

Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa – Background

For those interested in particularly the Dutch contribution to the international solidarity movement with the anti-apartheid and national liberation struggle in Southern Africa, here an initial selection of information sources is presented which can serve as background information with the archives and documentation collections of the former anti-apartheid groups which were handed over by NiZA to the IISH.

Web dossiers

First of all a web dossier: [The Netherlands against Apartheid 1948-1994](#): Anti-Apartheid and Southern Africa Solidarity Movements in the Netherlands, 1948-1994. Early 2009 this dossier, which was initially produced by Richard Hengeveld for the website of the Netherlands institute for Southern Africa, has been revised by the author and a number of illustrations were added. The dossier contains an illustrated chronological review of the Dutch anti-apartheid organisations and activities, as well as a list of mainly local anti-apartheid initiatives in The Netherlands in the second half of the 20th century.

Early 2012 a second web dossier was added on [Nelson Mandela and The Netherlands](#). This web dossier deals with the image of Mandela in The Netherlands throughout the years and the Dutch campaigns for his release and offers personal recollections of Mandela by Dutch activists, photographic impressions of his visits to The Netherlands and a description of the archival, audio-visual and campaigning materials on Mandela in the IISH collection.

Publications

In South Africa the South Africa Democracy Education Trust (SADET) is publishing a series of studies on the history of the national liberation struggle in South Africa and the international solidarity movement under the title [The Road to Democracy](#) ([link is external](#)).

The first two volumes deal with the struggle against apartheid in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, and in 2008 Volume 3 was published (in two parts) on the international solidarity with the struggle against apartheid under the title *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, Volume 3, International Solidarity. Part 1 of this volume deals mainly with the roles of the United Nations and (the anti-apartheid movements in) the Western European countries. Former Holland Committee on Southern Africa leader Sietse Bosgra wrote the chapter in this book on the Netherlands, titled [From Jan van Riebeeck to solidarity with the struggle: The Netherlands, South Africa and apartheid](#) (pdf, 4,4Mb). Former Boycott Outspan Actie leader Esau du Plessis recently wrote an open letter criticising Bosgra's chapter, which we also present here: [Open letter Esau du Plessis](#) (pdf, 1,2Mb).

In July 2009 Esau du Plessis produced a substantial report on the boycott campaign against South African Outspan oranges and the first years (1973-1974) of the Boycott Outspan Action (BOA) in The Netherlands, titled: [The story of Outspan oranges in The Netherlands and the campaign of the Boycott Outspan Action \(BOA\)](#) (pdf 218Kb).

In the Fall of 2012 Hugh Crosfield, an academic researcher at the Royal Holloway University of London, created a website in which the work of the BOA (Boycott Outspan Action) is being profiled: [hughcrosfield.wordpress.com](#) ([link is external](#)). Over the last two years he has been researching in depth the work of the BOA. His thesis is titled *Commodity boycotts, activist bodywork and race: a study of the anti-apartheid campaigns of the Boycott Outspan Action (1970-1992) and the anti-trafficking campaigns of Stop de Traffik (2006-2013)*.

In 2001 the South African researcher Genevieve Lynette Klein published a study with the University of Pretoria on the role of the Dutch anti-apartheid organisations from 1960 to 1995: [De strijd tegen apartheid - The role of the anti-apartheid organisations in The Netherlands 1960-1995](#) (124 p.; pdf, 526Kb).

In November 2012 the South African journal *Historia* published an article by professor Otto Terblanche of the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth on [Amsterdam as 'n anti-apartheidstad](#). (p.150-181; pdf; 400Kb). In June 2013 the *Journal of Contemporary Journalism* published an article by the same author titled ["De overval": aanslag op Suid-Afrikaanse bibliotheek in Amsterdam](#). In March 2014 prof. Terblanche in the *Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif vir Natuurwetenskap en Tegnologie* an article on [Die Nederlandse kulturele boikot teen Suid-Afrika: 'n Ontleding](#) ; with English abstract).

In September 2013 Dutch researcher Roeland Muskens received a doctorate of the University of Amsterdam with a thesis titled *Aan de goede kant – Een geschiedenis van de Nederlandse anti-apartheidsbeweging 1960-1990* (On the good side – A history of the Dutch anti-apartheid movement 1960-1990). Based on a large number of interviews and extensive archival research (amongst others at the International Institute of Social History) the author assesses the impact of the broad anti-apartheid movement on Dutch public opinion and politics in this period. To learn more about this book, you can read a [six-page summary](#) (PDF; 161 KB) of the thesis. In April 2014 Dutch publisher Aspekt launched a book based on Muskens' thesis: *Aan de goede kant: biografie van de Nederlandse anti-apartheidsbeweging 1960-1990*.

Early 2014 *Radical History Review* published an article by Peter Limb, Richard Knight and Christine Root on anti-apartheid archives and collections throughout the world – including the anti-apartheid and Southern Africa collection of the IISH – titled [The Global Antiapartheid Movement: A Critical Analysis of Archives and Collections](#) ([link is external](#)).

In December 2014, on the occasion of the 4th UNI World Indaba held in Cape Town, the Dutch Trade Union Federation FNV published a 36-page booklet titled *Help the FNV fight apartheid! 40 Years of Dutch trade union solidarity*, researched and written by Richard Hengeveld largely on the basis of anti-apartheid and trade union archives held by the IISH. A fully referenced version is [available as pdf](#) (2MB).

In the Summer of 2018 Marjan Boelsma of the former Azania Committee launched her website [Against forgetting \(external link\)](#) ('On the significance of solidarity, decolonization and the liberation struggle in the past and their impact on the present.') with information and a blog on the Azania archive.

In the years after 1994 various publications were published in the Netherlands on the relations between the Netherlands and Southern Africa in general and more specifically on the role of the anti-apartheid and solidarity groups. Through the archivist of the anti-apartheid and Southern Africa collection a number of copies of some of these publications can still be obtained (for packing and shipping costs) - contact: ksc@iisg.nl ([link sends e-mail](#))

Some of these publications are also available online:

- *Embargo: apartheid's oil secrets revealed* (edited by R. Hengeveld and J. Rodenburg, Shipping Research Bureau; Amsterdam University Press, 1996, 399 p.), also [available as pdf](#) (10Mb)
- *Brothers from the West: solidarity in the Netherlands with Mozambique 1962-2005* = Irmãos do ocidente: Solidariedade na Holanda com Moçambique 1962-2005 (uitgave Arquivo Histórico Moçambique i.s.m. NiZA en Hivos, 2005, 71 p.), also [available as pdf](#) (5Mb)
- *Namibia and The Netherlands: 350 years of relations* (edited by Huub Hendrix; uitgave Nederlandse ambassade in Windhoek, Namibië, 2006, 156 p.), also [available as pdf](#) (5Mb)
- *Een vriendschapsband van twintig jaar: Stedenband Amsterdam-Beira* (Nini van Driel; uitgave NiZA, 2005), also [available as pdf](#) (5Mb)

Links

Some important websites with archives and other information on the history of the anti-apartheid and national liberation struggle in Southern Africa and the international solidarity movement.

- [African Activist Archive Project \(USA\)](#) ([link is external](#)):
Project to preserve records and memories of activism in the United States to support the struggles of African peoples against colonialism, apartheid, and social injustice from the 1950s through the 1990s, with archival records, documents, posters, buttons (including a large selection from the NiZA collection), photos, etc. Besides the website contains a very comprehensive list of 'related sites' (with links and short descriptions of the websites).
- [African National Congress](#) ([link is external](#)) - collections and documents:
This section of the ANC's website includes many documents on the history of the African National Congress, the international anti-apartheid and solidarity movements with the liberation struggle in South Africa and biographies of leaders, militants and martyrs of the South African liberation struggle. This website also features a lot of audio-visual items, partly made available by the IISH – see <http://research.ancarchives.org.za/galleries/>
- [British AAM archives website](#) ([link is external](#))
Website titled '*Forward to Freedom: the history of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, 1959-1994*'. A beautiful website featuring videos, photographs, posters and documents from the AAM's archive at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford as well as interviews with former activists who tell what motivated them to get involved in the international struggle against apartheid.
- [Nelson Mandela Foundation, Anti-Apartheid Movement archives](#): ([link is external](#))
The Memory Centre of the Nelson Mandela Foundation in Johannesburg offers an overview of a substantial selection of archives of anti-apartheid activities internationally. The material has been organised by country with a division between AAMs and other organisations with anti-apartheid activities. Besides the national sections, also sections on regional and international organisations have been included.
- [No Easy Victories](#): ([link is external](#))
This website edited by William Minter a.o. American activists not only presents significant excerpts from the book *No Easy Victories: African Liberation and American Activists over a Half Century, 1950-2000*, but also an Internet search facility which gives priority to information on the history of the Southern African liberation struggle: Smart Search Southern Africa Liberation History.
- [Nordic Documentation on the Liberation Struggle in Southern Africa Project](#): ([link is external](#))
This website of the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden concentrates on the role of the Nordic countries in the late 20th century history of national liberation in Southern Africa and presents both archives, interviews, audio-visual material, etc. and a link collection of websites of relevance to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa.
- [South African History Archive](#): ([link is external](#))
The South African History Archive (SAHA) is an independent archive dedicated to documenting and supporting the struggles for justice in South Africa located at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The SAHA collection includes materials on the UDF and the TRC.