

January 1981.

BLACK WORKERS' LEADER SEEKS SOLIDARITY IN U.S. TOUR

From mid-October to mid-December 1980 Tozamile Botha, community and strike leader exiled from South Africa in the spring, made his first visit to North America. Initially he addressed the Annual Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners at United Nations headquarters in New York. Another week was spent in London attending a UN sponsored seminar on western corporate involvement in South Africa and three weeks were spent touring Canada, from Montreal to Vancouver. With the cooperation of the African National Congress, Botha spent about seven weeks addressing trade union, campus, community and church groups in the U.S. in a tour co-ordinated by ACOA.

Coming on the heels of a year of major labor and community unrest in South Africa, Botha brought impressive credentials as leader of the two-month long strike at Ford Motor Company's Port Elizabeth plant. This action helped initiate the wave of strikes in South Africa.

As president of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (Pebco) he organized meetings of up to 10,000 residents which offered a defiant challenge to South Africa's racist apartheid system. Whether in testifying before Congress, meeting with the leadership of the United Auto Workers (UAW), or addressing universities where trustees have resisted divestment, Botha brought a clear message of the sacrifices being made by the people of South Africa for their liberation, a message uncompromised by so-called "signs of change" and corporate "codes of conduct". He called upon his audiences to demonstrate their solidarity concretely in any way they could.

A brief summary of the tour, highlighting many of the places visited follows.

Labor

Botha began his tour in New York with a meeting sponsored by the local Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU) built on less than a weeks notice. ACOA sponsored a labor press briefing where Botha also met with the president of District 1199, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, Leon Davis. The briefing generated articles in many trade union publications such as the hospital workers magazine, District 65, UAW's paper, and District Council 1707 AFSCME paper. The president of the Fur, Leather & Machine Workers Joint Board (FLM), Henry Foner, arranged for Botha to address FLM workers at a leather tannery in Newark, N.J. and a FLM construction local meeting in New York. The FLM paper, Tempo covered the visits.

In Washington, he met with the staff of the International Affairs Department of the UAW. The national paper of the American Federation of State County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) covered his visit to their headquarters in a meeting with trade unionists arranged by TransAfrica. Near

Boston he met with local trade unionists at UAW plant offices in Framingham, Massachusetts, and in Chicago he met with trade unionists at CBTU meeting. In Hartford the Connecticut Anti-Apartheid Committee organized a reception for Tozamile sponsored by numerous community and trade union groups, including UAW Region 9A; District 1199C; and IAM Local 1736.

In Los Angeles he addressed members of the International Association of Machinists (Local 727), met other trade unionists at UAW Local 216's offices, and addressed members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) arranged by the local chapter of the National Black Communication Workers Coalition.

In San Francisco, his major speech, held at the Service Employees International (SEIU) hall, was endorsed by SEIU locals 250 & 723; International Longshoreman and Warehouseman's Union (ILWU); Local 10 and the Bay Area CBTU. He met with UAW officials at their plant office in Fremont, California, ILWU and state AFL-CIO officials as well.

In Detroit, he met with many of the national staff of the UAW at Solidarity House, including the research department, was interviewed by Solidarity, the national paper, met Horace Sheffield, special assistant to Douglas Fraser and national secretary of the CBTU and Marc Stepp, UAW Vice-President and Chrysler department director. Stepp, who had just returned from a trip to South Africa, hosted a reception for Botha.

Congress

Tozamile was invited in mid-November to address a hearing of the House of Representatives International Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, chaired by Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.). Botha was closely examined by the subcommittee concerning his opposition to the "Sullivan Principles" code of conduct for workplace reforms in South Africa. A briefing for Congressional aides was arranged by Stephen Weissman of the Africa Subcommittee staff and Botha also met with Senator Paul Tsongas (D-MA), who chairs the ad hoc Congressional monitoring group on South Africa. The Washington Office on Africa arranged a session for church and other national organization representatives based in the Capitol to meet with Botha.

Other Organizations

A number of other organizational forums introduced Botha to different constituencies. In Philadelphia, he met with national staff of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the New York AFSC office hosted a forum on labor and South Africa with Botha featured. A special meeting was organized at the African Studies Association annual conference in Philadelphia for Tozamile. In New York, he spoke before a meeting held in the Interchurch Center organized by the Africa office, National Council of Churches and addressed an African Forum at Phelps-Stokes Fund offices.

Community meetings were sponsored in a good number of cities for Botha. The Black United Front held a fund-raising reception in Brooklyn, N.Y. Labor Notes (labor activists newsletter) hosted a session at a Methodist church in Detroit; he attended a church conference on racism in Los Angeles; southern Africa support groups hosted meetings in Chicago, Baltimore, Boston and Poughkeepsie (N.Y.).

Colleges and Universities

Anti-Apartheid and divestment groups, African studies and black student unions sponsored forums for Tozamile at a large number of universities. His visit did much to extend the reach of divestment activities, (the issue is being taken up where it has never been raised before), and helped rejuvenate the forces where battle continues. Audiences up to 500 in a number of places came out to hear Botha. And frequently classes, meetings with administration officials and similar functions were arranged. His December visit to the West Coast unfortunately prevented many engagements from being arranged.

Colleges visited included Boston University, City College (CUNY), Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Hampshire, Harvard, Howard, Los Angeles Valley College, Northwestern, Princeton, State University of New York (Binghamton and NewPaltz) Suffolk University, Swarthmore, Temple, the Universities of Illinois (Chicago Circle & Campaign-Urbana) Massachusetts (Amherst) Rochester, Texas (Austin), Virginia (Charlottesville), Vassar Washington State (Pullman), Western Michigan (Kalamazoo) and Williams College.

Media

Aside from the labor publications noted, Botha was interviewed in a number of publications worth noting, including the San Francisco Chronicle, the Detroit News and the Chicago Defender. Africa Report and Southern Africa magazine carried interviews as well as The Black Scholar, The Guardian and Intercontinental Press. Labor News, a publication of Amnesty International USA on trade union human rights violations, carried an extensive interview which reaches hundreds of unions. Local papers, campus publications and television interviews were arranged in virtually every place visited, including radio interviews with the Inner City Broadcasting Network, National Black Network and United Nations radio (broadcast inside South Africa). For a feature article on labor unrest in South Africa Business Week spoke to Botha on tour and quoted him.

Just before Christmas as he departed for Africa, I believe Tozamile left with the knowledge that his tour had brought the message of the liberation struggle in South Africa to many thousands of Americans, helping build the base for new actions to sever the links between the US and apartheid.

Paul Irish
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198 Broadway
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Labor Leader Visits S.F.

A Black South African's Plea

Tozamile Botha, dressed in a brass-buttoned blazer, held a press conference in a San Francisco union hall yesterday that would have sent him to jail in his home country, the Republic of South Africa.

Botha, 32, a former labor leader at a South African Ford plant, has suffered the peculiar execution of his public presence the South African government calls "banning."

He cannot be quoted in the newspaper there, nor meet with any group, nor leave his house after sundown, even for a carton of milk.

Certain opinions are also forbidden. Yesterday, in San Francisco, Botha called for the "isolation" of South Africa, and the withdrawal of United States-based corporations from the country — ideas whose mere expression is illegal in the white-ruled nation at Africa's southern tip.

He claimed that American corporations, despite their reputation for relative liberalism in the archaic world of South African race relations, contribute to, and benefit from, the apartheid system — that nation's legally enforced system of racial segregation.

"They benefit from the cheap labor system," he said. Wages of blacks at the Ford plant in Port Elizabeth (South Africa's Detroit) are only a fifth of the white workers', he said.

To maintain the disparity, labor organizers are questioned and intimidated by police, and strikers are often "deported" to the reservation-like "Bantustans," and stripped of their rights to work in the cities.

"Their claim is that blacks will starve if they pull out of South Africa. But the blacks are doing all the menial jobs," he said. "We are prepared to suffer — it is the penal-



TOZAMILE BOTHA

'We are prepared to suffer'

ty we are prepared to pay for some meaningful change."

"People are becoming aware of their labor power," said Botha, referring to the wave of strikes that disrupted several multinational factories last August. "They see freedom coming nearer."

He became politically active while studying law at a black South African university. Later, as a teacher, he helped raise money for students arrested during protests in the late seventies over the forced teaching of Afrikaans, the Dutch-based language of the dominant white group.

At Ford, he worked as an industrial engineer-trainee, while leading a community organization, the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization. He resigned when Ford told him to choose between the civic organization and his job. He was re-hired three days later, after 700 black workers walked out in his support.

A second, less successful strike

of the newly organized black union followed. Workers returned to work after 2½ months, following the intervention of the American consul-general, without satisfaction of their demands for equal pay for equal work, promotions, and desegregated facilities.

The day after the strike ended last winter, Botha was "banned" by security police, without trial. Last May, Botha, a short, barrel-chested man, slipped into exile over the border to Lesotho, a black-controlled nation that exists like an island within South Africa's borders.

Lesotho also hosts other exiled South Africans who belong to the African National Congress, a political organization that took responsibility this spring for the spectacular bombing of a synthetic fuel plant.

Only a combination of tactics — boycotts, strikes, sabotage and guerrilla warfare — will produce profound change in South Africa, Botha said.

He has been touring Canada and the United States, asking unions to make sure their pension funds are not invested in corporations investing in South Africa.

According to U.S. government statistics, American corporations have invested more than \$2 billion in the South African economy and employ about 25,000 workers.

Despite what companies call "the hassle factor" of strikes, international disapproval, and the possibility of violent revolution, they are lured by the 20 percent overall rate of return on investment.

The South African economy has proved to be remarkably strong in the present recession because of its supplies of strategic minerals and the buoying effect of rising gold prices on this major gold producer.

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AFSCME Hosts South African Trade Union Leader

AFSCME's International Executive Board last month passed resolutions that expressed AFSCME solidarity with the courageous public workers of Poland and South Africa.

Public employees in both these countries walked out on strike over the summer. Both were fighting for dignity on the job—and the fundamental right to organize in free, independent trade unions.

The Polish workers made headlines the world over.

But the struggles of South African workers have drawn precious little media attention, especially in the United States.

Yet the South African workers' story—like the Polish workers' story—needs to be told, and last month the International helped tell it by hosting a leading South African trade unionist. His story follows.

Washington, D.C.—He has the same last name as his nation's prime minister, but exiled South African trade unionist Thozamile Botha has little else in common with the head of his country's racist government.

Botha spoke last month at AFSCME's International headquarters. He's currently on a U.S. speaking tour that will include testimony on South Africa before a congressional committee.

Botha was a central figure in last year's fight for decent working conditions for non-whites at Ford Motor Company's South African subsidiary. At one point, he was fired for political activity, but a protest strike by 700 black workers won his job back.

South Africa government officials later had Botha "banned"—a peculiar South Africa procedure that makes it illegal for a person to hold a job, meet with more than one person, be mentioned in the press or



leave home evenings, holidays or weekends.

Facing even stiffer penalties earlier this year, Botha fled South Africa.

AFSCME's International Convention last June noted in a resolution that U.S. investments in South Africa have bolstered the current *apartheid*—segregation—regime. Botha couldn't agree more after his experience at Ford.

"I was one of only two blacks out of 22 engineering trainees, and our wages were just 25 percent of the whites' wages," says Botha. "Many other jobs are totally closed off to blacks, and many facilities at the plant are still segregated."

"American workers can best help us by getting U.S. companies to stop doing business with South Africa," Botha notes. "Those dollars only strengthen what we're fighting against."

Joint Board hosts a South African labor leader

Thozamile Botha, who led over 500 black workers on strike at Ford Motor's plant in Port Elizabeth, South Africa last year, was guest speaker at a meeting of the FLM Joint Board's Steel Equipment Section and a plant meeting of the Ocean Leather tannery in Newark in mid-October.

Brother Botha's visit to this country was sponsored by the American Committee on Africa, which has spearheaded the campaign to eliminate U.S. support for the racist apartheid government of South Africa. The FLM Joint Board has cooperated with both the committee and the campaign by removing the Union, benefit and pensions funds from banks that lend money to the apartheid regime.

Botha, who had been elected president of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association, was given an ultimatum by the Ford management to stop his political activities or lose his job. When news of his firing spread among black workers the plant the same day, all the downed tools and struck. He was reinstated with full back pay within three days.

Following this, Botha led the workers in a two-month strike for equal pay and treatment, which forced management to rescind their discriminatory regulations and reinstate the 500 workers with seniority—an important victory for the black workers.

The Steel Equipment Section meeting was held at the Union Office on October 15 to draw up demands for its contract renewal at the end of the year. Botha was introduced by Business Agent Benjamin Parnes and spoke of his experiences and answered questions.

Two days later, Botha spoke to the Ocean Leather workers at a meeting in the street outside the plant during a break arranged with the company.

At both meetings, the workers expressed interest in the struggles conducted by South African workers for both trade union and human rights, and in the role of U.S. corporations and banks in supporting apartheid.



Joint Board President Benjamin Parnes introduces Thozamile Botha at the Steel Equipment Section meeting in New York. Center, he speaks to the workers of Ocean Leather in the street outside the tannery. At bottom, he speaks to an FLM group, he poses with Ocean's shop leadership (L. to r.) Walter Wright, Woodrow Tindall, James Martin, Business Agent Joseph McCoy, Botha, Thomas Gallabaw, Charlie Good, and Edna Gibe.

DECEMBER 1980

At top, South African labor leader Thozamile Botha addresses the United Mechanics 100's Steel Equipment Section meeting in New York. Center, he speaks to the workers of Ocean Leather in the street outside the tannery. At bottom, he speaks to an FLM group, he poses with Ocean's shop leadership (L. to r.) Walter Wright, Woodrow Tindall, James Martin, Business Agent Joseph McCoy, Botha, Thomas Gallabaw, Charlie Good, and Edna Gibe.

South African worker seeks U.S. support

Anti-apartheid leader tours America; draws bleak picture of his homeland

To some, social conditions under apartheid in South Africa sound so oppressive and so insane that it is difficult to believe they could exist in this age. Apartheid is so alien to the American experience that some are able to reconcile it in their own minds as either the result of cultural development that we cannot understand, or a perverse accident of colliding societies.

Others may put their minds at ease by thinking that it can't possibly be as bad as they have heard.



Tozamile Botha

Meet Tozamile Botha. This young South African, in the United States to spread the truth about apartheid and generate support for the cause of freedom in his homeland, tells a shattering story.

Botha is a man in exile; "banned" by the South African authorities because he tried to do something about apartheid. Paul Irish, associate director of the American Committee on Africa, met Botha last summer in the Black state of Lesotho and, after hearing his story, worked to bring him to this country to address a symposium at the United Nations.

Botha came to prominence in 1979 as president of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO). That group, whose meetings attracted as many as 10,000 persons in protest of apartheid, spearheaded a mass movement of black resistance to white minority rule in the industrial eastern Cape region of South Africa.

Botha was employed at the Ford Motor Company plant in Port Elizabeth where his political activities got him into trouble with white authorities. In October 1979, Ford management issued an ultimatum for Botha to stop his political activities or lose his job. When news of the firing spread among black workers at the plant, all 700 of them put down their tools and struck. Three days later, Botha was reinstated with full back pay.

In the following weeks, black workers were harassed and some were demoted. Led by Botha, they went on strike with a series of demands for equal pay and treatment. Seeking to break the strike, Ford "dismissed" the strikers and their demands, but said any who came back would be rehired without seniority. More than 500 workers stayed off the job for two months. Ford was forced to rescind its action, reinstate the workers with seniority and meet most of the demands last January.

The Ford episode was seen throughout South Africa as an important victory for Black workers. The self-confidence generated was a key factor in initiating a new wave of strikes, student boycotts and demonstrations that are challenging the white minority regime in South Africa.

The Ford episode was seen throughout South Africa as an important victory for Black workers. The self-confidence generated was a key factor in initiating a new wave of strikes, student boycotts and demonstrations that are challenging the white minority regime in South Africa.

During the Ford strike, Botha was also leading PEBCO actions opposing the

forced removal of black residents from Walmer township to a location far outside Port Elizabeth. The South African police jailed Botha and other PEBCO leaders as plans were being made for a citywide strike in protest of the Walmer eviction. Botha was held in jail for seven weeks without being charged under South Africa's draconian "security" laws. On release, he was issued "banning" orders (a form of house arrest), restricting him from work, public gatherings, and meetings with more than one person.

In May, Botha escaped to Lesotho, where he continued his organizing work. Strikes continued to spread in auto plants near Port Elizabeth, and Botha remained in close touch with black strike leaders at Volkswagen.

Botha's cause is a labor cause. Although apartheid touches the lives of Blacks in South Africa in every respect, it is most felt in the workplace. For instance, Botha tells of his early training as an industrial engineer at Ford: He began training with a white man at exactly the same time, at only about one-fifth of the white man's pay. Six months later, that white worker was Botha's supervisor.

Trade unions in South Africa, while legal, are organized and registered with the government along racial lines — African (Black), "Coloured" (mixed race), Indian and white — as is everything in South Africa. Most of the African unions have refused to register with the government, making it illegal for them to, among other things, raise the outside funds that are often needed to finance strikes. Some opportunistic blacks, says Botha, have affiliated with white-dominated unions and have been "bought out by the government," undermining the efforts of the black majority.

In his travels throughout the United States, Botha is making special appeals to the labor movement. In addition to financial support — which can be put into useful channels by the American Committee on Africa — Botha is asking that unions use their political muscle to stop banks and other financial institutions from extending the credit that South Africa needs to survive. He is also urging the appropriate unions to refuse to load machine parts and other exported goods destined for South Africa.



ACOA Director George Houser joins Botha at labor press conference.

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The American Committee on Africa, the agency that sponsored Tozamile Botha's trip to the United States, is another of the small but important agencies whose employees are a part of District Council 1707 and Local 107. Its work is to increase public awareness of the problems faced by the people of Africa and to work against oppressive regimes, particularly in Southern Africa.

Among its campaigns have been the discouragement of U.S. economic involvement in South Africa, a campaign against South African participation in the Olympics, and the successful "We Say No to Apartheid" drive in which artists, writers and entertainers were urged not to visit South Africa or allow their works to be used there.

ACOA publishes a quarterly newsletter, ACOA Action News, and maintains an extensive publications list.

Ena Fox is the chapter chairperson at ACOA, whose headquarters is on lower Broadway in Manhattan.

Botha—South African leader talks about movement

By DAN LABOTZ

Part one

Waves of strikes, student boycotts and demonstrations swept South Africa last summer, challenging the racist apartheid society and the white minority ruling class.

Tessie Botha, now in exile, was one of the leaders of that movement, and THE DEFENDER had the opportunity to interview him when he was in Chicago as part of a national tour organized by the American Committee on Africa (ACA) in cooperation with the banned African National Congress.

The tour began October 10, 1969 when Botha spoke before the U.N. at the invitation of the U.N. Special Committee Against Apartheid on the annual day in Solidarity with South African Prisoners.

Tessie Botha was one of the organizers and leaders of the community and labor protests.

The Fort Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO) grew out of those protests and became the leading force in mass resistance to white minority rule. PEBCO meetings often attracted as many as 10,000 and untied Blacks, "coloured" (or mixed race), and Indian residents in resistance to apartheid.

But at the center of the struggle last summer were the industrial workers.

● In Durban 5,000 textile workers went out on strike because of low wages and managements opposition to collective bargaining.

● In Clermont 2,500 textile workers walked out demanding a 25 percent pay increase.

● In Ekurhuleni at Bely Precision Castings 55 black workers were arrested for striking illegally.

● In Cape Town about 200 black and "coloured" workers

walked out of meat packing plants in support of 80 black workers who had been on strike for two weeks at Table Bay Cold Storage. The employers locked out 10,000 workers in response.

● In Secunda, 120 miles south of Johannesburg, there was rioting among some 12,000 black construction workers at two synthetic oil plants of the South African Coal, Oil and Gas Corporation.

But if the workers were in the forefront of the social movement, the autoworkers were in the forefront of the labor movement. There were strikes at:

● the Goodyear Tire plant at Uitenhage where workers demanded a raise in the base pay of \$3.90 an hour—the police turned gas, clubs and dogs on them.

● Volkswagen where 3,500 workers won a raise from \$1.53 to \$1.80 an hour for unskilled workers and from \$3.20 to \$4.28 for skilled workers. They later won about \$1.94 an hour as the base pay.

● General Motors where workers struck for similar demands. And finally there was a series

(Cont. from page 8)

However, when the management reinstated the black workers, racist white workers protested, demanding that they be paid double for the days that they had worked while the Blacks were on strike. "And the white workers made insulting statements, saying that blacks were smelly, and that they could not behave themselves in the cafeteria, and therefore the whites demanded segregation. They said their lives were in danger among anti-government elements."

of strikes at Ford Motor Company, and Toxamile Botha was at the head of those struggles, and we asked him how he came to be the leader and what the issues were.

"I was born in Port Elizabeth in 1949," said Botha, "and I studied in Port Elizabeth up to matric, and then went to Fort Hare University."

"I spent two years there in 1975 and 1976. Then in 1976 there was a student strike in protest against Bantu education and in solidarity with the Soweto uprising."

"After that for two years I was teaching."

"But in 1977 I was arrested and charged for incitement to public violence. I was acquitted in court."

"Then in 1979 I started at Ford Motor Company as an industrial engineer trainee and remained there until the end of October 1979 when the strike started."

Botha's job at Ford corresponded with the growth of protests in Port Elizabeth about housing and other living conditions. Out of these protests grew the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization (PEBCO).

"PEBCO was formed in September of 1979. Some of the reasons for its formation were the

Thereupon the black workers demanded the retraction of racist remarks by one of the white workers, and his transfer to another plant. And black workers went on to draw up other demands regarding long-standing grievances: the scrapping of job reservation within the plant, an end to segregation, equal pay for equal work, integration of training, promotion of blacks to senior positions, and so on. Management was given 14 days to look into the demands, or a strike would be called. Fourteen days passed.

fight against exorbitant rentals, the high bus fares, the mass removal of people from one slum to another against their will, the enforcement of Bantustan citizenship on the black people, the poor craftsmanship of the houses, and we were demanding accommodations for the old aged people," said Botha.

"I was elected the President of PEBCO when it was formed," said Botha.

As a result of his involvement with PEBCO, his employer, Ford Motor Company, gave Botha an ultimatum. They told him: choose between Ford and PEBCO. Botha chose PEBCO. Ford

fired him.

"I left the plant and the following day more than 700 workers walked out and demanded that I should be brought back to address them on the reasons for my resignation," said Botha.

Management refused to allow Botha back to speak, and the workers stayed on strike. "On the third day," said Botha, "management called me and asked me to address the workers and also to come back to work. Then we were all reinstated with three days pay."

(Cont. on Page 24)

The Black workers struck and held an in-plant meeting demanding to be paid at once. Management called the police who arrived in 10 vans and four truck loads, riot-equipped. Management said it would pay the workers in two days, but made it clear the workers had been fired.

The black workers from Ford were soon joined by solidarity strikes as 500 walked out at a Ford engine plant, 600 struck at S.A. Adamas, 1,200 struck at General Tire, and then all the workers in the township resolved not to go back to work until the demands were met. "Some of those workers went back," says Botha, "but the Ford workers remained on strike."

The black workers at Ford called upon the United Auto Workers (not related to the United Auto Workers union in the United States) to negotiate with management, but the union refused, saying the strike was political.

Ford attempted to break the strike by hiring "coloured" (mixed race) workers to scab on the striking black workers. "PEBCO resolved that if ORD did not reinstate the black workers, we would organize a national boycott, would boycott all white owned shops, would boycott all government liquor outlets, and

Botha:

'American corps investing in South Africa exploit workers'

By DAN LABOTZ

last in series

Tessie Botha, leader of the community and labor struggles in Port Elizabeth last summer against the white racist regime in South Africa, told THE DEFENDER that American corporations investing in South Africa only exploit the workers, they do not improve the racial situation.

Some American liberals have argued that American corporations bring an enlightened view of black-white relations to backward South Africa, but says Botha, "That is an excuse to continue the perpetuation of the exploitation of the black people in South Africa."

"If these companies are interested or concerned about the plight of the Blacks in South Africa, why do they close their companies here in the United States when business goes bad, like in 1971 when Ford closed a company in New Jersey, and General Motors closed a plant here, only to expand their business in South Africa under the cheap labor system?"

Says Botha, "If they are concerned about black people in South Africa why not pay them the same wages in South Africa as they pay workers here? Why such a disparity. Workers in South Africa are getting less than \$2.00 an hour." Auto workers in the United States average better than \$10 an hour.

"And these corporations are

building cars for the military and the police," says Botha. And these military and police cars are used to suppress the movement for liberation in South Africa.

Trade unions in this country are among the few integrated organizations and social institutions—however far they may be from any ideal of racial equality. But in South Africa, according to Tessie Botha, the unions are as racially divided as the society itself. "In South Africa," said Botha, "the unions are divided on a racial basis. White, Black, 'coloured' and Indians all have separate trade unions."

"And there is no case where whites have expressed solidarity with striking Blacks," according to Botha. "They are always opposed to striking Blacks, feeling that the Blacks are threatening the privileges of white."

Americans, from both right and left, have concerns about the influence of Russia in South Africa. From the right an increasingly cold war mentality, now all questions as a battle between what's called communism and what's called the free world (though there's some questions about whether either side deserves the names they claim). And from the left, there is fear of apartheid being replaced by a Stalinist police state. Tessie Botha is as-

sociated with the African National Congress (ANC) which arranged his tour in conjunction with the American Committee on Africa (ACA). The ANC has for decades been linked to the pro-Russian Communist Party of South Africa. THE DEFENDER asked Botha about this issue.

"The liberation movement, the African National Congress, has a program of action," said Botha. "South Africa belongs to all who live in it Black and White, and no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all of the people. We are fighting for the distribution of the lands to all those who work the lands. We want free education, free medical care, and every man a culture and language to be respected. Without caring we're socialist or communist, these are the things we are fighting for,

and a parma can decide from that."

Regarding material and military assistance from the Soviet Union, Botha said, "The ANC gets support, without strings attached from anybody who is concerned about the oppressed majority in South Africa. The ANC doesn't discriminate, it gets support from anybody. Sweden, Norway and Holland help materially. And so does the Soviet Union."

We asked Botha if there were anything he would want to say as a South African black man to Blacks in America. Here is what he told us:

"The struggle that we are engaged in South Africa is not only a South African struggle. When we are liberated, we will not stop fighting, but we shall go on to fight against racism and oppression wherever they exist in the

world. "Right now most attention is focused on South Africa. South Africa is the only country where racism is institutionalized."

"I know racism is also rife here. Sometimes in a very subtle way, sometimes more overt, but it needs those that are oppressed to fight against this racism. We can only be liberated when we ourselves fight against the oppressive system."

"It is the system that has to be fought," says Botha, "not individuals. As long as this system obtains, people will suffer."

"Today the workers, the producers of the wealth of this country are at the bottom of the pyramid, carrying all of the people that enjoy the wealth of this country on their shoulders. We are saying, workers of the world must unite and fight against exploitation."

Chicago Defender

CHICAGO'S DAILY PICTURE NEWSPAPER

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1969

Arrested and 'Banned,' South African Escapes

During November and December 1979, black workers at the Port Elizabeth Ford Motor Plant went on strike demanding higher wages.

Seeking to break the strike, Ford dismissed the strikers, but said they would rehire any who came back — without seniority. Over 500 workers stayed out two months. Ford rescinded its action, reinstated the workers and met their demands in January 1980.

One member of the Workers' Committee at the plant was Tozamide BOTHA, also leader of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Association (PEBCO). During the unrest, he and two others, Mono BADELA and Phalo Joseph TSHUME, were arrested

as he prepared to address a strikers' meeting to discuss proposals put forward by Ford. After his release, they were subsequently "banned" from any future political activity. Amnesty International adopted them as "prisoners of conscience."

Rather than face the harsh restrictions of a banning order, Botha escaped to Lesotho in early May. The United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid invited him to address their annual "Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners" in October.

During this visit to the United States, Botha was interviewed by AIUSA in its national office.

AIUSA: Would you describe your arrest?

BOTHA: I was first arrested under the general law that provides for detention without trial for 14 days. Then I was transferred under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act into indefinite detention without trial.

AIUSA: What exactly happened during your arrest?

BOTHA: I was going to a meeting in connection with the dismantled

Walmer township. We [Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization—PEBCO members] had earlier decided to stage a demonstration on Monday, 14 January. That was the day that the Ford management was to unconditionally reinstate workers...

When I got to the township, the manager of the hall refused me the key, saying that police had threatened him with jail.

As I was trying to persuade him, two



Tozamide Botha

cars drove up and parked bumper to bumper with my car. When I went out, four chaps got out, and we saw the head of the security police....

Immediately after I introduced myself he turned me around and searched me. Then he said, "Handcuff him."
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Interview

Arrested and 'Banned,' South African Escapes

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Within seconds, there were 10 Landrovers fully loaded with police in camouflage uniforms. They were shooting before I was even taken into the car.

The other chaps I was with were taken in one car and I was put in another. We were driven to the Walmer township police station.

I complained that the handcuffs hurt me as my wrists were beginning to swell....

AIUSA: Were these handcuffs the kind where if you struggle, they get tight?

BOTHA: Yes... Later on, after hours, they took me to a fire station and cut them off with shears....

From there they took me on a freeway with five cars following. On the freeway, the guard I was sitting next to opened the door and tried to push me out. The car was going real fast. I grabbed him, so that if I fell out, he would too....

We arrived at the PEBCO offices. The police searched the office and took many of our magazines.

Then they took me to my home. When we got there, a meeting was going on, a PEBCO branch meeting. Earlier in the meeting it had been announced that we had been arrested. My wife had collapsed and was unconscious....

When we came in, the police started beating everybody. People ran out of the house. They stayed about 30 minutes, beating people, and then we left. They left my wife in that state.

They took me to the Brighton police station, and then on to Jaffrey's Bay, about 90 kilometers [54 miles] from Port Elizabeth. They took all my clothes and left me naked in the cell with two blankets.

I stayed there for two days.

AIUSA: Did they give you any food?

BOTHA: They gave me porridge with worms. I set all the worms on the plate. When the station commander came, I showed him the worms and said I couldn't eat the porridge....

After two days they came and started asking me questions. After the second week, they took me to SAMLA.

AIUSA: Is that a police station?

BOTHA: It's in Port Elizabeth — the notorious place where Steve Biko [the former leader of the Black Consciousness movement, who died in torture] was shackled.

They took me to the "truth room." I started talking them about PEBCO. They said that PEBCO organized the Ford strike, and that PEBCO was a front for the African National Congress [banned].

They wanted to know "who are the contacts?" "Whom did we meet?" They kept me there for five days and nights without sleeping.

AIUSA: Did they beat you?

BOTHA: No. Then they took me back to Jaffrey's Bay, where I was kept for 48 days.

Upon my release on 28 February, they took me to SAMLA and gave me the banning order. I could not be seen near or on any university premises or near any factories. I couldn't receive visitors at home. I couldn't go out from 6 p.m. until 6 a.m., on weekends, or on holidays. They even said my wife couldn't see friends at home. Of course, there was no way I could earn a living, so I started selling vegetables....

AIUSA: While you were still in prison did they allow anyone to visit you?

BOTHA: Nobody knew where I was. They didn't even change my clothes. My wife sent me clothes, but they kept my clothes at the SAMLA building.

AIUSA: Were the clothes ever returned?

BOTHA: When I was released.

AIUSA: And you never saw anyone except the prison officials during this whole time?

BOTHA: There was no way that I could see anybody.

AIUSA: How did the guards treat you? Were they hostile?

BOTHA: They were not kind at all. They saw me as a terrorist. That was their attitude.

AIUSA: Were you ever taken before a judge during this time?

BOTHA: No.

AIUSA: Or a court?

BOTHA: No.

AIUSA: So they released you under banning orders. How long before you left South Africa?

BOTHA: I stayed until the beginning of May. The police visited me regularly. Every Friday, they'd come for about 30 minutes and ask me questions....

On Friday, they came and said, "You have met with certain people of the South African Christian Council — who?" And they named incidents when I had met with people, in contravention of the banning order.

I denied everything. They said to show up at SAMLA on that coming Monday.

I knew that they would charge me, so I decided then to go.

On Saturday night, my friends hired a car. I was dropped off at the Transkei and crossed into Lesotho. They, of course, were arrested when they returned. My wife and her brother were arrested, too, and seriously injured.

My wife was arrested at 8 p.m. Saturday night. They released her the next day. My brother-in-law was held for three days.

AIUSA: Where were they taken?

BOTHA: To the SAMLA building.

AIUSA: And your wife then left South Africa for Lesotho and eventually joined you?

BOTHA: Yes. And after she left, so other members of my family were threatened.