



## YCW International Week - An Evaluation

The 25th of April to the 1st of May is the "International Week of the Working Class Youth" - a special event in the life of the Young Christian Workers (YCW) internationally. All the national movements take up this activity as a means to develop international class identity and common militant action.

The South African YCW was no exception. There was a co-ordinated effort by all the regions. The movement adopted a common programme, the major aim of which was: "Awareness of the international dimension of the workers' struggle".

The starting point was the process of formation at group level - reflection and action. The militants analysed the situation of long working hours they experienced; forced overtime, unpaid overtime, etc. They looked at the effects and causes of the situation as experienced by them, their friends and families. Unemployment and ill health amongst others came into focus as a result. Also how multinationals control workers lives; and retrenchments.

In the YCW, reflection always ends with action to challenge the situation. It happened when militants reviewed or planned their actions around working hours - May Day is discovered through a concrete experience, not just in the air. Through this the YCWs easily place their small actions as part of the worldwide struggle against the exploitative system of capitalism.

### Formation area days

These days were planned to reach out to the mass of young workers. This is where a wide range of video tapes and films were shown. They varied from region to region but had one thing in common - bad working and living conditions: for example in the films on the steel and textile industries in America; the struggle for an 8 hour day; the coal miners struggle in Britain. Workshops were used so young workers could

express what struck them from films or video tapes.

### Discoveries

One common interesting response from many young workers is that they were surprised to learn that workers in other countries - especially Europe - experience similar working conditions to workers in South Africa. Since the problem of workers is one, their struggle is also one and therefore we need to help one another at an international level. There is a possibility of victory if workers organise themselves and carry the struggle forward.

A relation between the worker struggle and the new reading of the Bible was also expressed. An example of Sasol workers was cited as a struggle of faith by workers refusing to be slaves.

### International Day's Pay

The event was also an occasion of financial campaigns and education. Militants explained the IDP, what it means, why it is important for the workers' movement. "We must show our financial commitment to the worker struggle...we must finance our own actions...", one regional treasurer said. Each one of the YCW militants contributed a regional standardised amount of R10 as a day's pay. It is through these contributions that the South African movement affiliates internationally.

### Word of thanks

We thank all our brothers and sisters in the labour support groups, who helped to provide us with much needed educational material. Your assistance has contributed to the success of our "International Week".

(YCW communique, May 1985)