth	
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety?		1
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number	Yes No	1
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety?	Yes No	1
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to questi	Yes No on 34.	1 2
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No on 34.	1 2 course
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to questi	Yes No on 34. No Management	1 2 course
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No on 34. No man the other of Management Trade Union Joint Management	1 2 course 1 2
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No on 34. No management Trade Union Joint Management Union	1 2 course 1 2 / 3
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No Lon 34. 5, who ran the other of Management Trade Union Joint Management Union ROSPA	1 2 course 1 2 2 4
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No on 34. No management Trade Union Joint Management Union	1 2 course
32. Apart from the T.U.C. 10-day course, training in health and safety? Please circle appropriate number If you answered 'no', please go to question 33. If you answered 'yes' to Question 33.	Yes No Lon 34. 5, who ran the other of Management Trade Union Joint Management Union ROSPA	1 2 course 1 2 2 4

What union position do you hold?		
Please circle appropriate number/s	Safety Rep. (S.R.)	1
	Shop steward(S.S.)	2
	Both S.S. & S.R.	3
	Hold no position	4
	Other (please state)5
cu are <u>not a safety representative</u> , pleas	e go to Question 47.	
If you are a safety representative, were	you elected?	
Please circle appropriate number	Yes	1
	No	2
How long have you been a safety represent	tative?	
Please circle appropriate number	Less than 3 months	1
	Between 3-9 nonths	2
	More than 9 months	3
Do you think you will continue as a safe than 1 year from now?	ty representative fo	r
Please circle appropriate number	Yes	1
	No	2
Please give your name		••
Please give your age group.		
Please circle the appropriate number	Under 20	1
	21-35	2
	36-50	3
	51 or over	4
Which trade union do you belong to?		
	eu are not a safety representative, pleas If you are a safety representative, were Please circle appropriate number How long have you been a safety representative appropriate number Do you think you will continue as a safethan 1 year from now? Please circle appropriate number Please give your name	Please circle appropriate number/s Safety Rep. (S.R.) Shep steward(S.S.) Both S.S. & S.R. Hold no position Other (please state ou are not a safety representative, please go to Question 47. If you are a safety representative, were you elected? Please circle appropriate number Yes No How long have you been a safety representative? Please circle appropriate number Less than 3 months Between 3-9 n nths More than 9 months Do you think you will continue as a safety representative for than 1 year from new? Please circle appropriate number Yes No Please give your name Please give your age group. Please circle the appropriate number Under 20 21-35 36-50

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TROUBLE TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONAIRE.

If you would like to make any further comments (or swear at me for wasting your time) please write them in the space below.

APPENDIX 7: BREAKDOWN OF TRADE UNIONS TO WHICH QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS BELONGED

Respondents came from the following unions:

GMBATU Course

11 GMBATU (including 1 from MATSA - white collar section)

TUC Courses

- 21 AUEW (assumed Engineering Section)
- 16 AUEW Foundry Section
 - 2 AUEW TASS
- 19 TGWU (including one from ACTS white collar section)
- 13 UCATT
- 12 FTAT
- 10 NALGO
 - 5 EEPTU
 - 5 GMBATU
 - 5 ASTMS
 - 4 SOGAT
 - 4 NUR
 - 4 NGA
 - 3 TSSA
 - 3 NUPE
 - 2 COHSE
 - 2 NATFHE
 - 2 ASLEF
 - 1 Heating and Ventilation Union
 - 1 NUSMW
 - 1 Boiler-makers Society
 - 1 URTU
 - 1 'Technical Education/Furniture Industry'
 - 1 Domestic Appliance and General Metal Workers
 - 3 Unspecified

APPENDIX 8

CODING FRAME FOR SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES SURVEY

VAR NAME	VARIABLE DESCRIPTION (including question-naire number)	VALUES TAKEN	VAL CODE	CARD COLS.
RESPNO	Respondent number	3 digits to identify	•••	1-3
UNION	Respondent's union q.19 on short and	Boilermakers & GMWU TGWU	01 02	4-5
	q.47 on long	AUEW	03	
	questionnaire	EETPU	04	
		UCATT	05	
		NALGO	06	
		Heating & ventilating	07	
		SOGAT	08	
		FTAT	09	
		TSSA	10	
		NUR	11	
		NUPE	12	
		AUEW (Foundry)	13	
		COHSE	14	
		NATFHE	15	
		NUSMWCE	16	
		AUEW-TASS	17	
		ASTMS	18	
		URTU	19	
		TEFI	20	
		NGA	21	
		ASLEF	22	
		DA&GM	23	
		Union not known	blank	
SAMPRO	is health and safety procedure	Yes No	1 2	6
	same as grievance	N/A	blank	2
EFFPRO	is health and	Yes, always	1	7
	safety procedure	Sometimes	2	
	effective? (q.3)	Hardly ever	2 3 4	
		Never		
		Don't know	5	
		N/A	blank	2
HOWIMP	how would respondent		1	8
	improve procedures?	More management		
	(q.4)	co-operation/		
		communication		

		& access to management Speed up procedure Use union pressure Other Not applicable N/A	2 3 4 5 0 blank	
ED&TR	Education & training seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Seen as important Not ticked N/A	1 2 blank	9
PUBL	Publicity seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Seen as important Not ticked N/A	1 2 blank	10
BETORG	Better union organiz- ation seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Seen as important Not ticked N/A	1 2 blank	11
INFMAT	Use of information on materials seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Seen as important Not ticked N/A	1 2 blank	12
INFMAC	Use of information on machinery seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Seen as important Not ticked N/A	1 2 blank	13
OTHSUG	One or more other suggestions seen as important in getting workmates to take more interest in health & safety at work (q.5)	Other suggestions No other suggestions N/A	1 2 blank	14

SPESUG	Specific suggestions I for improving work-	Respon. of management of unit	t 1 on 2 te 3	15
	mates' interest in	" of inspectorat	e 3	
	health & safety (q.6)	" of manufacture	s 4	
	, (4.0)	" of management		
		unior		
		" of management		
		inions and membershi		
		Trust other		
		N/		nk
HSATLO	Level of satisfaction	Never any contac	t 1	16
	with local union office	Very satisfie	ed 2	
	service on health and	Quite satisfie		
	safety issues (q.7a)	Neither satisfie		
		nor dissatisfie		
		Not at all satisfie		
		N/		ık
HSATHO	Level of satisfaction	Never any contac	t 1	17
	with union head office	Very satisfie		
	service on health and	Quite satisfie	ed 3	
	safety issues (q.7b)	Neither satisfie		
		nor dissatisfie		
		Not at all satisfie		
		N,		nk
IMPSER	How would respondents	More info. usin	ng	
	improve unions (h&s)	publicity & photo		18
	service to membership?	More info. on ow		
	(q.8)	industr		
		info.on union police		
		info. on legislation	on 4	
		etings/contact/visit		
		Satisfie		
		Othe	er 7	
		Don't know		
		not applicab		
	Comi	bination of 1-4 above		
		N,		nk
PENSRK	Ranked importance	enter rank	1-8	19
	of bargaining on	item not ranked	0	13
	pension rights (q.9)	N/A	blank	
	pension rights (q.s)	N/A	DIAIK	
COMPRK	Ranked importance of	enter rank	1-8	20
	compensation on	item not ranked	0	20
	accidents (q.9)	N/A	blank	
	4.07	N/A	O LUIIA	

SOLRK	Ranked importance of solidarity (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	21
WAGERK	Ranked importance of wage bargaining (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	22
WKHRRK	Ranked importance of working hours bargaining (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	23
H&SRK	Ranked importance of health and safety negotiating (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	24
HOLRK	Ranked importance of holiday entitlement bargaining (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	25
EQPRK	Ranked importance of obtaining equal pay for women (q.9)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-8 0 blank	26
BONSRK	Ranked importance of bonus schemes in causing accidents (q.10)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-6 0 blank	27
BORERK	Ranked importance of boredom in causing accidents (q.10)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-6 0 blank	28
CARERK	Ranked importance of carelessness in causing accidents (q.10)	item	enter rank not ranked N/A	1-6 0 blank	29
NOTRRK	Ranked importance of lack of training in causing accidents (q.10)		enter rank not ranked N/A	1-6 0 blank	30
NINFRK	Ranked importance of lack of information in causing accidents (q.10)		enter rank not ranked N/A	1-6 0 blank	31
SYSRK	Ranked importance of bad		enter rank	1-6	32

	systems of work in item not ranked causing accidents (q.10) N/A	0 blank	
INFRK	Ranked importance of more enter rank information to improve item not ranked health & safety at work (q.11) N/A	1-6 0 blank	33
ORGRK	Ranked importance of enter rank better union organizatiem not ranked tion to improve health 8 safety at work (q.11)	1-6 0	34
SORK	Ranked importance of enter rank better safety officers item not ranked to improve health & N/A safety at work (q.11)	0	35
MANRK	Ranked importance of enter rank better management item not ranked involvement to improve health & safety at work (q.11)	0	36
FIRK	Ranked importance of more enter rank FI visits to improve item not ranked health & safety at work (q.11)		37
TRRK	Ranked importance of enter rank more health and safety item not ranked training to improve N/A health & safety at work (q.11)	1-6 0 blank	38
INCKNO	What has done most to training course increase respondent's Literature, films knowledge of health & Work experience safety at work? (q.12) Involvement within union Other Combination of 1,2,3 N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 blank	39
EFFHO	Do union head office Yes efforts make workplace No make workplace safer? N/A	1 2 blank	40

ОНУНО	Reasons that union head	Information	1	41
	office efforts make Pre			
	workplace safer (q.13b)	legislation	2	
		Training	3	
		Other	4	
		Not applicable		
		('No' to a.)	0	
		N/A	blank	
EFFLO	Do local union office	Yes	1	42
21120	efforts make workplace	No	2	
	safer? (q.14a)	N/A	blank	
		м/ А	DIANK	
WHYLO	Reasons that local union	Training	1	43
	office efforts make work-			
		ress management	2 3 4	
		Information	4	
		Other	5	
	Comb	inations of 1-4	6	
		Not applicable		
		('No' to a.)	0	
		N/A	blank	
			Diank	
EFFWKU	Do workplace union	Yes	1	44
	efforts make workplace	No	2	
	safer? (q.15a)	N/A	blank	
WHYWKU	Reasons that workplace I	involved & know.	1	45
WILL WILL	union efforts make Safety rep. effort,			10
	workplace safer (q.15b)	functions	9	
		fety committees	2 3	
			4	
	Pressur	e on management Others	5	
			3	
		Not applicable	0	
		('No' to a.)		
		N/A	blank	
FTROLE	Respondents view of Back-	-up, info. advice	1	46
	role that should be	Lay on training	2	
	played by full-time	Visits, inspect		
	union officers in	workplace; meet,		
	health & safety (q.16)	lecture members	3	
		ire on management	4	
		ill-time health &		
		safety	5	
	Co-	-ordinate info. &		
		ise with branches	6	
		Other	6 7	
	Con	mbinations of 1-5	8	
	Con	N/A	blank	
		, P/A	Diank	

RESH&S	Does respondent's union devote enough	Yes No	1 2	47
	resources to health	N/A	0	
	& safety (q.17a)			
INCRES	How should greater	Training	1	48
	union resources be	Information	2	
	applied? (q.17b)	Backing	3	
		ll-time health afety officers	4	
	& 3	Other	5	
		Not applicable		
		('Yes' to a.)	0	
		N/A	blank	
UNCONF	Do unions and management	Yes	1	49
	have conflicting interest		2	
	in health and safety? (q.18a)	N/A	blank	
WHYCON	Reasons for union/managem		1	50
	conflict over health and	Profit	2 3	
	safety (q.18b)	Production	3 4	
		gement lacking r explanations	4	
	Othe	for 'no'	5	
		Not applicable		
		('No' to a.)	0	
		N/A	blank	
ACCWK	Accident at work first	item circled	1	51
	aroused health & safety	not circled	2	
	interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
UNLIT	Union literature first	item circled	1 2	52
	aroused health & safety interest (q.19)	not circled N/A	blank	
	Interest (q.13)		DIAIR	
HSWPUB	Publicity on HASAWA	item circled	1	53
	first aroused health	not circled	2	
	& safety interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
MANATT	Management attitude	item circled	1	54
	first aroused health &	not circled	2	
	safety interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
DISSWK	Dissatisfaction with	item circled	1	55
	work conditions first	not circled	2	
	392			

	aroused health & safety interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
OUTINT	Outside interests first	item circled	1	56
0011111	aroused health & safety	not circled	2	00
	interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
OTHRES	Other factors first	item circled	1	57
	aroused health & safety	not circled	2	
	interest (q.19)	N/A	blank	
MANROU	Does respondent consider	Yes, always	1	58
	management to co-operate	Yes often	2	
	in providing health &	Rarely	3	
	safety information as a	No, never	4	
	matter of routine? (q.20a)	N/A	blank	
MANREQ	Does respondent consider	Yes, always	1	59
	management to co-operate	Yes often	2 3	
	in providing health &	Rarely	3	
	safety information on	No, never	4 5	
	request? (q.20b)	Never asked N/A	blank	
INFDIF	Kind of information found	Chemicals/		
1111111	difficult by respondent	new materials	1	60
	to obtain from management	Machinery	2	
	(q.21)	None	3	
		Other (inc.		
		everything	4	
		Both 1 & 2	5	
		N/A	blank	
HSECON	Has respondent ever been	Yes	1	61
	in touch with HSE? (q.22a)		2	
	National Action	N/A	blank	
HSEISS	Last issue raised by I	njury/accident	1	62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE	Work system/		62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b)	Work system/ conditions		62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b)	Work system/ conditions dust/chemicals	2 3	62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b) Fumes/	Work system/ conditions dust/chemicals Other		62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b) Fumes/	Work system/ conditions dust/chemicals Other Not applicable	2 3 4	62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b) Fumes/	Work system/ conditions dust/chemicals Other	2 3	62
HSEISS	respondent with HSE (q.22b) Fumes/	Work system/ conditions dust/chemicals Other Not applicable ('No' to a.)	2 3 4	63

	health & safety problem? (q.23)	N/A	blank	
CONLOC	Does respondent contact local union office with health & safety problem? (q.23)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	64
CONASC	Does respondent contact area safety committee with health & safety problem? (q.23)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	65
CONTC	Does respondent contact trades council with health & safety problem? (q.23)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	66
CONHGP	Does respondent contact local hazards group with health & safety problem? (q.23)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	67
CONHSE	Does respondent contact HSE with health & safety problem? (q.23)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	68
CONOTH		s, one or more None indicated N/A	1 2 blank	69
FTOACC	Has respondent had accident report forms from union FTO's? (q.24)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	70
FTOHLP	Has respondent had FTO help in completing accident forms? (q.24)	Yes, circled Not circled N/A	1 2 blank	71
FTOCLM	Has respondent had details of successful claims from union FTO's (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	72
FTOTOX	Has respondent had details of toxic substances from	Yes No	1 2	73

union FTO's? (q.24)	N/A	blank	
Has respondent had infor-	Yes	1	74
mation on other hazards	No	2	
from union FTO's? (q.24)	N/A	blank	
Has respondent had health	Yes	1	75
& safety bulletins etc.	No	2	
from union FTO's? (q.24)	N/A	blank	
	Has respondent had information on other hazards from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had health & safety bulletins etc.	Has respondent had information on other hazards from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had health safety bulletins etc. Yes No	Has respondent had infor- mation on other hazards from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had health safety bulletins etc. Yes 1 N/A blank

Has respondent has health & safety handbooks from union FTO's? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	76
Has respondent had information on health & safety training courses from union FTO's? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	7 7
Had respondent had information on legal rights on health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	78
Has respondent had advice on workplace organization for health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	79
Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	80
Respondent number 3 digits to ident	tify	•••	2/1-3
Has respondent had FTO advice on action to take with health & safety grievances? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	2/4
Has rspondent had any other FTO communications on health & safety? (q.24)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	2/5
Does respondent get enough health & safety information from union FTO's? (q.25a)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	2/6
safety information would health & s respondent like to get? Indu	safety stry-	1 2	2/7
	health & safety handbooks from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had information on health & safety training courses from union FTO's? (q.24) Had respondent had information on legal rights on health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on workplace organization for health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24) Respondent number 3 digits to identify a digits on the safety grievances? (q.24) Has respondent had FTO advice on action to take with health & safety grievances? (q.24) Has respondent had any other FTO communications on health & safety? (q.24) Does respondent get enough health & safety information from union FTO's? (q.25a) What further health and safety information would health & safety like to get?	has respondent had union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had information on health & safety training courses from union FTO's? (q.24) Had respondent had information on legal rights on health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on workplace organization for health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24) Has respondent had yes advice on action to take with health & safety grievances? (q.24) Has respondent had any other FTO communications No nealth & safety? (q.24) Has respondent had any yes other FTO communications No nealth & safety? (q.24) No nealth & safety? (q.24) What further health and safety information from union FTO's? (q.25a) What further health and safety information would respondent like to get?	health & safety handbooks from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had information on health & safety training courses from union FTO's? (q.24) Had respondent had information on legal rights on health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on workplace organization for health & safety from union FTO's? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24) Has respondent had advice on identifying hazards? (q.24) Respondent number 3 digits to identify Has respondent had Yes 1 no 2 n/A blank Respondent number 3 digits to identify Has respondent had Yes 1 no 2 n/A blank Respondent number 3 digits to identify Has respondent had Yes 1 no 2 n/A blank Respondent number 3 digits to identify Has respondent had Yes 1 no 2 n/A blank Does respondent had any Yes 1 no 2 n/A blank Does respondent get enough N/A blank Does respondent get enough yes 1 no 2 n/A blank What further health and safety information would health & safety 1 ndustry- what further health and safety information would health & safety 1 ndustry- lidustry- lidustry-

	Info. on toxic substances Info. on other hazards H&S circulars/ bulletins	3 4	
	substances Info. on other hazards H&S circulars/ bulletins	4	
	Info. on other hazards H&S circulars/ bulletins	4	
	hazards H&S circulars/ bulletins		
	H&S circulars/ bulletins		
	bulletins		
		5	
	H&S handbooks	5 6 7	
	Other	7	
		,	
	Combination of		
	q.24 numbers	8	
	Not applicable		
	('Yes' to a.)	0	
	N/A	blank	
Has respondent been	Vac	1	2/8
			2/0
		The second second	
and safety issue (q.26)	N/A	Diank	
Most recent issue F	umes ventilation	The state of	
		1	2/9
			2/3
		4	
about (q.21)		0	
	N/A	blank	
Was respondent satisfied	Satisfied	1	2/10
			-,
		2	
10001.01. (4.20)			
		0	
	N/A	blank	
Most recent health &	Fumes, chemicals		
	and dust	1	2/11
			-,
(1)			
		9	
		3	
		1	
		4	
	N/A	blank	
Could respondent operate	Vec	1	2/12
			2/12
and safety if not trade union member (q.30a)	N/A	blank	
differ member (4.00a)			
	Most recent issue respondent has been in touch with FTO about (q.27) Was respondent satisfied with assistance received? (q.28) Most recent health & safety issue respondent has been involved in at work (q.29) Could respondent operate effectively on health	Has respondent been in contact with FTO on particular health and safety issue (q.26) Most recent issue respondent has been in touch with FTO about (q.27) Was respondent satisfied with assistance received? (q.28) Most recent health & safety issue respondent has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & safety issue respondent has been involved in at work (q.29) Could respondent operate effectively on health Has respondent been yes in contact work (q.26) Fumes, ventilation, radiation, chemicals ('No' to q.26) Not applicable ('Yes' to q.26)	Has respondent been in contact with FTO on particular health and safety issue (q.26) Most recent issue respondent has been in touch with FTO about (q.27) Was respondent satisfied with assistance with assistance received? (q.28) Most recent health & Satisfied with assistance Neither satisfied received? (q.28) Most recent health & Satisfied 2 Not satisfied 2 Not satisfied 3 Not applicable ('No' to q.26) 0 N/A blank Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals safety issue respondent has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29) Most recent health & Fumes, chemicals ventilation has been involved in at work (q.29)

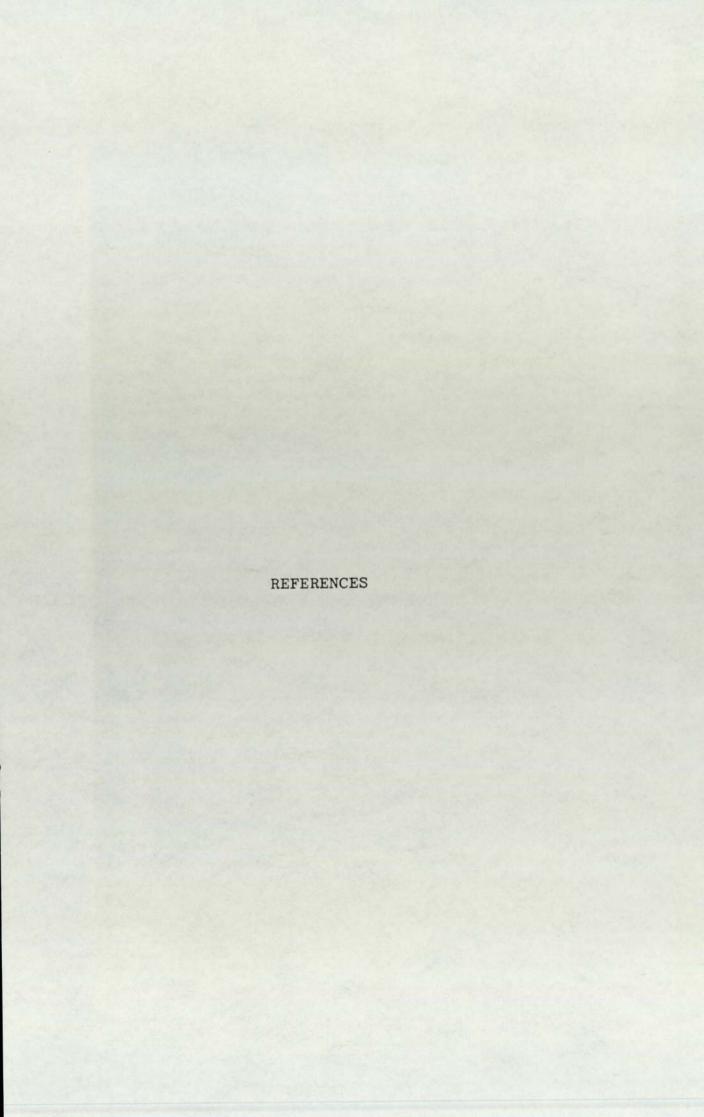
	operate effectively on	Management	2	
	health & safety if not trade union member? (q.30b)	recognition Other	2	
	trade union member: (4.500	Combination of	•	
		1 & 2	4	
		Not applicable		
		('Yes' to a.)	0	
		N/A	blank	
REFJOB	Would respondent refuse	Yes	1	2/14
	to do job considered	No	2	
	unsafe? (q.31a)	N/A	blank	
FURSTE	Further steps respondent	Contact shop		
. 0.1.012	would take if asked to	steward, safety		
	do an unsafe job (q.31b)	rep., district		
		officer, etc.	1	2/15
		Contact lower/		
	hi	gher management,		
		safety officer	2	
		act inspectorate	3	
	Check legis. & quote			
	Advise other workers Only start again when safe			
	Only star		2 3 4 5 6 7	
	Other Inform union, manage-			
		nt & inspectorate	8	
		N/A	blank	
OTHTRN	Has respondent had any	Yes	1	2/16
O I II I I II I	other training apart	No	2	
	from TUC course? (q.32a)	N/A	blank	
WHORAN	Who ran other courses?	Management	1	2/17
	(q.33)	Trade union	2	
	Joint	union/management	1 2 3 4	
		RoSPA	4	
		Other	5	
		Not applicable		
		('No' to q.28)	0	
		N/A	blank	
TUCOPN	Respondent's opinion of	Very good	1	2/18
	TUC health & safety	Good	2	
	courses (q.34) Nei	ther good nor bad	1 2 3 4	
		Poor		
		Very poor N/A	5 blank	
		Yes	1	2/19
MORVIS	Would respondent like	ies	1	2/19

	to see TUC health & No safety course improved N/A by more visual aids? (q.35)		
MORCAS	Would respondent like to see TUC health & safety course improved by more case studies? (q.35)	2	2/20
MORPRC	Would respondent like to see TUC health & safety course improved by more practical work? (q.35) Yes No	1 2 blank	2/21
LONGER	Would respondent like to Yes see longer TUC health & No safety courses? (q.35) N/A	1 2 blank	2/22
CONTIN	Would respondent like to Yes see continuous TUC health No & safety courses? (q.35)	1 2 blank	2/23
BETINS	Would respondent like to Yes see better instruction on No TUC health & safety courses? N/A (q.35)	1 2 blank	2/24
COUSOK	Respondent considers no need Yes for TUC course improvement No (q.35)	2	2/25
MORSUG	Has respondent other suggestions Yes about TUC health & safety No courses? (q.35)	1 2 blank	2/26
JOB	Respondent's present job White collar (q.36) Blue collar Unclear N/A	1 2 3 blank	2/27
WORK	Respondent's employment Public sector (q.37) Private sector Unclear N/A	1 2 3 blank	2/28
JOBTIM	Length of time respondent Less than 2 yrs	1	2/29

	has been in present job (q.38)	2-10 years More than 10 yrs N/A	2 3 blank	
NOEMP	No. of people employed at respondent's workplace (q.39)	Less than 50 50-200 200-1000 More than 1000 N/A	1 2 3 4 blank	2/30
WORKTU	Degree of unionisation at respondent's workplace (q.40)	Less than 50% 50-90% 90-99% 100% N/A	1 2 3 4 blank	2/31
TUPOSN	Respondent's union position (q.41)	Safety rep. Shop steward Shop steward and safety rep. No position Other N/A	1 2 3 4 5 blank	2/32
ELECT	Was respondent elected as safety rep.? (q.42)	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	2/33
SRFOR	How long has respondent been a safety rep.? (q.4)	Less than 3 mths 3) 3-9 months More than 9 mths Not applicable N/A	1 2 3 0 blank	2/34
CONTSR	Will respondent continue as safety rep. for more than a further year? (q.	Yes No N/A	1 2 blank	2/35
AGEGP	Respondent's age group (q.46) Under 20 21-35 36-50 51+ N/A	1 2 3 4 blank	2/36
OTHCOM	ge	p health & safety/ enerally favourable ical of questions/ questionnaire	1 2	2/37

	Other None	3 blank	
HSPROC	Workplace procedure Worker first raises for raising and Safety rep. first	1	2/38
	pursuing health & raises	2	
	safety issues (q.1) Other first raises	3	
	Don't know who		
	first raises	4	
	N/A	blank	
SRPROC	Health & safety issues Yes	1	2/39
	procedures involved Safety rep. not		
	safety rep.? (q.1) mentioned	2	
	N/A	blank	
SCPROC	Health & safety issues Yes	1	2/40
	procedure involved Safety committee		
	safety committee/meetings not mentioned	2	
	(q.1) N/A	blank	
BRPROC	Health & safety issues Yes	1	2/41
	procedure involves union Branch not		
	branch (q.1) mentioned	2	
	N/A	blank	
SSPROC	Health & safety issues Yes	1	2/42
	procedure involved shop Shop steward		
	steward, etc. for union not mentioned	2	
	information (q.1) N/A	blank	
COPROC	Health & safety procedures Yes	1	2/43
	involves convenor (q.1) Not mentioned	2	ST ARREST
	N/A	blank	
FTPROC	Does health & safety issues Yes	1	2/44
	procedure involve FTO? (q.1) Not mentioned	2	-/
	N/A	blank	
FORMAN	Does health & safety issues Yes	1	2/45
2 0 1 1 1 1 1	procedure involve foreman? Not mentioned	2	-,10
	(q.1) N/A	blank	
HIGMAN	Does health & safety issues Yes	1	2/46
	procedure involve higher Not mentioned	2	-/ 10
	management? (q.1) N/A	blank	
			CONTRACT OF

SOETC	Does health & safety issu procedure involve safety officer etc.? (q.1)		Yes mentioned N/A	2	2/47
FIETC	Does health & safety issu procedure involve FI or equivalent? (q.1)		Yes mentioned N/A	2	2/48
ENGEER	Does health & safety issu procedure involve factory or plant engineer? (q.1)	Not	Yes mentioned N/A		2/49
THRDPY	Does health & safety issue procedure involve outside third party? (q.1)		Yes mentioned N/A	1 2 blank	2/50
онѕ	Does health & safety issue procedure involve occupational health scheme? (q.1	Not	Yes mentioned N/A	1 2 blank	2/51
FREQIM	Any reference made to frequency of inspections or meetings in health & safety issues procedure? (Yes mentioned N/A	1 2 blank	2/52
TIMLIM	Are there time limits for each stage of health & safety issues procedure?		Yes mentioned N/A	1 2 blank	2/53
REPRO	Are hazard reports or formart of health & safety issues procedure? (q.1)	ns Not	Yes mentioned N/A	1 2 blank	2/54
SETPRO	Is there a set procedure for health & safety issues (q.1)	To be Normal Urgent Stop	Yes, set procedure procedure negotiated grievance procedure job, etc. Call union Other N/A	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 blank	2/55



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