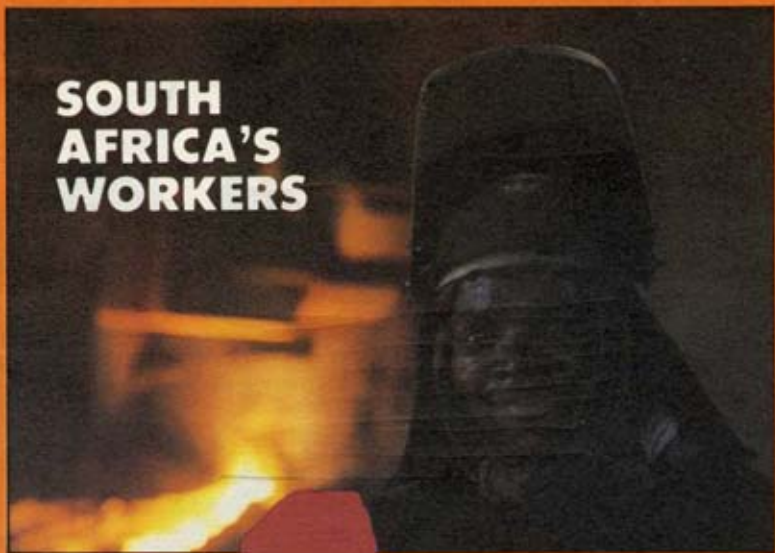


Vol. 23, No. 12



Ammo

**SOUTH
AFRICA'S
WORKERS**



**FIGHTING
TO END
APARTHEID**

UAW
AMMO

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LOOKING TO DESTROY APARTHEID

"South African workers are looking for the destruction of apartheid and all its racist structures — not cosmetic changes."

That was the blunt message that a just-released trade union leader from South Africa is bringing to American unionists.

The detention of Phiroshaw Camay and 20 other South African union leaders and activists sparked protests at the South African embassy in Washington D.C. and eventually led to the release of Camay and several others.

Camay, in the U.S. with several South African trade



PHOTO BY WEINBERG COURTESY IAWP

unionists for a conference on South Africa, explained what led up to November 14 — the day the South African police arrived at his home to detain him. And he painted a picture of a nation in turmoil: strikes, student protests and a stay-away movement that kept a million people away from work and school on two days in November.

There has been a major resurgence of liberation activity in the last two years: the growth of an independent black trade union movement and formation of two broad alliances to resist the South African government's new constitution which continues to deny a vote to Africans who make up 72 percent of the population.

In August less than 20 percent of the South African coloreds — the government's term for people of mixed ancestry — and less than 16 percent of the Indian (Asian) population voted in elections for what Camay described as a tri-racist parliament. The low turnout was a sharp rebuff to the South African government of Pieter Botha which represents the white minority.

Trade union organizing is going strong in South Africa. In 1979 the Nationalist government extended existing legislation to allow African workers the right to join trade associations. From that point black independent unions have concluded nearly 400 agreements affecting over 2 million workers.

And they've done that in the face of a serious recession, a decreasing world gold price, a weaker currency, and the enormous expenditures of the South African government to administer apartheid.

In the months preceding his arrest Camay said there were widespread protests over rent increases, inferior schooling for blacks, a legal strike by 80,000 miners that ended with 16 killings and 700 injured people, the arrest of over 400 student leaders, and the massive November stay-away or what we'd call a general strike.

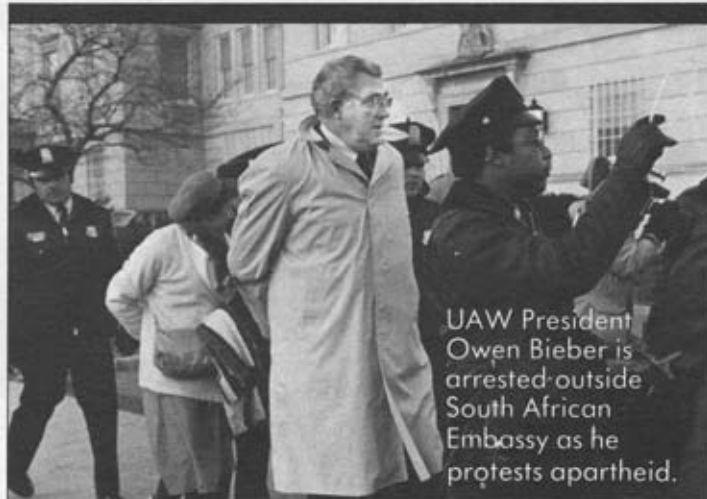


PHOTO BY RICK REINHARD

UAW President Owen Bieber is arrested outside South African Embassy as he protests apartheid.

WHY WE CARE

Why do we care what is happening in South Africa?

Why do UAW officials like our President Owen Bieber and Vice President Marc Stepp feel so strongly about apartheid and the persecution of labor leaders in South Africa that they carry the protests to the steps of the South African embassy?

Why do we care about the world's problems at all?

As he stood before the South African embassy January 15, Owen Bieber recalled Martin Luther King Jr.'s statement that "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Those words have a special meaning for the industrial workers of North America and Europe who have watched their employers become multinational employers. In that context international solidarity is not just an act of conscience but also in the long run an act of survival.

AFRICA



Overcrowding in a hospital in Soweto, black township outside Johannesburg.

Riots in Soweto in 1976 shook South Africa.

SOWETO RIOTS 1976

Pretoria

Johannesburg

SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE 1960

In 1960, South African police shot 67 men, women and children in Sharpeville.

Capetown was site of protests in 1980 over second-rate education for blacks.

CAPETOWN PROTESTS 1980

Nelson Mandela, likely leader of a majority-ruled South Africa, has been imprisoned on Robben Island near Capetown since 1964.

Capetown

SOUTH AFRICA IN TURMOIL

LESOTHO

East London

Durban

AUTO STRIKES

Port Elizabeth

Auto manufacturing center. VW, Ford, and GM have plants in Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage.

1984 Sharpeville protest over rent increases and police state tactics.



Poverty in Cross Roads area outside Capetown.

MY HOUSE WAS FIREBOMBED



Five months ago John Gomomo's house was fire-bombed. The South African auto union leader recently came to the United States to communicate with American trade unionists about the situation in South Africa.

Q. Tell us about yourself.

A. I was born in Uitenhage where I got my education at the Catholic schools. My parents were poor, and I had to start going to work. I've been working at Volkswagen since 1966. I'm a shop steward. In your terms, you would call me a local union president. I am also the vice president of the NAAWU, the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union.

Q. What led up to the firebombing of your house?

A. First, you must understand that there are VW security people who work hand-in-hand with the South African security police. Last July there was a series of disputes. VW found it could not control the situation, and thought I had too much influence over the strategy. At one point VW had to shut down the plant. One night about 3 a.m. I heard a "poot." The

house was burning. I could smell it was a petrobomb. It was clear to us that it was intimidation because of what was going on.

Q. Who do you think was behind it?

A. It was the South African security. It was not that much to me but for quite a long time my kids were restless. One would wake up at the slightest noise.

Q. Who does NAAWU represent?

A. We are involved in all of the motor plants. There is about a 7000 person workforce at VW in Uitenhage which is about 30 kilometers (19 miles) from the coastal city of Port Elizabeth where Ford and GM are located. Ford has a workforce of about 4,500. GM has a workforce of about 4,000. We also represent workers at Daimler-Benz, Leyland, Alfa-Romeo and Toyota. The only company where we represent less than 50 percent of the workers is Datsun-Nissan.

Q. Why are you in this country?

A. We want to talk with our counterparts about the problems we have encountered in negotiations to replace a contract which expired the 31st of December. We started out our negotiations with GM, Ford and VW on the 20th of November, but the attitude adopted by these three companies is very negative. Whatever we put forward has been rejected and they have stated bluntly that they have no money and that we have to extend the agreement until July 31, 1985. We realize the economic downturn in South Africa, but we asked them to give us a guarantee that from January 1, 1985 to July 31, 1985 there would be no further retrenchments (layoffs). In 1980 the concept of a livable wage was accepted in principle. But we still don't have it.

Q. When you talk about a livable wage, what are you seeking?

A. Now a livable wage would be 3.5 rand (\$1.61) an hour for an unskilled worker. The actual wage for unskilled workers is 2.75 rand (\$1.27) an hour. The minimum for a skilled worker is 4.22 rand (\$1.95) an hour.

Q. Are all the unskilled workers black?

A. That is right.

Q. Are there any blacks in skilled jobs?

A. There are a few—about 8 percent.

Q. What is the attitude of your labor federation—FOSATU—towards the move in this country to get companies to disinvest—pull their investments—out of South Africa?

A. FOSATU has a clear policy on that. FOSATU will oppose any new investment coming into South Africa if it accepts the conditions of oppression of its workers. But existing companies in South Africa should remain. Some of these factories have been in South Africa for many years. Our forefathers contributed their labor to build those factories. We believe we should build a strong labor movement in South Africa that can ultimately ensure the machines and buildings in South Africa will be retained for the benefit of all.

Q. What do you think about the Sullivan principles (which set standards for U.S. companies operating in South Africa)?

A. These multinationals should conform to the Sullivan principles. But I don't think any of us believe the Sullivan principles are going to bring a fundamental change in South Africa. They are only a stepping stone to us. Before our union was recognized, it helped us a lot to say to employers: "You have to agree to accept our trade union, if not, you are not complying with the Sullivan principles." These codes

need to be improved, but you cannot improve them without talking to the people inside South Africa.

Q. What is your attitude towards the new constitution which just went into effect? (Explanation: The new constitution of the white minority extended a restricted vote to Indians and so-called "colored" but not to blacks who are over 70 percent of the population).

A. The way the constitution will operate is that the whites will have 178 votes in their parliament, the Indians and so-called colored will have only 130 votes. Indian and so-called colored politicians elected under those conditions can speak until their faces turn blue, but they will never have success in that situation.

Q. What led to the arrests of the trade union officials and others a few months ago?

A. Student groups wanted us to support them in a stay-away (or two-day general strike in November) in support of detained leaders. In many areas, we did but after the stay-away the trade unions were put in front as if we had generated the whole thing. That led to the detention of several labor leaders including the president of FOSATU and four organizers of FOSATU affiliates.

Q. What did you think when you heard UAW Vice President Marc Stepp had been arrested in front of the South African embassy in protest to the jailing of the South African labor leaders?

A. My buddies all said, "John, now go to John Vorse Square and tell the South African police to arrest you in order to secure the release of your counterpart in the United States." And I said: "I'm struggling like everybody. But I'm not as bold as Marc Stepp is. I can fight against the system, but I will wait for them to come and arrest me. I will not go myself."

A DISGRACE TO THE HUMAN RACE

APARTHEID

The minority South African government's oppressive system of apartheid has repulsed the entire world.

It is not just Africans, or Third World countries or American blacks who are angered by South Africa's minority government's efforts to turn blacks in South Africa into virtual serfs.

It is not just Asians who look in dismay at the second-class citizenship afforded Indians who live in South Africa.

It is not just liberals, church leaders, and labor leaders in the U.S. and Europe.

It is really the entire civilized world. Even ultra-conservatives in the U.S. Congress recently called apartheid "a system that all Americans find repugnant."

What is the reality of apartheid?

VOTE DENIED TO 72% OF THE PEOPLE

Apartheid denies the right to vote to Africans who live in South Africa even though they comprise 72 percent of the population. Recently the South African government made a big show of elections in which people of mixed race and Indians were allowed to vote for segregated parliaments. But the colored and Indian populations boy-

JUMP TO PAGE 14

The bantustans are located on 13 percent of the poorest land in South Africa.

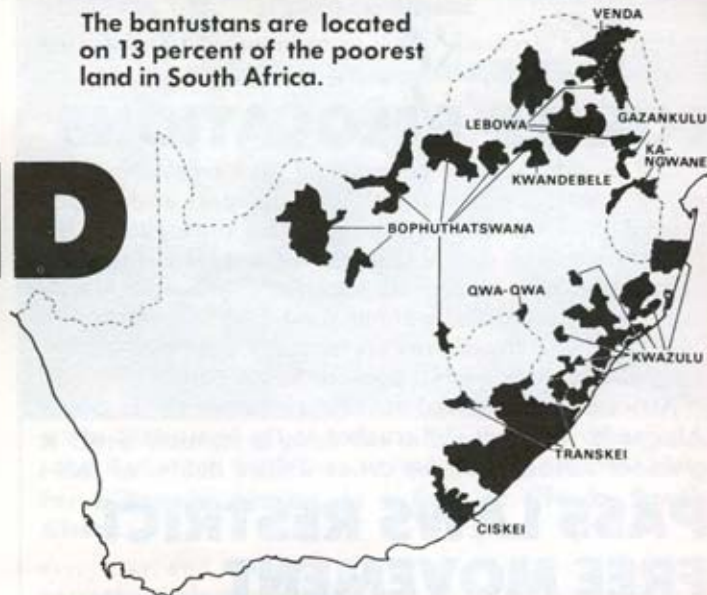


PHOTO BY MARK PETERS © BLACK STAR

Mrs. Mantha Kgantsi, 97-years-old, awaits the death blow to her home of 70 years. The South African government has ordered the people in the village of Mogopa to resettle in a bantustan. Before the government bulldozers arrive, the people of Mogopa tear down their own homes. Since 1960, the South African government has moved 2½ million Africans off their land into the so-called homelands.

JUMPED FROM PAGE 12

cotted these elections which were intended to whitewash apartheid without permitting any real change.

FORCED RELOCATIONS

The South African government has created ten so-called homelands or bantustans in the most arid 13 percent of the land in South Africa. And since 1960 it has forcibly removed over a tenth of the population to these homelands. With inadequate housing, poor hospital facilities, poor schools, and without good land to farm or jobs to go to, these bantustans are virtually detention camps. They also serve as a labor pool for South Africa.

Africans are bulldozed out of their homes by the South African government and trucked to the bantustans where often there are only tin huts or cardboard boxes to live in.

PASS LAWS RESTRICT FREE MOVEMENT

The South African government requires all blacks to carry passbooks with them at all times. This passbook contains identification, employment status, permits to enter white areas, taxes and family status. Under pass laws people can be arrested for visiting sick relatives at the wrong time or for picking up their children at the wrong time. And if they can't pay a fine, they end up in jail. South Africa has the highest prison population of any country in the world, and 40 percent are there for pass violations.

FAMILIES ARE SPLIT

Under apartheid's rules, workers from the bantustans cannot bring their families when they go to work in other places in South Africa. They either have to commute



AP/WORLD WIDE PHOTO

A clerk stamps a pass for a black man. The pass raid, in which police comb white suburbs looking for "illegal" blacks, is a fact of life in South Africa.

every day, and if this is not possible they have to live in a barracks while they work a year on a "permit." Africans born in urban areas have the right to remain there. But families sometimes get split up when one person is discovered to be illegally living in an urban area.

A POLICE STATE

Under laws passed by the minority South African government, people — white and black — can be held indefinitely without charge or trial. They have no right to contact an attorney, no right to even contact their families. Once arrested, South Africans face torture including electric shock, beatings, sleep deprivation and isolation. Outspoken union or political leaders can be "banned." If you're banned in South Africa, you are forbidden to be in the same room with more than one person — even members of your own family.

THE POWER OF SOUTH AFRICA'S WORKERS

South Africa's independent, black trade unions represent a powerful force for change. And they are determined that the changes will not be cosmetic but will end the system of apartheid.

There is a simple reason why the black trade unions have such potential: South Africa runs on black labor.

In the GM and Ford automobile plants in the seaport city of Port Elizabeth blacks run the assembly lines.

In the sweltering depths of the Witwatersrand gold mines, the shovelers and the drillers working at the face are black. On the vast farms that stretch to the horizon in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, blacks drive the tractors, tend the herds and mend the fences.

White South Africa needs black labor to do the work. But it tries to tightly control the job market. First the government has pushed millions of blacks into the bantustans, then it permits them to work in the cities for one year — but they cannot bring their families. Then they must return to the bantustans to re-register before beginning new one-year stints.



PHOTO BY WEINBERG COURTESY IAF

The other sources of black labor for the cities are the all-black townships (for example, Soweto outside Johannesburg) where every day millions of blacks line up for buses to go to work and return at day's end.

U.S. auto companies have operated in South Africa since the 1920s, but today they represent only about one-fifth of the South African auto industry.

The largest independent union in the auto industry is the National Automobile and Allied Workers Union. Representing 25,000 workers, its base is in the Port Elizabeth and Uitenhage area where Ford, General Motors and Volkswagen have plants.

Despite gains made by the independent trade unions, South African labor law is repressive. Virtually all strikes are illegal, picketing is banned, and it's a crime for unions to pay strike benefits for an illegal strike.

There is a long history of black labor struggle in South Africa from miners' strikes just after World War II to the police repression of the South African Congress of Trade Unions in the 1950s and early 1960s to the 1973 strike that sparked the renewal of the black union movement.

UAW PRESSES FORD ON RIGHTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS

Top UAW officials have carried our concerns about South Africa to the inner circles of America's largest corporations.

Following news stories that Ford Motor Company was considering shifting its South African car production to a company based in South Africa, UAW Vice President Stephen P. Yokich and UAW Region 1A Director Ernest Lofton set up a meeting with top Ford officials.

"We wanted to make sure that Ford understood the UAW's deep concern for the future rights of the Ford workers in South Africa," Yokich and Lofton said.

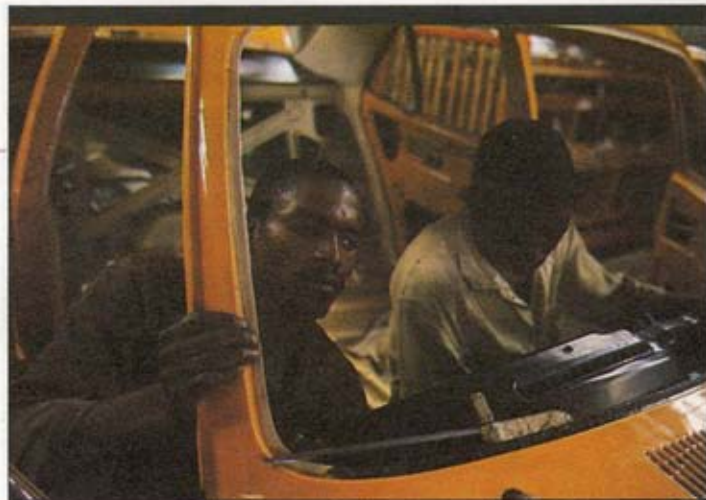
At the meeting were Peter Pestillo, Ford's vice president of Employee Relations, and L. Lindsey Halstead, Ford's vice president in charge of Asia-Pacific and Latin America Automotive Operations.

Yokich, director of the UAW's Ford Department, told the Ford officials that the UAW was not trying to get Ford to pull out of South Africa—a position the UAW has taken after consultation with South African independent trade unions.

However, the UAW International Executive Board has called for a ban on any further investments to either the public or private sectors of the South African economy.

Based on our talks with South African independent trade unionists, we were and are concerned that Ford's plans will result in a shift of production away from Port Elizabeth, where Ford currently bases its South African production, and which is an area of high unemployment.

"We are going to closely monitor this situation," said Yokich and Lofton. "And if we can help our Ford brothers and sisters in South Africa in any way, we will."



PHOTOS BY ALON REININGER © CONTACT

THE FIGHT FOR A LIVING WAGE.

South Africa's auto-workers struggle for a living wage.

And they fight to end apartheid — the system of passes, denial of voting rights, repression and dispossession that mars South Africa.

Photos show South African workers in Ford, GM and other auto plants.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Up until 1652 there were no whites in South Africa. That year the Dutch East India Company established a sheltered harbor on the Cape peninsula as a way station for ships enroute around Africa to India.

The company discouraged immigration after 1707. But by that time there already was a settlement of almost two thousand white men, women and children and a thousand slaves from northern parts of Africa.

As a result of the Napoleonic Wars, the British conquered the Cape in 1806 and British immigrants arrived. In 1836 Britain abolished slavery in its colonies. Angry Afrikaners — descendants of the first white settlers — began giant treks north to escape British control and eventually set up two republics: the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

In the mid-19th century the British took control of the eastern province of Natal and began importing people

from India as laborers and indentured servants.

Both the Afrikaners and the English settlers found themselves in constant conflict with the African tribes whose lands they were taking over. In 1899 British expansion led to the second Anglo-Boer War which ended in a British victory in 1902 and the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910.

Jan Christian Smuts, an Afrikaner who accepted the British victory, led the Union Party which governed South Africa until 1948 under policies that relegated blacks to second-class status. But that year an opposition party — the National Party — led by its right wing won a stunning upset and began implementing apartheid — literally apartness.

Behind the rise to power of the Nationalist Party was a secret society of Afrikaner elite called the Broederbond, founded in 1918 and dedicated to the ideology of white supremacy. In 1938 the Broederbond created a Nazi-type organization, the Ossew Brandwag (Ox-Wagon Brigade) set up along military lines.

While American soldiers were dying in Europe to stop Hitler and the Nazis, Pieter Botha's Nationalist Party in South Africa was cheering Hitler on.

When the United Afrikanderdom took over from the English-speaking people, they immediately began passing laws to implement apartheid.

In the nearly forty years since the National Party took over, the face of Africa has changed. One by one, former colonies have won their independence, and in 1980 in neighboring Rhodesia, a white minority government in Africa, ceded power in the country now known as Zimbabwe.

A simple look at the map of new Africa shows that apartheid — and all the fictions it lives by — is doomed. One day a new nation — probably named Azania — will exist in its place.

UAW BOARD URGES SANCTIONS

Calling apartheid a system of racial oppression that remains today as one of the darkest disgraces in any nation purporting to be a democracy," the UAW executive board in December called for six specific economic sanctions against the South African minority government. "External pressure in the form of economic sanctions would signal to Pretoria and the rest of the world that we do not tolerate the perpetuation of apartheid," the UAW stated.

The six sanctions are:

1. Imposing a ban on any further investments or loans to either public or private sectors of the South African economy.
2. Withdrawing all landing rights of South African aircraft in the United States and Canada.
3. Enforcing the 1977 U.N. arms embargo against South Africa.
4. Imposing a ban on the sale or transfer of all nuclear technology to South Africa from the United States.
5. Imposing a ban on the importation of South African "Krugerrands" (gold coins) which currently are being sold here.
6. Reimposing the Carter administration export controls on sales to the police and military which have been relaxed against South Africa by the Reagan administration.



TOLES CARTOON COURTESY THE BUFFALO NEWS

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WHAT IS THEIR FUTURE?



PHOTO BY TONY ARRIZA © BLACK STAR