

The year in review

MEMORIAL LECTURES, CONFERENCES AND COLLOQUIA

In 2006 the Trust commemorated two important tenth anniversaries, namely that of the death of Harold Wolpe and that of the establishment of the Trust. Two major events were planned to mark these anniversaries.

The 2006 memorial lecture was presented by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. The lecture, entitled 'Real Leadership' was hosted in Cape Town on 23 August 2006. The event was an enormous success. There were nearly 300 people from a cross-section of our society in the audience. There was considerable national news coverage of the lecture which served to stimulate broader public debate and discussion around leadership issues.

In addition to the Memorial Lecture the Trust held a 2-day colloquium in September 2006 entitled 'Engaging silences and unresolved issues in the political economy of South Africa'. The colloquium was held in Cape Town from 21-23 September 2006. Participants and speakers included local and overseas academics and representatives of civil society. The aims of the conference were to:

- reflect, in the spirit and manner of Harold Wolpe, on four facets of contemporary South Africa, namely, the nature and adequacy of intellectual engagement, of democracy and nation-building, of the state and society, and of class formation and capital accumulation.
- stimulate dialogue and debate on the challenging questions, unresolved issues and silences around these themes in current intellectual discourse in South Africa and internationally, and;
- make a contribution to the revival of left social science in South Africa by encouraging critical scholarship on these issues.

The four themes of the colloquium were:

- 1) Intellectual engagement in post-apartheid South Africa
- 2) Democracy and nation-building
- 3) State and society, and
- 4) Class formation and capital accumulation.

Papers covered a range of topics and included, amongst others: a discussion on the national question post-apartheid: Western Cape lessons and challenges for socialist theory and practice; a paper on state capital and the emergence of a new power elite; an analysis of the sublime object of nationalism; a paper entitled 'Reading Harold: class analysis, capital accumulation and the role of the intellectual'; and a paper that examined the topic 'Where did the left go wrong?'.

The level of discussion and debate over the two days was extremely high. Comments from participants were positive and enthusiastic – concerning the general organisation of event, the content and level of the inputs and discussions, and the composition of the participants.

