

Worker participation in occupational safety and health matters in France

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An agreement in principle exists in France to emphasise that new advances in the field of occupational safety and health presuppose the participation of the workers. In addition, there is growing recognition that safety is not an individual, easily isolated question but on the contrary demands that consideration be given to a whole range of different factors: the design of buildings and materials, the products used, work organisation, manpower characteristics and, last but not least, industrial and work relations.¹ In other words worker participation in safety matters must be. However, although a certain consensus exists as to the need for it, serious divergences frequently remain between employers and trade unions about its possible forms.

Development of the legislation

Over the years the legislation adopted has testified to this growing concern to ensure worker participation in safety matters not only in the undertaking but also in the various bodies which are responsible for prevention.

As recommended by the ILO as far back as 1928, health and safety committees, joint advisory bodies, were established by law in every industrial or commercial undertaking over a certain size by a Decree of 1 August 1947. The health and safety committee (HSC) is permanently responsible for improving the conditions of health and safety and reducing the number of accidents and the incidence of occupational diseases on the actual work premises. The HSC must enable the workers' representatives to be associated in any prevention policy. They have seats on the committee alongside the head of the undertaking, the chief of the safety service and the industrial medical officer. Although not actually members of the committee, the labour inspector and the representative of the prevention service of the regional

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sickness insurance fund (known as CRAM from the French acronym) may attend the meetings.²

When they were first set up the HSCs were given the task of inspecting the undertaking with a view to satisfying themselves as to the enforcement of the laws and regulations and the proper maintenance of the safety devices and equipment. They were also empowered to carry out investigations whenever an accident happened or an occupational disease revealed the existence of a serious danger.

Further legislation, notably the Decrees of 1 April 1974 and 20 March 1979, defined the powers of the HSCs more precisely and extended them to reflect a wider concept of safety. For example, the HSCs were to analyse the occupational hazards to which the workers might be exposed. This meant much more than simply supervising the strict application of the regulations since it meant studying the hazards linked to the use of machines or products, certain physical conditions of work, handling methods or the type of power used.

The dangers thus defined cover not only those brought to light through industrial accidents or occupational diseases occurring or notified . . . but also those which could emerge from job analyses, investigations into manufacturing breakdowns or damage to equipment, etc. Such an analysis of the "potential hazards" in each undertaking represents a new and important task for the health and safety committee.³

The Decrees of 1974 and 1979 specify that the HSC must take all possible steps to promote the use of the safest methods and processes, the choice of the best equipment and the best layout of workplaces. The analysis of occupational hazards serves as the basis for an annual prevention programme to be drawn up by the head of the undertaking and submitted to the HSC for examination. This programme must set out in detail the steps to be taken in the fields of health, safety or safety training.

More recently, a piece of legislation (known as the Auroux Act) has been introduced to amend the earlier statutory texts. The fact that the reform was entrusted to the legislature illustrates the desire of the public authorities to increase the standing of the HSC in the undertaking. Three elements of this new text particularly merit attention.

(a) The new Act-No. 82-1097 of 23 December 1982—confirms the enlarged modern concept of safety. The HSC originally suffered from a too narrow idea of safety. The safety function was at that time a specific one which came into play after buildings and equipment had been designed and working methods determined.⁴ The modern concept, however (which was already reflected in the Decrees of 1 April 1974 and 20 March 1979 which we have briefly discussed above), is an integrated one which can make it possible to call into question the safe design of buildings and equipment as well as of workplaces and, more generally, work processes. This is why the new text merges the old HSC and the subcommittee for the improvement of working conditions created by the Act of 27 December 1973 in undertakings with more than 300 employees.⁵ From now on a health, safety and working

conditions committee (HSWCC) is to be established in every undertaking with more than 50 employees, whatever activity it is engaged in.

(b) Two new rights are granted: time off and training. In many undertakings the spirit behind the establishment of the HSC was respected and the workers' representatives were already allowed time off outside the quarterly committee meetings to carry out their functions; from now on they are entitled to time off to inspect or study the working environment. Moreover, staff representatives should be able to attend a five-day training course without loss of wages so that they can learn how to perform their functions correctly; however, this right is granted only in the case of undertakings with more than 300 employees.⁶

(c) For a long time the trade union organisations had been demanding the right to order work to be halted when they considered that safety was not guaranteed. This right has not been granted to them for reasons which had already been brought up during the debates on the Act respecting the improvement of employment accident prevention, dated 6 December 1976.⁷ At the time the then Minister of Labour stated:

The right to halt dangerous work should not, in my opinion, be given to the delegates of the health and safety committees since these would then be liable under the provisions of the Penal Code in the event of an industrial accident: if in fact they did not use this right to halt work on a dangerous machine, as physical persons they would clearly be liable to prosecution.⁸

The HSWCC has therefore, as before, only the right to give warning of a danger, which should induce the head of the service concerned to make an investigation. The new feature, however, is the granting to the workers themselves of a right to refuse to work in a dangerous situation. "This right is guaranteed in two ways: the first is to make any disciplinary sanction imposed in such circumstances illegal and the second is the imposition of a sanction on the employer himself. If an industrial accident occurs when he has been warned of the danger he is committing an inexcusable fault." ⁶

The employees are represented on many other bodies besides the HSWCC, since they have seats on the boards of the National Sickness Insurance Fund (CNAM) and the regional funds (CRAMs), which draw up industrial accident and occupational disease prevention policy and decide the industrial accident "ratings".⁹ Workers' representatives also have seats on the national and regional technical committees of the CNAM and the CRAMs, which examine the industrial accident and occupational disease situation in the various branches of activity; they are also members of the prevention committees of the CRAMs, which steer the activities of the prevention services of these funds; finally, they have seats on the Governing Body of the National Safety Research Institute which has a membership of several hundred research workers and is financed by industrial accident insurance contributions. It is impossible in the space of this article to discuss in detail developments concerning worker representation in these various bodies. Suffice it to say that a reform of the social security system in 1967 had

done away with the elections of worker representatives to the boards of the CNAM and CRAMs but that, as a result of another reform, elections will be held in 1983, which will very probably promote greater involvement of the most representative trade union organisations in an active prevention policy.

The Act of 6 December 1976 also established a Central Council for the Prevention of Occupational Hazards, which is to be consulted on a wide range of prevention policy matters by both the public authorities and the representatives of the employers and wage earners. Its various committees or working parties have provided a forum for exchanges of ideas and making suggestions.

A Decree of 20 March 1979 reformed the industrial medical service to bring it closer to the users, to strengthen the participation of the workers' representatives in the running of industrial medical services and to enable the industrial medical officers to carry out their preventive functions more efficiently, particularly in giving their advice on new production techniques and products.

All of this clearly shows that the legislation has evolved in the direction of increasing the involvement of workers in safety matters. But how far are the texts applied?

Many HSCs have not been established

The accompanying table shows that 64 per cent of the establishments subject to the legislation did in fact have an HSC in 1950 but that in the years leading up to 1966 the proportion dropped gradually to 56 per cent; it was not till 1972 that there was a further upswing. This trend has continued in recent years, showing that more undertakings are understanding the value of establishing HSCs.

There is general agreement, however, that many HSCs exist only on paper or have only a formal existence. Ten years or so ago it was generally considered that barely a third of them functioned regularly and actively in the undertakings.¹⁰ According to some people "this figure should be revised significantly upwards: thanks to the advances made, more than two-thirds of the HSCs were in fact operating and carrying out the general activities they are called upon to perform in occupational safety and health matters".¹¹ It is probable in fact that the progress made in recent years is reflected both in the number of HSCs in existence and in the quality of their work, although it may perhaps be optimistic to consider that two-thirds of them are operational.

HSCs exist only very rarely in undertakings which have neither a works committee nor staff delegates. Among those which should have an HSC it is more often than not the smallest ones with between 50 and 100 employees which have not established one and which do not have any trade union representation either. Some undertakings which have a works committee nevertheless do not have an HSC; in some of these cases occupational safety and health matters are discussed at meetings of the staff delegates or the

Changes in the numbers of HSCs compared with the number of undertakings subject to the legislation

Year	No. of undertakings	No. of HSCs	% of undertakings with an HSC
1950	12 699	8 193	64.5
1963	14 803	8 669	58.6
1966	15 712	8 877	56.5
1972	18 130	10 912	60.2
1973	18 636	11 598	62.2
1974	19 180	12 039	62.8
1975	19 101	12 688	66.4
1976	19 079	13 071	68.5
1977	18 596	13 484	72.5
1978	18 331	13 546	73.9
1979	18 559	13 798	74.3

Sources: Ministère du Travail et de la Participation: *Tableaux statistiques sur le travail et l'emploi*, édition 1980, p. 535, and information supplied by the Ministry for 1978 and 1979.

Note: These statistics were drawn up by the Industrial Relations Directorate of the Ministry of Labour and Participation. They cover industrial undertakings with 50 and more employees and other undertakings with at least 300 employees. According to other statistics drawn up by the National Wage Earners' Sickness Insurance Fund for 1980 the number of HSCs set up outside the construction and public works sectors was 14,081 for 18,911 undertakings subject to the legislation, or 74.5 per cent.

works committee. According to the Ministry of Labour 83.3 per cent of the undertakings subject to the legislation on works committees had such committees on 31 December 1979,¹² whereas the statistics on the HSCs (which do not have exactly the same scope) give a percentage of 74.3 in 1979 (see the table).

The increase in the percentage of existing HSCs shown in the 1972 statistics is symptomatic of a revival of interest in safety questions and working conditions in general. The crisis of May 1968 at the height of a period of economic growth, individual manifestations of lack of interest in work (high absenteeism and turnover) and a number of disputes about working conditions which had considerable reverberations prompted the various protagonists on the labour scene to cease putting the main emphasis on wage increases and to concern themselves more with the quality of work.

The evolution of worker participation policy

In our view it is possible to distinguish three separate periods in policy making with regard to worker participation in safety and health matters: the first was when the technical aspect was dominant, lasting from the creation of the HSCs in 1947 until the early 1970s; the second, lasting a decade or so, was characterised by employer initiatives aimed at decompartmentalising safety and seeking active worker participation; and the third, which we have now entered, is marked by the definition of new participation strategies by

the trade unions with the encouragement of the State and founded upon new workers' rights.

What is the point, it might be asked, of harking back to earlier periods if the intention is to analyse the *current* situation in France in regard to worker participation in safety and health matters? In actual fact, not all undertakings are at the same stage and a very large number of them still show characteristics which we have attributed to the first period. This attempt to distinguish periods is aimed at clarifying complex developments by stressing what is new at a certain time and what can be considered as a sort of model which has chances of being generally adopted.

The technical period: A time of conflict

As we indicated when discussing the legislation, it was the technical concept of the HSC which was dominant at the outset. Ministerial circulars on the implementation of the legislation stressed that the staff representatives should be chosen in the light of their technical knowledge or safety and health aptitudes (circular of 11 September 1947). Two years later, one circular specified: "It is highly desirable that the technical nature of the functions of the HSC staff representative should always be taken into consideration and thus make it possible to avoid clashes between trade union organisations." It was stipulated at that time that the secretary of the HSC should be a specialist designated by the head of the undertaking, that is to say he should be the head of the safety unit or a person responsible for safety. The official texts appeared therefore to think that since safety was a technical matter it should be shielded from ideological disputes or clashes of interest and should create a field for general co-operation. The HSC technicians were also to strive to develop safety-consciousness among the staff.

However, in the majority of cases, the staff representatives were not technically prepared for their duties and, above all, they rejected the idea of being cast in a role which was, to say the least, ambiguous. At this period, in fact, as we have already pointed out, safety was only thought about after buildings, equipment and work processes had been designed and involved persuading everyone to adjust to this environment and behave in the manner best able to preserve safety. At this period, too, industrial psychology concentrated on selecting workers so as to adapt them to their workplaces and HSC technicians were asked to train workers to be more careful without being able to question the work methods used. According to the then undisputed doctrine of Taylorism there were those who organised work and those who performed it.

The trade unions rejected this role of auxiliaries of the technical services and the most active militants preferred to engage in other representation activities than the HSCs.¹³ At that time "the HSC was the poor relation of the trade union . . . without any collective endeavour, without worker awareness and without constructive proposals".¹⁴

Inasmuch as the most representative trade union organisations put the main blame for industrial accidents on the economic system and the profit motive,¹⁵ the defence of the workers' health became a prime means of awakening worker awareness. It was therefore less a question of seeking solutions on a day-to-day basis with the technicians (for fear of being integrated into the "system" which was repudiated) than of using the emotions aroused by a serious accident to awaken the workers to their exploitative working conditions.

The HSCs oscillated therefore between a technical role centred upon the application of the regulations, the safety rules and the wearing of protective gear, and a fighting role where the trade unions were most active, since every accident investigation provided an occasion for denouncing bad working conditions, the pace of work, etc. These trade union campaigns acted moreover as a spur to management to guarantee greater safety in order to avoid a deterioration in the climate of industrial relations.

This does not mean, however, that the first period was not marked by considerable progress in the safety field, since a body of safety knowledge was built up, works safety services developed and acquired real competence, the prevention services of the CRAMs expanded and systematically intervened in high-risk undertakings, and the labour inspectorate made an effort to ensure compliance with the regulations. All this happened, however, without any very active participation either by the workers or by the trade unions.

Integrated safety and employer initiatives to promote worker participation

A variety of factors no doubt explain the renewed attention devoted to safety and health matters as well as the fresh approach adopted towards them in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As we have already indicated, the undertakings were worried about a certain lack of interest in work, notably on the part of the young; they were looking for ways to combat high rates of absenteeism; social strife over working conditions undoubtedly surprised the trade unions as much as the employers. In the scientific disciplines connected with labour there was a shift in approaches and centres of interest: industrial psychology, which concerned itself principally with selecting personnel adapted to machines, began to give way to ergonomics, which sought to adapt machines to man; Taylorism was challenged in favour of forms of work organisation which no longer confined the worker to the role of a mere executant, etc. Case law on industrial accidents reflected and at the same time accentuated the growing public awareness of the importance of everything concerning the quality of work. An inexcusable fault of the employer ceased to be the sole object of investigation in cases of infringements of the safety and health regulations: a simple failure on the part of the line supervisor to take elementary safety precautions could be enough. "The

question of the criminal liability of the head of the undertaking also tends to be more frequently raised in the case of fatal accidents due to simple negligence or culpable failure to take precautions and not only due to breaches of the safety regulations.”¹⁶ The legislation took these developments into account and at the start of the 1970s encouraged the undertakings to devote more attention to policies designed to improve working conditions and prevention.

The trade union organisations clearly paid heed to all these changes; the interest shown in working conditions and safety was reflected in trade union publications, in the organisation of trade unionist training on these questions, and in the involvement of ergonomic research workers. Nevertheless, no overall trade union strategy in fact emerged during this period: it was rather a question of varied and more or less felicitous responses to employer initiatives in the undertaking.

During this period, in fact, the employers' organisations encouraged the undertakings to take the initiative and drew up a coherent strategy for worker participation. F. Ceyrac, the then president of the Metal and Mining Industries Federation (UIMM), which is the largest employers' association and which serves as a guidepost for the social policy of employers as a whole, stated that “in the field of accident prevention and as a corollary to the improvement of working conditions . . . a decisive step was taken in 1971.”¹⁷ In fact, following a symposium attended by more than 200 heads of undertakings, the UIMM had set up the Association for Prevention and the Improvement of Working Conditions (known as AFACT) to assist the undertakings, especially in implementing “integrated safety”.

In its review of its activities (*Année métallurgique*), the UIMM stated that experience clearly showed that “beyond the technical problems of traditional safety, each time that radical and lasting results were achieved and consolidated, they were due to the application of a clearly defined policy which the Federation had already drawn up more than five years beforehand”,¹⁸ the policy of integrated safety. Without underrating the successes achieved by some specialised safety services in the undertakings, the employers' association thought that these successes could only be consolidated if the production hierarchy completely integrated safety into production questions. Its task therefore was to convince the heads of undertakings themselves and, after them, the entire line management. Safety and working conditions are not matters for specialists alone; they affect everybody and, first and foremost, the production hierarchy, with the specialised safety services acting as a driving force, co-ordinating safety activities and keeping records.

As its name indicates, the AFACT is concerned with both safety and working conditions. Its aim is to discover the best working processes, machines and industrial layout so as to transform working conditions and enable the worker “to give the best of himself without damage to his physical or mental integrity”. This policy is also based on a conviction that humanity

and profitability go hand in hand. F. Ceyrac affirmed that it was a question of "fundamentally modifying the situation in which the workers are placed in the undertakings". As *Année métallurgique* somewhat solemnly pronounced: "this is an evolutionary process whose inevitability will be apparent to all, and credit must go to the Federation for having sensed this and having been the first to highlight it and set it in motion." ¹⁹

During the first year of its existence the APACT organised more than 500 days of training in the form of courses or job analyses either in large undertakings or in inter-works services. In 1975, 1,500 days of training were given to 20,000 persons (managerial staff, foremen or workers); in 1978 the figures were 2,000 days for almost 40,000 trainees. The APACT stresses that "the scope of its programmes is much broader than the word 'safety' implies since they show that it is no longer possible to separate . . . induction, training, information, communications, job analysis, prevention, industrial medicine, hiring, absenteeism, quality of production and general management of the undertaking".

The training sessions for staff delegates, ordinary workers and members of the HSC have undergone very rapid development since, as the APACT says, they view them as a means for participating in the study of the problems of their undertaking. From the outset the importance of workers' participation was stressed as a way both of finding judicious solutions thanks to their experience and of altering their status in the undertaking by making them play an active role. In a number of undertakings permanent research teams on the improvement of working conditions (known as ERACTs) have been formed; there were 200 of these in 1975 and more than 500 in 1978. Established at the workshop level, they "seek to encourage the men on the shop-floor to uncover the problems that arise at their level with a view to seeking and proposing concrete solutions"; ²⁰ these groups are composed of different levels of personnel ranging from engineers to ordinary workers. The subject of worker participation occupied an increasingly important place in the policy conducted by the employers. F. Ceyrac, who had become president of the National Council of French Employers (CNPF), stressed the importance of the line management of the undertaking encouraging the workers to express their views, listening to their suggestions and paying heed to their aspirations. The UIMM also wrote in 1979: "to be given an opportunity to express his views is a fundamental desire of each worker and should not be the prerogative of the trade unions alone." ²¹ Worker self-expression then became a subject of dispute between employers and trade unions: the former wanted to encourage it *individually* through the hierarchy of the undertaking while the trade unions saw it as a vehicle for the employers to reduce their influence, thus causing them to lose, as it were, a monopoly in interpreting *collective* demands.

The new rights of workers' self-expression and the preliminary outlines of trade union strategies

It is likely that a new period is now about to begin as a result of the new rights of workers' self-expression provided for in the Auroux Act and also because of the trade union strategies which are gradually being shaped.

Since 1974 the French Democratic Confederation of Labour (CFDT) had been trying to get the workers' freedom of expression and intervention recognised and had called for 1 per cent of hours worked to be set aside for this purpose. In April 1977 the Ministry of Labour put out a recommendation concerning the direct expression of the workers' views in the undertaking. The text made it quite clear that there was no intention to interfere with the functioning of the various workers' representation institutions in the undertaking or to hamper the line management in the normal exercise of its authority; but this dual concern was not incompatible with the desire to give the workers the right to express themselves directly on their everyday working life without delegating that right either to their representatives or to their supervisors. The recommendation stressed the fact that, in order to exercise this right of expression, the workers should have the benefit of the necessary time as well as a favourable climate for doing so. The Ministry was not seeking to impose rigid structures but rather to encourage "experiments in various undertakings with a view to learning general lessons in the course of time".

The Auroux Act of 1982 extends this recommendation by calling for negotiations in undertakings with more than 200 employees on guarantees of freedom of expression for the workers and on the organisation, frequency and duration of meetings (which should be as decentralised as possible).

These texts aroused fierce opposition on the part of the employers who feared that workers' self-expression would be less free as soon as the conditions for it had to be negotiated with the trade unions. On the trade union side, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) and the CFDT approved the provisions, since they considered that workers' self-expression was distorted in the ERACTs or other groups set up on the employers' initiative. The trade union *Force ouvrière* (FO) is not in favour of these new rights since it considers the trade union to be the normal vehicle for the expression of the workers' views.²² No one knows yet what the effect will be on their working conditions and on safety and health in particular.

The CFDT seems to be the trade union organisation which has defined most clearly a new strategy for assuming responsibility for working conditions and safety.²³ The object is to alter work itself in order to ensure that as few workers as possible feel their occupational activity to be a negative experience. The CFDT appears to be convinced that the pursuit of this objective should not be postponed till after a hypothetical change in the economic and social system. The preservation of the workers' health is clearly only one aspect of this conception. The CFDT believes that success

depends not simply on exposing the responsibility of the employers in the event of an accident but on undertaking more methodical action on a daily basis: investigating together with the HSC and the workers the causes of accidents to help to prevent them from occurring, bringing to light the links that may exist between working conditions and health, seeing to it that safety considerations are integrated into the planning of machines or buildings, etc. It is also seeking to define a coherent policy in the various bodies in which it is represented (industrial medical services, social security preventive bodies, etc.) in order to provide a better backup for action in the undertakings. All this presupposes increased training of activists in this field. The training of trainers²⁴ should make it possible to spread the training activities of trade union activists more widely. Up till now their training on matters relating to working conditions and safety was not regarded as essential and it was sometimes heard said that CRAM safety training subsidies were not wholly devoted to the proper purposes.²⁵

The CGT is the trade union which most insistently lays responsibility for accidents on the capitalist production system and was the most inclined, at least as far as its official position was concerned, to practise a policy of opposition to management. Nowadays, however, CGT trade union sections stress that they are approaching safety matters from a very different angle. The workers should devote as much energy to pressing safety demands as to those concerning wages, the HSCs should be decentralised to encourage the participation of all and an effort made to ensure that they are no longer the poor relations of the trade unions, safety training must be provided for trade union activists and workers, safety should be integrated into work organisation, accidents should be seriously investigated, proposals should be made for solving problems and the workers should be helped to make such suggestions without having to fear that they are being absorbed into the system.¹⁴

Worker participation and the future of industrial relations

In order to assess the degree of worker participation in safety and health matters in France one is obliged to draw mainly upon three sources: the state of the legislation, the official positions of the employers' or trade union organisations, and plant monographs.²⁶ But this is not very satisfactory since there is a considerable gulf between the legislation and its application or between the positions upheld nationally by the UIMM or the CFDT, for example, and the real situation in the undertakings. As for the monographs there is no knowing how representative these are.

Nevertheless, these sources make it possible nowadays to discern a certain consensus as to the conditions governing a satisfactory safety policy even if they do not make it possible to know the number of undertakings in which these conditions are really met.

Apart from the technical know-how required, its implementation and hence improved safety depend on the participation of the workers. This

presupposes a decentralisation of the HSCs in the large undertakings or the setting up of working groups in each shop so that the workers directly concerned can study the problems and make suggestions.

Studies of accidents or industrial hazards must be carried out methodically and should not be concerned solely with discovering the immediate causes; the whole chain of causes must be investigated with a view to bringing to light all the general and specific risk factors. The studies should result in concrete proposals to avert hazards; and the working groups are only likely to continue to carry out studies and make suggestions if they can verify that their proposals are taken seriously. This presupposes that the entire line management of the undertaking should agree to pay due heed to safety requirements in its decisions.

Safety training is not to be confused with information, still less so with propaganda. What has to be done in fact is to change sceptical or fatalistic attitudes, and this can only be done by involving "the participants in active investigations by confronting them with specific problems whose characteristics, structure and applicable solutions they should be able to discover through communal endeavour". The persons concerned have to be made aware of "the concrete possibilities for action whether at their own level or at another".²⁷ Such participative training activities sometimes produce spectacular results.²⁸

When all is said and done, it appears that there is a real possibility for worker participation in safety and health matters provided that their know-how is recognised, their ability to investigate and express their views is developed through training and their proposals for changes are taken seriously. All this presupposes that management should be modest and receptive in its attitude, which cannot always be taken for granted. It also presupposes that the workers' representatives should be able to encourage the workers to express their views on their work situation and to promote inquiring attitudes, which cannot always be taken for granted either.

The new rights of worker expression provided for in the Auroux Act may never materialise if the employers and the trade unions fail to reach a consensus on how they are to express their views. Such a failure would undoubtedly have unfortunate repercussions on safety and health in the undertakings. Nevertheless, the participation of the workers and their representatives in safety and health matters may well continue to grow if the trade unions and the employers agree to accord these problems a certain significance of their own, ceasing to use them mainly as a pretext for denouncing the employers, on the one hand, and weakening trade unionism, on the other.

Among the trade unions, those which affirm that no real change will occur as long as the capitalist production system endures are aware of the aspirations expressed by the workers for an improvement of working conditions and, faced with the employers' initiatives in this field, are trying to demonstrate their effectiveness. In some undertakings which have organised

direct worker participation in safety and health matters and which have considerably reduced the number of accidents, the CGT has lost a part of its influence. There is no doubt that in some instances undertakings have viewed direct worker self-expression on safety and health matters as a means of reducing trade union influence; for the trade unions the best response to this policy appears to be to agree to participate without, however, renouncing their fundamental principles.

The current hesitations of the employers towards the new rights of worker self-expression are understandable if they do not want to see the meetings for the expression of views on working conditions systematically used by the trade union to denounce the management rather than as a means of finding solutions. But, behind these hesitations, the employers find it difficult to envisage limited collaboration on matters relating to working conditions and safety with trade unions which furthermore challenge the economic system.

A certain consensus exists therefore as to the conditions for a further development of worker participation in safety and health matters, but the scale of this development and the ways and means of achieving it will depend to a large extent on the development of industrial relations in the coming years.

Notes

¹ See, for example, J. B. Cronin: "Cause and effect? Investigations into aspects of industrial accidents in the United Kingdom", in *International Labour Review*, Feb. 1971, pp. 99-115.

² For further details see M. Rezeau and Fr. Baque: "La participation des travailleurs à la sécurité dans les entreprises en France et en Grande-Bretagne", in *Revue française des affaires sociales* (Paris), Oct.-Dec. 1975, pp. 30-48, and J. Charbonnier: *L'accident du travail et le management de la prévention* (Paris, Hommes et techniques, 1980), pp. 121-127.

³ A. Nutte and J. Fontaine: "La politique de prévention des risques professionnels en France depuis la promulgation de la loi du 6 décembre 1976", in *Travail et emploi* (Paris, Ministère du Travail et de la Participation), July 1980, p. 57.

⁴ See J. Bessou: *L'ingénieur de sécurité dans l'entreprise* (Paris, Institut national de sécurité, 1966), pp. 21-26, and P. Kéravel and Fr. Beaumont: *Les droits des travailleurs à la santé* (Paris, Editions ouvrières, 1980), Vol. 1, pp. 46-47.

⁵ This Act has been published in the *Legislative Series* (Geneva, ILO), 1973-Fr. 2. See the first section.

⁶ See H. Seillan: "Un texte ambigu qui rompt tout de même avec le passé", in *Le Monde* (Paris), 26 Oct. 1982, p. 26.

⁷ See *Legislative Series*, 1976-Fr. 1.

⁸ *Journal officiel*, 14 May 1976, p. 2973, cited by Charbonnier, op. cit., p. 124.

⁹ This means establishing the employers' contribution rates, which vary according to the hazard, and can be modified.

¹⁰ L. de Bettignies: *L'institution du comité d'hygiène et de sécurité: Prévention des accidents du travail et amélioration des conditions de travail* (Sceaux, Centre de recherches en sciences sociales du travail, 1976).

¹¹ Rezeau and Baque, op. cit.

¹² "Les comités d'entreprise existants à la date du 31 décembre 1979", in *Travail informations* (Paris), Jan. 1982, ref. 3.

¹³ See L. de Bettignies: "L'institution du Comité d'hygiène et de sécurité: Aspects structurels de la prévention des accidents du travail", in *Revue française des affaires sociales*, Jan.-Mar. 1977, p. 5.

¹⁴ Interview given by CGT members of the HSC. See "Chantiers navals de la Ciotat: Sécurité et conditions de travail", in *Revue des conditions de travail* (Marseille), Sep.-Oct. 1982, p. 35.

¹⁵ Charbonnier, op. cit., pp. 17-27.

¹⁶ *Année métallurgique* (Paris, Union des industries métallurgiques et minières), 1971, p. 135.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 85.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

²⁰ *Année métallurgique*, 1975, p. 114.

²¹ *ibid.*, 1979, p. 112.

²² In the works committee elections in 1979 the CFDT received 20.5 per cent of the votes; the CGT, 34.4 per cent; the FO, 9.7 per cent, and the non-unionists, 21.2 per cent.

²³ *La prise en charge des conditions de travail dans notre pratique syndicale*. Plateforme adoptée par le Conseil national d'octobre 1981 (Paris, CFDT).

²⁴ See, for example, M. Le Tron: "La formation de formateurs", in *Education and training policies in occupational safety and health and ergonomics, International symposium*, Occupational Safety and Health Series, No. 47 (Geneva, ILO, 1982), pp. 80-83.

²⁵ In 1980 the CRAMs participated in the financing of 23,000 training days organised by the trade unions.

²⁶ See, in particular, S. Dassa and P. Maclouf: *Contribution à l'étude de l'organisation de la sécurité dans l'entreprise* (Paris, INRS, 1975); J. Székely and V. de Keyser: *La sécurité dans deux usines de textile* (Paris, ANACT, 1980); M. de Nève: *La participation des travailleurs à la sécurité* (Paris, INRS, 1976).

²⁷ J. Gaspard: "Sécurité des travailleurs et formation", in *Pour* (Paris), Mar.-Apr. 1976.

²⁸ See, for example, A. Ripon: "Une expérience de formation participative à la sécurité dans le domaine des petites et moyennes entreprises ...". Communication au congrès de la Société d'ergonomie de langue française, Louvain, Sep. 1981.