

## Highlights of forthcoming events organised by Idasa offices

### NATAL

#### Rural focus

Idasa in Natal will be taking voter education to the remotest areas of the province. The Natal office decided to concentrate on the rural areas because that is where the bulk of illiterate and marginalised people are. The following is the diary for voter education workshops in Natal:

- 2 October – Port Shepstone
- 8 October – Maputoland
- 8-10 October – Durban teachers workshop
- 23 October – Stanger teachers workshop

The office will be addressing Ulundi on 10 November which will shorten the long route to getting to the rural areas under tribal authority.

#### Violence and the poll

Have perceptions of violence pre-determined the result of the coming election? This is the question which Dr Jannie Hofmeyr will be addressing at the Future Forum at the Edward Hotel on October 20.

Dr Hofmeyr is director of the largest specialist research company in South Africa and has written many articles on social change.

He will be sharing the findings of his most recent

research surveys which deals with the impact of violence in South Africa in relation to next year's election. For bookings phone (031) 304-8893 or fax 304-8891.

### WESTERN CAPE

#### Tackling violence

"Images of Violence" workshops will be held on 19 October and 9 November at the St Paul's Church in Rondebosch. These workshops aim to help people confront the fear, uncertainty and powerlessness they experience under conditions of political and criminal violence.

Another workshop in the series, aimed at youth, will be held in conjunction with Peace Visions on 25 October at 2pm.

#### Calling civics

A workshop for civic bodies in the Cape metropolitan area will be held on 27 October from 17h30 to 20h30 at the Bellville Holiday Inn. It will address issues of common interest, such as the financing local government.

● A "one-city" conference will be held from November 19 to 21. It will be aimed at the "ordinary" people of Cape Town and address the themes

of peace, development and democracy in the city. For further information contact Michelle Booth at (021) 47-1280.

#### Training trainers

The Western Cape office is also training trainers for election monitoring and voter education. Various workshops have been set up. Interested individuals and organisations should contact the office at (021) 47-1280.

### PORT ELIZABETH

#### Voter workshops

Voter education workshops are being organised for the employees of Shell and the Delta Motor Company.

The office remains active in the Eastern Cape Housing Forum which is engaged in negotiations between the community, banks and developers.

### BLOEMFONTEIN

#### Africa report

A report-back meeting on the trip Bloemfontein university students made to neighbouring states will be held at the Vista University campus on 20 October. Further details from the Bloemfontein office.

unworkable and unfair system replaced by another. Would it not be better to make merit the most important criterion?

*E H Schumann  
Port Elizabeth*

#### Lower standards cause alarm

I AM a strong supporter of democracy. However, I am also a strong believer in building a healthier and more vibrant economy. After reading an article in *The Sunday Tribune* my

views on promoting non-discriminatory and equal opportunity human resource programmes are being reversed.

The article was on affirmative action and how it will give South African labour relations one of its foremost challenges over the next 10 years. I was alarmed to read about South African Airways efforts to put at least 12 black pilots in their cockpits within the next two years, and their decision to drop existing entry level qualifications.

SAA for many years has set an extremely high standard,

requiring a minimum of 1 000 hours flying experience. The new standard, agreed by representatives of SAA and the ANC, has been set at 250 hours along with a South African commercial licence.

My argument is that lowering the entry level will lead to SAA standards and reputation slumping behind other international and local airlines.

If this example is followed by other leading companies, will the development of our economy not deteriorate?

*Confused youth  
Pietermaritzburg*

## An unfair replacement?

THE ARTICLE in the August edition of *Democracy in Action* by Shauna Westcott raises some interesting points, not so much in the appointment of Frank Molteno, but in the consequences of "equal opportunity" and affirmative action. For instance, the discussion of promotions at UCT seems to imply that it would have been best to appoint a black woman (probably even better if she were disabled) to any post, irrespective of the merits of the candidate.

Which brings me to affirmative action. The discussions at Kempton Park emphasise individual rights, which I strongly support. Group rights have been regarded with suspicion (quite rightly), since they could be a means of continuing with the privileges of the old apartheid system. Yet affirmative action depends entirely on the concept of disadvantaged groups, even though we all know that it is no guarantee that because someone has a black or brown skin, he or she has been more disadvantaged than someone with a white skin. Statistically, on the basis of groups – yes – but on an individual basis – no.

Then there is the whole question of classification, which in the past had as a natural consequence the much-hated race classification boards. If you had an application for a job from someone who signed him or herself "Y Z Botha", how do you know whether they are black, brown or white? Or do you have a question marked "race" on your application form? And do you have a frothy if the applicant writes in "human"? Do you check up if the answer given is "black", in anticipation that this is an advantage? Are you going to check up on ancestors if you are not sure?

I don't have the answers, but I would hate to see one