

10 unionists detained during pamphlet drive

SHORTLY before the elections, eight Sigma shop stewards and two organisers from the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union were detained by police.

They were picked up by police on the outskirts of Eersterust, a township near Pretoria, where they had been distributing leaflets as part of FOSATU's campaign against the new constitution.

NAAWU's Lisa Makalela said they had stopped to give a lift to three UDF people and soon after this they were stopped by the riot squad.

'They ordered us out of the kombi, searched the men and then the kombi,' she said.

'The police then asked us to follow them to Eersterust police station,' she added.

had kept them there for two hours while they tried to locate a senior police officer.

'He told them that what we were doing was not illegal, but before they released us, the policemen demanded our pass books,' she said.

'Only myself and Martin Ndaba had our passes with us, the rest were then taken to Mamelodi police station,' Sister Makalela said.

She said she had then phoned the union lawyers who had contacted the police and informed them that the people should have been given 24-hours to produce their passes.

Everybody was released some four hours after they had been picked up.

In a press statement, NAAWU slammed the police action as 'clear intimidation'.



Sham democracy!

IN the peace and tranquility of the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town eighty-five so-called coloured and forty-five Indians this month were sworn in as members of parliament.

Far from their minds was the nightmare elections as they sat in their privileged seats and dreamt of their new fat salaries.

But the farcical elections will not be forgotten by the hundreds of thousands of workers who clearly showed their rejection of the government's new deal.

cent were recorded in the elections for the two new houses of parliament - the House of Delegates and the House of Representatives.

Significantly the lowest polls were recorded in the urban areas where workers would have voted.

It is clear that the overwhelming majority of workers heeded the Don't Vote call made by FOSATU and other progressive organisations.

The elections were a tremendous victory for worker unity.

Apart from the low polls

there were other aspects to the elections which turned them into a farce.

Indian and so-called coloured political parties in their eagerness to get elected revealed the depths of skulduggery they will stoop to.

Reports of people voting twice, of dead people voting and of intimidation of pensioners undermined any semblance of democracy which remained.

The government's hands are not exactly clean, either.

Shortly before the coloured elections the Security Police

detained over a hundred key activists from various progressive organisations.

Many of them have since been released but a significant number have been served with detention orders which will keep them in gaol until February next year.

Even a recent successful court attempt to have seven detainees released has been counteracted by the government - it merely drew up new detention orders.

On the election days themselves, the riot police attacked protesters with sjamboks and seized all banners.

They were assisted by members of the various political parties fighting the elections who obviously saw beating up protestors as part of their election campaigns.

The SABC also waged a ceaseless campaign calling on the so-called coloured and Indian voters to 'exercise their democratic right'. It was supported by almost every newspaper in the country.

However, the independent unions, community and other progressive organisations won the day.

'Only worker unity will safeguard SA's future'

WORKERS in the 'true spirit of resistance' had fought against racism in their factories and workshops, in every day life and in society, FOSATU's Les Kettleidas told a mass meeting of over 4 000 people held in the Eastern Cape recently.

The pre-election meeting was called by independent trade unions, community and church organisations to show their rejection of the government's new deal.

Continuing his speech, Brother Kettleidas said now that the independent trade union move-

ment had eradicated this evil, 'we see again attempts on another level to introduce apartheid.'

'This we reject, as it is only through the unity of workers, that our future will be safeguarded.'

'And we will be able to successfully fight for a society where all people will be equal and where no-one will be oppressed and exploited - a society free from racist and capitalist exploitation,' he said.

Brother Kettleidas called on the press to stop labelling anti-

election organisations as 'boycotters'.

'Name us what we are, the resistance, because that is what we are the resistance to capitalist and colonialist exploitation,' he said.

Brother Kettleidas said it was only when workers had a decisive say in the things that affected them that there could be a just society.

'And in order to do this, worker power should be based on effective organisation at the point of production - in the

factories, the shops, the farms and wherever workers are,' he said.

'Unless it is a democracy, in which representatives carry out the mandates and are accountable to the people, it is a false democracy and should be re-

Independent unions promise to continue struggle for free SA

IT is ridiculous for the Minister of Internal Affairs to call the results of the recent elections an 'acceptable' mandate to go ahead with the new constitution.

Particularly, when the low polls indicate exactly the opposite - the majority of eligible voters overwhelmingly reject the government's new deal.

This was said in a statement released shortly after the elections by the independent unions involved in the current unity talks.

The unions said that they rejected any attempts to blame the low polls on intimidation.

'The government swung the whole power of the state in support of the elections - weeks before it mounted a high-powered publicity campaign urging so-called coloureds and Indians to vote.'

'On top of this, it set out to harrass progressive organisations

jecting out of hand,' he added.

In conclusion, Brother Kettleidas said, 'Worker organisations will be crucial in developing a new and just nation and we await the day when we can ensure a democratic government of the people.'

campaigning for a boycott,' the statement said.

'This culminated in the despicable detention of over a hundred key activists from these organisations,' the statement added.

'But despite these efforts the government failed.'

'We believe that it is time that this racist government realised that apartheid in whatever guise is unacceptable to the majority of workers,' the unions said.

They said that in the independent unions, so called coloured, Indian, African and white workers had seen the benefits of unity and non-racialism.

'The real democracy practiced in our unions shows up the new constitution for what it really is - a farce,' the statement said.

'We will continue our struggle for a free and just South Africa for all workers,' it added.

The independent unions also called on the government to release all those it had detained.

