

nottingham bulletin.

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INCORPORATING THE BULLETINS OF NOTTINGHAM WORKSHOP AND
NOTTINGHAM CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE CUTS.

Health & Safety issue

Introducing GNASH

**A chip a day keeps
the doctor away?**



ALSO

**Pickets continue at the Post
Sanderson's dispute
Inner city programme
Caunton avenue flats
May Day photos
Job loss in Nottingham
The 'Right' Approach**

GNASH NOISE MEETING

Nottingham's new action group on workplace health and safety, GNASH held its first public meeting on Industrial Noise Hazards on Wednesday 23rd May. This is the first of a series of meetings about particular workplace hazards and topics relevant to safety reps. After a film, the speaker, Tony Clayton, explained how management usually pushed the cheap option of ear muffs or ear plugs whereas the need was to control noise at source.

There are a variety of ways to cut noise in the workplace, he said. These include good maintenance of machines; installing different parts in machines (eg rubber belts replacing metal gears); change in process (parts falling down shutters not falling as far); isolation of noisy processes from resonating materials and the damping of such materials. Noise can also be reduced by screening or enclosing noisy machinery and it can be absorbed by special materials on ceiling and walls instead of letting it bounce off again.

AN UNDERESTIMATED HAZARD

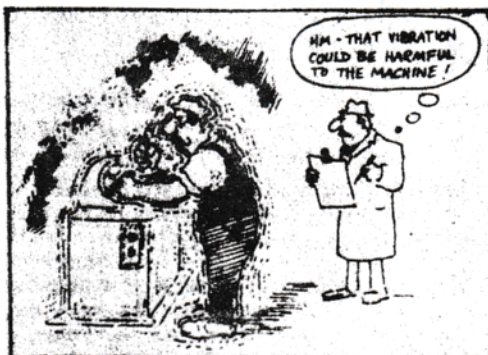
Unfortunately many workers do not recognise noise as a health hazard especially if an industry has traditionally been a noisy one. The loss of hearing often only develops over a period of years and people do not realise that hearing loss from exposure to noise will be on top of the loss of hearing that most people suffer as a simple result of ageing. Thus, while one may now be O.K., by retirement, many workers may have serious hearing disabilities.

Tony pointed out that many safety reps. are ahead of rank and file union members in understanding the dangers and this difficulty of getting workers to take this

hazard seriously was borne out by a group of workers from Draycott. Their management had had a survey of oil and noise at their factory but had refused to hand over the results to the safety reps. They had just assured the reps that conditions were "safe".

The next meeting is on June 27th also at the International Community Centre and is on Occupational Cancer. The subsequent meeting in July will be on the rights of Safety Representatives.

Apart from organising public meetings GNASH has been developing other means to get its ideas across to local safety reps. A Bulletin has been produced which contains a Model Health and Safety



Agreement, an article on the Health and Safety implications of Visual Display Units, details of the sources of information open to local safety reps and an explanation about GNASH itself. A limited number of copies are still available and can be obtained from 118 Mansfield Road. Apart from the Bulletin GNASH has also publicised the information which it can make available to safety reps on VDUs and an article on this appeared in Nottingham News. GNASH is anxious that workers facing the introduct-

ion of VDUs should get in contact and the material that is available can be provided.

HEALTH AND SAFETY LIBRARY

Meanwhile also a Health and Safety library is being developed at 118 Mansfield Road. Recent acquisitions include the International Labour Organisations Encyclopedia on Safety and Health at Work and Sax, Dangerous Properties of Industrial Materials. These are well worth browsing through to find the hazards and their prevention associated with YOUR job. The ILO Encyclopedia has brief, but detailed articles on the hazards of many industries and occupations as well as articles on particular hazards and diseases. References are given to further, more detailed information sources. The library is open to all safety reps during most week days and is usually open up to 5.30. (Please phone 50428 if you want to come in at some other time).

SUPPORT NEEDED

GNASH depends on your support. Steering Committee meetings are open to all safety reps to participate in. The next Steering Committee is on the 4th of July at 118 Mansfield Road at 7.30.

Money is also urgently required to finance activities. Gas testing, noise meters and books all cost a considerable amount of money. The ILO Encyclopedia mentioned above and book by Sax cost £95 for the two of them. So please use the resources we've got and help us by getting your trade union branch to help us by chipping in some money. Donations please to the GNASH Treasurer, John McGuigan, c/o NUPE, 6 Sherwood Rise, Nottingham.

B.D.

trades union council oppose libraries cuts

At its meeting on the 16th May, the Nottingham and District Trades Union Council unanimously voted for a motion proposed by the County Branch representatives of NALGO and heavily backed by teachers delegates.

The motion states "that we view with concern that no new library books will be purchased for schools and colleges in the financial year 1979/80, in accordance with the Education Budget and demands the re-instatement of this provision immediately."

In proposing the motion, Chris Wiles (NALGO) drew attention to the double standards of the popular press which screams about

teachers disrupting the education of children by taking industrial action for just pay claims and yet the same newspapers ignore the much more serious disruption brought about by the Education Committee sponsored library cuts.

John Harrison (NUT), in seconding the motion, informed the meeting that children were already being denied proper supplies of paper and new exercise books, and that schools are increasingly becoming dependent upon sponsored walks and donations from parents organisations to finance necessary expenditure. He pointed out that library book cuts would undermine CSE project work.

Mike Hamlin (NUT) said that the worst hit would be the schools in the poorer areas of the city, which do not have well endowed libraries and rely a lot on back up County services. He contrasted the present niggardly attitude of the Education Authority with their preparedness to spend thousands of pounds a day on providing temporary heaters for schools in their efforts to break the NUPE action last winter.

Finally, Roger Vaughan (NALGO) warned that if the library Budget is cut again next year, jobs in the library service could well be lost.

B.T.S.

EVENING POST

Sandersons

Dispute Still On

DEMONSTRATIONS against the Evening Post are to continue every month or so. The next one is on June 16th. They are being organised jointly by the journalists union NUJ and the print unions NGA and SLADE in conjunction with Nottingham Trades Union Council.

28 journalists were sacked in December last when they joined a national NUJ strike. NUJ Father of the Chapel at the Post, Kevin Hill told the Bulletin that they have not had any negotiations with management since they met the Managing Director Pole-Carew just after they were sacked.

Six journalists' families are still living in company flats in Wilford. The company withdrew its threat of eviction after the union said it would fight in the courts, but the threat still hangs over the heads of these families.

About 20 of the original 28 sacked are still involved in the dispute and are being paid out of union funds - for ever if necessary. All of them are contributing in some way to Nottingham News either by writing or by organising circulation or advertising. Three or four are particularly concerned with the dispute and are available to talk to union branches, etc.

The paper has settled down to a steady circulation of 13,000, down from an early peak of 20,000 after the novelty value wore off. Advertising has reached a steady level of £1500 per issue with a print bill of a similar amount. So the paper is keeping its head above water financially, though there are problems caused by delays in payments from advertisers. A recent NUJ conference decided the union should look into ways of raising money for the paper. An accountant employed by the NUJ is advising on ways of developing the paper.

NOT A CONVENTIONAL DISPUTE

Kevin Hill pointed out to the Bulletin that it is not a conventional dispute. Action like picketing, isolating supplies and building up support does not necessarily work with the Evening Post because unions are not very involved with the company. However the demonstrations and pickets are still worth while as a way of reminding the management and public of the important issues at stake.

The journalists involved in the dispute, he said are not active trade unionists. If the dispute had been fought conventionally instead of launching the paper there wouldn't have been 20 still involved but perhaps only six. So, though the dispute may have suffered because they had been putting their time in Nottingham News, this has been balanced by the number of people retained.

ALL OUT ON JUNE 16th

Trade unionists, tenants associations, socialist organisations - all of us suffer from the biased, anti-working class reporting and editorial content of the Evening Post. Also, it is a challenge to all trade unions in the city, that a large firm such as T.Bailey Forman, can effectively carry out a non union policy. It is, therefore important that we turn up in large numbers on June 16th, and that we support the unions involved in the Nottingham Evening Post dispute in every way we can.

NOTTINGHAM EVENING POST support all union mass picket

Sat June 16th

**12am at Forest Field
11am Forman St**

UNION BANNERS.

MESSAGES OF SUPPORT.

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE.

UNION DELEGATIONS.

LABOUR MOVEMENT MOBILISATION.

NOTTM T.U. COUNCIL

Sandersons (Forklifts) Ltd., Croft,
Skegness - Official Dispute
Financial Appeal.

The above dispute has now been in existence for the past 22 months. At the time of our last appeal in November of last year, negotiations took place with the Company for the first time, and agreement was reached with the Managing Director for the full reinstatement of all our emembers and recognition of the union. Sanderson reneged on this agreement following an orchestrated revolt by his 'so called "loyal workers" against the agreement reached.

There was considerable national publicity at the time when the dispute had been settled, and despite the fact that the National Organiser, Ron Todd circulated a report concerning the negotiations and the subsequent renegeing of the agreement, there are many branches throughout the movement who are unaware that our members are still locked in this bitter dispute.

We are of course making every effort to increase the pressure on the Company, which would force Sanderson into making a managerial decision, meanwhile our members are carrying on and as a consequence are still in need of financial support to alleviate the hardships incurred. They of course, deeply appreciate the tremendous support and solidarity which has been shown to them by many unions and branches throughout this very long period. Without this support they cannot continue, and this further appeal is made on behalf of our members and their families to assist them in the weeks ahead

Donations should be sent to the

APPEALS OFFICE,
24 HIGH STREET,
BURGH LE MARSH,
SKEGNESS, Lincs.

TEL. 0754 810779

and cheques made payable to either T.G.W.U. or Sandersons Strike Fund. Our thanks in anticipation of your continued support.

**B.COOPER,
District Secretary**

inner city programme

As time runs out for voluntary groups applying for inner city money it is hoped that the new Labour Council will be more committed to consulting the voluntary sector than their Tory predecessor.

During the past 2 months the inner city group has compiled and submitted to the council a set of criteria which reflects the needs of the local community. This has highlighted the discrepancies between the council and voluntary groups' sense of priority and initially led to some hostility from the council officers who saw this as merely 'council bashing'.

The council did, however, invite comments and criticisms related to their entire programme. A draft document commenting on the council proposals was drawn up by the Inner City Executive and discussed at a public meeting of 12th May. Some reservations were raised that local groups had not been properly consulted. Attempts were therefore made to ascertain these group's criticisms, and a revised document was submitted to the council officers on the 21st May. They were pleased to receive the these concrete criticisms and it was agreed that each issue raised would be discussed by the relevant department.

The point was forcefully made that the Executive had great difficulty criticising the programme, because there was so little information about council projects, whereas voluntary groups had to go into great detail in their applications for money. This was accepted by the council, who admitted there was a difficulty clarifying full details, which are worked out by individual departments.

SOME SCHEMES OPPOSED

The Executive stressed that they opposed some of the schemes such as for Health Visitors and Psychiatric nurses and because they believe this should be funded from the main programme. The council officers agreed that this was unsatisfactory, but the Area Health Authority are in a difficult position where they are satisfied with government provision as to capital schemes - the new hospital - but are under tremendous pressure to fund their ordinary staffing budget. Therefore the only way new and crucial staff could be funded was through the inner city programme. The Tory government's decision to drastically cut back cut back local government employees will inevitably mean even more schemes which

would normally be funded from the main programme will be pushed off onto the inner city money.

A CHANGE IN DIRECTION?

There is a possibility that there will be a change in direction by the new Labour Council. But as yet nobody is aware of their full policy. It appears they will only be marginally more sympathetic towards supporting schemes requiring money for running costs, because of the fear that this will mean no money is left over for new projects in subsequent years.

The council feel that applications need to be in as soon as possible, but have extended the date for final submissions to Friday 1st June. It was thought the Bank Holiday might provide a valuable opportunity to improve on a scheme.

Considerations will be given to holding public meetings, hopefully on a local area basis, where the final programme can be discussed in depth. A wide cross section of the Inner City Executive is also envisaged. The council intend to look at the possibility of funding the inner city mailing costs which amounts to £200 a quarter.

SECRETARIAT

At the public meeting the approval for an MSC funded secretariat and a constitution for the Nottingham Inner City Group were discussed. It was hoped that workers would soon be recruited for this scheme and that a full

time secretariat would provide better organisation and assistance for the next year.

However, the conservative government's attitudes towards the MSC and their references to cut backs in inner city budgets must cast doubts over these schemes.

The inner city executive will still press for consultation with the council leaders to express the views and needs of voluntary groups, and particularly to argue for more money and resources to be allocated to the voluntary projects. Finally, pressing for representation on the decision making Inner Areas sub-committee of the council.



"... and just here we boast the most up-to-date deprived area in Western Europe."

Nottingham Transport Group

The Nottingham Transport Group (NTG) recently opened an office in the City Centre. It is a local branch of Transport 2000 and is funded by Manpower Services.

Three researchers and several unpaid workers are looking into the problems of public transport, especially buses and trains. They are calling for a maintenance, if not an improvement, of all aspects of these services. Information packs and leaflets are being produced and a new magazine "Terminus" will appear shortly.

The group hopes to have close links with tenant and user groups, as well as having contact with those groups dealing with such problems as old age, disablement and illiteracy, etc.

Problems such as pollution, whether noise, fumes or any other, and environmental considerations are related aspects of the work. We feel sure that by promoting public transport everyone will benefit by an improved quality of life.

We will be pleased to hear from anyone wanting to contact NTG for any reason, whether it be a transport problem or to put an advert in the new magazine,

The address of NTG is:

Office 23, Bishop House,
42, High Pavement,
NOTTINGHAM.

Tel: 582631 Ext 17

caunton avenue flatsreport

Damp Flats, bad ventilation and inadequate heating are the problems faced by tenants in Caunton Avenue Flats in Mapperley.

The tenants association, CAFTA, want a thorough investigation made by the government Building Research Station. When this body investigated the nearby Kildare flats it led to a £¼ million renovation.

Caunton flats were built at the same time as Kildare flats during the jerry building era of the 60s. The city architect responsible for both has since retired.

CAFTA had the flats examined by a building engineer who said in a report:

" There is no doubt that the majority of units suffer damp conditions due to a variety of causes - condensation, rising damp, water penetration into the walls, defective roofs and balcony waterproofing...

" The causes of dampness are due to the lack of traditional building construction knowledge, combined probably with applications of novel forms of construction."

After pressure from the tenants last year the council tried putting more pitch on the flat

roofs and replacing damp courses. But there is still damp and fungus growth all over the flats.

CAFTA reports that the tales of carpets, curtains and clothes being destroyed by mildew are legion. They tried to get the council to do a complete survey of all the flats in May but Tory leader Jack Green said they didn't have the time.

CAFTA'S OWN SURVEY

So CAFTA had to do it themselves. They found 80% of the flats they visited had extensive damp, and 96% of the people were unhappy with the inefficiency and inadequacy of the heating systems.

Bills of over £100 a quarter for gas and electricity are quite common. Half of the people have electric storage heaters which can only be switched on overnight at a cost of over £1 per night, or they have to be left off. Not surprisingly many people use paraffin heaters - which are not allowed.

Many people retreat to their kitchens in cold weather. Many cannot use some of their bedrooms because of cold and damp. Because

the floors are concrete they are very cold and this causes condensation and damp.

There are also problems over ventilation. There are no small windows to open. For many people the only windows they can open are large windows next to walkways which it is not safe to open for security reasons.

CAFTA PRESSURE

After much pressure from CAFTA the council agreed to do some environmental improvements - like painting the window frames and putting in shrubs which the tenants don't want. The council has also investigated damp and heating efficiency in a small number of flats.

But CAFTA says the Housing Department is unwilling to see the problems as relating to the whole complex. The council has only looked at flats individually so they have trivialised the investigation.

CAFTA will not be satisfied unless they get a proper independent investigation of the complex as a whole. A decision on this should be made by the Housing Committee in June or July. Unless the new Labour administration is a lot more favourable than the outgoing Tories CAFTA is going to have to continue a hard battle. **N.L.**

housing action areas meeting

An attempt is being made to bring together people in the eleven Housing Action Areas (HAAs) declared so far by the city council. (The idea of HAAs is to improve most houses in a small area within five years. 75% grants are given, 90% in cases of hardship. Housing Associations normally take over a and improve much of the private landlord property.)

A meeting is being convened in early June by two groups - Phoenix (Radford) and Belper Road Action Group. This follows a one day meeting in May organised by community workers who are working in areas where HAAs have been declared. The meeting was attended by several interested people, including residents of HAAs.

The meeting was addressed by Jorg Smithson and Kath Timpson from the Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative in Leicester who explained how residents had formed a co-op to control improvements in a Housing Action Area. Funding for the co-op

came from the Government Housing Corporation in the same way Housing Associations are funded.

Alan McDonald, from Co-operative Development Services in Liverpool spoke about the experience of Housing Associations in Liverpool. He said that Housing Associations are generally efficient at doing improvements but they are not accountable. Their committees are composed of worthies who are not elected and usually no tenants.

The Trustees of the Guinness Housing Association, one of those doing improvements in Nottingham, are worth repeating:

Lady Elizabeth More O'Ferrall
Viscount Boyd of Merton CH, PC, DL
Viscountess Boyd of Merton
Maureen Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava
Marquess of Dufferin and Ava
Lord Moyne
Hon Jonathan Guinness
Hon Diarmid Guinness (deceased)
Paul Channon MP

Hon Simon Lennox-Boyd
I.S.S. Ferris Esq FCA
Prince Rupert von Preussen (who describes himself as a student)

But even Housing Associations like Guinness can be forced by resident groups to set up area committees involving residents.

Chris Collinge and Giti Paulin, community workers in Sneinton, outlined the improvement programme in Nottingham. In 1977 5,000 houses were unfit and a further 10,000 lacked basic amenities. But only 2,600 houses have been included so far in HAAs. Even for this small number progress has not been good. The council has under a dozen staff for 12 HAAs. And they aren't using their full powers against landlords who are reluctant to improve.

The meeting drew up a list of proposals to be put to the meeting in June.

N.L.

TRADES COUNCIL ★ UNION



may day
rally
'79



Photos-John Birdsall.

more job loss in Nottingham?

JOBS DISAPPEAR FROM LENTON AND
RADFORD BOULEVARDS

One of the main features of economic change in the last few years has been the decline in jobs in large manufacturing enterprises as technological change has progressively displaced more and more labour power and replaced it with machinery. With declining, or slow growing markets, the resulting job loss is even more of a serious problem. Down on Lenton and Radford Boulevards, at both Raleighs and Players, this process is now in operation. In this article we look at each firm in turn.

RALEIGHS

A common practice nowadays is for big companies to put out colourful fact and propaganda sheets explaining how the company is doing and analysing the accounts for their employees. And not so long ago Tube Investments-Raleighs put out such a factsheet headlined "Road to Recovery", and saying how good (i.e. profitable) 1978 had been. On the back of the factsheet however the message is that "1979 looks like being a rather difficult year. Sales in the UK are holding up well, but we are facing set backs in several major export markets". Sales to Nigeria are down. Export sales to Iran have virtually ceased and in the USA market conditions are "highly competitive and a number of the large local manufacturers have spare capacity." In the face of this Raleighs is looking to growth in the European bicycle market where it faces competition from

such manufacturers as Puch.

MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

It is these conditions which probably account for why bikes are being stockpiled in great numbers in the Lenton factory. Meanwhile jobs are also threatened from the modernisation programme. Raleighs intends to spend £14 millions on modernisation over the next few years. In the company newspaper, Raleigh Review, they explain that this involves, firstly, the layout of production to form a "total flow-through system which operates from tube shop to frames complete". Secondly new machinery will be installed to complete the operation. Better amenities for the workers are also promised. The total programme is spread over 5 to 6 years. Nowhere, though, does the company spell out the job implications. But the rumour from the factory is that there will be job loss. This seems most likely.

PLAYERS

Further along the Boulevard at Players the workers are facing similar problems. A few months ago a report of the Price Commission on Imperial Tobacco Limited (ITL) who own Player, threw some interesting light on the state of the company. Overall the market for cigarettes smoked peaked in 1973 at 137,400 millions and fell to 125,900 million in 1977. Within this decline ITL recently suffered a set back in terms of their share of the market. Entry into the EEC led to a change in the system of taxing tobacco which gave King Size cigarettes a price advantage and led to a switch in demand from smaller to King Size cigs. But ITL (Players) were not well placed to cope with this as they had a much smaller proportion of their trade in the King Size part of the market than did their competitors. Their response was to launch John Player King Size triggering fierce competition with Gallahers and Carreras Rothmans.

The going was made tougher for ITL by the ending of their long standing arrangement with British American Tobacco (BAT) whereby ITL traded mainly in the UK and Ireland while BAT traded outside those countries. The agreement was

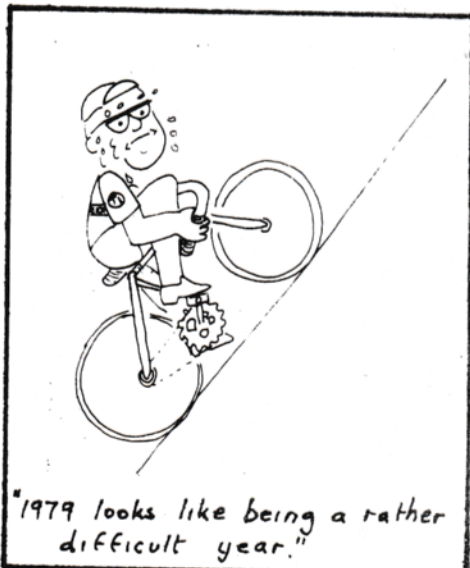
terminated so as not to fall foul of EEC anti-restrictive practices legislation.

By August 1978 overall Players were operating 31% below capacity though in its King Size production it was only 8% below capacity. What makes all this even more ominous for jobs is that, as with Raleighs, Players are going in for an investment programme. The Price Commission report on the ITL spells out the consequences. "roughly every 20 years developments in the technology of cigarette manufacture produce a new generation of machines with operating speeds considerably greater than previous models. At the present time a range of cigarette making machines and cigarette packing machines with speeds of approximately double those in current use are coming onto the market.... The economic justification of these machines lies mainly in the saving in direct labour costs; the man hours per million cigarettes produced can be very substantially reduced. The machinery is currently under test in experimental sections of the companies factories.... Clearly the effect of the capital investment programme together with the already adequate production capacity will produce a number of problems". (Price Commission Report on ITL p. 23).

Since ITL invested £14 millions in building the Horizon factory as a super modern factory at the beginning of the decade it seems almost certain that the new technology will be developed there.

"The Radford location, however, will probably be retained by the firm in the near future as the company is currently concentrating a number of miscellaneous services in the area such as warehousing space, personnel departments and so on. Furthermore a certain amount of the company's manufacturing capacity will probably be maintained in the area in order to secure flexibility of, and a variety of cigarette production." (Planning for Industry and Employment in Inner City Nottingham, Institute of Planning Studies, 1977 p 47).

B. D.



A CHIP A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY?

Probably because the new micro-electronic technology is associated with smallness, cleanliness and few moving parts health and safety considerations have not been particularly high on the priority list, at the time of its introduction and installation, for both management and unions alike. But evidence is now coming to light that this new technology in office shops, on the factory floor and at home can be dangerous to our health. Often these hazards are either ignored or remain unrecognised. This article looks at some of the hazardous disadvantages and risks, and only briefly touches on some of the health and safety benefits, since government, manufacturer and employer propaganda does a thorough job on that.

FACTORY FLOOR IMPLICATIONS

It is on the factory floor, which has perhaps been more health and safety conscious than the office, where some of the more obvious examples of the new technology removing formerly hazardous work can be found, and it must be added, at the cost of redundancies. For some

years robots and transfer devices have been used in the car industry for small component assembly, die-casting, paint spraying, welding and chemical dipping. Some of these tasks are heavy work, others are hazardous due to toxic substances or heat. While it is clear that new technology is both more precise and many times quicker, new hazards are created for workers. Quite apart from the need for robots to be adequately fenced off, increased speed and precision should not be used as an excuse for increasing overall workloads. Realistic production quotas and rest periods will have to be considered to offset the potential abuse of this. Equally, because robots will increasingly tackle the precision, skilled and problematic work, the workforce will increasingly service the robots. This will be repetitive, boring and unskilled, and as a result job satisfaction is likely to reduce, increasing the likelihood of stress and fatigue. Furthermore the installation of robots, unless closely monitored and directed by the workforce, may

give the employers the opportunity to reduce or fail to improve health and safety standards such

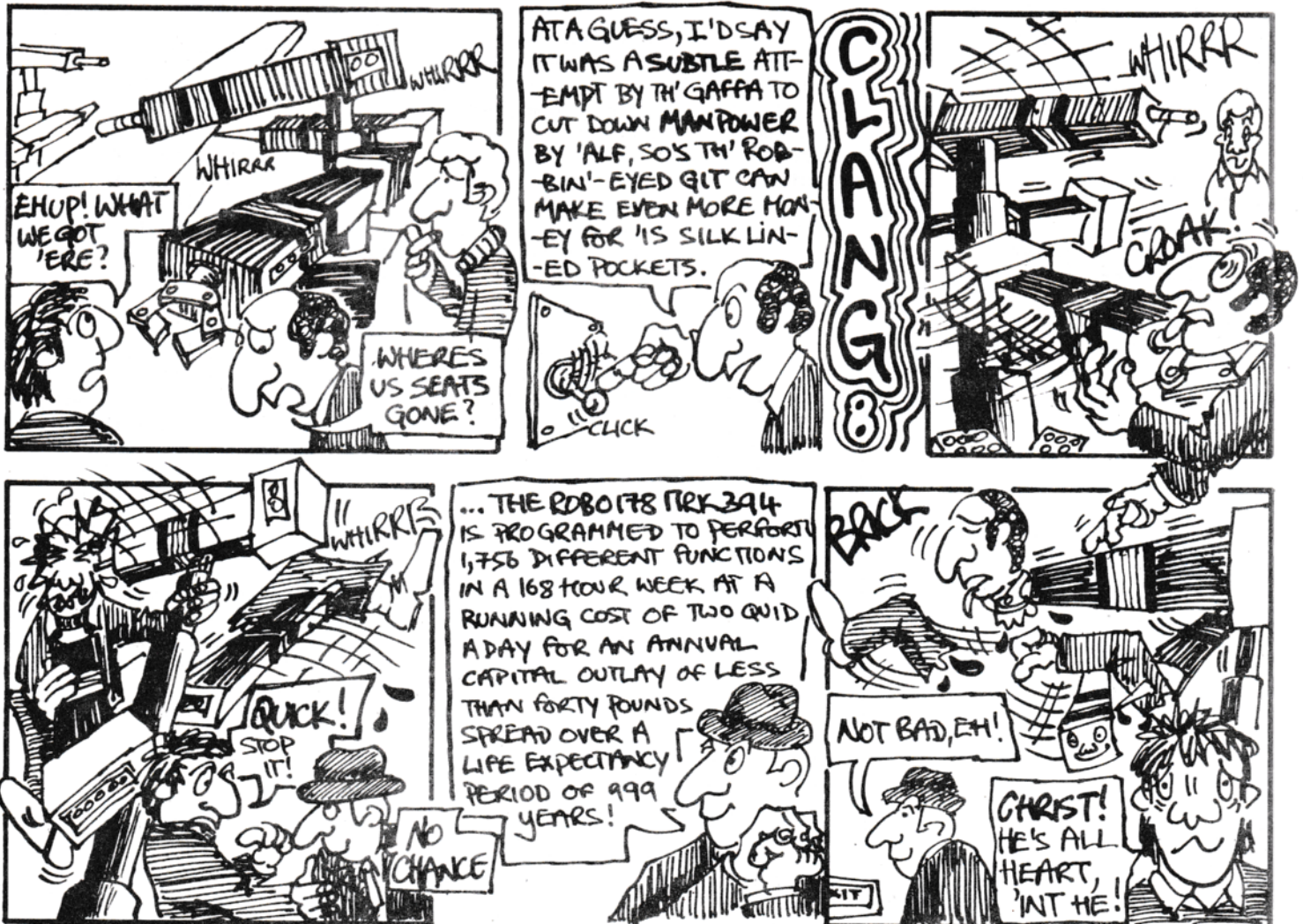
as good ventilation, noise, pollution, heat control and so on.

NEW OFFICE TECHNOLOGY

But it is in the office where new technology has been more rapidly and dramatically introduced with far reaching implications for employment levels and for health and safety.

There have been occasions where new technology has been introduced without consultation with the workforce and unions. In the Bradford local authority, word processors were installed during a weekend. The staff discovered the machinery on the Monday morning.

Furthermore, new problems associated with operation are being encountered. Office workers using the new technology are increasingly complaining of irritability, fatigue, headaches, muscular complaints. Research conducted by trade unions, academics and others over the past 5 years has so far est-



ablished 2 principal root factors - the specification of the office environment, and the nature and organisation of the work. Much of this research has concentrated on visual display units (VDUs). These have been introduced extensively in the Nottingham area eg the local authority, Pork Farms, and have been as a result the subject of a short but comprehensive analysis in the Greater Nottingham Action on Safety & Health Bulletin No. 1 (available from GNASH c/o 118, Mansfield Road ; - Further information on New Technology is also available for reference in the Centre 118 Library).

STRESS AND FATIGUE

But the experience of VDUs is very much the writing on the wall for new office technology generally, as administrative and clerical work takes on an industrial processing dimension. A recent study found that clerical computer work stations operators are frequently more alienated, and therefore more prone to stress and fatigue from their work than shop floor assembly workers. Appropriate machinery specifications and office environments can ensure workers health and safety.

Electronic machines give off heat which is dispersed by fans; therefore it is important that air conditioning is able to extract any surplus heat without causing hot and cold spots or draughts. A too dry an atmosphere can cause a drying of the eyes with eventual irritation. Machines should be properly spaced and arranged to allow hot air to be properly extracted. These fans, along with printers and typewriters can generate background noise levels which are stressful, and in the case of throbbing high/low frequencies, actual damage to the ear can be caused. Most unions, such as APEX, recommend an absolute maximum of 65 decibels.

LIGHTING

Lighting considerations can pose major problems if the new technology installation is a botched job. Frequently rooms are adapted not purpose built. While conventional clerical and administrative tasks require bright lighted work space, new technology machines often require little light, few windows and little glare for operators to be comfortable. And often operators may have dual functions (conventional and new technology) so constant conditions may not be practicable. Therefore light diffusers, blinds, curtains, partitioning and mobile directional light sources should be considered to ensure appropriate lighting flexibility.

OFFICE FURNITURE

The furniture itself can also cause aggravations to worker's health. Since workers are not standardised machines, furniture and equipment should be individually 'tailor made' for each operator to reduce the likelihood of neck, shoulder and back ailments, such as curvature of the spine. Chair and desk heights should be adjustable in every plane to encourage good posture and support to the pelvis. Electronic keyboards also need to be adaptable; the traditional QWERTY keyboard layout imposes a 60% workload on the left hand with concentration on the middle and index fingers. New redesigned keyboards would be desirable to redistribute this load. The 'special function' keys should be optional to left and right depending on which is the operator's dominant hand.

Office environments are usually considered safe but hazards do exist. Work stations have high voltages and consequently have a high fire risk. Appropriate ventilation must be reconciled with substantial protection since liquids such as coffee, spilled in a machine could constitute a chemical hazard; but more likely, plastic components could be attacked by cleaning solvents and inflammable liquids could be ignited by sparking contacts. Office work stations require accessible equipment and materials and unless adequate provision is made for storage and rubbish (i.e. scrap printouts), cables, telephones, etc. the resulting clutter could be hazardous in certain circumstances.

Stress and fatigue are also associated with the nature and organisation of work. Because the work processing is quicker, dangers exist for any worker attempting to 'Keep-Up' with the machine over a period of time. Rest periods are therefore important for the mental and physical well being of the worker. But in the same way that the environment should be tailor made **individually** rest should also reflect the nature of the job, the environment the type of machine and so on. Stress and fatigue is caused by a combination of factors; one of which is repetition. Electronic office technology stifles administrative and clerical skills as contact with the source and destination is reduced and lost. This deskilling can result in alienation and a reduction in worker confidence. Some improvement can be gained from a suitable mixing of tasks to break up this repetition.

SENSORY DEPRIVATION

In some instances where rooms are specifically designed for the new technology, what can amount to sensory deprivation can exist - a sealed anti-static room with little direct sunlight, no open windows, and little contact with workers outside the section. Tiredness can also be caused by intermittent work flow patterns and rhythms. Pauses, while awaiting information from the central computer or other sources can be especially tiring, since the operator must remain alert, though not knowing when the information will arrive. It is also important that adequate training is given to operators; in many cases no training is given at all.

Manufacturers cite ease of use as a selling point, but an operator's lack of confidence can result in nervous tension, apprehension and fatigue. The stress-fatigue relationship is additive; physical exertion, monotony, worry, boredom can all hasten the reaching of the fatigue threshold. Repeated daily fatigue often leads to chronic fatigue which can be characterised by both physical and behavioural changes, such as loss of appetite, dizziness, indigestion, insomnia, depression, anger and possibly breakdown or violence

AREAS OF CONCERN

It is only recently that health and safety needs are becoming apparent. As new technology applications become more widespread, the need for health and safety standards established prior to installation grows still more pressing. These standards can only be arrived at by detailed and comprehensive monitoring and research. The study of VDUs has broken new ground; now workers must use and develop these techniques on other aspects of new technology. Areas of concern could include the problems of repetition, deskilling and alienation; workplace environments, machinery flexibility and specification; work rotation; comprehensive training programmes; and specific identification of stress and fatigue types. However, such health and safety concerns may only be of a relatively short duration since, as seems likely, the number of unemployed will rapidly rise, the health and safety of the community at large may become the issue!

P.M.B.



THE 'RIGHT' APPROACH

On the morning of May 4th, jobbers on the London Stock Exchange were in jubilant mood. They loudly cheered every Tory gain and finally burst into a lusty chorus of 'Land of Hope and Glory'. For them the day was dawning on a new dynamic Britain in which private investment would be rewarded and the rich would get richer.

Callaghan and his team had paid the price of subservience to the international bankers. Many of the 1½ million unemployed, the public sector workers who the government had opposed so vindictively only a few months previously, trade unionists and their families who had suffered years of pegged wages had no compelling reason to vote Labour. There had been little in Labour's record or programme to inspire anyone; those who voted Labour did so out of old gut loyalties and out of fear that a present which held little charm would be replaced by a future even worse.

WHAT THE TORIES HAVE IN STORE

What the Tories have in store for us is spelt out in a document entitled "The Right Approach to the Economy" and by the various policies and announcements that have been made since the election.

The Tory strategy is to implement "a realistic philosophy for earnings, incentives and ownership in order to encourage industry and enterprise". Since taking power they have "encouraged enterprise" by scrapping the Price Commission, thus allowing firms to increase prices and profits. Many commentators have assumed that this will let inflation rip, but the Tories have a strategy for preventing such a disaster, namely to maintain a strict control of the money supply, in Mrs. Thatcher's opinion "the only final way in which inflation can be held and reduced".

But how does a government control the money supply? Increasing taxes? No! The Tories claim they will do the opposite. Restricting credit given by the banks, finance companies and building societies? Wrong again! That would discourage private enterprise. Only one possible course is left to the new government and that is to cut its own spending and hence its own demand for money.

Governments raise money either through borrowing or taxation. By reducing both, the government aim

to direct resources away from the public sector into private industry and commerce. With regard to taxation cuts it is worth pointing out that those workers who were attracted to Mrs Thatcher for that reason are liable to be disappointed. Any tax cuts we get will be more than made up for by increases in VAT. Who will benefit was made clear by Conservative economic spokesman John Biffen, in the House of Commons: "... there must be speedy cuts in the top rates of taxation. I deliberately use the word 'top'". His reasons were "to restore management morale...and to facilitate the growth of entrepreneurial small business." He said that on 13th February and on the same day Sir Keith Joseph gave another Tory reason for slashing public spending, by drawing attention to a point which must have been eluding those hospital workers, ambulance drivers, school ancillary staff and corporation manual workers, who were in the middle of their dispute, namely "the lavish use of resources by the public sector, without the discipline of a profit and loss account, which can bid away scarce management skills at prices that the private sector cannot afford".

CUTS START IMMEDIATELY

How big the Tory cuts are likely to be will be fully clear at the time of the Budget (This article has been written before). However, enough has been said already to indicate that they are likely to be substantial. Before the elect-



ions and even in the first few days of the Tory government it was expected that expenditure cuts would be implemented on a large scale in 1980/81. However, the new Tory Chancellor has said that

'substantial cuts' must be made 'at once'.

According to the Financial Times (26th May 1979) "The Tory long term objective is to...cut the volume of spending to around the level of 1977/78. This would be phased over several years. After allowing for various once and for all items this would represent a reduction of around £4bn or so from the originally planned level of £63 bn for 1979/80 and a bigger adjustment from the proposed level in later years."

PUBLIC SECTOR STAFFING LEVELS

This has already been felt in civil service and local government staffing where freezes have been announced. The Financial Times of 22 May announced the government intend to cut 22,000 from the Civil Service as a prelude to similar economies across the public sector. In Notts the County Council have suspended further recruitment (though in 'urgent cases' jobs may be filled). This is a 'temporary measure' pending later clarification in the governments spending plans but it is much more likely than not to become a permanent policy. Staffing levels in the Health Service are also to come under review. It is clear that strict implementations of cash limits will mean that public sector pay rises will be paid for through staffing cuts.

The axe will bite even deeper because in some areas the Tories have plans to increase expenditure. The 100% pay increase for M.P.s is an irritating, but minor item. Of much greater significance are the proposed increases in military spending and on 'law and order', estimated at 10%.

WAYS TO SAVE MONEY

Some other ways that the Tories will be looking to save money according to the Financial Times include the sale of public assets - parts of wholly owned public enterprises like British Airways, shares of companies held by the National Enterprise Board, sale of council houses etc. Further, revenue will be raised by increased nationalised industry and public sector charges notably in the Health Service. Employment support and industrial aid schemes are also to be cut - STEP in particular has already been axed and confined to inner city, intermediate and assisted areas and with exist-

Continued from Page 10.

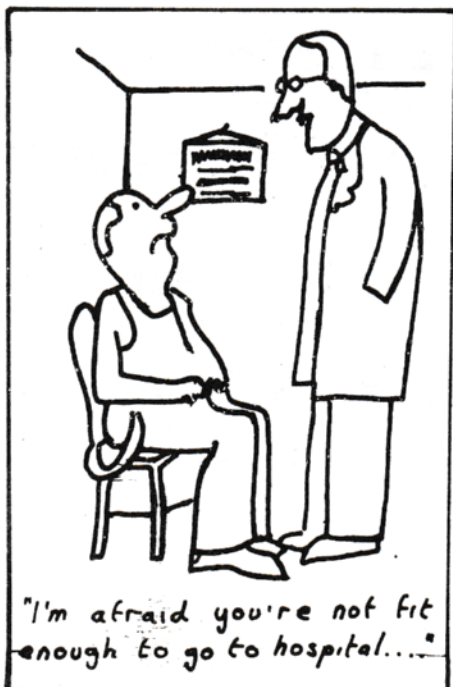
ing STEP schemes put under close review. All of which adds up to increased prices, a boost in unemployment and deteriorating services.

UNEMPLOYMENT

In relation to unemployment the Tories aim to eliminate "unsound unprofitable jobs" and replace them with "profitable jobs" through giving market forces their head. Britain's economic problems are so deep, however, that the free market is extremely unlikely to reduce unemployment levels. Those industries, if any, which do expand are likely to do so on the basis of advanced technology which requires few workers.

If the Tories are very lucky and there is a pyrrhic boom in the economy (not very likely - typist) the very best that we can expect is private affluence for the better off in the South East, counterposed against a continuing decline in the depressed areas and a society utterly incapable of providing its working population with decent housing, health care or social services.

In defending our jobs and our public services, there is no doubt that we will have a big fight on our hands.



REVIEWS

BARGAINING REPORT No 1. (March/ April 1979). Labour Research Dept., 78, Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8HF. Published 6 times a year. £4.92 pa (LRD affiliates) £6.42 (non-LRD affiliates). Discounts on bulk orders.

The Labour Research Department is now a well established trade union research body set up in 1912 to supply the labour movement with facts to give it back up in its struggles in the workplace. **BARGAINING REPORT** is the newest in the LRDs services for trade unionists and is specifically designed as a regular journal that deals exclusively with the problems that trade union representatives have to negotiate about.

The main features of the new journal will be regular reports on pay, employment law, safety, and company information; and in this first issue, the **Agreements File**, a major feature of **Bargaining Report** (BR) which looks at current practices across jobs and industries, reports on sick pay schemes. The report is a negotiator's guide to sick pay agreements, the latest statistics on sick schemes, sick pay and absenteeism, the TUC guide lines and how to claim state benefit. Future topics to be covered by the **Agreements File** will include holidays, shop stewards facilities, allowances, pension schemes, hours of work, etc.

The **Law at Work** section is designed to investigate how the law actually WORKS in practice and how trade unionists can make use of it, by reporting on the most important cases at the Employment Appeal Tribunal, the Central Arbitration Committee and Industrial Tribunals. In this first issue no less than eight important areas of employment are covered.

BR will also have brief regular sections on health and safety at work - in this issue the subject is dust hazards at work - and on company information. This latter section will be providing a practical guide to one aspect of company finance per issue - the first of the series is on dividends and shares.

Written from the trade union point of view, **Bargaining Report** will be an important part of the back up that workers representatives can draw on prior to entering negotiations and will become part of the erosion of managements superior access to research and information resources.

I.B.J.

A WORKER'S GUIDE TO VISUAL DISPLAY UNITS. Produced by the North East Trade Union Studies Information Units Health and Safety Project in conjunction with the Newcastle St Study Group on Unemployment and new technology. 20p per copy.

More and more workers are using VDUs. At the last count there were 200,000 and it is estimated that there will be ½ million by 1983. In Nottingham on the Steering Committee of Greater Nottingham Action on Safety & Health (GNASH) at least 2 members have had VDUs introduced at their workplace and in the case of the Evening Post VDUs are a part of the New Technology that has been introduced there. In response to this widespread development many trade unionists are demanding information on VDUs and it is therefore timely that this pamphlet should be appearing.

Effect on Jobs

The pamphlet looks at 2 aspects of VDUs and their associated technology. The first is the effect on jobs. The computerised systems of which VDUs are a part put many, particularly office, jobs at risk. These include accounts clerks, bank employees, civil service workers, librarians, newspaper and printing workers, postal workers, restaurant, sales staff, secretarial workers and warehouse-workers. As well as the quantity, the quality of work will also be changed. Some office skills may become redundant. Another effect may be to 'root' the operator on the spot. " Secretaries who today are seated at the typewriter for only part of the day may find that more and more of their work can be done without taking their hands from the keyboard and their eyes from the VDU. There will be no need to go to a separate filing system, because the files will already be in the machine's memory!"

Health and Safety Implications

This leads on to the other reason for concern about VDUs - their possible health and safety implications. The pamphlet looks at a number of possible hazards including eye strain, stress, body posture and fatigue and draws out a number of recommendations as to what can be done to take precaution against the hazards.

'A Workers Guide to Visual Display Units' is a good buy for workers faced with the introduction of VDUs. It is important that the Health and Safety implications of new technology and working practices are known and dealt with before they are introduced.

B.D.

Greater Nottingham Action on Safety & Health

GNASH HAZARDS MEETING

Occupational Cancer

Some of the most important substances known to cause cancer in humans include:-

Radiation (lung); Radon (lung); X Rays (skin); Radium (bone); Ultra Violet Light (skin); Polycyclic Hydrocarbons in soot, tar and oil (skin especially scrotum); 2 Naphthylamine (bladder); Benzidine (bladder); Arsenic (lung and skin); Bis(chloromethyl) ether (lung); Benzene (marrow); Mustard Gas (lung, nose); Vinyl Chloride (Liver); Chromates (lung); Nickel (lung and nose); isopropyl oil (nose); some woods (nose); Acrylonite (lung and colon); Asbestos (lung, stomach and throat).

Speaker: ROS KEEN (of the ENVIRONMENTAL FACTSHOP)

At this meeting the questions to be discussed will include:-

What is the incidence of occupational cancer? When is a substance safe? What can be done? What sort of screening procedures should be used?

7.30pm Wednesday 27th June

At International Community Centre, 61b Mansfield Rd.

DAY SCHOOL

Nottingham's Inner City Problems

UNIVERSITY ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

14 — 22, Shakespeare Street, Nottingham

Saturday 30th June, 1979.

11.00 am — 4.30pm.

For further details and conference papers contact Nottingham Workshop, Tel [REDACTED]

THE FUTURE OF ZIMBABWE

Saturday 23rd June, 2pm-5.30pm
International Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Road

Creche provided

Presented by the ZIMBABWE SOLIDARITY GROUP
and the ZIMBABWEAN AFRICAN NATIONAL UNION

HYSON GREEN FESTIVAL

On the Forest on the 14th/15th of July.

Events / Displays / Stalls etc.

Procession on Saturday

For further details contact:

Hyson Green Festival Committee,
[REDACTED], Hyson Green, Nottm.