

## *Conference programme*

# **The African National Congress at 100**

**Organised by:** African Studies Centre, ISS and ISS-SCHOLAS

**Venue:** International Institute of Social Studies (ISS-EUR)

**Date:** 10 September 2012

**COMPULSORY REGISTRATION:** [www.iss.nl/ANC100](http://www.iss.nl/ANC100)

### **Morning session 10.00-11.30**

Opening and Welcome:

10.00-10.30 **Leo de Haan**, Rector of the ISS

**H.E. Peter Goosen**, Ambassador of South Africa

Keynote lectures:

10.30-11.00 **Tom Lodge**, University of Limerick: Patrimonial politics in the ANC: past and present.

11.00-11.30 **Sakhela Buhlungu**, University of Pretoria: The relationship between the ANC and trade unions: historical legacies and contemporary dilemma's.

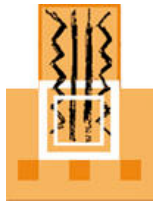
11.30-12.00 Coffee break

### **Early afternoon session 12.00-13.00**

12.00-12.30 Discussion, led by **Freek Schiphorst**, ISS

12.30-13.00 **Ineke van Kessel**, ASC: Nelson Mandela: the construction of an icon (powerpoint presentation)

13.00-14.00 Lunch



### **Late afternoon sessions 14.00-15.00**

Chair: **Jeff Handmaker**, ISS/Wits School of Law

14.00-14.15 **Stephen Ellis**, ASC/VU: The Origins of the ANC's Armed Struggle, 1948-1961.

14.15-14.30 **Heather Hughes**, University of Lincoln: The ANC and a century of struggle for gender equality in South Africa

14.30-14.45 **Conny Braam**, ex- Anti-Apartheidsbeweging Nederland: Operation Vula

14.45-15.00 Tea break

15.00-15.15 **Erik Baehre**, University of Leiden: From labour to redistribution: the last 100 years

15.15-15.30 **Susan Newman**, ISS: ANC economic policies and post apartheid economic realities

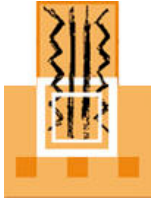
15.30-15.45 **Kier Schuringa**, International Institute for Social History / NIZA: The anti-apartheid and southern Africa collection at IISH

15.45-16.30 Discussion, facilitated by **Jeff Handmaker**

16.30-17.15 Roundtable organised by ISS-Scholas, including **Thandiwe Matthews** and **Farouk Nyende**.

17.15 - 17.30 Closing Words

17.30 -18.30 Reception, with drinks, photographic exhibition and music



## Introduction

In January 2012, the ANC opened its centenary celebrations in Bloemfontein (Mangaung) with a golf tournament. Interpretations of the symbolic significance of this event varied widely. Did the ANC celebrate the consolidation of its role as South Africa's new black elite, having at long last arrived at a par with the privileged white elite and middle class? Or, was it a callous choice that illustrated how the ANC had become disconnected from South Africa's working class and the poor, to whom it had promised a 'better life for all'?

In its 18 years in government, the ANC has achieved important progress. With the abolition of apartheid, South Africa has become a liberal democracy, in which the rule of law, democratic elections and the legal equality of all its citizens are taken for granted. Millions of people gained access to water, electricity, housing, education and health care. A modest but extensive scheme of social grants and benefits has made South Africa by far the most accomplished welfare state on the African continent. Black South Africans have regained their sense of dignity.

However, much remains to be done. The record of the ANC as ruling party is also marked by massive corruption, self-enrichment, patronage and ineptitude. In recent years, the party has manifested more authoritarian tendencies, attempting to increase its control over the judiciary and the independent media. In the year of its centenary celebrations, the ANC is deeply divided along factional lines, all vying for power and privilege. As party and state have become intertwined, the sense of paralysis within the ANC extends to a paralysis of state institutions. While welfare policies have addressed the plight of the poor and destitute, the gap between rich and poor has become even wider than under apartheid. Having recently surpassed Brazil, South Africa is now the world's most unequal society.

In this conference, a wide range of speakers will address different aspects of the ANC's history and its role as ruling party, as well as broader trends in present-day South Africa.

The programme leaves ample space for discussion and contributions from the audience. And yes, we do intend to celebrate as well: after the formal sessions you're all invited to join in with drinks, snacks and music.



## Abstracts

**Tom Lodge**, Patrimonial politics in the ANC: past and present

The ANC's venal record in power (especially with respect to local government) as well as the procedures it employs to secure electoral support invites a retrospective search for patrimonial and clientalist predispositions in its own earlier history. Conventionally the ANC's history is considered apart from the history of those who for one reason or another chose to work "within the system". This paper will question this separation of the trajectories of "struggle" politics from the political pathways followed by Africans around official institutions. In the 1940s and 1950's despite resolutions to boycott board elections, plenty of ANC elders, particularly those drawn from more genteel sections of township communities joined the boards and belonged to them in the 1950s. Though formally consultative bodies, Advisory Boards could exercise decisive influence in administrative allocations of public goods: they were centres of clientalist politics. More broadly this paper will trace friendship, family, dynastic and kinship connections among ANC leaders to show how cohorts and solidarities were constituted historically and how they continue to shape contemporary political life.

**Sakhela Buhlungu**, The relationship between the ANC and trade unions: historical legacies and contemporary dilemmas

This paper addresses itself to the theme of the African National Congress (ANC) on the occasion of its centenary celebrations in 2012 and pays specific attention to the relationship between the party to trade unions. The traditional January 8 statement of the party's national executive committee expressed pride at what it called the "strong historical relationship with the working class", expressed though its relationship with the South African Communist party and the trade unions. It is nearly impossible to discuss the activities and struggles of the ANC during the last 60 years without reference to the trade unions, specifically those of black workers. However, the relationship has not always been a smooth one nor has it always been characterised by equality of power relations. While the post-apartheid period has seen greater and more institutionalised collaboration between the ANC and the more influential section of the trade union movement, many of the contradictions and ambiguities characteristic of the relationship have also been brought into sharp relief. The paper therefore considers how some of these ambiguities and contradictions are the result of historical processes arising out of the anti-colonial / anti-apartheid resistance and the nature of the transition to democracy. The work of Frederick Cooper (1996) on relations



between liberation movements and social movements such as trade unions during decolonisation processes is used to provide a theoretical framework for understanding the dilemmas faced by the ANC's relationship to trade unions in contemporary South Africa.

### **Ineke van Kessel**, Nelson Mandela: the construction of an icon

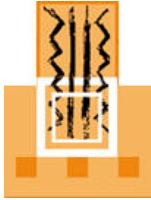
How did Nelson Mandela become the undisputed leader of the freedom struggle, and subsequently a universal icon, a symbol of the struggle for justice and reconciliation? In the course of a long life, Nelson Mandela has been cast in many different roles. In the eyes of black South Africa, he was a freedom fighter as well as an eloquent representative of the small black elite, while the South African government branded him as a terrorist and a communist. Black South Africa cherished the militant image of Nelson Mandela as leader of the armed struggle, but for propaganda purposes in western capitals, the ANC in a later phase cultivated the image of Mandela as a liberal democrat, committed to the rule of law and human rights. Nelson Mandela went to prison as one of the leaders of ANC. Twenty-seven years later, he emerged as the undisputed leader, hailed by many as the Messiah –or at the very least a new Moses- who would deliver them from the evils of apartheid. Prison was a crucial phase in the transformation of Nelson Mandela from an impatient African nationalist leader to the universally acclaimed hero who no longer needed to impress people because he exuded a natural authority. In my presentation, I will use images and cartoons to visualise Mandela's many different roles and images.

### **Stephen Ellis**, The Origins of the ANC's Armed Struggle, 1948-1961

The ANC's armed struggle against the apartheid state has been central to its self-image and its claim to historical legitimacy. Popular accounts of how the ANC came to adopt a policy of armed struggle, leading to the public announcement of Umkhonto we Sizwe in December 1961, omit key aspects of the turn to armed struggle. This paper will try to reconstruct the course of events with a view to throwing new light on South Africa's subsequent history.

### **Erik Bähre**, From Labour to Redistribution: the last 100 years

In the 20th century, labour deeply affected kinship and other personal relationships, and labour was central to political struggles for citizenship and equality in South Africa. One of the results of liberation was that redistribution became much more important. Contemporary issues revolve around the redistribution of social grants, development aid, BEE support programmes,



commercial insurance, and one might even include pentecostal churches. What are the social and political implications of the unprecedented expansion of redistribution, and how does it affect citizenship, kinship, and other personal relations?

**Heather Hughes**, The ANC and a century of struggle for gender equality in South Africa

Women were not admitted to full membership of the ANC on its formation in 1912, yet this did not stop them from waging a sometimes militant struggle for their rights: an observation that might be taken as emblematic of the ambivalence and tension that has characterised the ANC's position on 'the gender question' ever since. This paper presents a brief analysis of current scholarship on the history of gender relations in South Africa and how these have intersected with race and class to produce and reproduce profound social inequalities. It then surveys the ANC's efforts to address gender inequalities through the period 1912-1994, and critically assesses the government's record on gender issues since the coming of majority rule.

**Kier Schuringa**, The anti-apartheid and southern Africa collection at IISH

In 2008 the International Institute for Social History (IISH), University of Amsterdam acquired an extensive collection of archival materials relating to the anti-apartheid and Southern Africa solidarity groups in The Netherlands. It concerns the archives and related library and documentary collections of the three former anti-apartheid groups, which merged into the Netherlands institute for Southern Africa (NiZA) in 1997. The collected archives consist of documents from organizations such as the South Africa Committee (from the 1960s), the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Angola Committee/Holland Committee on Southern Africa, the Eduardo Mondlane Foundation, Institute for Southern Africa and Broadcasting for Radio Freedom. They also include materials from and about well-known activists, such as Sietse Bosgra, Conny Braam, Peter Waterman and Klaas de Jonge, and the archives of a number of local Southern Africa groups. Together with all of the archives of anti-apartheid groups, such as the working group Kairos, and the SA/NAM Association, the Defence and Aid Fund Nederland, the Azania Komitee, and the Landelijke Zuid-Afrika Groep of the ABVA-KABO and those of private individuals like writer and journalist Martin Bailey, which are already housed at the IISH, this handover will create an unprecedentedly rich collection on the struggle in Southern Africa and the international campaign against apartheid. These archives and collections cover the period 1960 to 2000.