By Aloc Russell in Johannesburg

President Nelson Mandela unveiled a radical overhaul of South Africa's white-dominated police force yesterday with the announcement of a more racially representative command structure.

This year "will be the year of change for the police," he said in Pretoria after appointing the country's top five policemen.

MajGen George Fivaz, an Afrikaner, was appointed national police commissioner. His appointment may help to reassure the white-dominated officer corps, who have found it hard to adjust to post-apartheid realities.

He is to have four deputies, two of whom are black and one Indian: the first non-white to hold such a senior post in the South African police.

They include MajGen John Manuel, the first black general in the force, and MajGen Zolisa Lillis, a deputy commissioner in the former Transkei homeland, which was aligned to the African National Congress before its reincorporation into South Africa last year.

Their appointments should reassure ANC radicals that the police are slowly starting to reflect the transformation of society in the new South Africa.

Mr Mandela's shake-up, which followed consultations with Mr Sydney Mufamadi, the Safety and Security Minister, came as a series of scandals and crises buffeted the police.

The press alleged last week that police officers had known in advance of a planned attack by black radicals on a white church congregation, but had let it happen to discredit the ANC.

Mr Mandela said he was taking the claims very seriously and one of the most important tasks of the new team was to investigate such charges.

He also insisted that the Cabinet's recent decision to cancel applications for indemnity made by 3,500 policemen shortly before the election was "irreversible." This will increase unease among senior policemen who thought they were safe from prosecution for crimes committed while enforcing apartheid.

But Mr Mandela said he was aware that police morale was low, and he appreciated that the appalling crime levels would not decrease unless the public co-operated.

MajGen Fivaz faces a massive task. The police are totally discredited and must trust black townships after their brutal attempts to enforce apartheid and all grading senior officers in orchestrating violence.

He stressed that his main aims were to achieve "an acceptable and accountable" force, to restore discipline and remove all forms of discrimination.

"We must make a clean and definitive break from the past," he said, adding that he would seek to introduce the police force's first "participative" approach to management.

Underlining the enormity of his task, as he met with an all-black cabinet, "besides Mr Mandela, police officers in the newly-named Gauteng province are working to broker an agreement with more than 100 striking officers from Soweto.

The talks followed a clash on Friday between the black strikers and the white-dominated riot squad in which one striker was shot dead.

After two hours of talks in Johannesburg, Mr Jessie Duarte, Safety and Security Minister for the province, persuaded the strikers to return to work today.

Twelve miners died in fictional clashes at a workers' hostel at Vaal Reefs gold mine near Orkney, in South Africa's North-West province.

Nelson Mandela has appointed a white senior officer as South Africa's new police chief.

The new command structure, announced yesterday, came as the force struggled with a series of problems involving racial and continuing controversy over indemnities.

The new national commissioner is the former police inspector General George Fivaz, a former narcotics agent and police inspector-general in the security branch.

Gary Fivaz, 48, replaces General Johan van der Merwe, who has been police chief for 12 years.

President Mandela also appointed four new deputy commissioners, one from each of the country's main racial groupings.

The new command will have to deal with a series of problems affecting the force, whose morale was dramatically demonstrated last week when officers opened fire on fellow policemen during a strike over allegations of racism at Soweto's Orlando police station.

One officer was killed and three were injured.

A showdown is also threatening with the police authorities in Kwazulu-Natal, over the planned graduation of 600 local recruits to the force.

The minister of safety and security, Sydney Mufamadi, has ordered the postponement of Friday's graduation ceremony pending investigations into claims that the recruits included disabled convicts and fugitives from justice.

The provincial government said it would defy the ban, claiming central government does not have such authority over it.

The long-running row over indemnities for security force crimes during the apartheid era also bubbled on at the weekend. The former foreign minister, Pik Botha, indignantly defended himself against charges that he authorised cross-border raids in which civilians, including children, were killed.

The allegations were made by Craig Williamson, a former police spy and army intelligence officer who has joined an anti-apartheid group of former ANC politicians for allegedly abetting the security forces in the face of a "witch-hunt." The provincial government has said it will defy the ban, claiming central government does not have such authority over it.

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Eritrea’s President Exhorts U.S. Not to Shun Role in Africa

By STEVEN GREENHOUSE
Special to The New York Times
WASHINGTON, Jan. 21 — The President of Eritrea, one of Africa’s newest nations, has come here to urge the Clinton Administration and Congress not to let the bitter experience of Somalia lead the United States to withdraw from the continent’s affairs.

The Eritrean President, Isaias Afwerki, who is on a two-week trip to the United States, said in an interview that African nations need America’s diplomatic clout and economic aid to help them achieve peace, democracy and better living standards.

Mr. Isaias, who heads one of the world’s newest democracies, a country of 3.5 million people on the Horn of Africa that became independent in May 1993 after winning a 30-year war for independence against Ethiopia, said that when he meets President Clinton on Feb. 1 he will tell him, “It’s an obligation for the United States to have a major role in Africa.”

The Clinton Administration gives high marks to Mr. Isaias for joining other leaders in the region in supporting diplomatic efforts to end civil wars in Somalia and the Sudan.

Mr. Isaias, 47, said he feared that many Americans wanted the United States to play a minimal role in Africa after its mission in Somalia took a disastrous turn on Oct. 3, 1993, when 18 American soldiers died there in a firefight. The United States originally sent troops to enable relief groups to distribute food throughout the war-torn country, but they became embroiled in fighting when their mission changed to hunting down Somali militia commanders.

“The United States role in Somalia was welcomed by the region, but then something went wrong,” Mr. Isaias said. “But it’s wrong for people to say that because of that, the United States has no role to play in that part of Africa. One particular incident should not be decisive about what America’s role should be.”

Mr. Isaias voiced alarm at the push by many Republicans lawmakers to slash economic aid to Africa and to eliminate the $800 million Development Fund for Africa.

“When you consider that Israel receives $3 billion in aid and that $800 million in aid for the 600 million people of Africa is not a very large amount,” he said. “Slashing aid to Africa will hurt many Africans but is it going to solve America’s economic problems?”

Mr. Isaias insisted, however, that he had not come to the United States with a hand out.

“Our country was devastated by 30 years of war,” he said of Eritrea, once the northernmost province of Ethiopia. “We recognize that the solution to our problems will not come from foreign aid. But we need foreign aid temporarily until we can stand on our own feet.”

The United States is set to give about $22 million in aid to Eritrea this year, about half of which will be emergency food relief aimed at tidying the country over until it rebounds from a lengthy drought.

Mr. Isaias is also scheduled to meet with Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Anthony Lake, President Clinton’s national security adviser.

Much of Mr. Isaias’s trip has been devoted to wooing investors. With its long coastline along the Red Sea, Eritrea has attracted several oil companies interested in offshore exploration. Mr. Isaias is also hoping to attract investors’ interest in tourism, agriculture and his country’s gold and copper deposits.

“After 30 years of war, we have many infrastructure problems: roads, telecommunications, health and education,” he said.

Eritrea, which had been a semi-autonomous part of Ethiopia, began its independence fight shortly after Ethiopia annexed it in 1962.

Wrong About Africa

IN MAKING THE case for his own sweeping approach to foreign aid, the chairman of the Senate foreign operations subcommittee, Kentucky Republican Mitch McConnell, dismisses Africa as unimportant to the security interests of the United States. Under Sen. McConnell’s restructuring proposals, money for Africa would be slashed deeply while funds for the Middle East and Europe, which he regards as strategically more critical, would get a boost. As one of the Republican majority’s more internationally minded members, and with his perch on the Appropriations Committee, Sen. McConnell’s thoughts will be given great weight. Congress, however, should be slow to rubber-stamp the senator’s views on Africa. American security and economic interests cannot be so easily divorced from the state of affairs in Africa.

How we regard Africa depends on how U.S. strategic interests are defined in a post-Cold War world. To concentrate American attention on former decades-old rivalries or familiar traditional relationships too narrowly defines this country’s international interests. Viewing Africa of today through the old prism of the Cold War, as some are doing, does just that. On the contrary, as President Clinton said in an address last year at a White House conference, “Africa matters to the United States.” It is not only because a superpower like America with a demographic $2 billion, $600 million in aid for the 600 million people of Africa is not a very large amount,” he said. “Slashing aid to Africa will hurt many Africans but is it going to solve America’s economic problems?”

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Neighbourhood watch in southern Africa

Regional co-operation has been much talked of in southern Africa. Now South Africa's political transformation is giving the idea some real life

Southern Africa's former rebels are cultivating a new role as regional village elders. Nelson Mandela, of South Africa, and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe are getting together to keep a paternal eye on potential troublemakers in the region and to step in early, if need be, to resolve disputes before they lead to conflict.

This alliance emerged in August, when Lesotho's fragile democracy cracked and King Letsie III sacked the country's elected prime minister. Along with President Quet Matse, of Botswana, Presidents Mandela and Mugabe joined forces to twist the king's arm. Their armies even carried out joint exercises in readiness to go into Lesotho. The threat was enough: the king backed down and the prime minister was reinstated.

In October Mozambique was due to hold its first free election. Led by Mr Mandela and Mr Mugabe, other countries of the region warned its rival parties to accept the result and said that if need be they would send in a force to help keep order. Then, only hours before last minute, Afonso Dhlakama, the former rebel leader, said his Renamo movements would pull out. Both Mr Mugabe and South Africa's first deputy president, Thabo Mbeki, promptly got on the telephone to persuade him to change his mind. Mr Dhlakama complied, Renamo took part in the election, and, says its leader, accepts its defeat.

Architect of negotiated revo­
lution in his own country, Mr Mandela—whether he wants the responsibility or not—is a natural arbiter for the region. As the deadline approached for last week's signing of the Angolan peace deal, Angola's president, José Eduardo dos Santos, complained of his counterpart's intransigence about South Africa's return of its troops.

Southern Africa's railway companies are helping those of their neighbours. Eskom, South Africa's electricity company, is building a new power line to Zimbabwe. South Africa's railways are helping those of Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, and its railways and those of the whole region are better at helping diversify, and expand, the economies of the countries they serve.

Trade and investment

Southern Africa's trade ministers are talking, but not too seriously, of regional co-operation. The area's economies are expected to grow by about 4% in 1995. Only about 5% of its official trade is carried out within the region; its main exports are commodities, most of them heading for Europe. The hope is that a newly opened South African economy will help diversify, and expand, the economies of the rest of the region.

Southern Africa busies with new activity. Foreign direct investment in Zimbabwe in the 12 months to July exceeded the (admittedly tiny) total of $177m for all the previous years since 1980. South Africa's trade with Zimbabwe has leapt in the past two years. Eskom, South Africa's electricity company, is building a new power line to Zimbabwe. South Africa's railways are helping those of Zambia and Tanzania to improve their services, and the three, plus Zimbabwe, have agreed to let freight travel uninterrupted across the region. Mozambique's deep-water ports are being rebuilt.

Yet behind the enthusiasm lurk problems. One of them is that, though Africa-optimists talk brightly of “southern Africa”, only a few of its 11 countries show much promise. Angola could be rich, but is miserably poor, with a GDP per head of less than $100. Tanzania and Malawi are even poorer, at $500. But South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe, and to some extent Namibia and Zambia, have reasonably healthy economies with reform programmes in place. And South Africa dwarfs the rest: in 1993 it accounted for four-fifths of the entire region's GDP.

Southern Africa already has an array of co-operative arrangements: SADC; SACU (the Southern Africa Customs Union, linking South Africa with Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland); and COMESA (the would-be Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, with 22 members). South Africa has now joined SADC. Set up as a way of doing without South Africa during the apartheid years, this body now plans co-operation in regional projects such as transport, tourism and energy. But if southern Africans are serious about co-operation, they need to rationalise these arrangements. SADC is not primarily a trade organisation. Should it become one? SACU is a customs union. Should it become a free-trade area?

These are delicate issues. Smaller southern African countries fear what they see as South Africa's economic imperialism. Its exports to them are worth eight times its imports from them, and they fear that its industries will swamp theirs. Zambia recently sent its trade minister to South Africa to protest at what he called the dumping of cheap South African manufactures after Zambia had cut its import tariffs by 60%. The other countries also worry that South Africa will suck foreign investment away from them. Whatever agreements are reached, the problem will be to turn them from paper into practice. As Ali Mazrui, a Kenyan-born historian, puts it: “Africans are better at uniting for freedom than for development.”

Freeing trade requires tough decisions. Zimbabwe, boldly, has lifted its exchange controls; but South Africa, the economy that matters, still lacks the foreign reserves it needs to do the same with confidence.

For now, Zimbabwe and South Africa are co-operating better in diplomacy than in commerce. Zimbabwe, wriggled by the World Bank, has recently pushed through some painful economic reforms and has been phasing out subsidies to industry. Yet, to its dismay, South Africa, its single-biggest market for textiles, two years ago slapped heavy tariffs on imports of almost all Zimbabwean textiles. A trade treaty that covers textiles comes up for renegotiation between the two countries early next year. It will be a timely test of South Africa's willingness to make regional economic co-operation work.
South Africa and Europe

Knock knock

P RISING open South Africa’s economy to trade and investment should be at the centre of economic policy, Thabo Mbeki, its first deputy president, told the African National Congress’s conference on December 18th. He might have added that South Africa also needs its trading partners to open their economies to it. Sanctions are dead, but exports still face plenty of obstacles.

In the first ten months of 1994, the value of South Africa’s exports topped 80% of its imports, and the country ranked as a developed country. But South Africa remains in the third rank of middle-income countries such as Brazil and Chile, India, under the GATT, it is classified as a developing country.

Over half South Africa’s trade is with the European Union (EU). Britain is now its single biggest trading partner. The EU gives former colonies in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean special trade concessions under the Lomé convention. To qualify, a country must be poor. South Africa is, but not enough: its black citizens are better off—indeed not vastly—than most other Africans, and rich whites push up the average to rank it, with middle-income countries such as Brazil and Chile.

In November Trevor Manuel, South Africa’s trade minister, went to Brussels hoping to squeeze out of the tight-fisted Europeans the same concessions they give the 70 Lomé countries. The EU says it will reply by February. It already lets in about 70% of imports from South Africa, notably gold and diamonds, duty-free. But South Africa is keen to diversify. And there the European: get tough: they do not want its apples, avocados or flowers, paper, leather goods or textiles, not even its coal. Even after the reductions provided for by the GATT’s Uruguay round, EU tariffs on temperate fruit, for example, will still be a hefty 12-13%.

The EU will not easily open its doors wider. Still to digest the Uruguay round, and with Eastern Europe clamouring on its doorstep, it is not in generous mood. Its Mediterranean members, with noisy farming lobbies and a climate much like South Africa’s, will try to keep it that way. It is also mindful of the fears of other Lomé countries, including some in Africa, that a South Africa competing on equal terms would pinch their markets.

Not that opening to South Africa would make much odds to Europe. South Africa’s GDP is only 1.7% of that of the EU as a whole. Nor need the Lomé countries lose as they imagine. “Our export profile is similar to theirs,” Mr Manuel told the men in Brussels, “but most of our products are different”—temperate, rather than tropical, farm produce, and manufactures.

Down Mexico way

Perhaps, though, South Africa is being too modest in its demands. Paul Collier, an economist at Oxford University, dismisses the Lomé deal as “miserable”. It excludes, notably, textiles, and is anyway guaranteed to last only another five years. He thinks South Africa should demand from the EU a free-trade deal like the NAFTA deal that Mexico—with an economy equal to 5% of its partners—got from America and Canada.

Why not? There is a trend for poor countries to get into bed with richer neighbours. South Africa has none such near at hand; Europe is the closest. A free-trade link, argues Mr Collier, could attach the two as closely as the EU is linked to Norway or Iceland. This would not only open EU markets to South African goods but might prevent the EU resorting to its familiar “anti­dumping” excuse for keeping them out.

Above all, such a binding deal would make South Africa’s commitment to opening its economy fully credible, by putting trade policy beyond politicians’ reach. The caution of foreign investors towards South Africa since the end of apartheid is due chiefly to the fear of political risk. Mindful of Nelson Mandela’s age, many worry that the ANC’s present zeal for free-marketry could be diluted by some more radical leader. Even anxious South African industrialists might be ready to accept greater competition at home if it guaranteed an outward-looking economy.

Nor would a link with Europe contradict South Africa’s plans for closer integration with its neighbours. Mexico, inside NAFTA, has also made a deal with two less advanced South American countries. South Africa could do likewise.

Europe’s claim they want South Africa to prosper. Were it to demand such a deal, it would at the least call their bluff.

Labour bill will cut working week, extend workers’ rights

South Africa’s long-awaited rewritten Labour Relations Bill will be launched in Johannesburg on January 25 by Labour Minister Tito Mboweni, and labour lawyer Halton Cheadle, who headed the team that revamped the bill.

Mboweni is forging ahead with far-reaching labour reforms. He has already indicated that the bill will enhance the rights of women employees, protect workers’ rights in the instance of insolvency and reduce the working week by eight hours to 40 hours.

On February 18, the 21-member staff complement of Nedlac—the National Economic, Development and Labour Council—which replaces the National Economic Forum—begins work in Johannesburg under recently appointed executive director, Jayendra Naidoo.

Naidoo stresses that his plans for the Council will be guided by those of the four constituents—labour, trade and industry, public finance and monetary policy, and development—which will have representation from civil society such as civic organisations.

“My role will be not only to interface with the constituencies, but to help them develop the capacity to negotiate and communicate with their grassroots and try and reach agreements. The other thing is to ensure that parties have the capacity to keep people on board. Unions are losing that capacity, without it agreements reached are in danger of not being implemented.”

Naidoo says he is concerned that the council does not become a crisis driven body, a failing of the NEF.

“The Labour Bill will be an important starting point. We also need to draw up development, trade and industry and monetary policies.

“We want to arrive at a series of agreements which taken together will reorganise social and economic life: make factories work better and increase employment”. Naidoo says Nedlac came about because of union unhappiness with an ever increasing number of scattered, usually crisis-driven forums. Nedlac is not entirely unique. “There is nothing like this that brings on board the community, say in the form of civics. But countries like Mexico, Japan and Scandinavia have co-operation either between trade unions and government or tripartite partners.”
On the day they buried Joe Slovo, John Carlin (left) looks back on six dramatic years and bids farewell to a people with an apparently limitless capacity to forgive.

One hot winter’s morning in Upington, a bone-dry town on the southern fringes of the Kalahari, Justice Bekebeke stood up in court to address Justice J J Basson. Mr Bekebeke had been baptised “Justice”. The judge had acquired the title after years of service in the law, and was one of the few black justices in South Africa. Mr Bekebeke was being tried for murder. Mr Justice Basson was preparing to condemn him — and 13 others — to death.

The Upington 14 were deemed by the judge to have shared “common purpose” in the murder of a black policeman in November 1985. Three and a half years on, each of the 14 was taking it in turns to address the court. They knew, for their lawyers had warned them in advance, that Justice Basson would order their execution. They had no reason then to imagine that within three years they would all be free on appeal.

Mr Bekebeke, aged perhaps 25, looked Justice Basson in the eye and said, “In a country like South Africa I wonder how justice can really be applied. I used to think that, even as a black man, I had access to justice. But I haven’t found it. So, well, my lord, what I would like to ask is: Let’s forget our racial hatred, let’s apply justice for all humanity. Why can’t we have for each and every racial group to live in harmony. Is it possible? Never say it is not. I hope, my lord, that you live to see the day of a free South Africa. I would like the Lord to let me live another five years so that one day you can see me walking on the streets of a free South Africa. And, my lord, may the Lord bless you, my lord!”

I was observing from the public gallery when, to my left, a small elderly man in a dark suit and tie, the father of two of the accused, bowed his head and mumbled “Amen.”

The date was 26 May 1989. I had been in South Africa barely five months. Then I had been regretting my decision to move from central America, where I had spent the previous six years. Then I was a reporter. Here you had the world’s greatest injustice, the United Nations “crime against humanity”, and yet there was no visible sign of change. I looked at P W Botha, the president, and I looked at Justice Basson and I thought of a passage from Age of Iron by the South African novelist J M Coetzee, “I have only to see the heavy, blank faces so familiar since childhood to feel gloom and nausea. The bullies in the last row of schoolrooms, loud-mouthed boys, grown up now and grown up to rule the land. They with their fathers and mothers, their aunts and uncles, their brothers and sisters: a locust horde, a plague of black locusts infesting the country, munching with unconscionable and unceasing, devouring lives... the reign of the locust family is the truth of South Africa.”

I looked at the black resistance movement and I saw a twitching body without a head. The old leaders were all in exile or in jail, the young leaders in detention, victims of P W’s voracious state of emergency.

I went out to see Justice Bekebeke and I saw an image of heroic forgiveness that will remain for me the abiding image of black South Africa. That spirit, which I saw replicated in township after township, that miraculous absence of racism and rancour among the vast majority of black people, was the rock on which South Africa’s democracy was built.

But it has not all been sweetness and light these last six years. Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes South Africans as “the rainbow people of God”. The South African tourism board talks of “a world in one country”. For me there has been a Shakespearean range to the South African spectacle. There has been high tragedy and low comedy, death and row upon row of peaks of joy, high hope and abject despair. During my time here all the vices and virtues of humanity have been dramatically and intensely on display.

Hand in hand with all the finest qualities known to the species there has been cruelty, barbarism, meanness and rank hypocrisy: the common characteristics of those who went to war to stop Nelson Mandela, the embodiment of all that’s best about South Africa, from becoming president. The violence Mangosuthu Buthelezi’s Inkatha unleashed on the black townships during the four years before Mr Mandela’s release and his election victory claimed 15,000 lives — among them Beauty Selee’s husband, mother and seven close relatives gunned down inside her two-storey home one night in 1990.

I saw Mrs Selee the next morning. She said she was two days old, looked twice her age. She spoke in shell-shocked fragments. “Five Zulu-speaking men had come from the Inkatha hostel across the road and burst into her house demanding money or a woman.” They didn’t see Mrs Selee, who was in the kitchen. She rushed into her bedroom and locked herself in. Then she heard a fusillade of gunfire, “like thunder”. She remained in the bedroom all night, hypnotised by a stream of blood that seeped under the door.

It was day by day the time the frightened neighbours summoned up the courage to come round and find out what had happened. They called the police, who came and took the case away. The police station was only 500 yards away. They had heard the gunfire. A local police colonel explained why his men had not reacted earlier. “No complaint was lodged.”

Blood will have blood, and Mr Mandela’s African National Congress supporters, the young “comrades”, responded to Inkatha’s challenge, perpetrating unspeakable atrocities themselves. The evil geniuses behind the slaughter sat at police headquarters in Pretoria and in Ulundi, Inkatha’s KwaZulu base. And a handful of South African reporters detected early on the hidden hand behind the township wars. ‘We did our best to expose it and although those on the receiving end of the violence required little effort of perception among white South Africans we felt like flies screaming in the wilderness.

In due course the “Third Force” was exposed. Now we all know, the affidavits having come thick and fast, that the security police had senior Inkatha officials on their payroll, that they supplied Inkatha with guns, with military training, with the logistical assistance to increase what an unguarnished police officer once described to me as a “terror value” of the attacks mounted “to defend the Zulu nation”. That was the entirely fraudulent line of reasoning Mr Mandela’s enemies had used to justify his people’s actions.

The security police colonel at the hub of the Third Force was Eugene de Kock, who is in jail facing a multitude of charges. Colonel de Kock, who was called him “Prime Evil”, but the label suits Mr Buthelezi just as well. His unique place in history derives from this: he is a black South African who battled against black liberation and kept on battling even after the apartheid regime had raised the white flag.

Today Mr Buthelezi sits in the cabinet of President Mandela’s government, with Mr Buthelezi’s most loyal lieutenants, Colonel de Kock’s Inkatha agents, members of parliament. The lesson Mr Mandela has taught the world is that there is only one way to resolve seemingly intractable conflicts: you must sacrifice your notion of justice and pure principle, however deeply held, on the altar of political compromise.

The Afrikaners, J M Coetzee’s locust family, made it easy for Mr Mandela. They repented — in deeds, if not in words. F W de Klerk, Mr Mandela’s predecessor and now his deputy president, graciously resigned in four years, after half a lifetime dedicated to apartheid, from a pragmatic to a moral belief in the wrongness of legalised racial discrimination.

General Constantia Viljoen, the Moses of the far right who a year ago was leading the walk to holy war, has emerged as Mr Mandela’s most loyal parliamentary opponent. As an ANC cabinet minister put it, in a tribute to both men, Mr Viljoen has stars in his eyes when he looks at Mandela.

In the most remarkable interview I have ever done, Eddy von Malitz, a firebrand farmer from the Orange Free State, told me late last year that he had seen that Mr Mandela had made a great man whom he would do his utmost to support. Until just two weeks before the April elections Eddy had been plotting to plant bombs around the country as part of his crusade to establish a Boer homeland, a volkstaat, insolated from “the Communists” and the blacks.

Mr de Klerk, General Viljoen, Mr von Malitz, even Mr Buthelezi, the president who used the rural Zulu population, and the mining, the resources of the white state to foment his foolishly deluded backers overseas, like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher — in pursuit of his lust for power.

Somehow Mr Mandela and his supporters, among them 90 per cent of the black population, have managed to bury their
Joe Slovo should never have been in South Africa, writes Richard Dowden. His father intended to go to Argentina, when he left Lithuania in the 1930s, but at the last moment boarded a boat for Cape Town. The family followed soon after. One wonders what Argentina might be like if Joe Slovo had grown up there.

After Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk, Slovo is probably the most important figure in South Africa’s recent history. There were two people who held the African National Congress together, the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the movement in 1990. One of them was Oliver Tambo and the other was Slovo. While Tambo’s gentle charm kept the personalities together, Slovo organised structure and policy. It was the mission he was trained for by the Communist Party. The South African Communist Party was so intertwined with the ANC that it was impossible to distinguish the two organisations. The style of organisation and the rhetoric were clearly Marxist-Leninist and the key posts were all held by Communists. Slovo was the key organiser.

He was an old-style romantic Communist, the type Graham Greene would have instantly recognised. His faith was absolute, his goals were millenarian but he was also urbane and humorous. But he also knew that horrible deeds must be done that good might come. As head of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC, he well knew the arguments to distinguish between indiscriminate terror and dramatic acts of sabotage to politicise the masses and terrify the oppressors.

Lusaka, the headquarters of the ANC in the years of exile, is one of the most depressing capitals in Africa and the ANC at that time was not an inspiring organisation. Many of Slovo’s colleagues spent their time drinking and dreaming in the Pumulani Hotel. Through all the hopeless years and the bittering Slovo kept the organisation alive. But he always kept in the background and in 1980 I was lucky to be given the first interview with him for many years. The Pumulani had run out of Zambian beer but had a few cans of Castle, which is brewed in South Africa. To touch anything South African at that time was mortal sin for anti-apartheid campaigners but Slovo shrugged. “Needs must,” he said, warning me in secret with a smile.

He was a regular visitor to Moscow and, although he was anxious about Mikhail Gorbachev’s reforms, he believed that Communism would be strengthened by them and continue to spread. However, he said he regarded apartheid as “imperialism of a peculiar kind” and openly doubted if socialism was the best system for South Africa to adopt immediately when apartheid was overthrown. Later, during the negotiations with the de Klerk government, it was Slovo who proposed the historic compromise of power-sharing and it is his vision of a power-sharing structure which has indeed come about.

In 1988 Slovo attended one of the early meetings between the ANC and South African politicians and academics in Germany. It was soon after the release of A World Apart, the film about the sufferings of his family during his exile. Though it was written by his daughter Shawn, he had a cold reception to it. We went to a video copy in a hotel room. By the end of the film he was weeping uncontrollably. Wynand Malan, a former National Party MP, took him in his arms and embraced him. This was perhaps a precursor for the astounding metanoia and reconciliation which South Africa was to undergo. Later Slovo said he had never really come to terms with the pain he had caused those close to him by his commitment to the cause.

I last met him during the election campaign at a small rally on a bleak windy field in a coloured township near Cape Town. He was exhausted but, as he said, an open election in South Africa was the event he had waited and worked for all his life. The sound system wasn’t working properly and the crowd heard little of what he said. It mattered little. They had come to see the legendary guerrilla leader and they were happy. So was he, full of joy and work.

Joe Slovo, lawyer, party leader: born Obelai, Lithuania 23 May 1926; member, South African Communist Party 1942-93; General Secretary 1986-91; Chairman 1991-95; founding member 1961 Umkhonto we Sizwe, chief of staff 1985-87; member, national executive committee, African National Congress 1986-95; Minister of Housing 1994-95; married 1949 Ruth First (died 1982; three daughters), secondly Helena Dolny; died Johannesburg 6 January 1993.

Joe left the world a ‘better place’

FROM HUGH POPE in Soweto

Tumultuous crowds of black South Africans gave a hero’s burial yesterday to Joe Slovo, President Nelson Mandela’s closest white ally and adviser within the African National Congress as they negotiated for their country’s new non-racial democracy.

Born on a gun carriage, Slovo’s body made its last journey through Soweto in a plain wooden coffin draped with the flag of the new South Africa. The late chairman of the South African Communist Party was lowered into the ground in Heroes’ Acre at the township’s youths’ cemetery, where he joined veterans anti-apartheid campaigner Helen Joseph to become only the second white person to be honoured with burial there.

Order broke down briefly when thousands of people charged forward, including youths with clubs, whips, spears, shields and even AK-47 rifles. But, as in other memorial ceremonies around the country, the atmosphere was more in celebration of Slovo’s extraordinary life than of mourning for his death, aged 68, from bone-marrow cancer on 6 January.

The pandemonium kept President Mandela from attending at the graveside, where Slovo’s second wife, Helena, chose to speak about his love of wine, women and song, and the red socks he wore as an emblem of his Communist beliefs.

Many happier symbols of reconciliation were on show at a farewell ceremony at Soweto’s simple Orlando Stadium. The ANC choir sang Die Siem, the Afrikaans national anthem, as township youths crowded on to the backs of police armoured cars. And next to President Mandela sat Pik Botha, the Minister of Energy, who was once Foreign Minister.

“The defenders of national oppression could not understand why Slovo would seek to end the dominance of his racial kin and kin,” said Mr Mandela.

“But Joe’s kin was all humanity, especially the very poor.”

The immigrant from Lithuania was accepted as a leader by black South Africans in a mythical way that other white men may find hard to follow. He even led the ANC military wing which accorded him his highest honour, the title Ithlwislwande Sеа­rannkосе (He who wears the leopard skin).

“He identified himself to such an extent with the black masses that he seemed to me to be our Moses. He was a believing unbeliever,” said an Anglican priest, Mandla Sibeko, watching the stadium ceremony from among 30,000 activists waving ANC banners as well as Communist red flags. “Joe Slovo was white, but really he was black, pitch black,” said Tandy Sosona, a saleswoman. “He was the only one we could trust 100 per cent.”

South Africa’s Chief Rabbi, Cyril Harris, joined in the tributes, saying Mr Slovo’s compassion had roots in his Jewishness. “Let not those religious people who identified with the evils of yesteryear condemn him. The world is a better place, thanks to Joe.”
Nelson Mandela's story is so like a fairytale that it is difficult to face up to the workaday details behind it. Towards the end of his twenty-seven years in prison, Mandela had become so mythologized — and there had been so few glimpses of his real character — that on his emergence to freedom it seemed that he would be bound to disappoint. Yet the four years between his release and his election as Head of State marked his greatest achievement. And today, at seventy-six, President Mandela can still surprise his opponents as he co-operates with the military leaders and bankers who were once his chief enemies, and pursues his policy of forgiveness.

As he reflected at his inauguration as President in May, Mandela's rise was the result of a dramatic turnabout in his fortunes. When the generals saluted him, he commented that “Not so many years ago before, they would not have saluted but arrested me.”

It is unlikely that Mandela's autobiography could have been as dramatic as his actual life. He has never easily articulated his hopes and fears, either in speeches or to friends. “I am not and never have been”, he explains, “a man who finds it easy to talk about his feelings in public.” And any collaborator would find it hard to bring out his emotions — particularly so because of the constant demands on his time. His two first chosen helpers, the novelist Nadine Gordimer and the professor Es'kia Mphahlele, gave up in frustration, and a televised version of his life is now being delayed by similar difficulties.

The final choice to collaborate on the book, Richard Stengel, a former Time correspondent, has achieved a convincing result, in a laconic style which sounds much like Mandela's own. But he has explained elsewhere his difficulty in getting behind Mandela's public persona: “the man and the mask are one.” And Mandela's commitment to reconciliation with his former enemies inevitably lessens the effect of important sections of Mandela's life, which need to be amplified by the biographer, rather than an autobiographer — someone who can include other people's accounts, most obviously about the years in gaol, when his colleagues have testified to acts of courage which he cannot describe himself. And Mandela is inevitably constrained in recounting the collapse of his marriage to Winnie; only a third party would be able to describe this objectively.

Such episodes are illuminated by the short biographies now updated, by Mary Benson, the veteran campaigner against apartheid who has known Mandela over thirty-five years, and who writes with both vivid descriptions and scholarly accuracy. She does not evade the embarrassments of the break-up with his first wife, or the misdeeds of his second wife. And she can convey the full tragedy of his separation from Winnie, as he himself cannot: “an intensely proud man, he had survived political martyrdom only to face personal betrayal and unimaginable humiliations.”

But Mandela's own book remains an indispensable historical document, which provides important new evidence to the forty-year story of apartheid, as seen by its most formidable opponent. And there is enough candour to provide insights into the nature of leadership, and to help to answer one of the most baffling questions: what was the inner strength which enabled him to maintain his integrity intact in his long years in prison, and to emerge as a world leader?

Mandela seems never to have had the kind of all-embracing religious faith which has sustained so many political prisoners. He was influenced by his Christian education at Wesleyan schools and by impressive missionaries, including the Reverend C. Harris, the governor of the Reformed Church school, the Reverend S. S. Mokotrim, his housemaster at Healdtown college, and the Reverend Matyolo who presided over the mission station. But he does not share the deep faith of his closest friends, Oliver Tambo, or his Anglican ally Father Mphahlele. When he was imprisoned, he thought about religion and attended services of all denominations, but he never embraced a single system.

Not, unlike many of his colleagues, was he ever a convinced Marxist. As a young politician, he was one of the chief opponents of Communists joining the ANC youth league; thereafter he learnt much from Communist friends who brought him into a wider society and “did not seem to pay attention to colour at all”. He became interested in dialectical materialism as a way of explaining world history, but he never became a Communist, as so many Western conservatives alleged. He remained, primarily, an African nationalist, committed to working with other races. “The cynical have always suggested that the communists were using us. But who is to say that we were not using them?”

On Robben Island, he took part in long arguments with his Commnunist colleagues about the relationship between the party and the ANC, and successfully insisted that the ANC must remain separate, as “a mass liberation movement that welcomed all those with similar objectives”.

His belief in the law provided a kind of faith, as it has done for other Third World leaders, including Mahatma Gandhi. The law gave him a theoretical structure of fairness and enabled him to confront policemen and warders with some confidence. In the midst of some of the most cynical political trials, he was still able to appeal to Afrikaner judges who, he knew, retained a sense of justice. But he also saw how deeply lawyers could be corrupted; most wretchedly, the Transvaal Law Society sought to strike him off their rolls, under pressure from the Minister of Justice, while he was in prison.

Certainly his sense of family was a source of support in his long years in gaol; this is clear from this book, and from an earlier biography, Higher than Hope, by Fatima Meer, which quotes from his letters to Winnie and to his children. In the autobiography, he describes how he was eventually allowed to receive photographs and even an album; it became his most cherished possession, which he lent to other prisoners until it was tattered.

But his pride in his family was mixed with tremendous guilt that he had left it without a head: “I rued the pain I had often caused my family through my absence.” And he was painfully aware of the strains his actions imposed on them. Writing about a beautiful tomato plant, which he had grown in his cell, which withered through his lack of care, he compared it to his marriage to Winnie: “sometimes there is nothing one can do to save something that must die.”

And he reflects poignantly on the conflict between his political struggle and his family, between being father to his country, and to his own children. “My family paid a terrible price, perhaps too dear a price, for my commitment.” In the end, it is clear that it was not his faith in family, religion or the law which accounts for his strength. It is his sense of his own dignity, which went back to his upbringing. He was the son of an illiterate chief with four wives who was deposed by the local white magistrate for insubordination, and died when Nelson was nine. But despite his father's early death, Mandela was brought up with a strong sense of traditional respect for leadership and tribal democracy: this was fortified when he was adopted by the Regent of his people, in the “Great Place”. His account of his early years in the poor but beautiful countryside of the Transkei shows little sense of oppression. It was not until he ran away from college to Johannesburg that he really felt the humiliation of the black people. To begin with, he saw himself as a gangster: the boy who could not use a knife and fork; but his chiefly background and his powerful physique soon gave him a sense of confidence and command which made him a natural leader.

When I first met him in Johannesburg, when he was in charge of the “defiance campaign” of 1952, he already had a formidable presence. He did not then see himself as the future leader — he later told me — and he looked to Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu as his intellectual superiors. But he was a true man of action; and when passive resistance was quashed and the ANC accepted his proposal for the armed struggle he was the obvious person to lead it.

His sense of dignity was accompanied by a stubbornness which could make him headstrong: but under the harsh discipline of prison he learnt the self-discipline crucial for a true leader and statesman. And his confrontations with the wardens strengthened his confidence. As he writes: Prison and the authorities conspire to rob each man of his dignity. Of most that assured me I would never give, for any man or institution that tries to rob me of my dignity will lose because I will not part with it at any price or under any pressure.

Or “Strong convictions are the secret of surviving deprivation; your spirits can be full even when your stomach is empty.” But he also learnt to be more flexible with his own colleagues, particularly after 1976 when, following the Soweto revolt, a new generation of more militant black rebels joined him on Robben Island. He tells of watching the film Hell's Angels, and how he was under pressure from the Minister of Justice, to “get rid of these kids”. And he even reflected on the film’s protagonists as freedom fighters. Mandela realized then that he might “become stuck in a mind-set that was no longer revolutionary”. 
But he also felt independent enough to risk offending his colleagues when he saw the chance to start talks with government leaders. "There are times when a leader must move ahead of the flock, go off in a new direction, confident that he is leading his people the right way." It was this combination of independence, flexibility and the reflectiveness he had acquired in gaol, which made him such an unexpectedly formidable leader after his release in 1990. Both the South African and the British governments were more detached from the ANC; Mrs Thatcher, as well as President de Klerk, was taken aback by his first speech in Cape Town, which conformed to ANC policy.

De Klerk still hoped to divide the blacks by pursuing a "double agenda" (as Mandela calls it), which included supplying arms and money to Chief Buthelezi’s Zulu movement, Inkatha. But, in prison, Mandela had learnt the power of reconciliation, and he successfully held the ANC together in a very broad coalition, which attracted both the leaders of the "Bantustans" and many younger Zulus. And, while he did not trust de Klerk after he realized the extent of the double agenda, he was still able to negotiate with him, with a shrewdness which outmanoeuvred his adversary:

I never sought to undermine Mr de Klerk for the practical reason that the weaker he was, the easier the negotiations process. To make peace with an enemy, one must work with that enemy, and the enemy becomes your partner.

Mandela is at his most discreet in the last part of the book, for he cannot risk offending politicians with whom he is now working closely. The forgiveness which he shows to all his former enemies, including warders and torturers as well as political leaders, appears all the more miraculous after his account of the brutalities of the long prison years. But this attribute sometimes makes the story bland.

A full account of the "double agenda" in both the national and international arena remains for future historians, who will have no need for discretion and will be able to make use of sources from all sides. But Mandela’s unique life-story reveals how a succession of plots were defeated by a towering personality who used his experience in prison to learn the true secrets of leadership.

Extracted from the address by President Nelson Mandela at the funeral of Joe Slovo, 15 January 1995.

The advocates of racial superiority could not understand how Slovo could be part of the liberation struggle and operate under the leadership of the hapless inferiors they despised. But Joe took part in struggle as an equal, as part of the people.

The defenders of national oppression could not understand why Slovo would seek to end the dominance of his racial 'kith and kin'. But Joe’s kin was all humanity, especially the very poor.

The champions of privilege and concentration of wealth could not fathom why Slovo identified with the wretched of the earth. But Joe knew that these were the creators of wealth and they deserved their fare share.

It is the tragedy of South Africa that his humanity, pragmatism and industriousness were realised by many, particularly among the white community, only after close on to 40 years of an artificial silence imposed on him by constant banning. And it is a tragedy still, that those qualities are extolled by some, as if they were new.

Let it be said loud and clear today, that the qualities Slovo demonstrated in abundance in the past few years were the same attributes that spurred him to struggle, the qualities that drove him to join the liberation movement and the qualities that he helped engender in these organisations.

We in the Government of National Unity know intimately what vacuum Minister Joe Slovo’s departure has left in our midst. We shall miss not only his incisiveness, experience and verve. We are conscious that it is given to a few to so ably combine theory and practice, as Joe demonstrated in his portfolio.

But we know too that he has left us a legacy which will continue to guide our approach. And that is to mobilise all the role-players in any area of work for joint efforts to build a better life for all. The depth of it all is captured in the profound messages that we have received from the civics movement, mortgage-lending institutions, the construction industry, property owners’ associations, the banks and many others.
UN treads a minefield of controversy

John Fleming in Maputo

For about the price of a hamburger you can buy a T-72 anti-personnel mine containing enough TNT to blow your leg off up to the knee cap. To remove the same mine from the ground costs around $1,000 (R3,500).

In the past year, some 15,000 people were killed or maimed by landmines around the world, according to the International Red Cross. During the same period the United Nations spent millions on mine clearance operations.

Landmine clearance, in the past limited to a small number of companies, is fast becoming a growth industry. With an estimated 100-million landmines located in 30 countries around the world, business promises to be good in the future.

One of the biggest bidding wars on the horizon is Angola. If the peace holds, one of the first orders of business for the UN will be to rid the country of some of an estimated nine million landmines. The landmine clearance programme is written and top UN demining experts are already in Angola evaluating the situation. But if the UN goes about its contracting the same way it did in its present project in Mozambique, then controversy awaits around the corner.

That project was plagued by problems from the beginning. (An 18 month delay in awarding the contract resulted in about 1,000 landmine casualties according to Handicap International). But the most stinging criticism has come because of the choice of contractors. The UN picked a team made up of the British multinational Lonrho and Royal Ordnance (also British) and the South African company Mechem.

Lonrho, active in Mozambique for years, was one of a few companies that managed to continue operating in the country during the 16-year civil war, allegedly through protection agreements paid to the Renamo guerrilla army that operated in the areas of Lonrho agricultural and mining interests. In the early 1980s the company agreed to pay several hundred thousand dollars a month to Renamo in exchange for not attacking a Lonrho owned pipeline in the north of the country, according to the London-based Catholic Institute for International Relations. In effect, some say, the deal prolonged the war by supplying the cash-strapped guerrilla army with funds.

Many involved with the demining project here also complain that Lonrho commercial interests in Mozambique are the main beneficiaries of the contract. One foreign diplomat pointed out that Lonrho is only demining roads in the two provinces in Mozambique where most of its commercial activity is.

"Lonrho is contractually bound to clear roads only in Manica and Sofala provinces, but those are just the roads Lonrho needs to clear," the diplomat said. "The majority of those roads are not that important, except to Lonrho, while just across the border in Tete province there are some major roads that haven't been touched. It makes me sick, but you can't blame Lonrho for getting a good deal from the UN."

Royal Ordnance used to be the British government-run munitions supplier. In that role it manufactured, among other things, landmines. The UN Demining Expert, who makes recommendations to the UN authorities, is Patrick Blagden, a former Royal Ordnance employee. He will make recommendations about contracts for Angola.

Royal Ordnance promptly subcontracted the actual demining to Mechem. For years Mechem designed and developed landmines for the South African Defence Force. Since the SADF was a prime supplier to Renamo during the civil war, there is a good chance that some of the mines they are pulling out of the ground are the same ones they had a hand in supplying in the first place.

Mechem has a unique technique which uses heavy Casspir trucks that drive down virtually impassable roads collecting filtered air samples. The samples are packaged and sent to labs where a dog sniffs them for explosives. If explosives are detected, the team returns to that portion of the road and searches for the mine.

The UN contractors have cleared roads much faster than other contractors in Mozambique. According to Lonrho officials Mechem cleared 2,000 kilometres of road in Mozambique in less than 100 days. But many point out that the quality of the work is up to question since quality control is a duty of the UN and not an independent agency. But most object to what they see as an unethical practice of allowing companies to profit from both the sale and removal of landmines, or "double dipping."

"Such a scandal simply cannot be repeated in Angola," said Christian Provoost, the director of Handicap International in Mozambique. Provoost, as director of an agency that deals with 4,500 amputees a year (most are landmine victims), is an advocate of banning companies involved in munitions manufacturing from bidding on demining contracts.

Many Mozambicans feel abused by the UN's choice of contractors. "This is just one more thing that has characterised the UN behaviour in Mozambique," said Joao Paulo Coelho, a Mozambican historian who has written on the UN operation here. "Mozambicans have never had a say in the choice of the demining companies or anything else the UN has done here, we have been victims all around," he said.

The few Mozambicans who do benefit from working with the demining companies are paid between $70 and $100 a month, or about the same as a domestic maid is paid in the capital Maputo. The work often requires them to work six days a week under harsh conditions for months at a time.

The Lonrho team does not use Mozambicans to demine but has Mozambican support staff and has used manual deminers in the past.

"We wish we could use them. It certainly would save us a lot of money," said Lonrho manager in Mozambique, Leo Scheijde. "But we have found that the Mozambicans just are not adequately trained to do the work in a safe, effective manner."

In preparing to start demining in Angola, one would think the UN would set out to avoid controversy. But Blagden, who has travelled to Angola to look into demining possibilities, sees no problem with the method in Mozambique.

"I am not hired to decide moral issues," he said. "I would like to use the Mechem technology again. I think they are far ahead of anyone else, and I am happy with the work of Lonrho and Royal Ordnance and Mechem in Mozambique," he said.

Since Mechem is the only company in the world to possess the technology it stands to reason that it has a shot at winning a contract in Angola.
Gun-Free SA Campaign

Tel: (011) 326-0073 Fax: (011) 787-5432

A Nation-Wide Hand-In Of Guns - 16 December 1994

Vision

To make a material contribution to peace and stability in South Africa by involving the people of the country in eliminating guns from our society and by actually removing and destroying a significant percentage of those guns.

A National Crisis

South Africa is in the grip of a domestic arms race of frightening proportions. In addition to 3.5 million licensed guns, thousands of unlicensed guns are in circulation - all this while firearms play the major role in criminal and political violence.

The birth of Democracy in South Africa offers South Africans a unique opportunity to commit themselves to a peaceful future by reducing the number of firearms and other weapons in our land.

The Campaign

The Gun-Free South Africa Campaign is leading the movement to get South Africans to voluntarily hand in their guns and other weapons. The campaign focuses on licensed as well as unlicensed firearms and offers an equal challenge to South Africans of all backgrounds to disarm themselves.

We have requested President Mandela to proclaim an amnesty on 16 December 1994 for the handling in of licensed guns and the transfer of their licenses to the State, as well as the anonymous handing in of unlicensed guns without fear of prosecution. An extensive educational and media campaign will precede the Amnesty and hand-ins will happen at places of worship around the country.

The Campaign hopes to acknowledge each weapon voluntarily handed in by providing the donor with a certificate of thanks from President Mandela. All weapons handed in will be disabled immediately, and then destroyed at a public ceremony.

The Campaign also seeks to encourage the growth of a gun-free South African culture by having children hand in their toy guns and war-toys on 2 and 3 December, at their places of worship or other hand in points such as shopping centres and banks.

Background

The Gun-Free South Africa Campaign began in the Religious Bodies Committee of the Wits-Vaal Peace Secretariat. It is now a national campaign, endorsed by national leaders of the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Bahai religions.

Significant support has also been offered by the business community, women's movements and media personalities.

Can we commit ourselves to a peaceful future?

We must decide whether we want a nation where everyone carries a lethal weapon, or one where we disarm for the common good.

A first step to creating a safer, less violent South Africa should be for people to reconsider their own need to own a firearm, and to voluntarily hand in weapons for destruction.

A call to all South Africans

Each of our religions teaches us to prefer the peaceful resolution of conflict to violence. The time has come to offer a radical example to a nation which has seen too much death and maiming, and to our children who deserve to grow up in a gun-free society.

We invite all people, whether religious or not, to consider this call conscientiously and we welcome the participation of any who wish to join the Campaign.

The Campaign is concerned primarily with weapons causing the most deaths in this country: handguns and assault weapons, although owners of sporting weapons may also wish to participate.