OSHE AND THE MEDIA

By Orlando Scott, (Barbados Workers’ Union)
OSHE & THE MEDIA

- OSHE – traditionally the “poor relation” in I.R in Barbados.
- Trade unionists and workers traditionally negotiated for better wages to the neglect of working conditions.
- Improvements in OSH in collective agreements were basic PPE – gloves, goggles, aprons, overalls; and limited WELFARE provisions: potable water, rest areas.
Employers and society generally did not rank OSHE as a core organizational value alongside finance, customer service and productivity.

Also, the linkage between OSH&E was blurred and/or not understood.

Employers regarded OSHE as a nuisance or cost.
FATALITIES IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

- Tractors overturning and crushing drivers
  - absence of protective hoods
  - seconds seated on tractor fenders
  - multiple trailers
  - misuse of agrochemicals – chemical spraying without training or PPE.
EMPHASIS ON “SAFETY”

- Little attention paid to health.
- Saw the need for a national campaign to build public awareness through the media.
- Education and training.
1978 - joined BWU staff as PRO.

Served as News Editor at daily newspaper.

1979 - started to host 1st of 2 trade union radio shows.

1981 - attended first OSHE course, sponsored by UNDP in Georgetown.

1982 - Dr. Alan Le Serve was posted to Eastern Caribbean as a OSH Consultant.
OSHE & THE MEDIA

- Assigned to work with Dr. Le Serve.
- Conducted radio interviews with Dr. Le Serve.
- Started to use radio shows as media to highlight OSHE in Barbados and globally.
- Discussant on national television.
- In 1996, first publication of the Unionist.
- Every edition contains OSH news.
OSHE & THE MEDIA

- Sit on OSH boards
- PAHO Task Force on CNCDs (Chronic Non-communicable Diseases)
- HIV/AIDS Commission
- National Advisory Committee on OSH
- RAMCID (Risk Analysis and Monitoring Committee on Industrial Development)
- Commission on CNCDs
- Focussed on OSHE more broadly to include health:
  - CNCDs, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS
OSHE & THE MEDIA

➢ STARTED PUBLICATION OF TRADE UNION MAGAZINE IN JANUARY 1996

- 2ND EDITION, FEBRUARY - RAN A STORY ON “HEALTH ON WOMEN’S AGENDA”

- OSH MONTH OF ACTIVITIES – MAY 1996
PUBLICATIONS

WORKERS MUST BE PROTECTED

By ORLANDO SCOTT

Guest feature writer

A Healthy Worker Is Usually A Happy Worker

By MARIA HOLS

Safety & Health Officer

OSH IS A NATIONAL PROBLEM

STRESS IN THE WORKPLACE

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH WEEK - 2007

S

TRES IN THE WORKPLACE

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT VITAL TO OUR SURVIVAL

Healthy environment vital to our survival

Avances Feature

13

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13
The Way forward for the HIV/AIDS Response in Barbados

Since 1983, Barbados has been successful in maintaining a low prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS. This success is attributed to a combination of factors, including early intervention, education, and support systems. The government has implemented various programs aimed at reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS, such as public health campaigns, counseling services, and support groups. These initiatives have helped to raise awareness and encourage behavior change among the population.

Smoke-Free Worksites = Better Health

The record shows that the implementation of smoke-free workplaces leads to better health. According to the July-September 2000 edition of HAZARDS Magazine, there were fewer hospital admissions for heart attacks in England in the year after July 2000, when the smoking ban came into effect. A major study suggests that the ban on smoking would lead to healthier workers and also lead to the reduction of smokeless and ill health among the workforce, especially among smokers employed in bars, nightclubs, restaurants and shops, where smoking may be a common pastime.

Wellness Workshop

Thirty-four members of joint safety and health committees representing the Transport Board, National Conservation Commission, Port Authority Inc., Barbados Water Authority and Supercom Inc. convened at the BWI Labour College from June 23 to July 1 at a workshop entitled "Smoke Free on the Move for Wellness," to map out a wellness strategy for their respective workplaces. During the workshop, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Health’s Health Promotion Unit and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados Inc., the participants heard presentations on topics ranging from "Preventative Measures and Physical Signs of Stroke" (Dr. David Corbin), "Stroke Rehabilitation" (Dr. Wendy Noyard), "What are Chronic Non Communicable Diseases and how they can be prevented" (Dr. Michael Hinson), and "Wellness Workshops: The Way Forward." The Unionist 31

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There is no evidence to substantiate the claims by proponents of the ban that cigarette smoking can cause serious heart problems and even death. Two of the physicians who attended the meeting, Professor Trevor Hallam, Chairman of the Commission for Chronic Non Communicable Diseases and Professor Timothy Bostock, addressed the health impacts of cigarette smoking.

BWU PRAISES GOVERNMENT’S MOVE TO BAN SMOKING

The Barbados Workers’ Union (BWU) has praised Government’s move to ban the smoking of tobacco products in public places, effective 1st October, 2003. Health Minister the Honourable Donville Inniss made the announcement at a recent meeting attended by the medical practitioners, employees, trade unions, civil servants and NGOs.

The banning of smoking in public places in Barbados has been an issue for the Barbados Workers’ Union for some time now. This concern received wider public attention when a resolution on the same was moved by a member of the Council of Hotel and Restaurant Workers at the Union’s 67th Annual Delegates’ Conference.

Workers in the Hospitality Sector have been particularly outspoken on the matter of the smoking of tobacco products in public places, since they suffer the consequences of second hand smoke, exhale by smokers in bars.

Housekeeping staff in the Hospitality Sector are also affected since they have to clean rooms and handle cigarette butts and ash.
PUBLICATIONS

BWU & THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN A HEALTH PARTNERSHIP ON CNCDs

The BWU’s educational programme on chronic non-communicable diseases started in the latter half of the 1990s, following a Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) workshop in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, which brought together stakeholders from throughout the region to discuss the impact of CNCDs and to formulate a programme to tackle them.

Workplace

The workplace is the most advantageous forum for health promotion and the Barbados Workers’ Union remains in the forefront of the partnership with the Commission on CNCDs and the Ministry of Health in its efforts to culturally change the attitudes of its membership and the wider community.

The recently held Healthy Caribbean 2008 Conference, held at the Accra Beach Hotel, Barbados, observed that CNCDs represent the major causes of death and the present share of the burden of disease in the Caribbean. The prevention of these diseases is therefore a priority for the Barbados Workers’ Union as well as the government of Barbados and its members. The Union, therefore, has supported the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour in promoting health and safety in the workplace.

ILO Seeking Funding For New OSH Programme

The International Labour Organization’s Subregional Office for the Caribbean hopes to get funding for an extensive occupational safety and health education programme for the Region in the near future.

ILO Senior Specialist Workers’ Activities Paula Robinson made this disclosure at the opening ceremony of a one-week training seminar in Occupational Safety and Health held at the BWU Labour College, in late March 2010. Ms. Robinson said that the proposed extensive safety and health education programme would assist the ILO in renewing its efforts with trained personnel in the Region.

Death & Injury

According to Ms. Robinson, deaths and injuries took a particularly heavy toll in developing countries, where large numbers of workers were concentrated in primary and extractive activities such as agriculture, logging, fishing and mining, which represented some of the world’s most hazardous industries. She added that, apart from the sheer magnitude of the numbers affected, research had shown that the poorest, least protected workers – often women, children and migrants – were also among the most affected. Micro and small enterprises accounted for more than 90% of enterprises where conditions were often very poor and the workers in these undertakings were often excluded from all labour protection.

Ms. Robinson’s view was that human suffering had no measurable cost, unlike economic losses. She said that in many developing countries, death rates among workers were five to six times those in industrialised countries, yet the phenomenon was still largely undocumented and there was insufficient political will to address the problem.

Often employers measure the cost of prevention but they do not measure the cost of the lack of prevention because it was not reflected in the company’s bottom line.

Sexual harassment at the workplace

Women who walk the streets, especially on Broad Street, complain about the sexual harassment they receive on the streets, especially during rush hours. If you regard them as immoral or sex objects, stop and question yourself before you make these remarks that are directed towards them and are rude about their private and upper body.

The Unions
THE ROLE OF SAFETY COMMITTEES IN PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL DISASTERS

By Dr. Alan LeServe, former HRO Consultant, Occupational Health and Safety

Industrial disasters are not new, they have occurred ever since the industrial revolution took place in Europe in the last century. However, over the past twenty five years, a number of major industrial disasters have occurred that, as a result of the large-scale loss of life, injury and environmental pollution, have demanded public attention. For example, in the UK in 1974 there was an explosion in a plant manufacturing cyclohexane at Flixborough in which 28 workers were killed and 40 injured. Two years later in Seveso, Italy, a process malfunction in a chemical plant resulted in the release of dioxin, one of the most toxic chemicals known to man, causing widespread injury and environmental contamination.

In 1984, an explosion of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) at Mexico City caused an estimated 500 fatalities and several thousand injured. The same year was one of the most tragic industrial disasters of all times occurred in the Union Carbide Chemical plant at Bhopal, India. The escape of a gas cloud

New health, safety moves needed

In view of the above, there is an urgent need to put a stop to such industrial disasters. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been active in the field of occupational safety and health for over a century, but not recently. In 1994, the International Labour Conference adopted several international conventions on the subject, including the ILO’s Convention No. 167, for the promotion of decent work in the field of occupational safety and health. These conventions have been ratified by many countries, including the USA, but it is not clear how effectively they are being implemented.

The Unionists | 19

What Is 28 April?

The Barbados Workers’ Union will join with the Ministry of Labour and R.E.I.A. Environment to organise a training programme in Occupational Safety and Health at “Solidarity House” on Thursday, April 28, to mark the International Commemoration Day on which we remember workers who died at work.

The theme will be “Highlighting the New Risks of Work in the 21st Century.”

28 April is the International Commemoration Day on which we remember workers who died, were injured or fell ill due to unsafe, unhealthy or unsustainable work places and industries around the world.

The most updated information shows that there are almost 360,000 fatal occupational accidents in any year, at an estimated 100,000 fatal work-related diseases. Every day, more than 2,000,000 workers get hurt because of accidents and on average 5,000 workers die because of work-related diseases.

Since 1986, the first such commemoration took place at the United Nations, the International Labour movement has observed and promoted 28 April around the world. To date, some 20 countries and territories have officially recognized 28 April as the International Day for Dead and Injured Workers: Argentina, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Caribbean, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Greece, Luxembourg, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Pakistan, Spain, Taiwan, Ukraine and - the most recent addition - the United Kingdom, an addition to which the Andean Community of South America has adopted 28 April on behalf of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and their associate member Venezuela.

What is 28 April for?

* To commemorate those who have lost their lives and their health at, or because of, their work;
* To raise awareness about the risk of disease, injury or death for workers in all sectors and countries;
* To engage all workers and unions in a positive action day for dialogue, transformation and progress on occupational safety and health.
➢ Thank You

➢ Any Questions??