

# Youth Year sparks off controversy

SA Juvenile Youth

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SPAC

International Youth Year will be launched into immediate controversy on March 15 when three separate political groupings in South Africa begin different campaigns.

The Government has declared 1985 to be the Year of the Youth, in keeping with United Nations celebrations.

But the year will also be celebrated by far rightwing groups under the auspices of the Afrikaner Volkswag and by youth organisations affiliated to the United Democratic Front.

The Government's decision to use the UN emblem has sparked consternation in right-wing circles.

And it has prompted organisations in Windhoek to withdraw from official celebrations.

Afrikaner Volkswag leader Professor Carel Boshoff described the choice of emblem as disgusting and said his organisation would offer youth an alternative programme.

Youth organisations affiliated to the United Democratic Front are also anxious to distance themselves from the official Year of the Youth and they have decided on a localised emblem instead of the United Nations emblem.

The question of youth is open to different interpretations, said Mr Graham Simpson, research officer of the National Union of South African Students, which is affiliated to the United Democratic Front.



He added: "It is important that United Democratic Front affiliates pose an alternative understanding of the problems facing the youth of this country."

Special attention would be focussed on black youth and on the End Conscription Campaign, said Mr Simpson.

Poles apart is the Afrikaner Volkswag, which believes integration will be encouraged by the Year of the Youth being co-ordinated by the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning.

The Afrikaner Volkswag was planning special events to offer youth an alternative to the Government's indoctrination programme, said Professor Boshoff.

The moderate but powerful Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge, along with most Afrikaans churches, is backing Government celebrations.

The central theme of the official Year of the Youth is development and the official launch on March 15 will also start Youth Weekend.

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