

“Hats off to the Past, Coats
off to the Future”

Bill Simpson, Chair, Health & Safety Commission, 1983.
Foreword, “Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Factories, 1833-1983”

The Development & Organisation of UK Safety Reps Training & Support 1973-1988.

David Gee, Retired Senior Adviser, Science, Policy, Emerging Issues, **European Environment Agency**, Copenhagen.

Now Visiting Fellow, Institute of Environment, Health, and Societies, **Brunel University**, London.

1973-88 **Health & Safety Training & Support at TUC & GMB Union**

Summary

Part A 1973-1978 Safety Rep **training** takes off.....

Part B 1978-1988**Safety Reps supported** by their **TUs** and the **“Hazards”** movements

Part C 2016-2020 Towards a **“European & Global Research & Repository Network on Harm Prevention”**

Part A.

Safety Rep **training** takes off.....

L'Autunno Caldo, Rome 1969/70

- David Gee teaches English in Rome (The English school , Via Lucullo), lives near P Navonna.....with
- Stephan Overly, who studies at the Gramsci Institute, Rome, and who translates the Italian TU H&S agreements eg Fiat for UK journals...
- ...and they both watch & get inspired by the huge strikes and demonstrations
- DG returns to UK to work for unions : AUEW, TUC, GBM

The roll out of TUC Training of Safety Reps 1973-93.

1973/4 **Development** of the TUC courses at **TUC Training College**, London
via 5 day residential courses

1974/5 Training the c 150 **Tutors** in TUC weekend schools

	<u>Courses (10 days over 10 weeks)</u>	<u>S. Reps</u>
1975/6	361	5370
1976/77	578	7803
1977/78	731	10,398
1978/79	1744	27361
1979/80	1441	18,738
1980/81	879	12,067
1981/2	714	8934
1982/3	526	6737
1993523	6775	

Key Causal Factors in the rise of TU Safety Reps & their Training

- 1862 disaster at New Hartley Colliery killed 204 miners,
- 1872 Coal Mines Act **Workmens Inspectors** in the Mines
- 1972 Robens (ex Coal Mines boss) Report on Health & Safety at Work, : considered TU Safety Reps but rejected them.....
- **Flixborough Disaster 1974 & Court of Inquiry 1975**
- **1977 Legal rights to TU Safety reps and their training by the TUs....following TU campaign.**
- **Funds** from the Government to the TUC,,,which paid.....
- **Willing tutors** from the Workers Education Association, Colleges & Universities to run the 10 day courses.

FILXBOROUGH, 01.06.1974,
UK



Flixborough Court of Inquiry, 1975

“Lessons to be learned”

- there was **no evidence whatsoever that Nypro placed production before safety**. Nevertheless, if production is below target and profit is below budget, there are inevitably conflicting, albeit perhaps **unappreciated, priorities** when decisions have to be made
- “This corrosion was created because nitrate treated cooling water had been used in the past to dilute small leakages of cyclohexane from the plant.
- **This phenomenon had not been appreciated by the management at the time**
- it is essential that the management structure should be so organised that **the feedback from the bottom to the top should be effective**

Origins of the radical content of S Rep training courses: the 5 “Bibles”

- Vol 1 of **Das Kapital** (Marx)about shift from Cottage industry to Factories....
- “**Redgrave’s Factories Acts**”, the Factory Inspectors “bible”about **the results of decades long struggles for legal protections**: then the decades long undoing of these rights by the courts.....
- “**Hazards of Work : how to fight them**” Pat Kinnersley
- “**Safety or Profit?**” Theo Nichols
- “**Work is Dangerous to your Health**” S. Daum (USA)

1973

**SAFETY
OR PROFIT**

**Industrial Accidents
& the
Conventional Wisdom**

Theo Nichols & Pete Armstrong

1973

Pluto  Press
Workers' Handbook No.1

The Hazards of Work: How to Fight Them.

**Physical Hazards / Patterns of Work
Chemical Hazards / Disease / Prevention
Accidents / Action / The Legal Machine
Safety Law / Winning Damages
Industrial Injury Benefits / Organising
Directory of Toxic Substances**

Patrick Kinnersly

Other Sources of inspiration & support.....

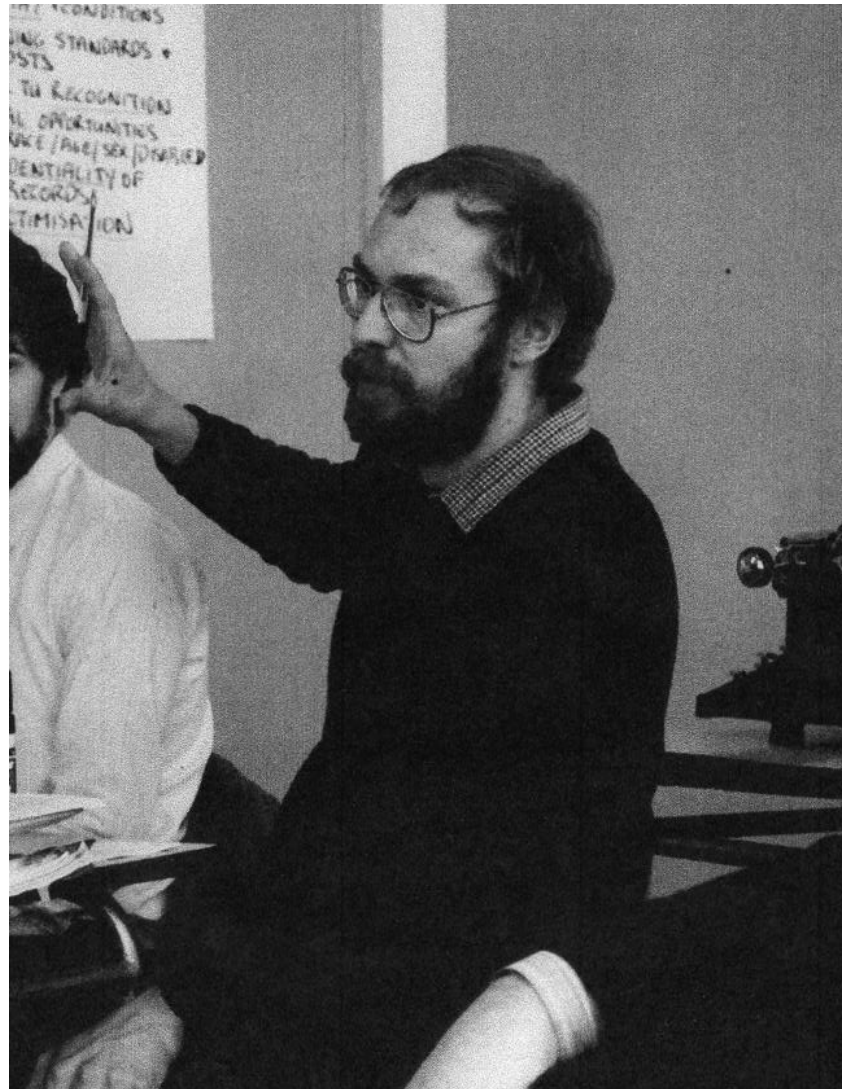
- Cesare **Maltoni** (Cancer) Irving **Selikoff** (Mt Sinai, N Y, asbestos), Morris **Greenberg** (Asbestos), and the Institute (**Belpoggi**) & Collegium Ramazzini (**Landrigan & Soffriti**), Bologna
- US Unions eg **OCAW**, **Tony Mazocchi**; Clothing Workers of America (their film, “The Inheritance”, with Pete Seeger songs, was shown at the TUC Training College courses....)
- Sam **Epstein** (Politics of Cancer), Prof **Bob Case** (cancer epidemiology), Tony **Fletcher** (epidemiology, noise etc), Walt **Patterson** (Nuclear) Alister **Hay**, Alan **Dalton**, Charlie **Clutterbuck**, and of course
- **Rory O’Neil** who for <40 years has been providing, on a pittance, radical OHS journalism & support to S Reps via “Hazards” journal

(With apologies to those that I have missed.....)

Structure of the Approach to dealing with Hazards at Work

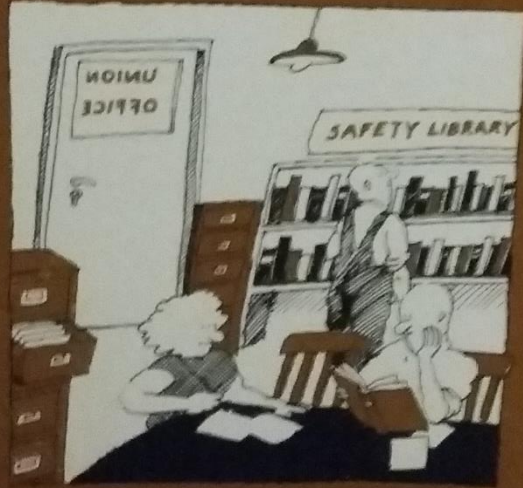
- **Ask the right questions** about the nature of the harmful agents/practices/machines etc.
- Via **analytical dialogue** between S Reps & Tutors sharing the worlds of work conditions, Technical OHS information, and TU organisation **aimed at creating “safe workplaces”** not lecturing “lazy, greedy, careless, apathetic” workers
- **Identify a standard** to aim for from the best available information on the world eg USA, Sweden, Germany, Italy, Finland, Russia
- **Organise** to achieve the standard

Andy Fairclough 1951-1996
TUC Education Dept, 1977-90



1979

information for safety reps



a course for union representatives
TUC education

Part B 1978-1988

Safety Reps supported by their TUs and the “Hazards”
movements

5/6 UK National Health & Safety Officers in Trade Unions

- ASTMS-Sheila McKechnie
- GMB-David Gee
- TGWU-Alan Dalton
- SOGAT-?
- Bakers Union-Nigel Bryson
- Agricultural Workers –Chris Kaufman
- TUC H&S Adviser (Jim Hamilton) and TUC Doctor

(Conflict between them and their Union bosses was not uncommon-see Ibsen's play , "An Enemy of the People")

Plus support from the H&S Training of TU Officers by the TUC and TUs.

Sheila McKechnie Health & Safety Officer ,
ASTMS Union. 1976-1985

1948-2004



Some TU Campaigns & Support on Key Hazards

- Chemicals eg GMB/ASTMS **Cancer Prevention Campaign; Ag workers pesticides campaign**
- Asbestos campaigns eg GMB **Asbestos in the Community**
- Radiation eg GMB **Campaign to reduce Radiation dose limits 10x; BNFL Radiation & cancers Compensation scheme with payments < 50 % probability**
- Noise, Stress, VDUs, Repetitive strain injuries, MMMF etc
- TV Documentaries eg “Alice: a Fight for Life” (Asbestos), “The Nuclear Dustbin” (BNFL, Sellafield)
Thames TV “Pollution from work” Chanel 4: “Our Backyard series Welsh TV BCME cancers at Pontyclun

Support from Worker & Community Hazards Groups

- Hazards Bulletin
- London Hazards Centre
- Manchester Hazards Centre
- Sheffield Occupational Health Centre
- Conferences of Safety Reps in UK and Europe.
- TUC H&S service



“Lincolnshire coroner Paul Kelly recorded that Elizabeth Belt, who taught in schools in the county from 1968 to 1995, died as a result of an industrial disease, the asbestos-related cancer mesothelioma. She had provided written testimony before her death detailing the presence of asbestos in display boards in the classrooms where she worked”.

Number 736 - 30 January 2016

“Workplace safety enforcement in freefall” 2015

“the number of proactive inspections has fallen by 95% in five years.

14 Dec 2015, By [Hugh Robertson](#) TUC H&S Adviser

“So my final thoughts for 2016 in signing off my last TUC blog”

“For a Just transition: Consider how **Sports Direct** treats the workers at its **giant warehouse** on the site of the former **Shirebrook pit**, and you have the model of what a **just transition to a low carbon future** cannot look like.

“build on the pillars of the **Decent Work Agenda set out by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in October 2015: social dialogue, social protection, rights at work and employment**”.

Phil Pearson, retired TUC H&S, Dec 2015, now tweeting **@GreenUnions**

Fiona Muir, **director of health and safety for the Building Workers' International**, an umbrella group of unions in the sector with over 12 million members in 135 countries. Fiona worked for UK then Spanish TUs on OHS before joining BWI



Modern Slavery, UK & Globally, 2015

The UK became the third country after Niger and Norway to ratify a landmark International Labour Organisation (ILO) agreement to outlaw forced labour and modern slavery.

The ILO [estimates](#) that **21 million people are victims of forced labour** around the world, producing approximately US\$150 billion a year in illicit profits.

C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Convention concerning Forced or Compulsory Labour (Entry into force: 01 May 1932 Updated by 2014 Protocol

Modern Slavery In the UK.....

The UK ratification came two days after a West Yorkshire businessman was **convicted of employing large numbers of Hungarian men as a “slave workforce”** at the now defunct Koze Sleep bed factory in Ravensthorpe, Dewsbury.

A conviction followed that of Hungarian nationals Ferenc Illes and Janos Orsos, who were jailed last year after being found guilty of supplying Koze Sleep with slave labour.

Ethical audits by high street retailers including Next Plc, the John Lewis Partnership and Dunelm Mill had **failed to spot the exploitative employment practices**

Part C 2016-2020

Towards a “European & Global Research & Repository Network on Harm Prevention

????

“Process Safety - Learning from the Past and Implementing for the Future” 2013

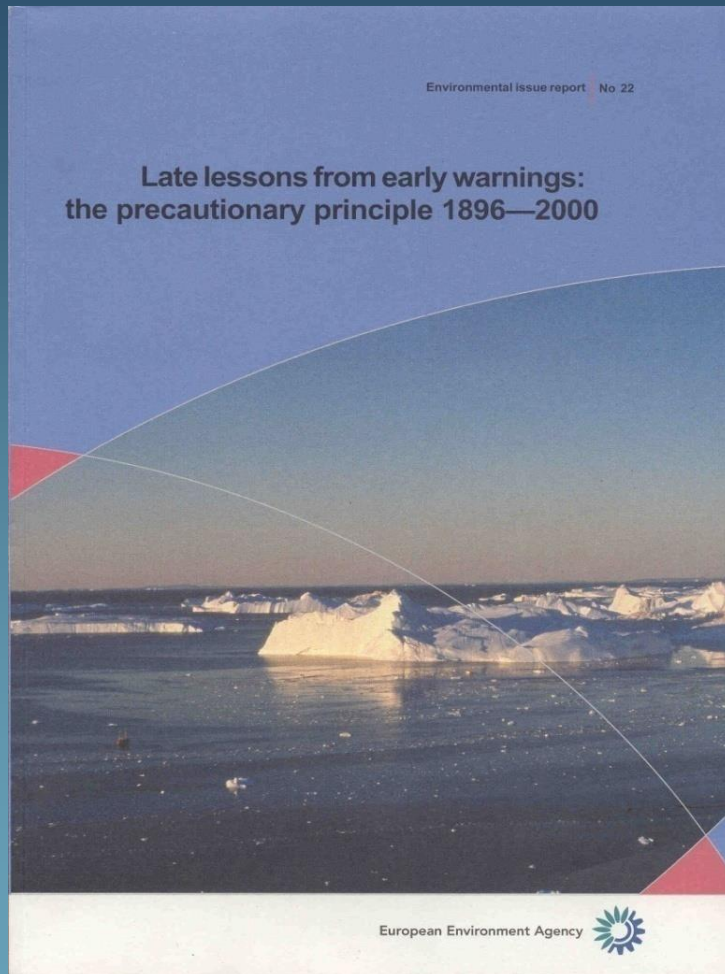
“there are many examples, such as Texas City, Formosa, Longford, (**Flixborough**, Bhopal, Toulouse, etc) and **Deepwater Horizon**, where previous incidents within an organisation could have provided valuable lessons in identifying and correcting the hazards which ultimately led to a major incident, **if the information had been captured by the Safety Management System (SMS) and used.**

Sarah Sinclair, Major Hazards Safety Solutions Pty Ltd, PO Box 228 Rosanna 3084, Victoria and Chemical Engineering Department, Monash University, Clayton 3800, Victoria

Homo Sapiens (tragicus?) as slow learners

Two volumes

2001



2013



34 case studies

'Environmental chemicals'

- **Beryllium**
- **PCBs**
- CFCs
- TBT antifoulants
- **Mercury**
- **Environmental Tobacco**
- **Perchloroethylene**
- **Booster biocides**
- **DBCP**
- **DDT**
- **Vinyl chloride**
- **Bisphenol A**

Ecosystems

- **Ecosystems resilience**
- Great Lakes pollution
- Fish stock collapse
- Acid rain
- **Bee decline, France**
- **Invasive alien species**
- **Floods**
- **Climate change**

Transport fuel additives

- **Benzene**
- MBTE
- **Lead**

'Micro technologies'

- **Nano**
- **GMOs**

Animal feed additives

- BSE, 'mad cow disease'
- Beef hormones
- Antibiotics

- **Asbestos**

Pharmaceuticals

- **Contraceptive pill**
- DES

Radiations

- **X-rays**
- **Mobile phones**
- **Nuclear accidents**



....and 8 “horizontal “ chapters..

- the “12 late lessons” from vol 1...

..and in vol 2:

- **the precautionary principle;**
- **false positives;**
- **precautionary science;**
- **costs of inaction;**
- **protection of early warning scientists;**
- **why businesses ignore early warnings;**
- **Conclusions.**
- **2 Annexes on summaries & updates of vol 1 case studies.**

Some Lessons of PCBs

- **Persistence, bio-accumulation and large spatial range** ensures widespread and enduring contamination long after the 1970s bans.
- **Action on early liver damage effects in workers in 1930s** could have stimulated research and lower exposures
- *“The non application of the **precautionary principle** has left a legacy the total effects and costs of which can only be guessed at”*

Koppe & Keys, chapter on PCBs in “Late Lessons from Early Warnings”
EEA, 2001.

Need for greater public engagement...

- In hazard/risk/options/alternative assessments
- In applying the PP via “acceptable” levels of protection for health & environments and
- in choosing **appropriate strengths of evidence for action**
- In **choosing strategic innovation pathways** to 2050 on energy, transport, agriculture (see Agro-ecology & GMOs chapter) & consumer product chemicals.

Conclusions, Late Lessons from Early Warnings, EEA, 2013.

Time for Training of “Citizens for the Environment”

By whom, how, and with what Funding?

Objectives & Initiation of the proposed Research (“Knowledge for Action”) Repository ?

- To gather, and make accessible to all, **the documents and experiences (eg oral histories) of past struggles in Europe** (and elsewhere) for occupational, public and ecosystems health
- To **reflect & research the past so as to produce lessons for the future**
- To **disseminate the accumulated knowledge & wisdom** in multiple formats (instagrams, TU TED Talks, videos, etc) to the TU and Community Activists of today and tomorrow.
- **INAIL/ETUC to organise first planning mtgs. May & Sept 2016??**