

REPORT OF THE

WORKERS' CONTROL CONFERENCE

**NOTTINGHAM
1966**

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THE CENTRE FOR SOCIALIST EDUCATION

The Centre for Socialist Education, in convening a national conference on Workers' Control, was taking on a responsibility which had already been enthusiastically discharged by the Voice newspapers and The Week in a series of three national seminars held in 1964 and 1965.

The first seminar, in Nottingham early in 1964, attracted a great deal of attention in the socialist press, and brought together over 60 national delegates and a number of Nottingham trade unionists to consider a number of papers on the possibilities for the extension of democracy in the nationalised industries, and for an aggressive, democratic reply to the technocratic pressures for an incomes policy. It attracted substantial academic support, and it assisted in hammering out the strategies which have consistently been advocated in The Week and Voice of the Unions ever since, of posing against the demand that the unions be increasingly integrated into the State machinery for control of industrial relations, which has been an insistent theme of all the incomes policy propaganda of the Wilson-Brown team, the counter-proposal of a movement for workers' control. This movement took shape around the call for complete and democratic accountability of all industrial organisations to their work-people, for the 'opening of the books' and for the abolition of business secrecy.

As a result, wide interest was aroused in the unions and the Co-operative movement, and a second seminar was held in London with support from the London Co-operative Society for some of its proceedings. By this time, early in 1965, a Labour Government had been reformed, and supporters of The Week-Voice campaign had elaborated a number of specific proposals for democratic advance in industry, particularly in the public sector. Following a call by Ernie Roberts, Assistant General Secretary of the AEU, in the Voice, a seminar of steel workers based on the Sheffield area worked out a detailed plan for the democratic administration of the about-to-be nationalised Steel industry. Study groups in Hull considered the democratisation of the docks and public transport. A Ruskin College group had put forward plans for the Mining Industry, and the Derbyshire Miners had taken the whole question forward with the publication, in 1964, of their 'Plan for the Miners'. The London Conference had already, therefore, reached a point at which it had a whole number of detailed schemes to study, and it was found necessary to convene yet another national gathering to complete the examination of these. This was held in Manchester in mid-1965.

Already the movement was attracting considerable support from the unions. Particularly in the T&GMU and among the Foundrymen, discussion flared up into the columns of union journals, and then spread over into the socialist press at large. By the beginning of 1966 the whole campaign was beginning to reach the stage at which it was embracing the official institutions of the movement. The Hull dockers elaborated their detailed programme into an 'Anti-Devlin Report', which aroused very considerable discussion among portworkers all over the country, and which set a very useful framework in which to consider the proposals of an Official Labour Party commission, which, under the pressures generated in the campaign, had put forward a scheme for nationalisation with 'workers' participation'. The proposals of the Sheffield seminar were taken over, lock, stock and barrel, by the craftsmen's committee of the Steel Unions, and put forward for consideration as their official recommendations. The Hull busmen had published a pamphlet in which they set out 'Four Steps for Progress' which attracted a widespread audience all over the country.

But the climax of support for the campaign came with the Seamen's Strike. When Mr. Wilson appointed the Pearson Commission to provide a propaganda justification for not meeting the Seamen's most moderate demands, the union's schelerotic research department did nothing about the matter. (Perhaps the training of the NUS Research Officer in the witch-hunting bureau, IRIS, fitted him better for other work: in any event, the NUS nationally published no serious reply to the Pearson Report.) At this point militants in Hull took over, by publishing 'Not Wanted on Voyage', a brilliant reply to Pearson which incorporated all the aggressive responses to the incomes policy which had been elaborated in the Workers' Control seminars. In a forthright chapter, the Seamen demanded that before Pearson's evidence could be accepted, the shipowners' books must be opened to union investigation. Their point was reinforced by the fact that a Government Committee on Company Law Reform, set up by the Tories, had recommended in 1962 that the shipowners' exemption from even the normal obligation of companies to publish information about their reserves, was totally inexcusable.

It was in this context that the Nottingham seminar met on June 25th-26th 1966. It marked a major breakthrough, attracting the widest support of all the seminars so far held. Delegates attended from all parts of the country, and the 19 delegates from Scotland - not to mention observers from Norway, the United States, and Poland - showed that distance was no object. There were also large contingents from London, Manchester, Hull, Nottingham, Birmingham and Coventry, Yorkshire, and Wales and the West Country. Six Universities - Hull, Nottingham, Essex, Oxford, Swansea and Loughborough - were represented.

As a cross section of the Labour Movement the attendance was equally impressive: Labour Party, Communist Party, Independent Labour Party, Young Socialists, Fabian Society, Centre for Socialist Education, Edinburgh Trades Council, Glasgow Left Club, Arab Revolution, and a long list of Unions - AEU, ASSET, ASCW, AUT, DATA, ETU, NALSO, NASDU, NGA, NSMM, NUM, NUR, NUS, NU.Students, NUT, POFU, SCEBTA, T&GWU, TWU, USDAW. Over 150 delegates were present in all, as well as visitors from the Nottingham area.

The socialist journals participating included 'The Week', 'International Socialism', 'Labour Worker', 'The Socialist Leader', 'Humber-side Voice', and 'Voice of the Unions'.

Many industries were obviously well represented amongst the long list of unions involved, but there were also individual delegations from specific sections of industry, and the detailed contributions which they were able to make to the Conference were of especial value. The Bristol-Siddeley Engines Joint Shop Stewards' Committee sent a four-man delegation, and there was also a delegation from the Redbourn (Scunthorpe) Works of Richard, Thomas & Baldwins.

The Conference agreed, on the first day, to separate into eleven Study Groups as follows :- Health & Safety Delegates in Industry; Labour Democracy; Incomes Policy; Package Deals; Workers' Self Management in Yugoslavia, Poland and Scandinavia; Workers' Education; The Steel Industry; Docks; Mines; Busmen; The Aircraft Industry.

The first, plenary, session of the Conference heard a number of representative speakers: Walter Kendall, editor of Voice of the Unions, opened with a brief but graphic summary of the record of work done up to date, and introduced a platform consisting of Michael Barratt Brown, Ernie Roberts and Tony Topham. Michael Barratt Brown, a member of the editorial team of Plebs, stressed the need for a concentrated attempt to work out practical proposals which could be communicated and connected with the day-to-day struggles of the unions, and serve to enlarge trade union powers now. The whole strategy of encroaching control, which raises the serious problem of how to mobilise the unions to prevent their incorporation in management schemes, and to assert their power over and above the interests of property, had by now been widely understood, so that little time was spent on what Michael Barratt Brown called 'pie-in-the-sky' schemes. However, the precise way in which control demands are formulated, and the manner in which they are set out as stimulants to independent socialist thinking by the workers, and as barriers to the assimilation of the unions into neo-capitalist disciplinary designs, still require very careful study. This was emphasised by Ernie Roberts who made a stimulating analysis of the by now well-known platform set out by Jack Jones of the T&GWU, showing the dangers of accepting productivity bargaining at its face value. Tony Topham, in setting out the major questions for the seminars, stressed this problem: at all times the demand for control must leave the unions free to attack management, which will remain an intractable force until private property itself has been overcome, and the transition to full self-management on the basis of a democratic plan can be made. As Walter Kendall insisted, in papers circulated prior to the Conference, even then the unions have a vital independent function, which should be separate from that of industrial administration.

After the opening session, the Conference split into its seminar groupings, the reports on which make up the bulk of this brochure. A detailed report on the movement for industrial democracy in Scandinavia was brought by Mr. Aake Anker-Ording, who represented Norwegian engineering workers. Doctor Golebiowski, of Poland, also brought a report on Workers' Councils in Poland, which is carried with the seminar reports which follow.

A sustained effort is now needed to take the findings of the Nottingham Seminar still further into the mainstream of the Labour Movement. The resignation of Mr. Cousins from the cabinet, and the developing fight against the completely neo-capitalist incomes policy, cries out for an integrated socialist alternative policy, and for a strategy of advance based on the conviction that the transition to socialism in Britain is not only possible but imperative, if the gains made by the Labour Movement in the past century and a half are not to be wiped away, and the descent into corporatism is to be avoided.

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This Report supplements the Bulletin of Preliminary Papers for the Workers' Control Conference - a 40 page booklet comprising the basis for discussion of the various Study Groups. The Bulletin, already issued to Conference Delegates and to subscribing members of CSE, is separately available from 'The Week', 74 Mansfield Road, Nottingham. (Price 2/6d post free).

CREDENTIALS LIST OF DELEGATES ATTENDING THE WORKERS' CONTROL CONFERENCE

by Geoff Coggan

The following list is extracted from the individual Seminar registrations, and excludes a number of delegates who attended only the general discussions. Organisations, etc. are listed solely for purposes of identification.

Aake Anker-Ording, Norway (Norwegian Engineering Workers)
Alec Acheson, 53 South Knighton Rd., Leicester (CSE)
A. Adyamo, Fircroft College, Selly Oak, Birmingham.
Barbara Allen, 51 Lomaine Drive, Kings Norton, Birmingham (CSE)
Julian Atkinson (CSE)
M.J. Ball, 40 Scarsdale St., Carr Vale, Chesterfield.
Colin Barker, 43 Daisy Bank Road, Manchester, 14.
Ben Barker, 25 Queens Road, Sketty, Swansea.
Michael Barratt Brown, Robin Hood Farm, Baslow, Derbys (Sheffield Group)
Peter Bell, 8 Postern Gate, Hull (NUS)
T. Bell, 79 Dalmeny St., Edinburgh, 5. (Edinburgh Trades Council)
Alastair Black, 23 Clark Avenue, Edinburgh, 5. (ditto)
Janet Blackman, 42 Pearson Park, Hull.
Keith Bloor, 53 Central Avenue, New Basford, Nottingham (Labour Party, NGA)
Richard Britnell, 47 Derby Rd., Watford, Herts.
Ken Britton, 197 Kings Cross Rd., London, WC.1. (ILP)
Leslie Brook, 39 Greenhill Lane, Leeds, 12. (Swansea Univ. Socialist Society)
Arthur Bryan, 16 Hillary Rd., Scunthorpe. (ETU)
William Boyle, 1 Dalkeith Avenue, Glasgow S.1. (DATA)

Steve Butters, 47 Derby Rd., Watford, Herts. (Labour Party, NUT)
Ken Buxton, 16 Edgware Rd., Bulwell, Nottingham. (Labour Party, NUR)
Pete Barnes, Arnold, Nottingham (Labour Party)
A.V. Cathers, 11 Fitzroy Square, London, W.1.
Peter Carter, 17 Westbourne Avenue, Hull. (Hull Univ. Socialist Society)
Malcolm Cauldwell, 7 The Glebe, London, SE.3. (CSE)
R.G. Coates, 78a Butt Rd., Colchester. (Univ. of Essex Socialist Society)
Ken Coates, 19 Greenfield Street, Dunkirk, Nottingham. (CSE)
Ray Collins, Bute House, Penarth, Glamorgan. (CSE)
E. Concliffe, 19 Derwent Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.
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Rosalind Delmar, 12a Didsbury Court, Manchester, 20.
Pat Devine, 'Moresby', Prestwick Park Rd., Prestwick, Midlothian.
Harry Dorrell, 'Medway', Oak Stubs Lane, Dorney Reach, Maidenhead, Berks.
J. Dronfield, 236, Remembrance Rd, Willenhall, Coventry. (Bristol Siddeley
Dan Durant, 42 Pearson Park, Hull. (ASoW Engines)
Margaret Fraser, 372 Spring Lane, Mapperley, Nottingham. (Labour Party)
J. Fawthrop, Students' Union, Hull University. (Hull Univ. Socialist Society)
Richard Fletcher, 71 New Kings Rd., London, SW.6. (Voice of the Unions)
Ken Fleet, 143 Haddon Crescent, Chilwell, Nottingham.
Pat Fryd, 97 Otago Street, Glasgow W.2. (Glasgow Left Club)
Dave Goodman, Fircroft College, Selly Oak, Birmingham.
Dr. Golembiowski, Nuffield College, Oxford.
R. Goodie, 32 Hill Avenue, Dumfries. (Dumfries Trades Council)
R. Gregory, 54 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham. (Labour Party, The Week)
Judy Gregory, ditto.
P. Grundy, 75 Longford Rd., Kingstanding, Birmingham. (T&GWU)
John Henry, 11 Albany Street, Edinburgh, 1. (Edinburgh Trades Council)

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Jim Higgins, 19 Avery Gardens, Kentow, Middlesex. (International Socialism)
 J. Harber, Univ. of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester. (Univ. Socialist Socy)
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 T. Harris, 5 Holly Terrace, New Walk, York. (Labour Party)
 Ann Humphreys, Students' Union, Hull University.
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 Walter MacLellan, 3 Quarryknowe, Lanark. (Lanark Young Socialists)
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 Patsy Stoneman, ditto.
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In 1958, due to further and more lively decentralising processes, the extension of the participation of the working classes in managing the enterprises had assumed the form of a special institution - the Workers' Councils. This constituted a basic transformation in the legal situation of the personnel of state enterprises. There arose the possibility of the personnel participating directly and institutionally in the management of the works, independently of forms and means hitherto available.

The main organs of workers' self-government are: The workers' self-government conference; The Workers' Council of the enterprise in question, its praesidium and the branch (departmental) workers' councils. A particularly important role is played among the above organs by the Workers' Self-Government conference, which is described by the Act as "the supreme organ of self-government", which is entitled to give decisions in all matters with which self-government is competent to deal. Being the supreme organ, the workers' self-government conference "co-ordinates the activities of the organs of self-government in matters with which they are competent to deal". It is composed of all the members of the workers' council of the enterprise, the works council of the Trade Union and the works committee (executive organ) of the Polish United Workers' Party. The composition of the conference may also include representatives of youth organisations and of technical and scientific associations nominated by the Conference itself. Moreover, the managing director of the enterprise participates in the debates of the conference officers.

The tasks of the workers' self government conference, as fixed by the provisions of the 1958 Act, may be considered under the following headings: (a) Directing and co-ordinating the activities of the other organs of workers' self government; (b) Deciding in those key problems of the enterprise which have become the concern of workers' self-government; (c) Exercising control and supervision. The Workers' Self-Government Act enumerates the following among the rights of the conference in the field of expertise and control: (a) Examining the annual budget of the enterprise together with the account of remits; (b) Examining the reports on the activities of the enterprise handed in by the management; (c) Establishing the fundamental trends and forms of control exercised by other self-government organs.

The Workers' Self-Government Conference participates in the co-management of the enterprise, and consequently shares responsibility for the effects of its activities, i.e., it participates in the administration. Therefore it is entitled to participate in management, and in making decisions. It can thus be said that W.S.G.C. not only exercises control over the activities of the administration, but also supervises its functioning. The W.S.G. Conferences are not only organs of self-government in the enterprises. Workers' councils, their praesidium as well as the branch (department) workers' councils may be active side by side with them.

The range of activities of Workers' Councils (its chairman or praesidium) includes: (a) Expressing opinions concerning the nomination and recalling of the Managing Director; (b) Control over the contracts concerning supplies, labour and services, entered into the enterprise with units; (c) Control over sales and purchases made on the private market; (d) Control over the wages fund, the wages list and the rewards and bonuses paid in the enterprise.

The Praesidium is nominated by the Workers' Council out of its own members. Ex-officio members of the Praesidium are: the representatives of the Workers' Council, the secretary of the committee of the Polish United Workers' Party and the Chairman of the Workers' Council of the Trade Union. The Managing Director of the enterprise participates ex-officio via the meetings of both the praesidium and the Workers' Council. Of course the importance of the Workers' Self-Government, whose organisation, scope and forms of activity have been mentioned by me - should be measured by its social, practical and economic achievements.

In Poland the W.S.G. is treated as a constitutional institution. Indeed, it serves the purpose of expanding the participation of both the manual and white collar workers in the management of state enterprises. The organs of that self-government collaborate with the units of the state administration in carrying out economic tasks. The W.S.G. collaborates with the local representative organs, i.e. the Peoples' Councils, as well as with other state and social organisations (in order to strengthen the direct participation of the citizens in governing the country). Such is the political sense of the existence, activities and development of the workers' self-government.

The W.S.G. plays a major part in the process of improving personal relations in the production plant. The exercising of control and supervision over the administration of the enterprise by the workers' self-government is one of the conditions of developing the personnel's social initiative and social activities. By teaching the workers to treat the production plant as their own, the workers' self-government helps to increase the economic effectiveness of the activities of such enterprises. Owing to the existing connection between the level of workers' wages and such economic effects, this brings about an increase in the individual worker's income. The progress made so far in the activities of Workers' Self-Government indicates that this institution is gaining an increasing importance and producing ever better effects in the political, social and economic fields.

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INCOMES POLICY, LEGISLATION, & SHOP STEWARDS

Economic Background to Incomes Policy :

There is a necessity for employers to be able to predict labour costs, in context of long range planning, because of :

- (a) Rapidity of technological advance
- (b) Consequent rapid rate at which capital equipment is becoming obsolete
- (c) Huge cost of technological research and replacement of capital equipment.

The fast growth of international competition is squeezing British profit margins.

The rapid rate of growth in Italy, Germany, Japan, etc., is to some extent due to the fact that Labour movements are weaker than in Britain, and growth can be accomplished with less regard to the workers.

The British balance of payments problem is caused by :

- (a) The maintenance of the £.
- (b) Large outflow of private capital
- (c) Vast arms expenditure.

With the need for neo-capitalist planning, there is a necessary growth of State involvement in the economy. The State is the biggest employer.

Realities of Profits, Dividends and Wages

In a capitalist economy profits cannot be controlled without stagnation because they provide the whole motive power and dynamic of the system.

The control of dividends is not the same as the control of profits (the major proportion of profits is taken up by capital investment)

Wages under capitalism are won by good organisation and struggle. If high wages are held back, low wage earners will not benefit - quite the contrary. Militant, highly organised, highly paid workers are the vanguard of the working class advance as a whole, both by example, and because lower paid workers fight to keep up.

The Incomes Policy is not an incomes policy at all, but a WAGES Policy.

There are two types of wage bargaining :- national T.U. bargaining fixes basic minimum; shop-floor bargaining establishes actual wages, piece rates etc. At least in the vanguard sections of the working class, the shop-floor struggles predominate.

The Trade Unions and Shop Stewards

There is an increasing division between T.U. official machinery and the rank and file, because of :

- (a) The increasing State involvement in the economy has tended to integrate T.U.s into the machinery of actual government.
- (b) The growth in the number of full time paid T.U. officials.
- (c) The geographical basis of T.U. branches.

Whereas the shop stewards are closely involved in the day-to-day struggle on the factory floor. These are the ones who lead the workers' struggles today - so the Incomes Policy, Prices and Incomes Legislation, and the whole anti-working class drive is now directed primarily against the shop steward.

Opposition to the Incomes Policy and anti-T.U. legislation is crucial to the working class. This is the class struggle at the moment, and in the long run the fight for workers' control will be led by the shop stewards.

The main task now is the building up of the shop stewards' movement at local and national level, and the politicisation of the movement - at present fragmented and narrowly based. A start has been made with the London Industrial Shop Stewards Defence Committee.

Opposition to the Incomes Policy

Despite agreed opposition to this particular Incomes Policy, the Seminar displayed considerable disagreement over tactics.

- (a) Either complete rejection of any Incomes Policy under capitalism, and militant opposition to it on both theoretical level (i.e. Cliff Barker's Book), and by practical unrestrained shop floor militance.
- (b) Or "socialisation" of Incomes Policy, in form of demands for dividend limitation, price control, state planning of key investments etc. Some felt that negative opposition, even if successful, would leave us where we were in terms of the fight for workers' control and socialism, and thought we should demand more state intervention in the interests of the working class.
- (c) Those opposing this line of thought believed that advances in workers' consciousness and organisation, arising directly out of fight against Incomes Policy, anti-T.U. legislation, etc., were in themselves positive gains. Also thought that "state intervention in interests of working class" a contradiction in terms, since the state in question is a capitalist one.
- (d) Question of "opening the books" brought up. Agreed that as one of the opposing demands: it represented good general tactics.

Opinions were equally divided on the question of Trade Unions :

- (a) Most felt that, with bureaucratization of Unions, and since Government's policies in fact attacked rank and file workers, the main struggle, at least in the most advanced sections of working class, had switched from unions to building up rank and file organisations, and shop floor struggles.
- (b) Most, however, were agreed that Trade Union action and participation was still very important. We should co-operate as far as possible. In many fields the main struggle was still that of unionisation. We should not make a fetish of unofficial action by shop stewards.

Conclusions

No unified, coherent attitude to Incomes Policy, etc. was produced by Seminar. It was generally felt to be very useful, but merely scratched the surface. There had been no economic analysis of Government's arguments in favour of the Incomes Policy as a factor leading to economic growth. There is much work still to be done.

REPORT ON THE MINING SEMINAR

The seminar felt that workers were strangled by economic decisions made elsewhere in a nationalised industry. This could be seen on safety committees at a local level when the manager has a certain economic position to fulfil for that particular pit e.g. that the pit must close in 5 years or that it must either pay its way or be closed. To this problem must be added the ageing labour force in the mining industry.

It was agreed that a fuel policy should still be based on coal. Local committees would need to look at the economic position locally in their own pits, and therefore the books must be opened locally, especially when pits are due to be closed. On the question of whether the management should be elected by the workers, there was some hesitation, since it was felt that the miners were not ready for this, and the present management was, in any case, for the industry. The workers are safe with local committees, but the managers should remain responsible to the N.C.B.

The amalgamation of unions was recommended. This is now easier, as all the different categories of miners are now working together as a team. Re-deployment would be more acceptable if the N.C.B. could manufacture its own switch-gear and machinery and therefore cut down unemployment. This is a more just social policy than killing mining communities by moving miners to other areas.

Preventive precautions against ill-health should be strengthened, especially for miners over the age of 50.

Workers' control is necessary in the mining industry. Nationalisation has failed unless benefits in wages and better conditions have been transferred to the workers.

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REPORT ON WORKERS' EDUCATION SEMINAR by Joe Kenyon, TUC

The seminar was unhappy about the TUC education schemes. Education is the most important weapon in the struggle for socialism, and the TUC education service, designed to provide education in direct subjects for trade unionists, and primarily for union officials, and not to provide education of the kind given by the NCIC and WEA, appears to be inadequate for this purpose. The students involved are to be full-time officials, or voluntary officials. There are to be no evening classes. Instead there will be day-release, weekend courses and short residential courses. These are to be co-ordinated to provide for progressive studies, linked with postal courses, to standardise them according to a plan as to their contents made centrally at Congress House.

Therefore there is a need for a new independent working-class education movement. CSE may fill the gap here, and must devise an education structure, and a CSE Book Club like the Left Club. The structure should have a local democratic basis.

HEALTH AND SAFETY. report by T.Bell and Les Cook.

The following is the report we have to make, and our comments, on the S.M.A. programme "Safety Delegates in Industry".

1 Lack of precision. We consider that the paper lacks precision in a number of places, e.g. Are the S.H. and W. officers to be elected? Is there meant to be a ratio of one delegate to every 25 workers in the larger factories?

2 Necessary Considerations. The proper functioning of an occupational health service needs a) a re-modelled N.H.S. based on health centres with salaried doctors, b) better conditions of work in factories and other work places. These considerations were not stressed enough by the S.M.A.'s paper.

3 Our General Bias. We were in favour of greater compulsion than was expressed in the paper e.g. we would make it compulsory for all employers to join the scheme, even in the short term, and we should like to see the law setting higher standards than those envisaged by the paper. Penalties for maintaining dangerous workplaces should be drastically increased.

4 Differences with the Report. a) we consider that the part-time safety delegates would in fact be full-time in all but the smallest factories, that is if they were conscientiously following all the duties laid down by the paper. We therefore think that, in all but the smallest workplaces, there should be full-time elected officers, with an office in which to work, and being paid a wage commensurate with their difficult and skilled job. They would have security of tenure and could only be removed by their "constituents".

b) The ratio of 1:25 is unwieldy in a workplace of, say, 500 people. We would increase this ratio in the larger factories.

c) Officers would be appointed by the Trade Unions concerned only where the nature of the industry precluded viable election procedures.

d) The training of workers should be done by qualified teachers on the shop floor.

e) Times of meetings between delegates, officers, medical staff etc., should be regular and on set dates. We consider that they should meet at least every 3 weeks.

f) We consider the programme should be introduced as a whole at one step, and not in stages.

5 Points to stress. We consider the following of vital importance.

a) Safety records must be kept up to date, and copies of all reports must be kept. The safety delegate or officer would supervise the sending of reports to the factory inspectorate.

b) Extension of designated diseases.

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c) Full wages on injury. In the case of an enquiry being held into an injury, the benefit of the doubt should be given to the injured worker.

d) Proximity of health centres and accident units to industrial centres.

e) Certificates of competence in safety are a must for all employers.

f) Protection of the delegates and officers from victimisation.

g) Strengthening the factory inspectorate. This would be done by paying better salaries, but this would lead to both economic and social savings in the long term.

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DCCMS GROUPS SEMINAR

report by N.Walsh, T&GWU, Wharves, Staffs.

Analysis. The Anti-Devlin Report was considered. It presented difficulties due to the different methods of operation and ownership of ports. The seminar found that the Anti-Devlin Report facts did not line up with those in London or Bristol. The seminar was not happy about the way the report was laid out. Quotations were interspersed in a manner which detracted from its arguments.

National Port Authority. The relationship of the National Port Authority to the Central Portworkers' Council needed better explanation. What would be the composition of the N.P.A.? Who would the government choose? Former employees? A Trade Union knight? This would simply create jobs for the boys, without extending the workers' power.

Concerning the "Mikardo Plan": will it become the Labour Government's plan? There was a controversy over Mikardo's plan and the Labour Party Inquiry, arising from the accusation that no docker sympathetic to ideas of workers' control had a hearing. Neither did NAS&D.

A revised plan is needed, to be ready for the time when Labour intended to nationalise. This should be made into a clear and simple pamphlet.

A comparison between Devlin and Anti-Devlin Project Committees should be set up on a local basis, so that dockers could study their own port, and make their own proposals.

A conference should be held in 6 to 9 months to hammer out an overall plan, which could unite all portworkers.

Communications to Unions should not be confined just to the T&GWU. There is inter-union rivalry, which should not prevent discussion on this matter. Other political parties, not only the Labour Party, should be consulted. Apolitical people, as well as the ILP, the Liberals, and bodies like the SWF, should be consulted. There had been an assumption that all are committed Labour Party members at this conference. This is not true. The rivalry between dockworkers in London led by Dick Dash and Liverpool, led by Peter Kerrison, shows that the Labour Party has no monopoly of dock opinion. All agree that we need industrial democracy, but some do not wish to be hobbled by the word "Nationalisation".

REPORT OF SEMINAR ON YUGOSLAVIA - SCANDINAVIA AS MODELS
FOR WORKERS' CONTROL

The seminar concerned itself with the relevance of the Norwegian and Yugoslav Workers' Control movements. As a preliminary, though, there was a short discussion of the Polish model, opened by a Government representative from Poland. Comrade Aake-Ording described the movement for Workers' Control in Norway. He described the parliamentary and legal struggle, to underpin the ideological movement, within the Labour Party. He mentioned the part in the struggle played by 'political' strikes.. Publication in English of the background to the Norwegian struggle could prove useful in that the relevance to Britain is perhaps more pressing than those of either Yugoslavia or Poland. It was felt that a close study of the role of the market and Trade Unions in the self-management system of Yugoslavia was necessary in the light of the present 'reforms from above'. Is the consciousness of the Yugoslav worker so advanced as to withstand any possible encroachment of a form of 'workers' control' after last week's reforms ?

There was a feeling that in the British situation the strategy to be adopted was one of 'encroachment' ; negative in the case of private industry (i.e. the power of veto over actions of management) and positive in the case of nationalised industries (i.e. the putting forward of constructive alternatives). It seemed that the seminar believed in this policy of 'positive encroachment' after the nationalisation of an industry. The strategy can be a dangerous one in that it might lead to a subsequent bureaucratic stifling of the 'encroachment' policies: and it needs to be looked into further.

In conclusion it was felt that there were many lessons for our movement in those of Yugoslavia (notwithstanding their present over-emphasis on a text-book schema of market economics) and of Norway (despite some over-emphasis on legal and parliamentary methods of achieving objectives). We feel that C.S.E. should publish a booklet, possibly, comparing the systems and outlining their applicability to the British situation.

Tony Topham opened the meeting by outlining the pattern of wage negotiations. These fell into two groups: those concluded at National Level; those concluded at Local Level, which give rise to what is termed as Wage Drift. This depends on the bargaining power of the workers' situation and the activities of the shop stewards in exploiting this situation. He pointed out that wage drift is an important part of total wages. It was concluded that the employers regard a package deal as a means of stopping this wage drift by removing the controls of shop stewards at local level.

Package deals were first negotiated in America, with the worker giving up certain rights in order to obtain a shorter working week.

Discussion took place around whether or not package deals were a good thing or not. Should the unions strike a big blow at part of the package deal? Could a package deal be solved locally or not? Should productivity be included in such a deal?

Esso was the first company to introduce a package deal here, at their Fawley works, to halt the wage drift, and to cut away the militancy of shop stewards. They concluded a package deal which included a substantial wage increase in return for more discipline on the workers, such as control on demarcation disputes and problems and the elimination of overtime, to generally eliminate those areas where the shop stewards eat into managerial prerogatives. Part of the Fawley deal was to do away with piece work, one area where the shop steward has a wide area of influence, and the worker has a measure of independence inasmuch as he determines his own level of working according to his financial needs.

In other package deals anti-strike clauses are included. Nonetheless it was generally felt that because of the continued high level of employment, shop stewards were introducing new measures of controls, even where package deals were accepted.

The seminar concluded that in any package deal the following should be excluded: anti-strike clauses, those attempts to take control away from the shop steward, the closed shop type of package deal where the union can be used as an instrument to discipline the workers (such as has been concluded by the Municipal and General Workers' Union at Ilford). It is necessary to work for a strategy of positive gains for minimum concessions, to make counter-demands for a shorter working week and a sliding scale of hours, e.g. 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. All who accept package deals should be aware that the chief dangers could well lie in the future. Shop stewards in particular should be careful in considering the implication of "buying out" their controls for cash benefits.

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Jack Jones has put forward, in Tribune, a policy of high wages for high output. Its conditions include:-

- 1 Elected shop stewards sitting on boards.
- 2 Scrutiny of the books.
- 3 Joint pay and production committees.
- 4 The right of trade unions to report backward employers to the little N.E.D.Cs.

The seminar felt that there was a great danger that the shop stewards may be caught up in management. That if trade unions were to be represented they must be elected from the floor and have the right either to veto or at least to disassociate themselves from the decisions.

2 was generally agreed, with the policy of opening the books for inspection. They should not remain secret, guarded from the workers.

On 3 it was felt that to gear pay to productivity alone means accepting the status quo in regard to the division of the national cake. This no socialist can do.

There was little comment on proposal 4. It would not mean anything if the books remained closed. In general we recommend that the unions ought to participate on any councils which defend workers' interests, but should not take any responsibility for management.

Further we recommend that any deal to increase productivity must be paralleled by increased safety measures, and negotiated agreements on the construction of new machinery and the pace and conditions in which it should run.

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REPORT ON THE BUSMEN'S SEMINAR

It was felt that one of the problems in implementing workers' control in the transport industry was the attitude of the workers to authority. It would be especially difficult to ensure discipline and security of jobs in the railways, where the unions already have negative control. On the question of managerial function, would supervisors be simply experts or would they carry out workers' policy decisions made by workers' committees, or would the workers' take decisions on the shop floor. It is important that the right type of officials be chosen to make workers' control effective.

However, it was felt that workers' control was a most important step towards socialism. The allocation of resources in municipal services must be made by city councils. There was no other way. There seemed to be some confusion in the busmen's model in bringing in trade unions at workers' councils level. The Trade Unions should be kept outside this, with their own functions. One difficult decision to take was where officials should be advisers, and another difficulty was the complexity of the proposed councils.

Chairman: Michael Barratt-Brown

The aim of this group was to examine the submitted paper with the idea of drafting an amendment to the Iron and Steel Bill that will give a basis for democratic participation by the workers in the industry.

Two major types of proposal emerged. The first relied upon the Productivity Committee to be established in each works section, to be elected by the workers of that section. To this must be added a further Works Council, as detailed by the papers, elected from all workers of different grades. As an alternative to this it was suggested that Shop Stewards should be given a different and increased status and legal protection. Since these are elected by the worker in the first instance, they could be at section level. The Works Council could be elected from the Shop Stewards Committee and they could be given Executive Powers.

However, it was felt due to the shortness of time before the Bill becomes Law, that a working basis must be found to ensure that ample time is available once the Bill is Law, for a democratic structure to be created within the industry.

Therefore it was suggested that the following principles should be written into the Bill.

- 1 The Bill should give an element of democratic control of appointments at all levels, to all workers.
- 2 No permanent machinery of consultation should be imposed until full discussions have taken place with all the workers.
- 3 It was felt that experiments should take place at various plants, to see if an ideal solution can be found for workers' participation, based on the paper submitted to the seminar, and that this paper be submitted to the Ministry of Power.

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REPORT OF THE AIRCRAFT SEMINAR by Philip Higgs, joint shop Stewards Committee, Siddeley's.

Potential projects for the British aircraft industry are the manufacture of airbuses, light aircraft, helicopters and vertical take-off and hover-craft. European co-operation is needed to stand up to the competition of the American industry.

In general aircraft workers are in favour of nationalisation of the industry, and want much more workers' control than exists in the industry's present form. Shop floor gangs with elected leaders already organise work on the shop floor, and this is a rudimentary form of workers' control.

The industry could operate under workers' control if its structure were broken down as follows:-

- 1) Ministry;
- 2) National Board, as in steel, one for each section of the industry;
- 3) National Production Board - 50% from the National Board, 50% from the Workers' Council;
- 4) Workers Council - 50% departmental, elected by workers, 50% management.

CSE should call a national meeting in September to draw up a plan for the industry;

REPORT ON LABOUR DEMOCRACY SEMINAR

by Richard Fletcher.

The Labour Party and the Trade Unions must be discussed as they are. The basis of power is similar in both cases: a self-perpetuating bureaucracy, who act undemocratically, and are subject to intervention by the Government. The Parliamentary Labour Party is being deprived of its power by the Cabinet and the Press.

The situation is hopeless unless we strengthen our roots in local political machinery and unless we can control such machinery. The Left should not isolate individuals in this work, but should take part collectively in union elections, and should build up delegations to the various committees of the Labour Party.

The tactics will have to be those of guerilla warfare. The Left must choose the issues, and they must include the issue of democracy, even though this may have to be done by opportunistic means. The Left must have an alternative policy, must not allow itself to be frustrated by the opposition to it, but must remain in the Labour Party and Trade Unions in order to fight for this policy.

We should fight on issues when they are understood, and should not go into them too early. The long process of education must be begun, and then the fight opened up when the issue is generally understood.

Many lessons have to be learned from the situation in Nottingham Labour Party. It is a mistake to become so isolated. Although the struggle in Nottingham started with criticism of the City Party's position as a rubber stamp for the Council, and then progressive policies were put forward as an alternative, too much energy was spent in gaining delegateships, and not enough on building a hard political left.

The performance of MPs in the House must be tied up with the resolutions of their CLPs. Parliamentary secrecy must be removed. We must fight on policies and be prepared to actively support them, realising that many a resolution is a beginning, not an end.