

Re-Visiting The Political Economy of Social Change in Contemporary South Africa

Conference 14 and 15 June 2012



The Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust in partnership with Liliesleaf

Re-Visiting The Political Economy of Social Change in Contemporary South Africa

This conference held in honour of the seminal Marxist theorist Harold Wolpe examines the political economy of social change in a democratic South Africa. It focuses on key issues in the economic and social transformation of South Africa since democratic rule was established eighteen years ago.

It aims to critically assess progress in the creation of a more egalitarian post-apartheid social order, and understand and explain obstacles to the achievement of such an order. These were central intellectual and political concerns of Harold Wolpe. Rather than diminish in relevance since his untimely death in 1996 Harold Wolpe's penetrating and influential explanatory analysis of the South African social formation, and the critical intellectual tradition that underpinned it, is all the more necessary and needs to be further reclaimed by new generations of scholars and activists committed to the social transformation of South Africa. It is hoped that the conference will contribute to invigorating such a critical tradition by drawing together leading scholars in their field to discuss and debate the state of the state, the political economy of development, the state of education and constitutionalism and its challenges.

Day One : 14 June 2012

12h00

Registration & Lunch

Session 1 - 13h15

Chair - Ms Peta Wolpe

Conference Opening:

Harold Wolpe - A Critical Thinker

Prof Robert van Niekerk, Rhodes University

Session 2 - 14h00 - 16h00

Chair - Prof Fred Hendricks

Political Economy of Development

Dr Iraj Abedian, Chief Executive, Pan-African Capital Holdings

Prof Ben Fine, Department of Economics
School of Oriental and African Studies,
London

16h00: Tea/Coffee

Session 3 - 16h30 to 18h00

Chair – Dr Rozenda Hendrickse

Education: Reproducing Inequalities or Motive for Social Change?

Dr Linda Chisholm, Special Advisor to the Minister of Basic Education

Prof Salim Vally, University of Johannesburg

19h00: Gala Dinner

Programme Director

Mr Nicholas Wolpe, Liliesleaf CEO

Keynote Speaker

Deputy President Kgalema Motlanthe

Day Two : 15 June 2012

Session 4 - 08h30 to 10h30

Chair - Dr Michelle Williams

State of the State

Ms Nomboniso Gasa, Researcher and Analyst:
Gender, Politics and Cultural Issues

Prof Steven Friedman, Director Centre for the
Study of Democracy, Rhodes University/
University of Johannesburg

10h30: Tea/Coffee

Session 5 - 11h00 to 13h00

Chair - Prof Robert van Niekerk

Constitutionalism and its Challenges

Adv Ngoako Ramatlhodi, Deputy Minister,
Correctional Services

Dr Siphon Pityana, Chairperson, Council for the
Advancement of the South African Constitution

Session 6 - 13h00

Closure

Ms Peta Wolpe

Dr AnnMarie Wolpe

13h30: Lunch and Departure



Harold Wolpe, 1926 - 1996

Harold Wolpe was a lawyer, political activist, sociologist, educationalist, seminal thinker and writer. His career spanned more than 50 years and represents a great and enduring contribution to the struggle against oppression, and the development of policies and programmes for a democratic South Africa.

Following Wolpe's death in 1996, and in recognition of his contribution to the achievement of social justice, political, economic and social liberation in South Africa, the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust was established later that year.

The first event of the Trust, held in April 1997 in Cape Town, was an international conference entitled "The political economy of social change in South Africa".

Conference organised by the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust in partnership with Liliesleaf

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