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REVIEW OF LIFE AND WORKER ACTION (ROLWA)

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to bring the fundamental method of the YCW up-to-date so that it may be a useful instrument in the action and formation of militants and young workers. We have therefore taken into account the experiences, both positive and negative, of the last few years and particularly from the evaluation made at the 1968 International Executive Committee and the study carried out at the 1969 International Council. This document was submitted for study and discussion at the 1973 and 1974 International Executive Committees and was finally approved by the International Council In 1975.

This document is not a recipe of how to systematically carry out a review, not an outline to be followed word by word. It attempts to clarify and put in an orderly manner a number of elements to be taken into account and used as reference when the time comes to review our militant action.

At first it was entitled "Review of Working Life" and implied the reviewing of our action in working life as well as ourselves within this action. With the years, its title became deformed and now that of "Review of Life" is commonly used. The content also changed and in many places within or outside the Y.C.W. It became a review of people's lives. So the title **"Review of Life and Worker Action"** has been chosen in order to overcome this historical distortion and to underline the meaning of the use of the YCW method.

Your experience will tell if these elements guarantee or not the quality of the Review of Life and Worker Action.

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I. WHAT SHOULD WE REVIEW?

Our Actions

The starting point is the review of our action.

Our Life

Taking our actions as a starting point we will certainly come to see the link between the situation and our LIFE. Not life in general, its superficial aspects or facts we are not concerned with.

General Situation

We can and must review the general situation by which we should reach the concrete point we are involved in and on which we are going to lead our action.

II. HOW TO SEE?

Taking into account what we are already doing, what is going on around me every day?

A. What is going on at my work, in my country, suburb, in my family?

What are the conditions of work or in the neighbourhood? What are the reactions among workers or neighbours or among those with whom we are carrying out the action? This will immediately give us a view of the immediate, concrete reality of our own life and context.

How many people are living in the same situation?

This will enable us to see the extent of the situation. To decide whether it is an individual or collective problem. Thus we will gradually discover the extent of the problem.

B. What are the consequences of this situation for the People who experienced it?

This will give us an idea of the depth and seriousness of the problem, of the influence of the situation on the people, of the concrete limitations due to the situation of those involved. Through a deepening of the consequences we will discover the need to act. Our conscious makes us fight along with the others to try and solve the situation. The desire to fulfil oneself and not being able to do so, frustrated aspirations, all provide a basic motivation to act. We can neither be a militant nor carry on action in a permanent manner without being deeply motivated.

Knowing the consequences of the situation on the young workers will enable us to discover their specific behaviour and reactions, in effect to consider each young worker as an individual with his potentialities and practical limits.

Only in this way shall we be able to give a concrete and adequate answer based on the real life of the young workers.

C. Why are people subjected to such a situation and why does such a situation exist?

People do not experience this situation by chance. Such a situation comes about from causes and reasons. It is important to discover these causes if we are to find the solution or the course of action leading to a solution.

In this respect, providing an answer to certain questions will be helpful. Questions such as: For whom is the situation beneficial? Who suffers from it? On whom does the solution depend? Why has no solution yet been found? Has this situation always existed?

Double Cause: the structures and us

We will then be able to see, each time more clearly, that the solutions are neither simple nor easy. That concrete situations are conditioned by external factors; that good or ill will does not explain everything. We will become especially aware of the existence -aside from economic, political and even repressive reasons or structures - of cultural conditioning, of a lack of organization among those subjected to the situation and, in many cases, a considerable lack of awareness or preparation to come to grips with the situation.

Need for extensive knowledge before judging

If we do not have sufficient knowledge of the situation and its causes, it is necessary to seek means of improving our knowledge. Who can be of help to us? It is important to have an inquiring mind, to know, each time more thoroughly, the reasons for our situation, the various and intermingled elements which make it difficult for us to know our society well. For these reasons, supplementary Formation Programmes are a necessity which the Movement must undertake. This will help militants progress efficiently in their actions as they discover their specific needs.

D. What do those subjected to the situation think and why?

If we do not know we must do our up most to find out. This preoccupation and action must come foremost: knowing that others think of the situation we are in.

This inquiring spirit is essential; but in order to be authentic it must be shared by all those around us and with whom we are in contact.

Thus, we will be able to learn whilst at the same time leading other young workers, to see some aspects of the situation we are in, as well as being or becoming responsible for what concerns us all.

In this manner, our reflection made during the Review of Life and Worker Action (at militants' meetings) will always enrich us through the newly discovered aspects which we will then share with others. These new aspects will serve as a basis for continuing or initiating common action where we live.

Awareness of their Ability to react

Awareness of what they think and how they react to our way of thinking reveals to us the level of preoccupation and the type of action they are willing to undertake. Ignoring this will lead us to offer the Young Workers things they are not willing to do or not prepared for. We would isolate ourselves from them, thus destroying the educational process which would enable them to discover the steps which follow.

Finally, knowing what our friends think will determine the pedagogical phases to be taken into consideration when acting, so as to respect the level of people while remaining efficient.

Who else shows concern for this situation?

It is important to SEE if other groups or people are concerned with the same situation. We must know who they are and what they are doing and their plans are. We would therefore make a deeper analysis on the need for new action or for working together. But we cannot act as if we are the only ones involved.

III. APPROACH FOR SEEING

Searching Spirit

Considering the importance of the precise discovery of reality, of the conditions of the young worker life and of these conditions on our own life, which affect our fulfilment as persons, it is necessary to have an instrument - research- and an attitude -Searching spirit-.

Neither Prejudge nor Suppose

It is essential that we neither prejudge nor suppose. We must see and see deeply. An enquiring approach means being attentive to the life of people, particularly those people with whom we are carrying out an action, and being attentive to their reactions in the different situations, events and actions in which we are involved. We must also seek out the best course for committing ourselves to action or for continuing the action in order to respond to the needs and aspirations expressed.

Our heart also must be involved in seeing

Our way of seeing must be different from that of professional statisticians or simple clinical observers. We also must see with our heart in order to deeply feel the sufferings of our fellow-workers and our whole people. But at the same time we must remain objective and clear-sighted.

Willingness to learn

A true militant is not necessarily one who 'sees' all. Rather, he is one ready to learn from others.

See clearly and deeply in order to judge correctly

Our judgement or interpretation will be correct insofar as we clearly and deeply see. Otherwise we will always retain a superficial vision of society.

Our action and thus our commitment will be made in favour or against a given situation depending on whether our insight is deep or superficial.

A gradual ability to see through experience

It is obvious that the ability to 'see' is acquired through the experience of a review of action.

It is a gradual process? But it is possible, no matter the age or intellectual ability. Little by little, our vision of reality will become more complete and consequently closer to reality and will finally lead us to a global vision of the society we live in.

IV. HOW TO JUDGE?

Our opinion and conscience

A. What do we think of all that we have seen?

It is important that everyone express its thought. The easy way out, of relying on someone else who "knows" more or limiting oneself to books in order to sanction and judge situation off hand, is of no value.

It is necessary to make an effort to think. To make use of one's thinking ability. This is how we will develop both our critical ability and our sense of responsibility.

We must try to develop a personal opinion in order to overcome any inferiority complex, our fears in the face of freedom and responsibility, as well as the fear of losing our comfort. We will begin to develop our own criteria as to what we want and we will avoid manipulation only insofar as we succeed in comparing among ourselves existing reality with how we would like things to be.

B. The opinion and awareness of others - What is the thinking and action of other organized worker groups? Why do they think this?

It is important to listen to and to know the opinion and action of others, particularly of those who have the same objectives of liberation of the Working Class - e.g. trade unions, co-operatives, worker committees and so on... Although in some cases, we may not coincide or agree with them, it is important to know what they are doing and which goals they seek to achieve so as to have, when judging, more facts and to avoid superficial conclusions. The struggle to build a new society and a new man is neither a spontaneous nor improvised struggle that is why we must take interest in and respect what other workers have achieved over the years in order to arrive at an understanding of the complexity of the solution and importance of a permanent commitment.

C. Confrontation

We must try to understand the situation using the following guidelines:

- a. Our conception of man. The values he experiences or which are suppressed in the present situation.
- b. The model of man revealed to us by Christ - the Gospel, the Bible.
- c. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- d. The thoughts and testimonies of the great fighters of the people recognised by the masses.
- e. The History of the People's struggle for its liberation.

Every militant will not use all these guidelines. At least not all at the same time. Some will emphasize certain points and give less relevance to others; some may broaden their source of reference. What is important is to overcome the limits of our own opinion, which, despite its importance as such, will always remain limited.

Thus we avoid being dogmatic and moralistic in the negative sense but instead enlarge our foundations and motivations.

Deepening and broadening our reflection, by adding more points of reference will enable us to develop more points which are common to us and to the whole of the working youth which has not discovered Christ as a point of reference.

New values evolve from this confrontation

The further development of our critical capacity and the birth and formulation of new values to be experienced by man, the people, and us young workers in particular will evolve from the confrontation between the situation and the totality of points of reference or elements of comparison. At the same time, this confrontation will help us determine some of the elements which must be integrated in the new society we want to build. A society that is at the service of man.

D. Self-Criticism and Transformation - SEE how we are part of the very ill we wish to fight while retaining the above points of reference.

Here we must develop a critical view of ourselves which entails a personal and collective change. If we do not make this personal change, we will be unable to create a new society without building into it the very errors of the present one. It is not enough to build new structures without changing man as well.

This means that we must rid ourselves and others of all forms of exploitation: selfishness, laziness, vanity, lust for power which makes of man a machine which consumes produces and destroys.

A way of life which itself questions

We cannot wait for new structures before beginning to live new values. They must be lived now as an anticipation of what a new society could be. Our way of life must change as a result of our action and reflection. This way of life begins to spread and it questions the life of others insofar as it is the expression of an ideal to pursue.

E. Evaluation progress of current action

That is, judging our action as we are in the process of carrying it out. Without this evaluation there is no possibility of progress because there is no effort of adapting objectives to the ever changing society.

Comparing the result with the initial goal - Now to evaluate our action.

1. Comparing what was achieved with what we wanted to achieve. On this point, it is important not to leave anything to chance nor to be superficial but to recognize objectively what we have achieved. The point is not to do much or too little, but to do what was needed.

Examining whether we are progressing or regressing

2. Judge whether our action entails changes or not. In other words, judge whether our companions react, participate consciously and commit themselves, if personal changes occur in them, if a minimum of natural, stable groups emerge led by the workers themselves, if they take on the consequences of the action, including the financial aspect, if their demands are met.

To give a value to everything down to the smallest detail

3. It is important to give a value to everything, even the smallest detail within the global framework of what we seek to fulfil. Every effort is a step forward, a victory over laziness, routine, selfishness, unawareness and relying on others. It is important therefore, to give value to everything achieved through our action new experiences, new means of organization, progress in the method, self-confidence and confidence in the young workers, feeling of strength. Also whether people begin to make decisions, to communicate, to criticize, to finance their actions, whether they broaden their vision, whether they undertake their responsibilities, etc.

Analysing the means and difficulties

4. Assess whether the means used are adequate and sufficient. That is whether or not they correspond to the abilities of people, if the latter know how to use and finance them. If these means were efficient or if they require improvements. It is appropriate in this perspective to determine which difficulties we had to face, whether it be from our point of view, that of the Movement or from outside.

Along the same line, it is necessary to analyze the new mechanisms of repression and integration used by the enemy in the course of the action.

Financing of the action, its means and organization

5. In a society such as ours, where money dominates everything, it is important to continually review and see who financed the action and how the young workers finance the means, meetings, etc. which are vital for the action. It is from this evaluation that springs the need to support the Movement financially as something of our own.

Deciding on the action and its continuity

6. Once the preliminary work is done, the time has come to judge on whether to continue the action or not and why. In other words, it is necessary to determine whether our motivations and goals are still valid for us and for the young workers concerned. That is why it is essential to review the motivations of the young workers who participated. The continuity of the action and inasmuch the action itself depends on this.

Seeing the role played by the Movement

7. After having evaluated the action, with reference to the above, it is important to evaluate the role and place occupied by the Movement in the action: to see if the Movement was in any way present, whether any young workers have discovered the YCW, what they have discovered and how, whether the YCW has been extended and whether this is proportionate to the capacity of the Movement. This will help show how the Movement can or should complete the action being carried out.

The requirements, for the group and the Movement

8. From this evaluation of our action emerges a series of requirements for the group directly involved and for the Movement as a whole: the need for information, for further formation, different forms of coordination, reviewing of the Movement's means (whether it be a mass newspaper or meetings, etc.), etc.

In this way, we will ensure that the Movement and the means it uses are adequate for the action of its militants and young workers.

V. WHAT REQUIRES TAKING ACTION?

Perspectives in Action: People and Structures

The review or analysis of the situation and the judgement we will arrive at, will show that any action is but a partial solution. Obviously we will succeed in eliminating the cause of our situation only insofar as we take into consideration our present economic, political and ideological system, and change the manner in which men relate and behave. That is why all action or plans most always keep in sight these global perspectives, even though they are not always easy to see.

Long-term planning

In analysing the scope of the problem, with its causes and consequences as well as the level of awareness and organization of the young workers, one also realizes that it's impossible to solve the problems and change the situation through spontaneous actions separated from long term planning. Each action, down to the smallest one, must be another step-forward amidst the steps and efforts of the working youth and the people in general and not a stop backward or wasted energy.

Daily actions make up the long-term plan

We must therefore establish a few fundamental long-term goals in which we shall integrate the actions and concrete commitments which each Review of Life and Worker Action will perform contain.

VI. HOW TO ACT

Methodological process

A. The formulation of these fundamental goals must take into account the fact that it is the young worker who must consciously carry them out if we are to achieve real changes enabling people to change. Therefore, given the YCW's task among young workers, it is necessary to take its method into account.

- How is an action of conscientization to be carried out?
- How to take an action which will stimulate and bring about the organization and coordination of young workers?
- How can we set up infrastructures in all the areas of life which will enable them to act consciously, to discover progressively the causes and consequences of the situation, to enable them to educate themselves and change, as well as develop all aspects of their being, allowing for the organization, leadership, planning, control and evaluation of the action and the objectives, by the young workers themselves?
- In what way are these infrastructures also struggle-communities for the total liberation of men?
- In what way are these infrastructures communities bearing the seeds for the transformation of the working youth, people and society?

B. **HOW TO PLAN ACTION:** Taking into account all that has previously been said, we must clarify our objectives of immediate or gradual action so that the Review of Life and Worker Action may always bring more elements, suggestions or motivations and results. We must therefore clarify the following points :

What do we plan to do?

1. What do we plan to do in our factory, our suburb, etc? Which problem, aspect or point of interest will we choose to start with or emphasize? This implies that we must take into account the persons whom the action is aimed at, since we are not alone in finding a solution to the situation or problem. We must do it through awakening others as well. Only then by uniting our forces, we can make progress.

To decide with whom we are going to work

2. It is necessary to decide with whom we will work. We must always be able to rely on a specific number of people who are, or will be, our friends. We must see who will be ready to do something for the some objective.

How are we going to motivate them?

3. Once we have decided whom to work with, we must determine how we will motivate their collaboration keeping in mind their level of commitment and their sensitivity of awareness. Thus we will be able to share the tasks to be done, according to the manner in which each one of our companions sees the objectives and is ready to work towards it.

What means will we use?

4. It is necessary to make a list of the means at our disposal in order to see if they are up to the goals we have set. Though the material means are not the only ones assuring success, it is necessary not to underestimate their value. We must be realistic and keep our strength in mind.

When will we take action as planned?

5. When will we review the results?
 - The next evaluation will be another step forward. It must be done periodically and assure a reorganization of the Movement's action. A regular review guarantees that we retain a very realistic vision; and it helps us better answer to the requirements and difficulties which arise.

- A regular review guarantees an YCW method as well as its bringing up-to-date.

VII. REVIEW OF LIFE AND WORKER ACTION IS

1. The Review of Life and Worker Action is a METHOD and as such the main instrument of FORMATION of the YCW. Movement. The meeting of militants grants us the opportunity to work as a team and to draw common objectives.
2. The Review is first of all a Review of our Action. It must be the starting point.
3. Starting from our action, the Review of Life and Worker Action is:
 - A. An instrument for an objective analysis of the reality that we experience at a local and international level.
 - We see the immediate reality with its causes and consequences for the working youth and the people;
 - starting from our life, we get a broader and more global view of reality and this by searching more facts and information.
 - We analyse this reality, its structure, political, ideological and cultural causes and consequences.
 - B. It is a comparison between existing reality and that which should exist.
 - A confrontation between man as an object, considered as producer and consumer, and man as a person with his unfulfilled aspirations viewed as the active protagonist in the functioning of society.
 - Confrontation between present society, based on the exploitation of man, the existence of classes, violence, private ownership of the means of production, and the type of society which must be built so as to enable all men to actively participate in the development of society where they may fully grow.
 - C. It is a self-criticism of ourselves, our behaviour and commitment. It is a permanent demand for our personal and collective transformation, and an Incentive for putting 'ourselves fully at the service of the community.

Everyone shows as he is and accepts himself as he is. Where every man has a personal opinion and holds part of the truth. Where every man seeks, listens, relates and criticizes, according to his level of judgement and is ready to accept criticism.

D. It is a plan of action in the light of an analysis of reality and of the persons involved in this reality. Decisions are taken as a Team.

- where concrete objectives are set and subject to review later on.
- where the results attained are evaluated and compared to the objectives previously set.
- where action is re-directed according to the evaluation carried out.

4. The Review of Life and Worker Action is a school of formation through action, where everyone takes part in, with his person, his life and his action. And it follows that its level is always that of those who undertake the Review.

5. The Review of Life and Worker Action, achieved in common at local, national and international levels, finally leads to the drawing up of objectives and plans on a national and international level. These objectives and plans of action most are evaluated, re-orientated and re-organized in a permanent way. These common objectives are the backbone uniting the Movement and propagating the feeling of being the international body.

When in the framework of these objectives and plans of action, we concentrate on a problem with a precise objective and a specific plan of action in a given time, we initiate our Action Campaign (it has different names according to the place: enquiry campaign, action campaign, plan of action, special enquiry, or simply campaign). In any case, it always implies a step dedicated to research.

VIII. THE REVIEW OF LIFE AND WORKER ACTION IS NOT:

1. Seeing in a simplistic way or superficial manner;
2. Judging in a moralistic way;
3. Acting in comfort;
4. A study of themes or of life, in an intellectual way, not leading to commitment to action or change.
5. A criticism of the others' private life;
6. A "magic recipe" to be applied at any time with anyone.
7. Spontaneous repent for errors committed without analysing why they were committed and how they can be avoided in the future.
8. Of course, an hour and a half of meeting devoid of any effect on our own life.

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