

# Calling all young people 1985 is your year!

**GRASSROOTS:** What is the significance of IYY and why are you taking up this campaign?

**DAN:** The significance of the IYY is that for the first time we are able to involve a cross-section of young people in the same campaign. By participating in joint activities, young people are forming unity.

IYY can also help expose the apartheid practices of the government. If one looks at the IYY themes, one can point out the lack of participation in South Africa, one can show how development is stifled and what peace should mean in South Africa.

One could show that the black local authorities, new constitution, GST and unemployment are not the way to peace.

**GRASSROOTS:** How do you intend taking up the IYY?

**DAN:** We intend having a number of activities, for example around the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter. The Charter gives direction to the youth. If you reject apartheid, you must have an alternative. The implementation of the Charter will lead to a free and just South Africa.

The form of our activities have not yet been concretised. A lot will depend on the regions.

Some of the issues which may become focuses of the campaign are conscription and the Education Charter campaign. The most important aim of IYY, however, is the unity of the youth in South Africa and internationally.

THIS year has been declared International Year of the Youth (IYY) by the United Nations. In South Africa, youth and students have come together to celebrate IYY. Grassroots spoke to Dan Montsitsi, national co-ordinator of IYY, during the recent IYY launch in Cape Town.

We are thinking of a national rally which would include cultural activities. A national youth festival at the end of the year is meant to bring all kinds of young people together. All our activities would be to mobilise people to benefit our organisations.

There are ideas of linking up with other countries, particularly African countries, for various joint youth activities. It would be nice if we could, for example, organise soccer matches between South African and Zimbabwean youth and at the same time share experiences.

**GRASSROOTS:** What is your relationship to church organisations?

**DAN:** We have quite a good relationship. We are working closely with the youth desk of the South African Council of Churches. They have invited us to some of their activities and we have invited them to ours.

**GRASSROOTS:** What is your attitude towards the government taking up the IYY campaign?

**DAN:** The government find themselves in a bad position. Lots of other countries have spoken out against South Africa, for example in the UN resolutions on the police killings and the treason trial.

Now the government is deliberately trying to mislead youth. They have never been serious about the development of youth. Examples here are education, job scarcity and discrimi-

nation. Youth don't participate in decision-making.

I doubt the sincerity of the government. They can't talk about peace because their response has always been that of repression, in the 50s, 60s, 1973, 1980 and still today.

The intention of the state in taking up IYY is to misguide the youth and to present a front to the world. They are also doing this to promote their puppets.

In the Transvaal, the government takes up the IYY through the community councillors in the different townships. They have a central committee consisting of youth, community councillors and the West Rand Administration Board. The government gave R49 000 towards IYY in Transvaal.

We want to have nothing to do with the government's campaign. We question the legitimacy of the government.

**GRASSROOTS:** What would you say is expected of young people this year?

**DAN:** Our strongest appeal is for young people to come forward and participate in our IYY activities and to show up the false and dishonest intentions of the government.

Our call is for youth to unite under progressive forces in the UDF and to challenge the government, to question their intentions.



**DAN MONTSITSI** addresses the launching meeting of the IYY campaign in the Western Cape. The meeting was held at a church hall in Bonteheuwel.

On Saturday afternoon, hundred of young people including many members of youth and student organisations, took part in a cultural rally to celebrate the International Youth Year campaign.

## New art body

A NEW regional cultural body which will encourage and promote talents in the Western Cape, will be launched early in May.

Invitations have been extended to all progressive organisations and individuals to attend a meeting at the Community Arts Project (CAP) at 3 p.m. on Sunday May 5.

Initial work has been done by a group of artists and interested individuals. They have drawn up a set of working principles outlining the aims and objectives, the structure and function of the new organisation.

Some of the aims of the organi-

sation are:

- to unite progressive cultural workers in the Western Cape.
- oppose all forms of oppression and exploitation.
- encourage and promote creative talents existing in the communities of the Western Cape.
- to focus attention on and actively oppose the harassment of cultural workers.

Membership will be open to progressive cultural organisations and cultural workers actively engaged in the community and who subscribe to the aims of the organisation.

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