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PERFORMING 'MIDLINGNESS': FREDERIK VAN ZYL  
SLABBERT AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN TRANSITION

Barry Shapiro



2 March 1940 – 14 May 2010

When he surveyed the prospects for meaningful negotiations between the African National Congress (ANC) and the ruling National Party (NP) in August 1988, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, former leader of the white liberal parliamentary opposition, suggested that it was “as important, if not more important, to consider how a democratic constitution can be achieved than to argue what its constituent elements ought to be.” “For democracy to become feasible in South Africa,” he continued, “democratic process must precede democratic content in constitution-making.”<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, “Can Democracy Be Negotiated in South Africa,” August 1988, in Slabbert, *The System and the Struggle: Reform, Revolt, and Reaction in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1989), 182–183. Also see Slabbert, “Alternative Political Models,” in Gideon Jacobs, ed., *South Africa—The Road Ahead* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 1986), 161: “It seems to make more sense to concentrate on *how* we can avoid such an end [the systematic destruction of human and natural resources] than to consider what would be preferable constitutional end products.”

As a quintessential liberal academic in South African politics, Slabbert, who is perhaps best-known for his February 1986 resignation from what he described as an “irrelevant” Parliament,<sup>55</sup> devoted his entire parliamentary and post-parliamentary political career to occupying and defending what he viewed as an increasingly vulnerable “moderate political centre” poised uneasily between two supposedly “competing redemptive ideologies.”<sup>56</sup> Indeed, in cultivating throughout his career the image and persona of the judicious analyst and reasonable man in politics, Slabbert can be regarded as a latter-day representative of a long-established positional tradition in Western liberalism that can be traced at least as far back as Francois Guizot’s ideas on the “*juste milieu*” in early 19<sup>th</sup> century France.<sup>57</sup> Yet, while the urge to present himself as a man of the centre was a constant for Slabbert, two distinct models of centrism can be detected in his political activity during the crucial decade of the 1980s. As I demonstrate in this essay, these two models track Slabbert’s analytic distinction between process and content. At the same time, I will also seek to show how Slabbert’s evolution as a political actor reflected his own emphasis on the importance of process over content.

As a Member of Parliament from 1974 to 1986 for the party successively known as the Progressive Party (PP), the Progressive Reform Party (PRP), and the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), and especially during the last seven of these years as PFP Leader, Slabbert, like most

<sup>55</sup> Patrick Laurence, “Swansong to the ‘Macabre Ballad’” *Weekly Mail* (14-20.02.1986); p. 14. Slabbert is quoted here as characterising parliamentary activity as a “grotesque ritual of irrelevance.” Also see Slabbert, “The Relevance of Parliament,” April 1987, *System and Struggle*, 92-100.

<sup>56</sup> Slabbert, “The Service of Opposition,” *Financial Mail* (07.09.1984):p. 54; Slabbert, “Fashioning a New Role for Fashionable Liberalism,” extract from Alan Paton Memorial Lecture, *Sunday Times*, 6 June 1993.

<sup>57</sup> See Vincent E. Starzinger, *Middlingness: Juste Milieu Political Theory in France and England, 1815-48* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), esp. 18-19.

of the "Progs" of that era, was dedicated to the pursuit of two blatantly contradictory objectives: 1) "growing the party" by somehow appealing to an expanded portion of the white electorate; and 2) speaking for, and somehow "representing", the interests of the voteless and unrepresented black majority. A full-throated pursuit of the first of these objectives would have forfeited whatever credit the progressives may have accumulated with liberation movement activists, while a stronger commitment to the second would have significantly compromised their never very robust electoral prospects. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the PFP and its earlier iterations always sought to stake out and build up a middle-ground between what Slabbert called the system and the struggle. What I especially want to bring out, however, is the way in which electoral considerations, in particular, led Slabbert, especially during his tenure as party leader, to concentrate on matters of content rather than process.

There was never any chance that the "Progs" would dislodge the NP from power. Even as the Official Opposition between 1977 and 1987, their high-water mark was no more than the 27 seats in a 178 member white Parliament that they won in 1981. Yet the bottom-line for progressive leaders was always how many seats they would win in the next election. Seemingly seeking to energise party workers, and undoubtedly stretching the limits of reasonable possibility somewhat, Slabbert told PFP gatherings in 1982 that the party could be competitive in 45 constituencies. Claiming that a combination of PFP growth and a strong right-wing Conservative Party showing in the next election could deny the hitherto entrenched "Nars" a majority, Slabbert argued that the P. W. Botha government would then have to negotiate with either the "Progs" or the right-wing and that it might well might choose to "move in our direction." "I am not coming to you and telling you," he stated, "that we are going to be the government after the next election—that is not possible. But I

can tell you that we can have a significant influence on the kind of decisions that will be taken. In other words, we can be involved, not only in protest politics, but in power politics. But that will depend on the number of seats that we can bring back."<sup>58</sup>

Without overemphasizing the degree to which the decisions of voters reflect policy choices, it goes without saying that one of the central endeavours of a political party seeking to win votes is to develop an attractive set of policy positions. In other words, to further belabour the obvious, one of the main things that any party contesting an election must do is answer the question of what it stands for. As the head of a commission set up in 1977 to codify PFP policies and principles regarding the establishment of a post-apartheid regime,<sup>59</sup> an assignment which served as a springboard to his elevation to party leadership two years later, Slabbert found himself knee-deep in detailed questions of constitutional content. In particular, "because he realised," as one prominent historian recently put it, "there was no electoral support for a system that reduced whites to permanent exclusion from power,"<sup>60</sup> he entered into a decade-long dance in which he and his party offered a shifting succession of varying schemes designed to bring about "full and equal citizenship rights for all", while avoiding a "winner-takes-all majority form of government" that would allow "the domination of one group over another."<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Slabbert, Speech Delivered When Addressing Various Regions During the Week of 16-21 August 1982, University of Cape Town Libraries, African Studies Collection, Colin Eglin Papers, BC 11103, G 16:1, 10-11.

<sup>59</sup> See Colin Eglin, *Crossing the Borders of Power* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2007), 177-178.

<sup>60</sup> Hermann Gillmore, *The Last Afrikaner Leaders: A Supreme Test of Power* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 212.

<sup>61</sup> Eglin, *Crossing the Borders*, 177-178.

In the early stages of this dance, from his work on the PFP constitutional commission to the publication in 1979, with David Welsh, of *South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power*, the centrepiece of Slabbert's strategic proposals for circumventing majority rule was the idea of a minority veto.<sup>62</sup> However, as this notion began to be picked up and gingerly put forward in the early 1980s by the more advanced elements within the NP, and as the need to maintain some credibility with a re-awakened liberation movement seemed to take on a new degree of urgency, Slabbert and the PFP soon abandoned its advocacy.<sup>63</sup> Instead, as the 1980s unfolded, PFP policies increasingly promoted individual rights as guaranteed by a Bill of Rights, an independent judiciary, and various blueprints for decentralising power. Yet whatever the particular constitutional content, the need to provide some formula that could claim to be democratic and, at the same time, that would serve to reassure anxious whites, remained a constant. Thus, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter who interviewed Slabbert in November 1985, only three months before his resignation from Parliament, wrote that "on the crucial black demand of one man/one vote, he hedges a bit," stating that "I don't believe simple majoritarianism is the answer."<sup>64</sup> For our purposes here, the essential point is that, as party politician and party leader, Slabbert was operating in an environment in which a fundamental part of the job description was proposing answers and engaging in debate and electoral combat with those who were proposing different answers.

The need to propose and debate answers became much less pressing in the wake of Slabbert's resignation from Parliament. For whatever combination of personal and political factors may have led to this

62 See Slabbert and Welsh, *South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979); 153-155; and Eghn, *Crossing the Borders*, 178.

63 See Giliomee, *Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 216-218.

64 *Wall Street Journal* (14.11.1985).

controversial decision, which continued for many years to stir up feelings of anger and abandonment among many erstwhile associates and supporters,<sup>65</sup> it provided him an opportunity to focus his energies on constitutional process rather than content. As the guiding spirit of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa (IDASA), which he co-founded in late 1986 with fellow ex-PFP Member of Parliament Alex Boraine, Slabbert was still working within what he saw as the political middle-ground, but in a very different way. "From the outset," as he later wrote, "Boraine and I were determined that IDASA should be non-aligned, not part of 'the struggle' or 'the system,' but that it should try to promote dialogue between members of each."<sup>66</sup> In other words, to generalise this shift in perspective, rather than position oneself in the political middle through the formulation and articulation of moderate and/or liberal principles and policies which seek to synthesise and/or compromise between radical and reactionary extremes, the centrist in this second model acts as more of a moderator or facilitator, promoting dialogue in an effort to bring political antagonists together to talk to each other in the hope that they will, ultimately, negotiate their own synthesis or compromise.

Such a new-found priority of process over content in Slabbert's activities was particularly evident in IDASA's most notable contribution to the South African transition, the celebrated conference at Da-

65 See for example Tony Leon, *On the Contrary: Leading the Opposition in a Democratic South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2008), 121-122.

66 Slabbert, *The Other Side of History: An Anecdotal Reflection on Political Transition in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2006), 48. Also see Alex Boraine, "An Amalgam that Worked," in Alfred LeMaire and Michael Savage, eds., *Van Zyl Slabbert—The Passion for Reason: Essays in Honour of an Afrikaner African* (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2010), 43: "Van and I got together immediately after we walked out of Parliament. We agreed that we would aim to focus on promoting dialogue, which would hopefully lead to formal negotiations in our country."

kar, Senegal in July 1987 in which a group of exiled ANC leaders met with a delegation of largely Afrikaner intellectuals and opinion-makers. While this almost week-long media event was only one of many pre-negotiation initiatives that preceded the commencement of serious negotiations between the ANC and the apartheid regime, political scientist Dan O'Meara's evaluation of its impact generally reflects the judgment of a range of commentators and analysts. According to O'Meara, the "shockwaves" generated by the "trek to Dakar" helped build "a groundswell for change within leading Afrikaner circles." As he put it, "in effectivly demythologising the ANC in the collective mind of much of this Afrikaner establishment," Dakar and the work of IDASA as a whole "slowly legitimised the once-unthinkable—that negotiations with the ANC were not just inevitable, but would happen sooner rather than later." In similar vein, Stel-lenbosch political philosopher Willie Esterhuysen, a central figure in a parallel but more secret pre-negotiation initiative in which the ANC met with a group of Afrikaners more closely connected to the government than Slabbert's delegation, credited the Dakar event with having a significant impact in preparing the ground for future negotiations in that "it raised public consciousness for a negotiated settlement."<sup>67</sup>

Whatever the impact of the Dakar conference, the manner in which Slabbert operated at this gathering provides a good illustration of his evolution from party politician to facilitator and bridge-builder. Though the members of the white delegation were hardly government supporters, and indeed can, in most cases, be categorised as lib-

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67 O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994* (Randburg: Ravan Press, 1996), 374; and Esterhuysen, *Endgame: Secret Talks and the End of Apartheid* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012), 34. Also see Daniel Lieberfeld, "Evaluating the Contributions of Unofficial Diplomacy to Conflict Termination in South Africa, 1984-1990," *Journal of Peace Research*, 39, 3 (2002): 366-369.

erals of various shades who saw themselves as principled adversaries of apartheid, there was a strong current of disagreement and contentiousness between what the press characterized as the "two sides." In particular, there was a wide chasm between the ANC position and the views of most of the white delegates on questions relating to the efficacy and morality of armed struggle. In addition, there was sharp debate and disputation on the familiar issue of how the rights of minorities might be protected in a post-apartheid regime and strong disagreement over whether a future negotiation process should be, as turned out to be the case in 1992-94, largely two-sided (that is, the ANC vs. the government) or whether other anti-apartheid groups, including white liberals, "would have an equal voice in shaping a new South Africa."<sup>68</sup>

As the primary organizer, and with Thabo Mbeki conference co-chair, Slabbert largely floated above these battles and sought to minimise the extent of the disagreements that surfaced. While many of the liberal conferees, accustomed as they were to offering answers to the eternal problem of how to resolve the South African question, were eager to delineate and reiterate what an ANC executive committee member called "their pet theories and scenarios,"<sup>69</sup> Slabbert's main concern was to highlight the degree to which consensus and common ground prevailed. Thus, while noting that most of the members of his delegation regretted the ANC's continued commitment to armed struggle, he told an interviewer that "it was made

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68 Richard Everett, "Breaking Out of the Cocoon," *Africa Reports*, (September-October 1987): 31. For other reports which stress disagreements between the two delegations, see Stanley Uys, "Dakar: ANC-Afrikaner Talks and Thoughts," *Front File: Southern Africa Brief*, (July 1987); Mike Robertson, "ANC reply to violence 'not satisfactory,'" *Cape Times*, (11.07.1987); *Sunday Times* (12.07.1987); and *Weekly Mail* (17-23.09.1987): p. 6.  
69 Pallo Jordan, "A View From the Other Side of the Table," *Weekly Mail* 17-23.09.1987): p. 7.

abundantly clear to all that the prime responsibility for reducing the escalation of violence through armed struggle lay with the Government". At the same time, he maintained that "an extraordinary meeting of minds on a number of important issues" had occurred.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps most importantly, in terms of preparing the ground for future communication between the ANC and the government, Slabbert was especially intent, as was the ANC itself, on fashioning the Dakar meeting into a vehicle for ANC legitimisation and de-demonisation. ANC delegates, he told a reporter, "had been far more willing to search for areas of common understanding and to occupy the middle ground than on the previous occasions he had met them."<sup>71</sup> Whereas Slabbert had been heavily invested before his resignation from Parliament in forging links with Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Zulu nationalist Inkatha movement,<sup>72</sup> his focus at the Dakar conference was in promoting the idea that the ANC was the "biggest political group in South Africa today" and that "no solution is possible without the involvement of the ANC." Indeed, in keeping with this theme, he dismissed characterisations of the ANC as "a terrorist organization and a small group of Moscow-dominated communists" as "government

<sup>70</sup> *Sunday Times* (12.09.1987); *Cape Times* (13.09.1987).

<sup>71</sup> *Sunday Times* (12.09.1987).

<sup>72</sup> See "Rebels Hold Out on Talks With Pretoria," *New York Times* (14.10.1985); Brian Hackland, "Incorporationist Ideology as a Response to Political Struggle: The Progressive Federal Party of South Africa, 1960-1980," in *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa*, eds. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido (London: Longman, 1987), 376-378; and Thomas G. Mitchell, *Indispensable Traitors: Liberal Parties in Settler Conflicts* (Westwood, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002), 55. Close links between Slabbert and what was then the Progressive Party, and Buthelezi can be traced back at least as far as 1970 in the founding of the interracial discussion group Synthesis. (See Eglin, *Crossing the Borders*, 112-113; and Paul Cassar, "The Emergence and Impact of Dr. F. van Zyl Slabbert in South African Opposition Politics, 1974-1981," Master's thesis, Department of History, University of the Orange Free State, 1984, 7.)

propaganda."<sup>73</sup> The essential subtext of Slabbert's message at Dakar was perhaps best expressed by journalist Allister Sparks: "If white South Africa does not negotiate soon with this essentially moderate and sophisticated non-racial organization—a body that Pretoria has falsely demonised—then they may find themselves having to do so with an extremist one that will replace it."<sup>74</sup>

It may be objected that instead of embodying a different model of centrism, Slabbert's resignation from Parliament and subsequent activity at Dakar and other IDASA venues represented a sharp turn to the left and a shift from an alliance with Buthelezi and Inkatha to an alliance with Mbeki and the ANC. A version of this line of thinking has been recently advanced by Hermann Gilloomee, who, incidentally, was one of the white delegates most at odds with the ANC at Dakar. According to Gilloomee, Slabbert "had no intention of remaining in the political wilderness" and having concluded that the ANC would likely come to power in the relatively near future, was angling for a top position in an ANC government.<sup>75</sup> However this depiction of Slabbert as being primarily motivated during this period by considerations of political ambition does not, in my view, possess the ring of truth. Without delving too deeply into the psychological realm, which in any case would require a more complete study of the sources than I have been able to undertake, Slabbert seems to have been more of a reluctant and even diffident politician anxious to avoid being soiled by the moral compromises inevitably associated with playing politics, rather than an ambitious careerist.<sup>76</sup> As he him-

<sup>73</sup> Anthony Johnson, "Some Tough Issues on the ANC-Dakar Agenda," *Cape Times* 09.07.1987; and "ANC biggest political group in SA—Slabbert," *Cape Argus* 17.09.1987.

<sup>74</sup> Sparks, "Whites Elated by Black Africa's Jubilant Welcome" *Observer* (UK) (17.09.1987), Mayburye Archives, University of the Western Cape, MCH 02, Box 21.

<sup>75</sup> Gilloomee, *Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 227.

<sup>76</sup> See especially Ray Swart, *Progressive Odyssey: Towards a Democratic South Africa*

self claimed (in an account that is largely backed up by then-Progressive Party leader Colin Eglin, who recruited him as a parliamentary candidate): "I stumbled into politics [in 1974] through a misunderstanding. I was assured I would not win, that I was just helping out. Twelve years later I stumbled out of Parliament. In those twelve years, I developed a reasonably adequate understanding about the use, abuse and seduction of power. One could say I had a grandstand seat from where I could observe the administration of repression and patronage."<sup>77</sup>

Rather than being a comfortably-situated player in the game of power politics, Slabbert appears as more of a political dilettante, driven most fundamentally, I suggest, by a visceral distaste for racial injustice originally reflected in his early inclination towards a religious vocation and by an intellectual predilection, as a working sociologist, to combine academic theorising with pragmatic problem-solving. As such, his decision in the mid-1980s to "throw.... everything he had," as Gilloome succinctly puts it, "into getting the ANC legalised,"<sup>78</sup> was essentially rooted in a pragmatic and analytic assess-

(Cape Town: Human and Rousseau, 1991), 156-167, 165; and Jannie Gagliano, "Who We Were," *Passion for Reason*, 32-33. A similar view was also stressed by Colin Eglin in an interview conducted by the author, Cape Town, 21 May 2013.

<sup>77</sup> Slabbert, "Is Academic Freedom Still an Issue in the New South Africa?" University of Cape Town, 2003, UCT Libraries, African Studies Collection, BAP 378. 121 SLAB. Eglin confirms that the main strategic objective of Slabbert's candidacy was to entice a large number of volunteer opposing workers into his electoral district so as to facilitate Eglin's own more likely victory in a nearby district. While not mentioning any "assurance," he makes it clear that Slabbert's eventual win in the campaign was highly unexpected. (*Crossing the Borders*, 137.) For an account of how Slabbert more or less "stumbled" into PFP party leadership, see Cassar, "Emergence and Impact", 150-196.

<sup>78</sup> Gilloome, "Research and Policy Brief: Lessons from History for the Opposition," 21 May 2013, <http://www.sairt.org.za/sairt-today-1/research-and-policy-brief-lessons-from-history-for-the-opposition-2013-21st-may-2013>, accessed 3 August 2013. For Slabbert's own reflection on his aims at Dakar: "We simply wanted to assist in making dialogue with

ment that a relatively peaceful end to white domination would be simply impossible without the ANC playing a central role in negotiations for a new constitutional framework."<sup>79</sup> Again the accent here is on process rather than content, on seeking to contribute towards opening the lines of communication between a particular group and its enemies rather than on endorsing (or critiquing) the policies and positions of that particular group. Indeed, the frequent characterisation of Slabbert's role during this stage of his career as being that of a mediator or arbitrator obscures the extent to which process dominated content in his thinking at this point.<sup>80</sup> For a mediator or an arbitrator must dig deeply enough into the content of a dispute to formulate compromise proposals and, in the case of an arbitrator, to make a ruling on content, while the fundamental task of a facilitator

the ANC legitimate" (*Other Side of History*, 54.)

<sup>79</sup> This is not to discount the contention that he was also influenced by an urge to identify with the moral validity of the ANC and a longing for emotional acceptance by it, particularly as reflected in his susceptibility to Mbeki's adroit charm offensive. (See especially Mark Gevisser, *Thabo Mbeki: The Dream Deferred* [Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball, 2007], 496-498, 513-515; Gilloome, *Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 222-223; and Slabbert, *Tough Choices: Reflections of an Afrikaner African* [Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2000], 103-104.) In my view, this emotional bonding with Mbeki and the ANC, in counteracting some of Slabbert's own stereotypical thinking about the ANC, helped open his eyes to a more realistic assessment of that organisation. He had, in other words, to go through a process in which the ANC was de-demonised in his own eyes before he could publicly promote ANC de-demonisation. At the same time, whatever emotional dynamics may have been in play, Slabbert always maintained his political and ideological distance from the ANC, which, no doubt, rendered him insufficiently reliable to be tapped for a high-level position in the post-apartheid regime (see Ezerethyuse, *Endgame*, 345, note 1). For Slabbert's allusion in an earlier phase of his career to a stereotypical anti-communism as a means of demonisation of the ANC, see *Rand Daily Mail*, 7 August 1978, as cited in Cassar, "Emergence and Influence", 135-36, where he raises the spectre of black domination, which is then linked to racialist domination.

<sup>80</sup> See for example Gilloome, *Last Afrikaner Leaders*, 227, where the notion of Slabbert maintaining his independence through promoting himself as a mediator or arbitrator co-exists somewhat uneasily with the idea that his ultimate goal was a top position in an ANC government.



or bridge-builder is to grease the wheels of communication and to allow the contending parties to attempt to work out their own resolution to a dispute.

Slabber's most important contribution to the South African transition was in making Dakar and similar events happen, in bringing together people with little or no previous contact with each other and thereby initiating a process, in the words of Breyten Breytenbach, of "breaking down the walls of mutual distrust and ignorance."<sup>81</sup>

As inheritors of the hallowed traditions of centuries of Western liberalism, South African liberals had naturally long believed that they had much to contribute to debates about how a democratic and non-discriminatory South Africa might be structured, and that liberal ideas, principles, and policy positions would help provide answers to the historic problems confronting their country. Yet whatever richness and depth such liberal contributions may have added to the intellectual quality of such debates, it is probably fair to say that one of the most common responses that liberals received for their troubles was a healthy dose of contempt and suspicion, both from defenders of the apartheid system and proponents of black liberation. In particular, even moderate black leaders deplored, for many generations, what they often characterised as white liberal paternalism and condescension.<sup>82</sup> Slabber's process-oriented approach to political centrism may have served to neutralise and short-circuit some of this historic tension, providing, through IDASA and similar initiatives, a way for liberals to play a useful role in the transition to democracy without being subject to the usual charges of seeking to impose their own

81 Breytenbach, "The Slow Quietness of Life," *Passion for Reason*, 8.

82 See for example Z. K. Matthews' reference in 1953 to the "reluctance of the average liberal white South African to work with instead of for the African" (Janet Robertson, *Liberalism in South Africa, 1948-1963* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1971], 118).

ideas on the oppressed masses whom they were supposedly trying to help. In any event, the self-restraint implied in Slabber's post-parliamentary inclination to encourage those representing the most politically-significant elements of the population (the ANC and the government) to work out their own answers reminds us that, along with the more content-laden precepts that can be found in tomes on political philosophy and constitutional theory, political humility, in the sense of the willingness to let those voicing different versions of truth do most of the talking, is also a liberal value.



#### REVIEW

Leopold Scholtz, *The SADF in the Border War 1966-1989* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2013). This is the first major, scholarly history of what the South African Defence Force (SADF) called "the Border war", written by one who is on the whole sympathetic to the SADF but is not entirely uncritical of its actions and tries to see things from 'the other side'. Scholtz calls his book 'only a first attempt' at what is primarily a military history of the war (ix). Scholtz is at his best in discussing SADF strategy, at his most biased when discussing, say, the SADF raid on Cassinga in 1978. Scholtz does not see the war as primarily fought either to oppose or to defend apartheid and colonial domination, but by SWAPO and its allies to bring about a revolution and by the SADF to buy 'time for a better and more durable peace to ripen' (97). But a 'revolutionary' outcome was never likely, and the continuation of the war came at enormous cost. Scholtz is right to say that 'as further sources become public, the picture will become even fuller and more nuanced' (ix). While those interested in the military history of the war may long refer to this book, those looking for a sober general account of the war and its consequences will need to look elsewhere.

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

*Stephen Gray*, a prolific writer and poet, was Professor of English at the Rand Afrikaans University until 1992.

*Barry Shapiro* is Professor of History at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania. His Ph.D (1988) was entitled 'Revolutionary Justice in Paris, 1789-90'. Email: bshapiro@allegheny.edu

*Randolph Vigne*, a scholar and former activist, is a regular contributor to the *QB*. Email: randolphvigne@gmail.com

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## FORTHCOMING

Among the articles we expect to publish in the next issue of the *QB* are 'South Africa's endangered Heritage of Traditional Music: Survival Strategies' by David Dargie, Adjunct Professor in the Music Department at the University of Fort Hare, and 'Plants, Patronage and Promotion: Lord Caledon's Connections at the Cape of Good Hope' by John Mcaleer, Lecturer in History at the University of Southampton and previously Curator of Imperial and Maritime History at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, England. We also hope to include a review by Irina Filatova, co-author of *The Hidden Thread. Russia and South Africa in the Soviet Era*, of Hugh Macmillan, *The Lusaka Years. The ANC in Exile in Zambia 1963 to 1994* (Jacana Media, 2013), and to reinstate the 'Notes and News' section, which many readers have found so informative in the past. Please send any items for this to the editor.

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*Randolph Vigne*