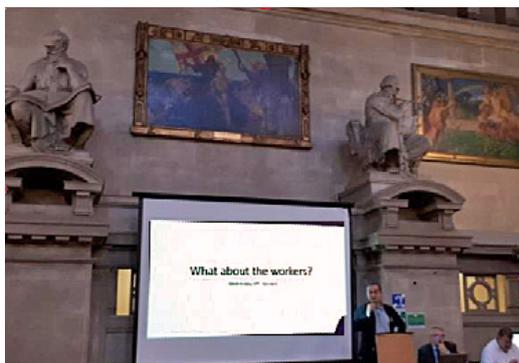


Cardiff University School of Social Sciences

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Ref: LTB 641/2019 - Professor David Walters Director of the Cardiff University Work Environment Research Centre (CWERC), is an internationally renowned researcher and writer on various aspects of the work environment and strong supporter and advocate in the strengths and positive benefits of employee and trade union representation and consultation on health and safety, the politics of health and safety at work, regulating health and safety management, chemical risk management at work and health and safety at work in all types and sizes of companies. He is the editor of the international journal, Policy and Practice in Health and Safety, a member of the IOSH Research Committee and was Special Adviser, to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee. He is highly respected across the UK and European Trade Union movement. David is due to retire shortly and to mark his retirement an International Health and Safety Symposium entitled "*What about the workers?*" has been announced in his honour with the event.



The event was opened by Tom Hall who explained the day, the background and work of David; the masses of study books he has written and the international scope of his work on workplaces and many countries. Speakers, and attendees, at the small gathering came from Australia, NZ, Latvia, Canada, SA, Sri Lanka, USA and St Helens.

Peter Lahay from the International Transport Workers Federation (1) talked about the struggle to improve conditions by trade unions along with Jukka Takala the Executive Director Emeritus, President of the International Commission on Occupational Health (2).

Legislation around the world is in place to prevent workers going on strike or taking industrial action on behalf of other workers – like in such a case for not unloading a ship in support of those on strike on board that ship. Now, you can get more information on shipping in 1880's than today. ITF IOSH study 2016 need to build knowledge activism.



ICOH is the oldest scientific association in the world being founded in 1906, it has members from 93 countries and recognised by the United Nations. Noted that net harm is caused by humans it therefore can be prevented by humans – these are NOT natural disasters however there are problems for example in Pakistan only 2.5% of workplaces are inspected. The vision hasn't changed, work-related zero harm.

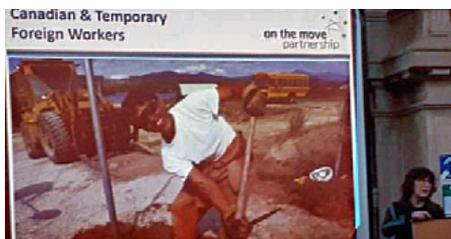
They had some scary figures; in 2017 an estimated 2.74 million work related deaths with 380,566 being direct incidents. Non-fatal incidents (more than four days off work), 374 million, new work-related occupational cancer 742,000. Every statistic up one the level of 2014, we are going backwards – though the one light is that we may now be getting truer figures that ever before so we can see internationally the scale of the problems internationally.

Michael Quinlin the Emeritus Professor of the University of New South Wales talked about issues with precarious work, the digital economy and supply chains. Contracts are the exercise of discretionary power, within markets powerful groups can use contracts to create hierarchies of control. Governance structure within contracts can shape many aspects of commercial behaviour, supply chains can be viewed as such, control shaping price, quality, work effort etc. Uber and the like are simple an App enabled variant of the basic model using subcontractors to evade labour standards. Such precarious work like this is not new and goes back years even being mentioned 1812 in parliament, all these contributed over the years to workplace disasters. There are now hundreds of studies dealing with OHS effects of temporary work and there is persuasive evidence linking insecure and precarious work to high incident rates of injury, poor physical and mental ill health; evidence linking it to suicide and drug use; and effects on healthcare including family ill health.

Felicity Lamn, Associate Professor of Employment Relations Auckland University of Technology, opened saying that 19th. of November is world toilet day (3). There are over 4 billion people around the world that live without safe managed sanitation. The UN Sustainable Development Goal six which has a target to eliminate open defecation and ensure everyone has access to sustainable sanitation services by 2030.



Richard Johnstone the Professor of Criminology from Queensland University argued that worker organisations must play a political and operational role that are non-substitutable. Workers first-hand experiences are vital to identify areas of no-compliance and they understand the nature and culture of the workplace. However, they need supportive government and organisation capacity.



Katherine Lippel (Professor University of Ottawa) and Barbara Neis (Professor memorial University) talked about lone workers who can be slow to raise H & S issues as do not want to be put back inside and lose their autonomy. They continued with compensation, return to work issues and psychosocial hazards. Mobility for work is not new, but it is changing (4) and across the world a

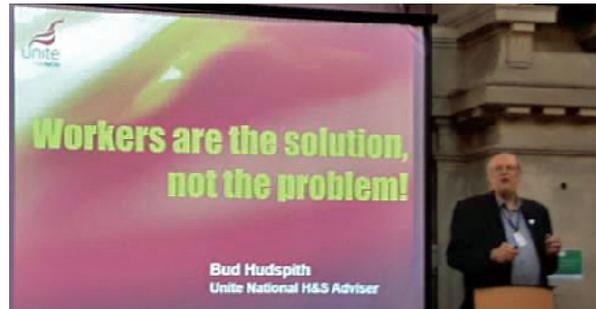
wide range of people are mobile for work, both new workers and those near retirement. From long daily commutes, to travel meaning being away from home for days, weeks or months.

Labour OHCOW Academic Research Collaboration (LOARC) (5) was formed in 2010 when a group of worker health and safety activists got together with staff from the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) and university researchers to examine the effectiveness of workers' rights to protect themselves from hazards at work.



Andy King Researcher in Residence from McMaster University of Labour and (*more impressively*) retired Health, Safety and Environment Lead for United Steel Workers Union in Canada) spoke about Canadian workers still not being safety over thirty years after their OSHA but; worker representation has made a difference; the world of work has changed and there is a an increase in precarious work, and psychosocial hazards are now the most persuasive and damaging hazards confronting workers.

“Workers are the solution, not the problem” was the tag line for Bud Hudspith, the Unite National H&S Adviser who called for ditching some of the myths such as human error being a choice; training will solve human errors problems; punishment will address human error, most incidents are caused by human error and so on – basically – stop blaming the workers.



Owen Tudor, Deputy General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation chaired the last session and Lawrence Waterman, Chair of the Board of Trustees, British Safety Council led the tributes to David as we decamped to a less formal setting away from the old Council Chambers. We have mentioned Lawrence many times before since meeting him at the old London Olympic site where he made massive sustainable changes to large building projects around the UK, Europe and the world.

There was time when unions concentrated on getting compensation after the harm not in preventing that harm from occurring, at least that has stopped. Workers knowledge is political. June 1995 a conservative Canadian government moved what they called a “common sense revolution”, similar to getting rid of the burden of health and safety or the “Red Tape Revolution”.

Xabier Lasterza – EU OSHA (6) talked about the future of health and safety in the workplace post-Brexit; emerging risks August 2019. Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020 has run its course and future plans being drawn on new and emerging risks.

Frequent co-writer and researcher with David is Phil James, Professor of Employment Relations, Middlesex University and he more or less closed the day with a very personal tribute. Surprisingly David was a former biology teacher and did masters in hygiene so quite a move into becoming one of the most respected lecturers in workplace safety. David’s father was a shop steward and he started in industry with an interest in workplace experiences rather than Health and Safety, that came because of the gaps he could see, and he wanted them



filling to prevent workplace injury and fatalities then spent a lifetime commitment to improving working lives.

In conclusion:

- There were around 50 attendees but that including all of the many speakers. It was clearly an academic event, but good to meet and talk to senior H and S actors representing the CWU.
- The UK must buy-in to the EU.OSHA agency post-Brexit for workplace safety even if the driver is just to sell to rest of world (just like the Swiss do now).
- New phrase PCBU meaning *Person Carrying (out) Business Commitment*, an Australian legal term.
- We need to focus on Strategic Enforcement rather than broad brush.
- Need to change the terminology and use term **Health and Safety Activist** and not the current, but old and dated, Union Safety Representative.



Professor David Walters - Professor of Work Environment & Director of Cardiff Work Environment Research Centre (CWERC) has left the UK, and foreign, workplaces better than when he started his own working life.

1. International Transport Workers' Federation www.itfglobal.org/en
2. International Commission on Occupational Health www.icohweb.org/site/homepage.asp
3. World toilet day www.worldtoiletday.info/
4. www.onthemovepartnership.ca/
5. Labour OHCOW Academic Research Collaboration <https://labourstudies.mcmaster.ca/loarc>
6. EU OSHA information about occupational health and safety across EU countries www.osha.europa.eu

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