



Burning store in Soweto: 'Either the wheels of negotiation politics creak into motion, or we have to prepare for a siege'

WORLD AFFAIRS

Pretoria's 'Mailed Fist'

After months of riots, South Africa's president declares a state of emergency.

For months, South Africa has been heading toward the flash point. Week after week, blacks in the country's segregated townships have clashed with police in riots that have left more than 500 people dead. Finally, last week, South African President Pieter Botha moved to contain the mounting unrest. Appearing at Pretoria's Union Buildings, Botha announced that he was declaring a state of emergency in 36 districts

including Johannesburg, all of its outlying areas and most of the Transvaal and eastern Cape provinces. "Conditions of violence and lawlessness . . . have become more severe and cruel, especially in black townships," Botha said. "This state of affairs can no longer be tolerated."

Botha summoned the emergency powers under South Africa's

Public Security Act of 1953—a measure last invoked in 1960, after the Sharpeville riots. Under the draconian legislation, the government will be allowed to impose curfews, tighten censorship of the news media, arrest and detain suspects without warrants for up to 14 days and interrogate prisoners without the presence of lawyers. Security forces will also be able to seal off curfew areas, close down businesses and take over all essential services. Although he wasn't specific, Botha made it clear that the government would deal harshly with disobedience. "I wish to issue a warning that strict action will be taken against those persons and institutions that propagate disruption," he said.

Guarded Response: The Reagan administration, which recently has been reviewing its policy of "constructive engagement" toward Pretoria, responded guardedly. The State Department issued a statement saying it hoped the unrest would subside and that the new measures could be removed. But South African black leaders angrily attacked the move. "This reaction is typical of the South African government," said Desmond Tutu, the Anglican bishop of Johan-

nesburg. "They have never known how to deal with dissent. The only response they know is the mailed fist."

In an exclusive interview with *NEWSWEEK*, Tutu warned that the government had misjudged the depth of hostility in the townships, particularly among young blacks (box). In the past few weeks black radical leaders had begun to adopt a new strategy of economic boycotts and strikes against white-owned businesses. But the crackdown stirred fears that the townships would again erupt into random, bloody violence. At the weekend everyone watched apprehensively as more than 30,000 blacks gathered in Cradock, in the eastern Cape Province, for the funeral of four leaders of the mainly black nationalist United Democratic Front (UDF) Party. The UDF leaders were killed during a recent riot, allegedly by South African police.

Since last fall the situation in South Africa has moved slowly from simmering racial tension toward outright civil war. The African National Congress (ANC), the outlawed black-nationalist group dedicated to winning majority rule, has vowed to make



STEPHEN HONE

Botha: A warning

the black townships "ungovernable"—and then use them as bases for attacking whites in the major cities. Botha has further alienated blacks by introducing a new constitution that gives limited powers to the country's Indian and Colored populations but withholds political rights from the black majority. As their frustration has boiled over, blacks loyal to the ANC and UDF have taken to the streets, often choosing black government employees as their targets. Town councilors and members of their families have been murdered, others have been terrorized and the homes of more than 300 black policemen have been burned.

Before Botha's announcement there were more incidents of arson, looting and stone-throwing last week. Seven people were killed when police opened fire on rioters in Soweto and Duduza. In Soweto thousands of schoolchildren boycotted classes to join an antigovernment march, and across the country some 70,000 black students from 30 schools took part in other protests. The battle over law and order also heated up. In some townships government policemen appeared on horseback, adding an extra measure of intimidation to their presence. In others, such as Duduza, militants set up their own "police stations."

Forced Searches: Elsewhere, ANC supporters launched their new campaign against white-owned businesses—a strategy designed to play on whites' fears that the economy will collapse if blacks stop supporting it. Gangs of black youths roamed the fringes of isolated townships, taking action against blacks who bought from white-run stores. They stopped bus commuters and demanded to search their packages, destroying containers of flour, milk, sugar and beans. In Port Elizabeth, radicals attacked a black woman who had bought eggs from a white merchant and smashed the eggs over her head. At Nonzwakazi, near the town of De Aar, another black woman who had patronized a white-owned shop was hacked to death; her body was doused with gasoline and burned.

With the state of emergency, Botha clearly hoped to curb the violence. But critics of the government—including white opposition leaders in South Africa's Parliament—were not encouraged. Dr. Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, head of the Progressive Federal Party, attacked Botha for not moving ahead with constitutional reform to grant more power to blacks. Slabbert said Botha had invited him and other opposition leaders to join a special cabinet committee on black rights three months ago but had yet to follow through. "This situation cannot go on," Slabbert said. "Either the wheels of negotiation politics are going to creak into motion, or we have to accept the government is preparing us for a siege." After Botha's latest move, it appears more evident than ever that Pretoria has opted for a siege—and that the outcome will be more bloodshed.

MARK WHITAKER with PETER YOUNGHUSBAND
in Cape Town

'It's a Dangerous Animal'

Despite spiraling violence among blacks and flint-hard intransigence by the white government, Bishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, has maintained his belief in nonviolence. NEWSWEEK'S Peter Younghusband spoke with Tutu at his office in Johannesburg last week, even as Pretoria declared a state of emergency. Excerpts:

NEWSWEEK: How do you now see the future of South Africa?

TUTU: Almost as I've always seen it. Unless apartheid goes, we're for the birds.

Q: How does the state of emergency change the situation?

A: I think we have a government that really doesn't know where it's going—and for that reason, it's like a dangerous animal. They have never known how to deal with dissent. The only response they know is the mailed fist. Declaring a state of emergency is a typical reaction. It doesn't really change much: it just removes the last vestiges of our rights, and it means that whatever they do to us now, they can do with more impunity.

Q: Do you see any way out of this new level of crisis?

A: If there were a clearly defined plan—with a timetable—indicating that apartheid is really going to be dismantled, we could contain this escalating violence. But I think many whites are not aware of the mood of the children. I have never condoned their violence, but I don't think they are just being bloody-minded. They believe the only way the system is going to change is through armed struggle, and if they have to die in the cause, they will. The one thing that keeps surprising us is that they continue to accept the likes of us and others who are still talking about peaceful change, as their leaders. But that is being called into question. I think the time is maybe not too far away when they will sweep us away.

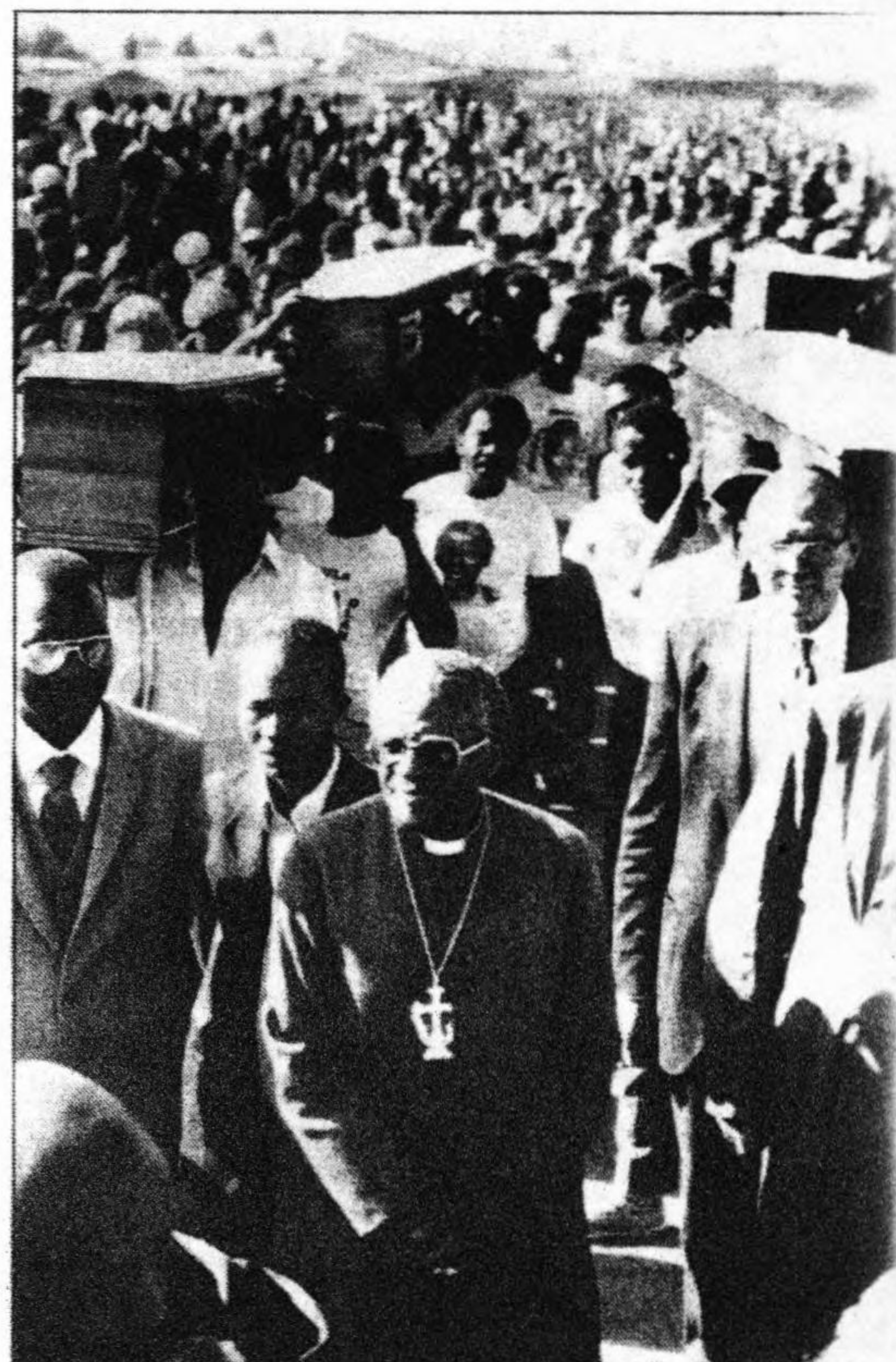
Q: What kind of workable constitution would satisfy all South Africans?

A: I'm not a politician or a constitutional expert. But I do know that I will not give up my South African citizenship or any part of South Africa. The constitution would have to be democratic—not based on ethnicity at all. The government should be saying, "We can still control how change is going to happen in this country." Instead, we have a kind of replay of what happened in Rhodesia, where Ian Smith stupidly closed one op-

tion after another, until he had nothing left. He found himself painted into a corner and had to give up. We need a national convention where the authentic, accepted representatives of every section of South African society would sit together and horse-trade. They would work out the blueprint for South Africa.

Q: Do you think something like a federal solution would work?

A: I wouldn't exclude that. But it must



Tutu at funeral: A replay of Rhodesia?

not be based on race. If we are going to divide, we must divide on equitable grounds. If we must regionalize, we must use normal criteria, and not say an area is delimited for whites, or Zulus. I wouldn't accept that. But above all, I would buy it only if it was a solution that was not imposed by an unrepresentative group. I would accept the Balkanization of South Africa if it was suggested by a truly representative national convention.

Q: Do you see yourself as part of this process?

A: The only thing that we, the church, would provide is the vision of a South Africa that is nonracial; a South Africa in which people count because they are human beings, and not biological irrelevancies.