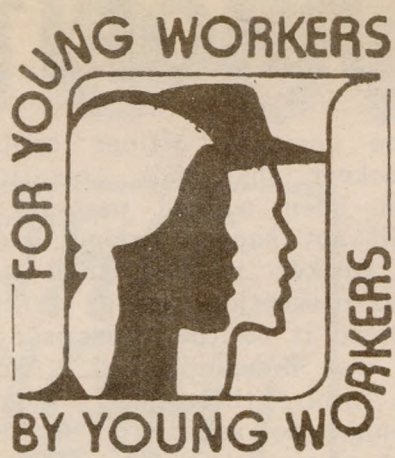




YOUNG WORKER

No 14 20c

MAY DAY SOLIDARITY

The 1st of May is known all over the world as the INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY. It is a day when workers pledge their struggle for better working and living conditions. It is a day of showing a link of workers struggle in different countries of the world. It is a symbol of taking forward their struggle against the CAPITALIST SYSTEM and to take control over their lives.

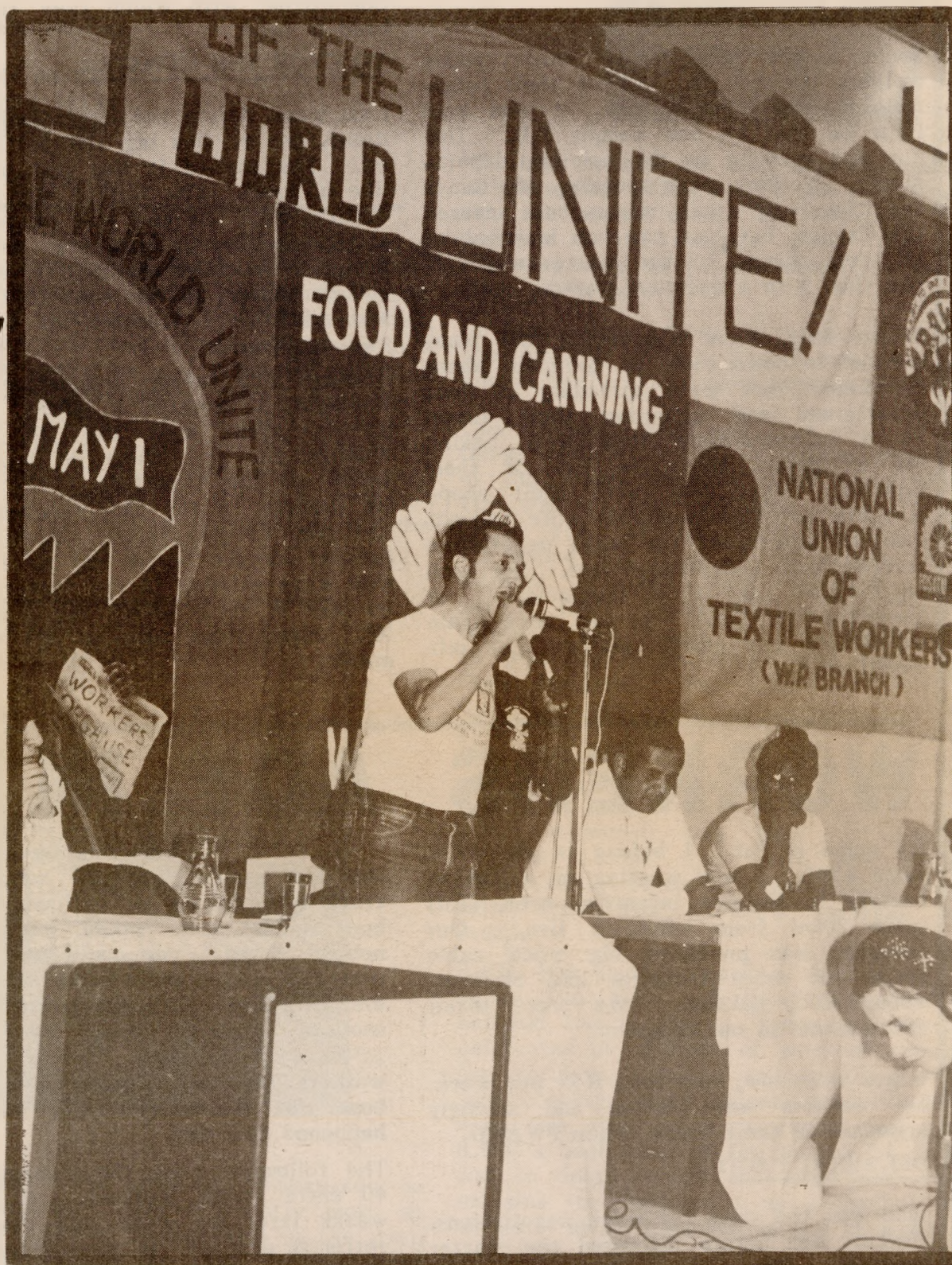
In 1890 the Second International Workers Congress accepted MAY DAY as an INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY FOR ALL THE WORKERS OF THE WORLD.

Recently in South Africa, fight for May Day to be recognised as a paid public holiday is once more on the agenda of the worker movement. This demand comes at a time when workers have continued to build their trade unions. Thanks to the militant struggles of the early 70's which paved the way for the present strenght of the unions. Already many companies have signed agreements to recognise May Day as a paid holiday.

Last year the 100 Annivesary of May Day was celebrated with militance and dignity. More than 1,5 million workers supported the call to attend the rallies which were held all over the country.

The Labour Monitoring Group reported that it was the biggest stay-away in over 25 years. The biggest rally organised by COSATU at Orlando Stadium attended by close to 20 000 people.

Last year support for MAY DAY symbolised that workers are beginning to decide what holidays they want and not the states idea of holidays. Its a symbol of hope for the working class that to build a society based on the principal of workers control, workers have to be in-control of these actions.



Union Leader addressing May Day rally -Cape Town

WORKER ACTIONS.	Page 2.
WORKER RIGHTS.	Page 5.
BOOK REVIEWS.	Page 11.
COUNCIL 1986-1987.	Page 8.
EDITORIAL.	Page 9.

OUR LIVES—BEFORE PROFITS

"Chubb-Fire"... I am sure you already saw that name somewhere...yes, on one of these funny big red bottles that are hanging in most of the public premises and that are called extinguishers.

"Chubb-Fire has a factory in Brits (Tvl). In the past few years, Chubb Fire workers as many others in Brits area, have managed to establish their Trade Union in their factory: MAWU. I met three of them who also belong to the YCW. As workers, they meet regularly inside the YCW to support one-another in their commitment to a better world.

FUMES AND CHEMICALS.

Some months ago, these three young workers noticed that one of their fellow workers had become sick, it was said later on that he had caught T.B. This guy was working in the painting department. Workers were speaking of 'fumes and chemicals' that might have caused the disease, but how can you know about all these things...? the matter was left like this, with a question mark.

Before long, some welders in the plant decided to down tools to complain about the fumes that were spreading in their department and affecting their lungs. As a compensation they were asking for a special bonus on top of their salaries. They met with their shop-stewards and their demands were brought into the agenda of the wage negotiation meeting with the management. But such negotiations take time, particularly as understood in Chubb Fire and once again the health and safety matter was left unnoticed.

WORKERS SAFETY COMMITTEE.

YCW militants contacted a specialised organisation in Johannesburg called Health and Information Centre (HIC). This organisation proposed to meet with the shop stewards and YCW members arranged a date between them and the shop-steward committee.

HIC people listened to the shop-stewards' report about the conditions in the factory and insisted that nothing could be done without the workers themselves. They encouraged workers to set-up a 'Safety Committee' with which they could work hand in hand.

TO CAGE THE MONSTER.

Last week during the final testing procedures, one of this big red bottles exploded. The top of it had just blown-off like a bomb. The worker who was proceeding with the test was injured by the small particles of iron that were flying around. Luckily enough it was not so bad for him, he was sent to the doctor and was able to resume his work after two days leave.

Through this safety committee, workers managed to organise a safety inspection of the plant with the HIC officials. Management gave them an hour to inspect all the situations. HIC reported its findings to the shop-stewards council and the workers safety committee. It pointed out the health and safety hazards that were existing in the factory, explained how it could affect the workers and HIC helped them also to list their demands.

The company officer explained to the workers that this specific bottle had not been welded properly and that it will not happen again. Few days later a worker noticed that another bottle was presenting similar defaults. He reported it to the supervisor who apparently was not impressed. Workers decided to involve their Safety Committee. The committee asked for an interview with the company's safety officer. This time they said: "We do not want explanations about welding problems, we just need a safe-guard". Management agreed that something had to be done. The following day they build a sort of a cage to surround the bottles to be tested.

Actually when workers tested the very bottle that they were suspecting to be defective it exploded again. But this time, the 'bloody thing was caged' and the workers were safe.

THE MESSAGE OF THE BIG RED BOTTLES.

It shows that workers must be aware of health hazards and dangers that they are exposed to at work. And it shows that together we can do something about it.

Man, next time you see one of these big red bottles hanging about, think of the workers of Chubb-Fire and think of your health and safety conditions in your factory...maybe it is not that safe and healthy in your workshop after all...maybe together with your fellow workers, you also can do something to protect what is your most precious belonging: Your Life.

WORKERS ACT IN SOLIDARITY

My name is Pat. I belong to the YCW since 1984. I was working in a Timber factory in Rosslyn industrial area (Tvl) some 20km from where I live. Our company was producing big wood cable drums for other factories like Siemens, Asea, ATC, Sakabel. We were about 400 workers in our company.

Wages were low, very low, R55 per week, but workers were united and strongly organised in their Trade Union PWAU.

DELAYING TACTICS.

June was the time for wage negotiations. Workers had before discussed the matter together. They knew what they would demand: 50c increase per hour. They sent their representatives to negotiate with the boss.

The boss was not prepared to discuss with them. He postponed the meeting. In order to force management to receive our representatives we decided to start a 'go-slow' and reduce the production. Management took another date with our shop-stewards but postponed it again. Finally he told them that he had phoned to the 'company owner' in Johannesburg and that he was not allowed to negotiate salaries with them. Instead he personally proposed to meet the whole workforce.

On the 15th of September, the manager tried to force workers to attend his meeting. He stopped the machines. Everyone was looking around at what was happening.

To our amazement we saw the boss standing on the top of a big truck and calling us to come. Everybody knew what would happen, and nobody moved. You could hear from all over the plant the protest of the workers grumbling their dissatisfaction, even shouting slogans: 'Speak to our Union'. ...'Away with you'...'Forward with the workers struggle'...Needless to say, the boss was extremely angry about what happened that day.

The following week the company hired 40 extra casual workers. A couple of weeks later we were told that it will retrench part of its work-force. Many workers were afraid: Who will be retrenched? We saw that it was a strategy of management to get rid of us and hire new workers at a lower salary and eventually to divide us and crush our Union.

On the 17th October, the owner of the company turned-up and met with the shop-stewards.

On Friday management fired 40 casual workers and announced that 60 others will follow soon. The shop-stewards called a general meeting of the workers. Workers were totally against management's decision. They proposed to reduce working hours but not to allow retrenchment of the workers. Management did not care about the workers proposal. He had no feeling for the poor people who were going to starve without a job, he was just concerned about his business and he

did not accept anything from the shop-stewards.

On Tuesday morning a list of 60 names was put on the notice board. Those were the names to be retrenched. 6 shop-stewards among 7 were the one's to be retrenched. On Friday they received their dismissal letters and two weeks notice pay.

On Monday morning the retrenched workers went straight to the Union Office. Other workers entered the factory. They put their working clothes on, stood by their machines but refused to work: 'No work when our brothers are retrenched' 'An injury to one is an injury to all'.

At 9.30 am. management dismissed all the workers and called the police in to the factory. We left the company for the union office.

Since then the boss had hired a scab-labour. Our Trade Union had opened a court case against the company. We are still waiting for the results.

There was little choice for us workers either to let our brothers be dismissed or to fight for a just salary and stand up in Solidarity.

Whatever the result of our struggle will be, I am proud of what we did in our Timber factory. I think that workers have to show that bosses have no right to do anything they like to the workers. I know that what we were demanding was right. Workers are human beings not machines. Bosses have to learn to respect workers as human beings.

B R A Z I L

A NEW MILITANCY



Who is Waldemar Rossi?

Waldemar Rossi, now 48 years old, began working when he was 10, cutting sugar cane in the fields in the little town where he was born, Sertãozinho, in the interior of São Paulo state.

The second of eight children, he had to help support the family which included two elderly grandparents. From 13 to 27 he worked as a building labourer.

Rossi came from a practising catholic family, and he soon became involved in the Young Workers Movement, YCW. At 27 he was chosen as the regional director which meant moving to São Paulo where he has lived ever since. Three years later he left YCW and went to work as a metal worker because he had come to believe in the importance of developing union organization from the grass roots upwards.

In 1966 for the first time he stood as candidate in opposition to the incumbent president in the São Paulo Metal Workers Union elections. At the same time he remained as an active church member, and joined the newly formed church workers' movement, known as Pastoral Operário.

In the early 1970s political repression worsened, with thousands of Brazilians being imprisoned, tortured, and tried by military court for opposition to the regime.

In 1974, Rossi was meeting with a group of fellow Pastoral Operário workers in a church when police invaded and arrested them. Accused of belonging to a clandestine organisation he had never heard of the so-called Popular Liberation Movement, based in Algeria - Rossi was tortured by being strung up from an iron bar and given electric shocks. He was interrogated for days, held in solitary confinement, and finally released after four months without charge. Charges were only brought against nearly two years later and he was finally brought to trial in 1978 and rapidly acquitted for having no crime to answer. But the years sub judice prevented him from standing as opposition candidate in 1975 and 1978, which he believes was the object of the exercise.

In 1981, he stood in the union election and lost by a narrow margin of votes to the *peleço* candidate Joaquim de Santos Andrade, and the powerful union machinery which Andrade has controlled for 16 years.

In October 1981 he lost his last job in a small engineering firm when the recession made him redundant. He made a conscious choice years ago: 'I understood that I didn't just want to be a spectator of history, but to take part in it'.

LAB: The independent trade union opposition emerged in the late 1970s. Could you explain why you felt it became necessary to involve yourself in this movement?

WR: I have been directly involved in the Brazilian trade union movement since 1962. There was no other option for me but to get involved in this trade union movement, particularly trying to develop grass roots trade union organisation, which didn't give any security or guarantees for the existence of the trade union movement within the company. The trade unions are directly under the tutelage of the state, so they live under a perpetual fear of 'intervention' by the state, not an occasional 'intervention', but a permanent state 'intervention'. Realizing the absence of independent trade unions, I like many others, got involved in order to try and build up this independent trade unionism. The development in the 1970s has been a direct result of that commitment. For example, in 1966, we began to build up nuclei within the factories, taking up whatever immediate struggles were possible, developing the struggle against the trade union structure that existed, and trying to co-ordinate this activity within the factories, trying to transform the trade unions form within. Gradually the Brazilian working class began to take on our proposals, so that what happened from 1978 onwards was really a result of all that discussion and those local struggles which has been going on in the factories.

LAB: Given the history of state intervention in the trade unions, and the repressive situation which you outlined, how was it possible for the opposition movement inside the trade union movement to emerge?

WR: It emerged from the awareness of the militant workers themselves. We know from history that this kind of movement does not emerge spontaneously, and that led us to realize that it was through the involvement of ourselves and other comrades along these lines of working against the trade union structures that would develop, although we knew that the state would continue to intervene to repress us. The fact that we know this repression will continue doesn't stop us: it means that we have to discover other ways in which to carry on this struggle without allowing the repressive forces to discover and to stop us.

And although many of our comrades suffer this repression, and for example, have lost their jobs many times, that actually meant that new groups, new nuclei, were being formed in new companies as these militants moved on from one company to another.

LAB: Why is it that certain businessmen are keen to see the state implement the so-called *abertura*?

WR: I think some industrialists are keen to have a certain degree of *abertura* but none of them want to see an *abertura* which includes the worker's movement because none of them are prepared to make any concessions to it. They are interested in a certain kind of parliamentary political opening which will allow them to deal with their means of exploitation in a slightly different way.

LAB: You personally experienced the repression of the Brazilian state. Can you outline some of your experiences, including your imprisonment in 1974?

WR: Yes, obviously as a representative of that trade union opposition, the Brazilian government tried to deal with myself and a number of other comrades involved under the repressive laws. It was somewhat difficult for the government and the repressive forces to harass us in terms specifically of our work as the trade union opposition, or indeed on the other hand in terms of our work with the church. So what the government tried to do, working together with the trade unions stooges, the *peleços* was to have us denounced within the companies where we worked. The result of this was that during 18 years as a trade unionist in the engineering sector, I lost my job 19 times. On top of this, in 1974, the government planned a pretext for charging us under the National Security Law on the grounds that we were involved in a political movement. In 1978 the government itself was forced to recognise that we didn't in fact have any involvement in an illegal political group. Nonetheless in 1974 we suffered electric shock treatment *pau de arara* (parrot perch, in which the victim is strapped to and suspended from a pole), and generally being beaten up, and a lot of other comrades went through that experience not just me. And the repression continues to this day. Every step we take is closely watched, and in fact, I have just lost my job again.

LAB: The support of the church has been important to the opposition movement. What forms has this taken.

WR: The fact that a number of worker militants were involved with the church, were carrying on their work on two levels - on the one hand creating opposition nuclei within the factories and at the same time working within the church through the base communities - led the church to realize slowly that it was really very separated from the Brazilian reality.

As a result of this discovery and of the repression which the government was exerting on the people, the church realized that it had to begin to take some new steps both in the countryside and in the towns. It realized that its responsibility in forming the awareness of Christians couldn't merely confine itself to the spiritual area, but had to take on the social areas as well. cont. pg 10

SHIFT WORK—WHO BENEFITS ?

Shift work was one of the issues discussed recently at a Health and Safety Education Seminar. The seminar was held at Cosatu House in Johannesburg. Many shop stewards from various unions attended.

Workers at the seminar discussed the following issues around shift work: Why the bosses like shift work, health and other problems of shift work and demands of shift workers.

WHY BOSSES LIKE SHIFT WORK.

The main aim of the bosses is to make profit. So they save money by using the same machines during night and day work. In some factories only certain machines have to work all the time. For example a furnace in a foundry. But the bosses will make sure that all the machines operate.

IN SOME SERVICE INDUSTRY, LIKE HOSPITALS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WORK CONTINUES ALL THE TIME. SO IN SUCH CASES SHIFT WORK IS NECESSARY. BUT IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT THESE WORKERS HAVE TO WORK UNDER BAD CONDITIONS.

PROBLEMS OF SHIFT WORKERS.

Workers in the workshop listed the following problems:-

- * It is very difficult for your body to get used to working shifts.
- * You get sleeping problems when you work shift.
- * You must work when your body wants to sleep. And try to sleep when your body wants to be awake.
- * It is difficult to sleep if you stay in the townships and the hostels. There is too much noise in the day.
- * Shift workers do not get enough sleep. When you do not get enough sleep you feel tired and cross.
- * There are more accidents at night because workers are often tired.

NOT ALL THE DEMANDS HAVE BEEN MET.

The workers in the workshop expressed the fact that, the bosses are very reluctant to meet the demands of shift workers. Some of the demands had not been met. Sometimes workers are forced to apply pressure before management can agree to their demands.

SHARING EXPERIENCES WAS IMPORTANT

This shift work workshop was very interesting because workers from different unions learnt from one another. They discovered how other workers challenged the bosses, difficulties encountered like workers being threatened with dismissals, strategies used and demands proposed by workers from other factories.

This experience surely helped the unions who had nothing to report on their shift work campaigns to realise the importance of demanding healthy conditions for shift workers.

The workshop also helped others to realise that neglecting problems such as shift work, would only help the bosses to make more profits. And workers would continue to work under difficult conditions.

EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP.

Concluding, the workers expressed their discoveries and committed themselves to carry on the struggle around shift work and other health and safety problems.

One worker, who is also a YCW member, expressed his concern about the shift work campaigns. He said that it has always been the wish of the YCW to initiate actions around shift work.

He said that every unhealthy situation experienced by workers should not go unnoticed, but must be challenged through concrete actions.

OTHER PROBLEMS OF SHIFT WORKERS.

The workers also complained about the following:-

- * Eating poor food, not eating properly and digestion problems.
- * Canteens and 1st Aid facilities are often not open at night.
- * Shift workers often do not have transport to take them to work or home.
- * Workers do not have enough time to be with their families. This often leads to divorce.

These were the problems raised by workers in this workshop. One could feel and realise the seriousness of the problems caused by shift work.

DEMANDS MADE BY WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS.

After raising all these problems, workers from MAWU, NAAWU, CWIU, PWAU and others shared with us about the type of demands they are making to management.

The following demands were highlighted:

- * Free transport for workers working at night, to and from work.
- * Rest room facilities.
- * Shift allowance.
- * Reduced working week and hours.
- * Lunch and tea times during night work.
- * Access to telephone, especially when working at night.
- * Extra paid leave (sick and annual leave).
- * Time off to attend union meetings.
- * Early retirement for shift workers.
- * Free meals when working at night.
- * Free medical aid.

He concluded by saying that, the Health and Safety Education Day has served as a motivating and encouraging factor for workers to go and strengthen their campaigns around shift work.

LET'S FIGHT FOR OUR HEALTH AT WORK AS WORKERS. SOME HAVE ALREADY STARTED...WHAT ABOUT YOU...

Young Worker is Published by the Young Christian Workers
125 Stamfordhill Road
Greyville 4023
All news compiled by the Editor. Bevil Lucas
Unless otherwise stated.

WORKERS RIGHTS

Canteens, Toilets and Change Rooms.

Very often do we hear of workers lacking facilities like canteens, toilets and showers etc. In some factories they have these facilities but they are either dirty or not enough to cater for workers. One common situation is the quality of food that is cooked in canteens. In most cases workers eat food of poor quality. Recently, we read of workers going on strike after suffering diseases of stomach like diarrhea. Sometimes toilets are few and showers are not separated for males and females. This creates inconvenience and lack of privacy for the workers. These are very serious issues of Health and Safety inside many factories, that reach Young Worker Newspaper, through what young workers experience at their different work places.

Bosses take advantage of the fact that, very few workers know about what the law says about their rights. Mostly these are the workers who are organised in trade unions. Many workers suffer as a result of management neglecting Health and Safety. In South Africa the law that talks about canteens, showers and toilets is called Machinery and Occupational Safety Act - MOSA. This law entails information about several issues of health and safety like committees, inspectors, canteens, showers and toilets. This article will aim to specifically talk about canteens, showers and change rooms.

WORKERS WHO BELONG TO TRADE UNIONS.

Workers who are organised into their own worker organisations, are in a position to fight for rights and even fight to improve on the piece meal that the law provides. The limitations of the regulations depends on workers organisations, to come together and look at ways they can change the conditions. In some factories workers have taken actions already. If you have never, start now. Fight for just Health and Safety conditions! But remember, the strength of your action depends on how strongly organised you are.

Let us read on what MOSA has to say about canteens, change rooms and toilets.

1. Canteens - Dining Rooms.

- If more than 3 and less than 10 women workers, are employed, your employer must provide a couch. This must be provided free of charge, maintained and kept clean.
- If more than 10 women workers are employed, a rest room must be provided. Couches and furniture must be provided for these rest rooms. A woman worker may go to the rest room when she feels ill.
- If in your workplace, the toilets lead into the change room and if the inspector feel that the change room is not suitable for eating meals then: Your employer must provide a room where women workers may eat their meals. This must be provided free of charge maintained and kept clean. Furniture must also be provided.
- The rest rooms and dining rooms must be cleaned, well lighted and well ventilated.
- If you work with skins, wool, mohair, poisonous gasses, food or drinks, your rest and dining rooms may not lead directly with the workplace. This applies to the change rooms as well.

Change Rooms.

Employers must provide separate change rooms for each sex and race. Each change room must have enough seats with lockers which can be locked. The employers must also provide a means to dry wet clothing.

Change rooms must be well lighted ventilated and clean.

WASHING FACILITIES.

- Your employer must provide the water supply, soap free of charge. You may be provided with a shower bath and additional basin with hot and cold water if the inspector feels that the work you are doing is such that the washing facilities are not enough. Workers must get this free of charge.

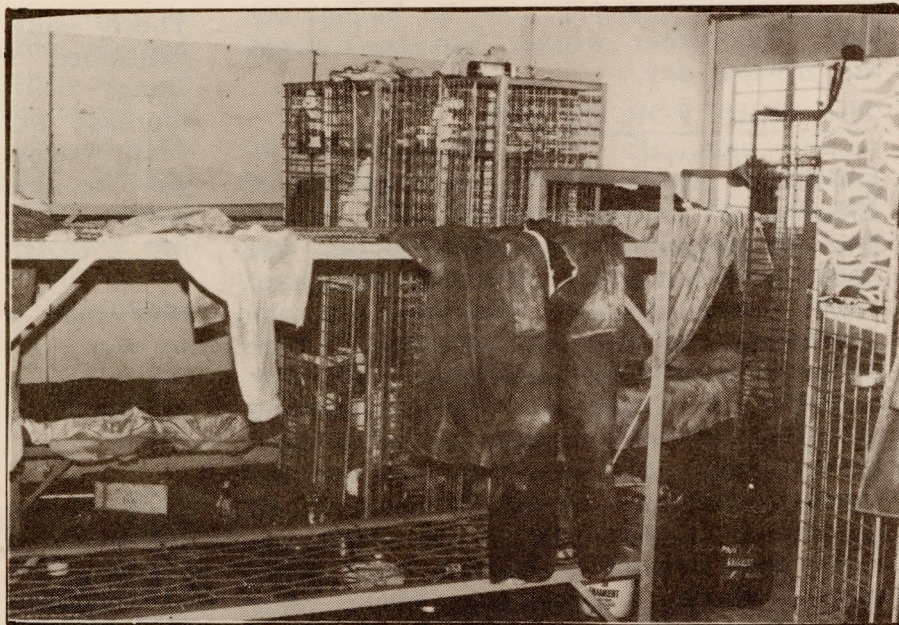
- There must be at least 1 washbasin for every 15 workers of each sex.

TOILET FACILITIES.

- There must be separate toilets for separate sex and race.
- The toilets must be properly separated with each labelled to show which race or sex they are for.
- There must at least be 1 bucket toilet for every ten workers of each sex, if toilet buckets are provided.
- For every 50 male workers there must be one urinal.
- There must be a bin with a fitting lid in every toilet room used by women workers.
- Your employer must maintain the toilet facilities and keep them clean.
- No door or window in which food is manufactured, prepared or handled shall be situated less than 3 metres from the toilet facility.
- No toilet facilities shall be in the room where you work.

IS YOUR EMPLOYER OBEYING THESE REGULATIONS?

If not, the possible action you can take is to speak to your safety representative to take the issue with management. If the employer still does not follow the regulations, then an inspector may be called in by a safety representative.



Does your change room look like this, ?? Do you have one ???

TESTIMONIES

W O R

My name is Zim, I was born in the Transkei 28 years ago. I left the Transkei before finishing Std 8. In 1979 I went to look for work in Johannesburg.

While I was still at school, the teachers used to see me as troublesome but they liked me because I could do my work. I remember one time organising the students against extra study periods. All the boys were with me and we spoke to the Principal. We told him that the amount of time spent on doing our work at home does not allow us to stay after school for these study periods. As boys on the farm we had to help with the work there also. Once the principal wanted to sell us textbooks. These books were issued free to all the students. We then decided that instead of buying these books, we would break into the staffroom and take them free of charge. When the theft was discovered we had to face the village court, all those involved in the theft were charged R7-00.

In Johannesburg I worked in a large shoe factory called BATA, as a casual worker, I did not work there very long because my parents wanted me to come home to complete my schooling. In 1980, I left home to go and work in the MINES. You work hard in the mines under bad conditions.

I lost my job after they discovered that we were selling liquor in the hostel. This is regarded as an offence because there is a bar on the hostel premises. We were doing this because our wages were not enough to survive. It is also very terrible, on the mines and the months can become very long for migrant workers. When I came to Durban in 1982, I got a job in AKALS where I am still working at present. I came here because there is no work in the Transkei. My father and my younger brother is also working in Johannesburg.

WHERE I WORK.

AKALS is a wholesale shop dealing with motorspares and sporting goods. I work as a rod builder, I build fishing rods of all sizes. Sometimes I do other things like assembling bicycles. At work we experience many problems. The wages are very low, we do not have any representation, racism is also very strong at work.

HOW I MET THE YCW.

In February '86 I met two ladies in a shopping centre. What attracted me was they were speaking my home language, which is not very familiar in Durban. We spoke and they invited me to a house in town. I was suspicious but curious because black people do not stay in town normally. At this house I met other people. They talked to me about my work and I asked them about their work. They then explained to me and invited me back again. I kept on coming back to this house to discuss with them about my work and other things also.

I was beginning to see that my situation at work could be challenged and that something can be done about it.

RECRUITING FOR THE YCW.

When I first tried to recruit for the movement I was not clear myself about it. My fellow workers told me its a political organisation and they wanted to know how could this talk about our situations at work be connected with christianity. Some said they do not want to have anything to do with the CHURCH. The organiser encouraged me not to lose hope, but to go back to my fellow workers. We always tried to look at the ways in which to answer the clever ones at work. Not long after this, I went on three weeks leave, before I could start a group. When I came back from leave I heard that management knew that I was recruiting for a union. They did not know that it was for YCW, but they thought it was for a union.



I WAS FIRED.

Three weeks after this, 3 of us were sorting reject sunglasses from the good ones. A pair went missing. When I came to work the following day my clock card was not there. The security told us that the manager wanted to see us. We went up to his office. He was not interested in what we had to say. He just told me to leave the company premises and go. He told one of the other workers that they would now be doing my job. The other worker had been fired the previous day.

THE FIGHT FOR MY JOB.

I went to report this to the organiser of the YCW. I did not believe that I could be fired just like that. For me this was unfair. The manager did not even hear what I had to say. We went to the Transport and General Workers Union office to seek their assistance. We sent a letter to management for a meeting but we recieved no response. For four weeks I was out of work but during this time I continued visiting the workers, inviting them to YCW study days and giving them things to read but they never came. Their song was the same "You are out of work, now is the time to see if your YCW is working. If you get your job back we will join you".

We at last met with management for a long debate about the reasons for my dismissal. I was re-instated.

WORKERS RESPOND.

Workers began to see that something can be done. They wanted to join a union before doing anything, for their own protection. We discussed the joining of a union and started to recruit for CCAWUSA. We started a YCW group and therefore a process of action. We used to have all the worker meetings as one big group at this house in town. I wanted all the workers to belong to YCW. But the organiser showed me the importance of having a small group to review with and why the movement was aimed at YOUNG WORKER. When we are many we all do not speak, and in the YCW each and every young worker is just as important as the other.

BEING INVOLVED IN ACTION.

Our first action was to fight for a proper tea-time. A fixed one. We never used to have a fixed time for tea. The supervisor decided who should get tea at what time. We decided to draw up a petition to be signed by all workers. The workers decided to call the manager to talk about this problem. The petition was not signed but workers decided to boycott the tea which was given by management. The workers demanded to meet with the director and put forward all their grievances and demands. He suggested to speak to only a few of us. The workers told him to wait because we wanted to elect our own committee.

A committee was elected and told what to speak about with the director.

- * Unpaid over-time and no proper night transport for deliver assistants.
- * The bad treatment by supervisors.
- * Day offs being taken away for 3 months as punishment.

These were rectified. The committee continued to meet management about things like the explanation of the UIF, increase etc. The committee was not really negotiating. We needed people who were to have power to negotiate especially when it comes to wages. This is not just a COMPLAINT BUT A DEMAND.

Now that we have elected shopstewards we want to start talking about wages and real wages. The average in the company is R64-00.

YCW FOR ME DOES NOT MEAN TO TAKE THE PLACE OF THE TRADE UNION, BUT IT IS THERE TO MOTIVATE YOUNG WORKERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKER STRUGGLE AND TO RESPOND TO THEIR REALITY.

OF YOUNG WORKERS

Watloo is an industrial area situated in the eastern side of Pretoria, around Mamelodi. There, you find many factories, big and small.

I worked in one of these small factories which was called Flex-Tech-as a driver and a machine operator. There was a small number of workers: 17 all together. Our boss's were Italian, we were making car cables; brake cables; hand brake cables; clutch cables, choke cables etc... These cables were sold to big car companies, even sometimes overseas.

SITUATION IN THE FACTORY.

There was no specific department in the factory. All workers were scattered in one room and those who were operating machines were unable to speak to one another because of the distance between them. We were faced with bad working conditions; low wages, forced overtime, no representation; no registration; unfair dismissals; no overalls; no pay slips; we used to receive our money in an ordinary envelop without any indication of UIF, pension fund deduction etc. As a driver and machine operator I was paid R65-00 a week. Because of my involvement in the YCW I was well aware of all these problems. I think I was the only one. All these conditions were reported at the YCW group meetings of my area. Through our sharing and reflection we found it important to motivate my fellow-workers and to make them discover the situation they were exposed to.

THE MAIN SITUATION WHICH LED US TO ACTION.

Through our reflection, sharing and analysis of the situations affecting workers in Flex-Tech, we came to the conclusion, in my YCW group, that to work without being registered was very dangerous because managers did not recognise us as permanent workers. As a result bosses can dismiss you at any time, if you want to know about your rights or if you get injured, you cannot claim for anything. Workers were not militant inside the trade union. As YCW's we were also affected by the State of Emergency it was difficult to hold our meetings and to share our problems. In spite of my dismissal, I did not get discouraged to carry on with the long struggle of the working class. Luckily enough I got another job as a driver in another company, but I still keep contact with my fellow workers in Flex Tech, and I am hoping to be able to launch a YCW group with some of them soon.

RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ACTION.

Just after I was fired, workers got work overalls and coats. But what I regard as the most important is the awareness and growth of some of them. As I said where is now a few of them who are about to start a YCW group in their own area.

We held our first union meeting in SAAWU's office. 13 workers out of 17 attended. For some of them it was a strange experience-to find themselves in such a place. They did not know what a Trade Union was. Management started to realise that something was cooking among the workers. Some workers felt that should the manager hear that a trade union was roaming in the factory, they would be fired. But a good group was sticking to the union and we were willing to change the situation. My fellow YCW's in our group meetings encouraged me to motivate my co-workers. We used a pamphlet explaining what is a Trade Union. This pamphlet was extracted from Young Worker Newspaper No. 7. For workers, it is very important because they have to understand how their trade union works and how to initiate action in their workshop. We were busy organising ourselves when the State of Emergency was declared. There were no possible ways any longer to hold a Union meeting or to bring in any publication related to our struggle. Boss's took advantage of the situation to increase their oppression.

DIFFICULTIES WE CAME ACROSS.

There was no effective motivation and education provided to the workers by the trade union. The trade union did not organise any meeting to discuss and share about our daily problems in the factory.

I was dismissed from work because of Trade Union activities, and workers' could not do anything because of the State of Emergency. I went to the trade union office to inform them about my dismissal and to get support: there was no one in the office. People around the office told me that the police had raided the place and arrested some organisers. The following day I found them but they were afraid to move out to my factory and negotiate with my boss's. I argued with them until they accepted to go. I managed to get my benefits but not to be re-instated.

Actually workers were dismissed almost every day from the company according to the mood of the boss. Management was taking advantage in keeping workers unregistered, to be able to treat them the way he liked and to prevent them from organising themselves and from claiming for their rights. The YCW group encouraged me to discuss with my fellow workers about this issue or registration, the dangers that it entailed and to try to get some of them to one of our meetings to discuss other problems. Little by little they discovered that it was their right to be registered. I used several means to make my fellow workers to develop and have a say in the factory they were working in.

Anyway, registration was not the only problem we were facing in Flex Tech. There were still a lot of bad conditions that had to be improved and it was easier now to speak with my fellow workers. It was very important to involve them, to share with them, to give every one a say and to make decisions together. I got a lot of support from my YCW group meetings. Through our review I came to realise that through the little we had done in our factory, my fellow workers had grown and were then able to challenge their situations: people were then motivated and aware, feeling in charge of improving the conditions they were exposed to.

UNIONISATION.

In my YCW group meetings, I kept reviewing the situation and actions in Flex Tech. During one of our meetings we found that it could be wise to organise ourselves under a trade union. I was myself an active member of MAWU before in another company. That time I did not know much about which trade union would be prepared to support the unionisation of a small factory like Flex Tech - Workers went to SAAWU office. I did not speak to all workers but just to my close contacts. I knew that some were not interested in our plan and few of them were spying on us. I collected some trade union forms, I filled mine and I started filling them with some of my contacts. We were six active people in the factory. We were helping one-another to recruit among the other workers and we managed to cover the entire workforce.

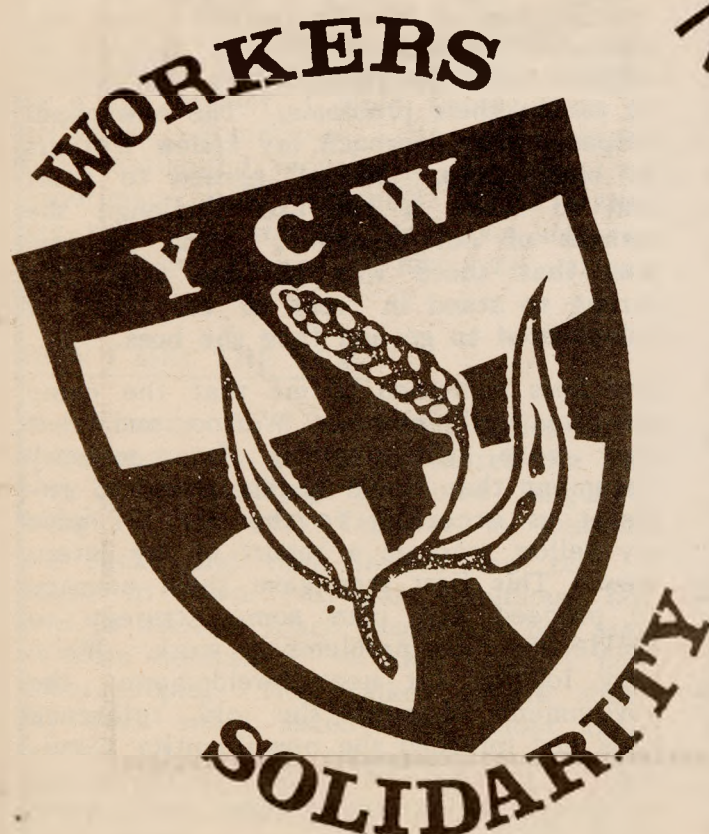
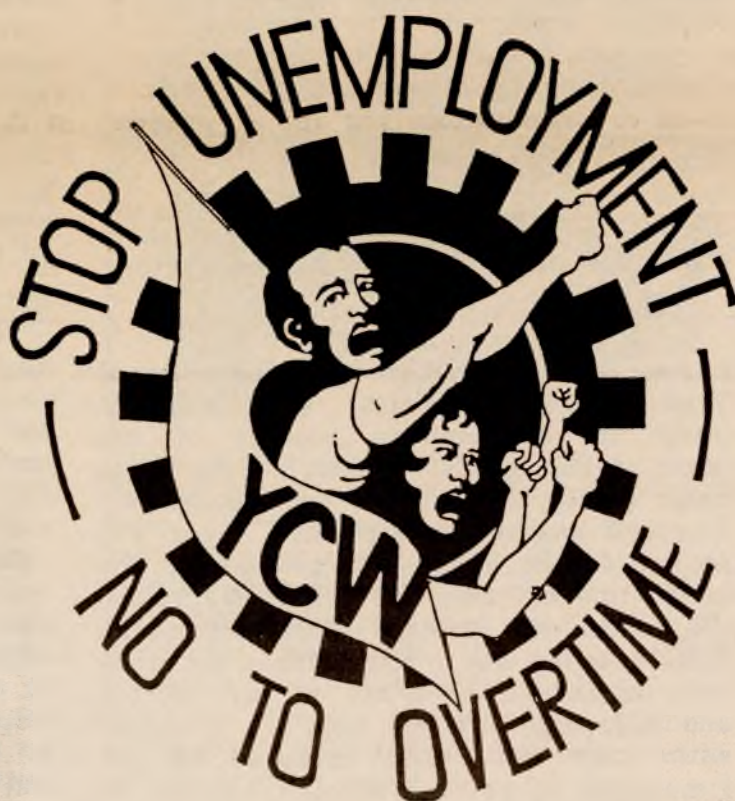
MEANS USED TO SUPPORT THE ACTION.

The first means that allowed the action to proceed was, of course to discuss and share with my co-workers; but I used also the Young Worker News Paper (No 10), some other YCW publications and advice from the Worker Aid Centre. Young Worker Newspaper, in its issue, No. 10, had a specific article about registration as well as several articles on actions taken by young workers in order to tackle their problems. The newspaper helped me to approach my fellow workers at lunch time. We all agreed to meet and to make a plan to challenge the owners of our company. The problem was that there was no one who felt strong to stand in front of the boss. I volunteered to go and face the boss.

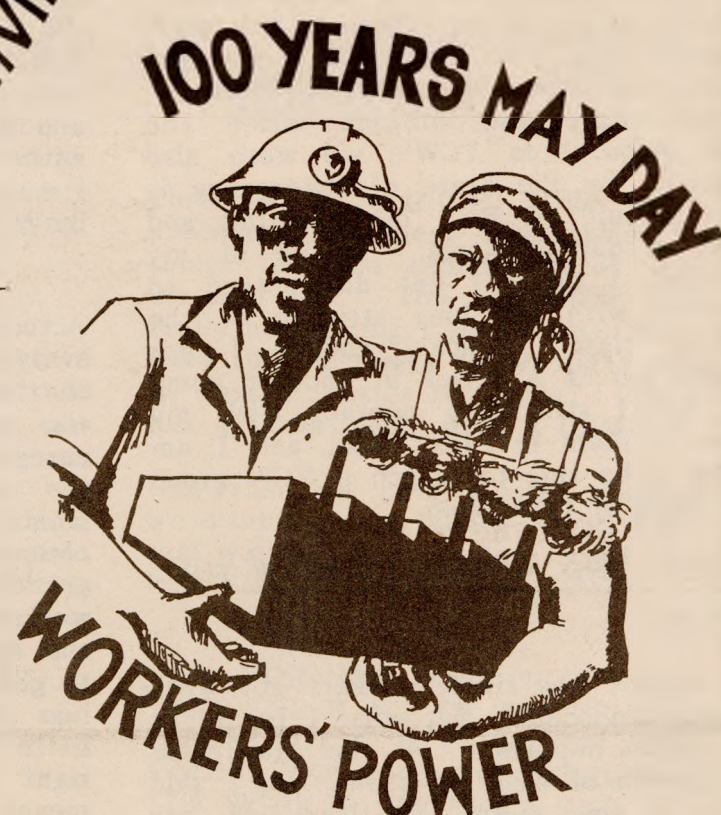
The boss explained to me that the company was still new in Watloo and that they were still awaiting the necessary document that would enable them to register us according to the law. I gave my fellow workers a report of my interview. This first step gave them courage to proceed and plan some strategy to tackle our daily problems at work. While busy looking for new developments, the government changed the old reference book and enforced the new Identity Document. In this new document there was no space for Job Registration, and nobody knew how this problem was to be handled any longer. This new I.D.? stopped our action.



Some of the delegates who attended Council



These are the different designs of T-shirts available at your local YCW office. T-shirts are cash with order. The special May Day one is in two colours red and yellow, All T-shirts come in small-medium-large and x-large sizes. May Day T-shirts cost R6-50 all others R6-00. Remember T-shirts are not for ycw's only. The movement needs to extend and to reach out to many other working class youth.



EDITORIAL

Political and other organisations have posed questions to the movement's position in the present situation in our country. Our primary task of education is the basis on which we present our position. We believe that education must always come from the action carried out by young workers thus promoting organisation. But we do not ignore the fact that we are not the only movement involved in this kind of EDUCATION.

The task of education starts from reality and not from a theoretical understanding of our struggle. We believe that young workers have the capacity to challenge and confront these contradictions which exist in our society. This option for education implies a method has to be used. This method embraces all steps necessary to reach that objective. A method which allows young workers to participate in actions which are within their own capabilities. It allows for the understanding of the circumstances under which these young workers have to take action.

Through the SEE-JUDGE-ACT method used by the movement young workers are able to discover the existence of two classes and to which one we as workers belong. This analysis of our reality aims to make us aware of a commitment we have towards our fellow workers and society.

It is in and through action that young workers add a new chapter and become part of the construction of the Kingdom here on earth.

The urgent need to create a new type of social-economic order, a different society where human beings can lead a better life, urges us to make young workers aware of the INTERNATIONAL dimension of these sufferings. To awaken in young workers the desire to organize themselves, to collaborate with other worker movements and to create a vast movement which in its process will change the lives of workers and the present social order.

In order to achieve this, young workers must be involved in action which will help them to assume their responsibilities in a permanent and progressive manner, militant worker action is a must. By acting with their fellow workers organisation is built up of which they are accountable to, and which they can control.

As young workers in an EDUCATIONAL movement we must be witnesses of worker solidarity, and by doing so can we become part of the INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE of workers and of the working class. As a movement of working youth, its aim is to reach all young workers wherever they are. It works so that each one may know his dignity and live in accordance with it. The YCW believes that without the participation of the working class it will be impossible to bring about the radical changes needed to meet man's universal aspirations.

The link with unions and other organisations is through the actions developed by the young workers: We do not wish to promote or push workers into certain unions or organisations but rather provide them with tools necessary to analyse these

organisations or unions and to distinguish which one will be best suited for the advancement of that particular action which they are involved in. This analysis allows young workers to become critical of unions or organisations which do not promote their working class interest. We do not wish to replace unions but rather to play a complementary role so that young workers can be motivated to engage in the worker struggle. Workers are the victims of this economic system of exploitation. Confronted with this, the movement affirms that every man has human dignity and that we can not accept a situation which runs against this dignity. We will engage in the struggle for a more just society because man is the victim of this system.

Through participation young workers become aware of this situation and its causes. Young workers must take part in this process for the liberation of the working class. As we advance we must develop principals, become more organised and stronger in our commitment.

We should eliminate sectarianism and partisan views which divide the workers, keeping in mind the fundamental objectives as a movement of the working class. WE will continue to strive for the unity of workers and build up a movement which is truly representative of the young workers and controlled by them. In this way we can ensure that power structures of the working class are created PROGRESSIVELY.

YCW ADDRESSES:-

NATAL COASTAL
P.O. BOX 17056
CONGELLA
4013

Tel: (031) 252768

WESTERN CAPE
P.O. BOX 4238
CAPE TOWN
8000

Tel: (021) 453177

GOLDFIELDS YCW
P.O. BOX 254
MOTSETHABONG
9463

WEST RAND
P.O. BOX 45106
MAYFAIR
2108

Tel: (011) 8371395

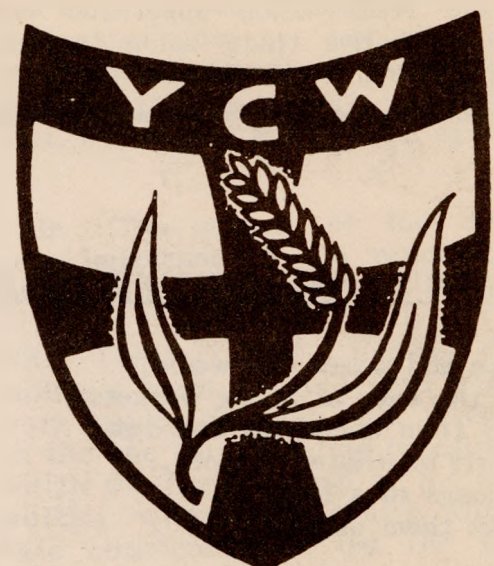
PRETORIA REGION
P.O. BOX 18124
HERCULES
0030

Tel: (012) 777981

EAST RAND
P.O. BOX 258
TEMBISA
1628

Tel: (011) 564138

EASTERN CAPE
P.O. BOX 4259
KORSTEN
6014



In South Africa YCW is mandated by the SACBC. It is affiliated to the International YCW, which has permanent consultative status with bodies such as UNESCO and I.L.O.

continued from pg 3

LAB: Are you really saying that the initiative came not from the church but actually from the Brazilian people?

WR: Basically, yes. I mean of course that there were always some people with in the church hierarchy who had a more open view of things, but the real force which allowed the church to develop in this way came from the popular movement and from youth and various other base organizations which had some connection with the church. Even though a lot of these militants were rejected and sometimes repressed by the church itself the members of these organization continued to advance and eventually impose a new vision on the church as a whole.

This linked up with the work of one or two bishops in the church who had a much more open view of things and who had been working for some time - people like Dom Helder Câmara, Casaldaliga, and so forth.

LAB: Has the rise in the opposition worker's movement led to an improvement in material conditions for workers?

WR: I think that immediately after 1978 the opposition movement did manage to succeed in winning a series of improvements in terms of wages; but very soon afterwards, the government and the employers managed to recover their position by a series of measures which included not only the National Security Law but also the high turnover of labour and the effects of the recession, which, although it occurred on an international scale, it was intensified to some extent in Brazil to have a negative effect on the working class. The multinationals are taking advantage in promoting the crisis in order to work through their own method of restructuring the Brazilian production processes. So the situation of the working class movement at the moment is extremely critical in terms of unemployment, the movement itself, which came out of the trade union opposition and later the combative trade union leaders, has itself suffered a certain reverse.

LAB: Originally the opposition movement was reluctant to become involved in parliamentary politics. What brought about the change of mind on this question? Why has the movement formed a political party, the PT or Workers' Party?

WR: The trade union opposition itself has nothing to do with the formation of a political party, the PT. The PT was the proposal of a number of combative trade union leaders, and subsequently a number of militants involved with the trade union opposition joined in and supported it. The proposal of the PT ~~was~~ the present constitutional and legal situation is certainly the most advanced, but that doesn't mean that for the majority of workers who are opposed to the existing trade union structures, the PT is the solution. One should never confuse the most advanced opposition with the solution of the struggle of the working class.

LAB: What are the difficulties of the PT in adopting the parliamentary strategy, and how do you see these difficulties being resolved?

WR: In parentheses, I am not a member of the PT. I think that in these terms the difficulties confronting the PT are the same as those confronting all the other opposition parties, that is to say, the government is not in the least bit interested in these parties being in a position to dispute power. This is particularly acute in the case of the PT because it has a position of much more unqualified opposition to the government. So that with this latest package of electoral reforms which is a repressive measure adopted by the government, in my opinion, all the parties are affected by this but the PT is the most severely affected by it. Because in addition to the obstacles which are placed in the paths of all the parties, there is also the question of the obstacle and bans which it places on the trade union leaders who have been removed from office, which is the case of many of the leadership of the PT.

LAB: In what way do you differentiate your position from that of the PT?

WR: There are two distinctions. The PT sees itself as a political party representing the totality of popular opposition movements, whereas the trade union opposition is an opposition movement within the trade union movement which sees itself strictly in terms of trade union opposition without any affiliation or link to any political party. Personally, I would prefer to devote my efforts to developing the strength of the various popular movements on different levels, so that they can create organisms which will be organisms of expression of the powers of workers in particular areas, however limited.

LAB: The PT and its allies form one wing of the labour movement. How would you characterize the other wing?

WR: That's not correct. It's not the PT and its allies which form one side of the workers' movement - it's the various movements for independent trade unionism which form the one side of the movement. The experiences of these movements existed prior to the formation of the PT. The fact that a majority of militants in the trade union opposition movements support the PT does not mean that there is an alliance between the PT and the combative trade unionists. In fact, within the trade union opposition movement there is the trade union opposition power, the combative leaders of trade unions, and other groups within the trade unions who are opposed to the existing trade union structure. On the other side, there are the pelegos, the government stooges, and certain sections of the left with reformist proposals, who have made an alliance with them, and which form a current called Unidade Sindical (Trade Union Unity).

LAB: How do you see growth of similar independent trade union organizations, for example in Poland and in South Africa, where there is great hostility from the state in each case.

WR: It is confirmation that we are not alone in our struggle in Brazil to build up a trade union independence, and that this is the best way for workers in different parts of the world to establish an independent presence. And it's also the basis for the building of a society based on justice and solidarity.

This is an extract of an interview conducted by the Latin American Bureau taken from the book BRAZIL STATE AND STRUGGLE

POEM

TAKE A PAUSE AND WIPE YOUR SWEAT.

I sit here and watch the world,
Through the eyes of young workers,
They cry from chemicals and dust
In a poorly ventilated factory,
That belongs to a boss
Who gives them money

To come back next week,
Because he thinks they are blind enough,
From the poor light in the workshop
Not to see the children dying
Because there is no money in their hands,
That have made millions
For the boss's wife to own a Mercedes
Benz
To take her to the shop
To feed her rugby player children.

I feel their muscles flex
And the sweat blinding those eyes as
they work
A moment's pause to wipe that sweat
Enough to prick the brain and ask the
other:
"What do you think about the
situation?"
How many are affected?
Who is gaining who is losing?
What are the causes, what are the
consequences?
We must do something.

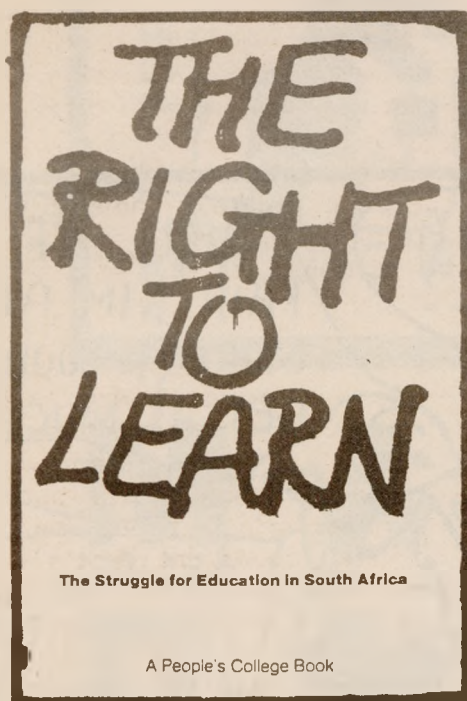
The group meeting is over.
Now I feel the fight and frustrations.
Workers fear to lose
The crumbs in their hands
The Induna reports
The bosses question
The workers question
The workers fight

There is no going beyond the corner.
Nobody can fall past the ground
The only thing left is to rise.

We rise comrades
And forward we move
We use our brains and our method
The movement is old and strong
Experience is sitting in the open space
That shines with knowledge on to of
its head.
Review Review Review
The blind can see
Protection provided
From dangerous chemicals
And now we see as well as know
The money in hand only for cigarettes
That's why we demand more
A living wage is what we want.

**A LIVING WAGE IS WHAT WE WANT
NOW!!!**

BOOK REVIEWS



The right to learn
Prepared by Pam Christie
Sached and Ravan Press.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Education is a very important weapon. The working class can use this weapon to defend itself against the boss's exploitation which is also financing apartheid system in this country. This system benefits the minority instead of the entire working class.

There are different kinds of education that the workers can be involved in - There is management education training and there is Trade Union education training.

What are the differences between these two types of education?

When introducing the 'Bantu Education' in 1953, - the then minister of native affairs said:- "When I have control over the native education, I will reform it so that these natives should be taught from childhood that equality with the Europeans is not for them - We should not give the natives any academic education, if we do so who is going to do the manual labour in the community?"

According to the experiences of one metal worker who had been attending management training programmes, he had discovered that management is teaching ways that are more favourable to him-teaching workers on how to control other workers.

The differences between management and trade union education, are explored in the book called "The Right To Learn" - It looks at why has there been growth on the Job education in South Africa. It tries to answer the question, "Why is private enterprise prepared to spend money on educating workers? It suggests that one reason for this is to combat workers militancy and to undermine Trade Union Education Programmes.

The right to learn is an easy and factual book to read. It deals with the ongoing struggle for education in South Africa. It looks at some crucial issues in education and puts forward ways of understanding them.

This book also asks very important questions such as:-

- How has students, teachers and parents resisted Apartheid Education?
- And it also raises questions for discussion about the alternatives and changes in education.

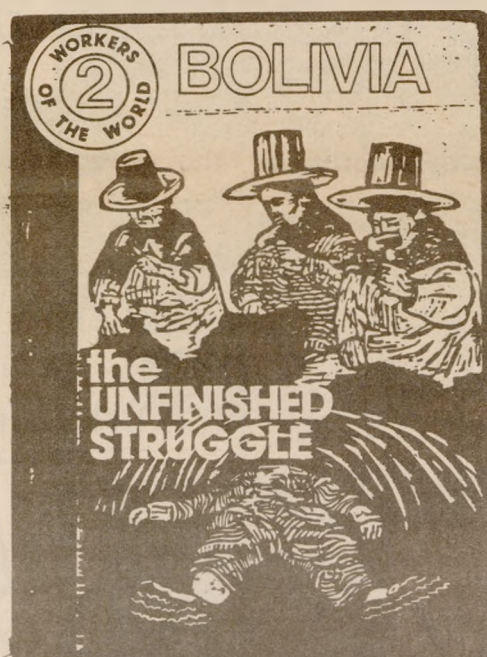
This book should be read by everyone who is concerned about education and changes in South Africa.

It is available at:-

RAVAN PRESS
P.O. BOX 31134
BRAMFONTEIN
2017

at R6-60.

Bolivia: The Unfinished Struggle is about another country in South America. Bolivia's working class is one of the most militant in the world. In 1952, workers, peasants and their allies took power in a popular revolution and tried to set up a democratic government. Workers in South Africa will find it interesting to read why this revolution failed, and how the army took power again. They will also learn about the harsh life of the Bolivian mine-workers, the story of their union, and the struggles of the women's committees.



Botswana: The story of Mineworkers in an Independent African Country looks at the big strike of mineworkers in the town of Selebi-Phikwe in 1976. The giant South African company, Anglo American, was one of the owners of this mine. Also many workers from Botswana came to work in our country every year. So for workers in South Africa, it is interesting to know about the union movement in Botswana, and what life there has been like since independence.

Solidarity: The Story of International Worker Organisations. Today in South Africa, unions are facing important questions about who are the different international trade union organisations and what influence they have on workers' struggles in different countries. This book tries to answer some of these questions, and examines some of the problems of international trade unionism. It also looks at the history of links between these organisations and unions in our own country.



"So they sacked me and another leader of the strike. This wasn't the first time that the two of us had lost our jobs. My position in the struggle meant that it was very easy to be victimised. I went from job to job.

In Santo Dias' story he says: "Inside the factories workers started small groups known as the trade union opposition.

This opposition grew and grew until 1978, things exploded. Half a million workers in the metal industry went on strike. This was the famous Folded Arms strike: rather than risking confrontation with the police and army on the streets, the workers occupied their factories and sat by their machines with their arms folded! The bosses had no choice but to negotiate. The strike won some of their demands. But most importantly, they had felt their own power. This gave them the courage to intensify their struggles, and to launch more big strikes in 1979 and 1980.

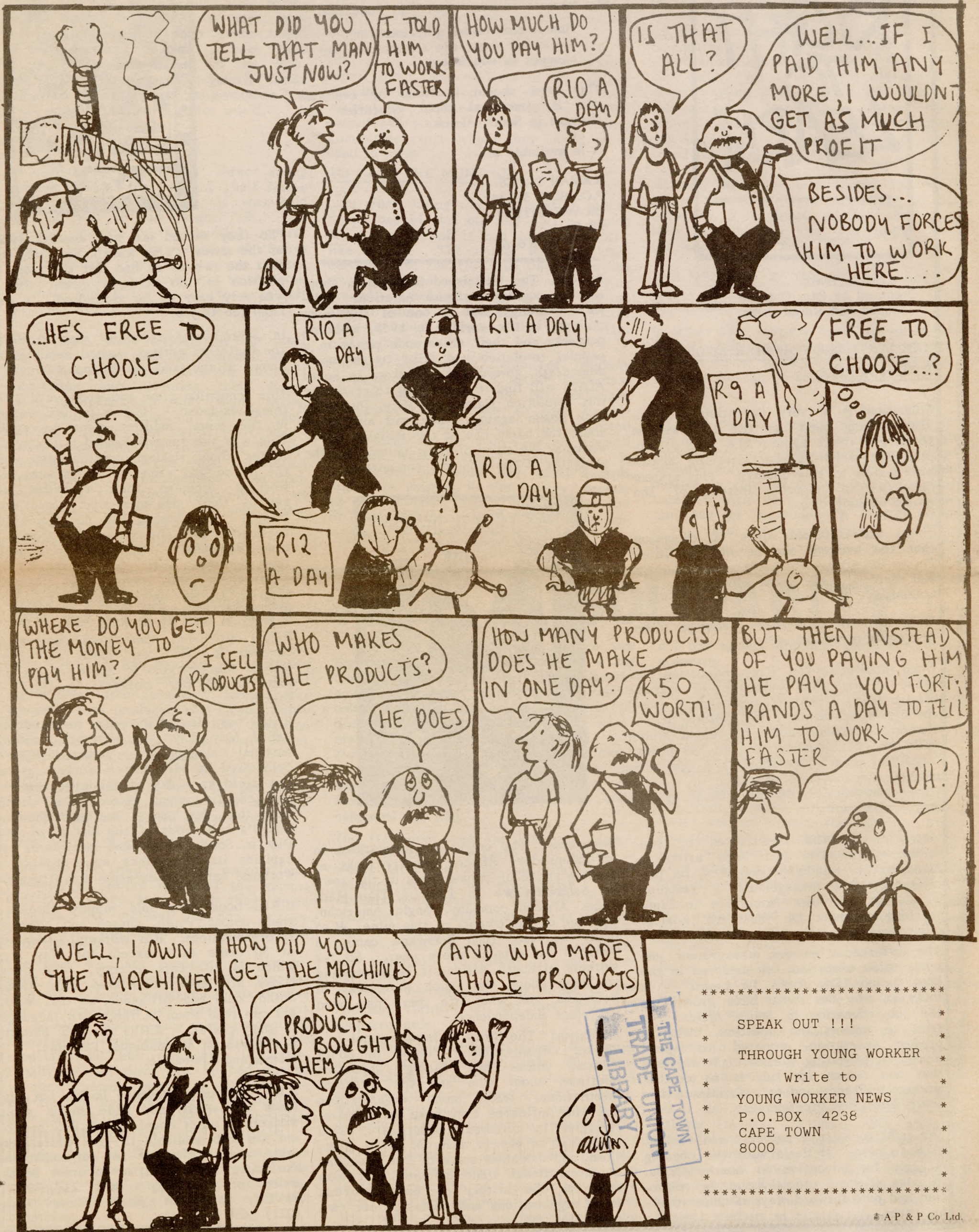
ILRIG produced this book on Brazil because it felt that there are many lessons that workers in South Africa can learn from the worker's struggle in Brazil.

ILRIG has also produced a short booklet called May Day: A History of International Labour Day. Today 1 May is celebrated by millions of workers around the world as a day of solidarity. In our own country, many unions have already won this day as a workers' holiday. ILRIG's book tells of the history of May Day in South Africa and elsewhere, and explains its importance as a symbol of workers' unity, organisation and struggle.

ILRIG books are sold mainly through trade unions, youth, church and community organisations. For workers, they sell at 50 cents each, except for May Day, which is 30 cents a copy. All these books are being translated into Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu and Afrikaans, so that workers can read them in their own languages if they prefer. ILRIG is also planning new books on Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

ILRIG not only produces books, but also lends out videos and slide shows about workers in other countries. ILRIG members are also available to give educational talks and workshops for organisations. For more information, or to order books, write to:- ILRIG, BOX 213, SALT RIVER, 7925, or phone Cape Town (021) 650 3504.

Where does profit come from?



* SPEAK OUT !!! *

* THROUGH YOUNG WORKER *

* Write to *

* YOUNG WORKER NEWS *

* P.O.BOX 4238 *

* CAPE TOWN *

* 8000 *

* ***** *