

HAROLD WOLPE
MEMORIAL TRUST

Annual Report

2005/2006



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FOREWORD

by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Prof Kader Asmal

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the second annual report of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust, which covers the period April 2005 to March 2006.

Over the past year, the Trust has been a hive of activity. We welcomed the new National Co-ordinator, Tracy Bailey, in April 2005. Tracy, together with Stuart Rothgiesser, and later Michelle Campbell, worked hard to start the ball rolling in a new era for the organisation. The Trust's dialogue activities were extended through the formation of two new partnerships. Dialogue activities are now hosted on a regular basis in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg and various sites around the Eastern Cape Province.

The Trust also received additional funding from two new donors – the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. This funding, together with that provided by existing donors – Atlantic Philanthropies and the Ford Foundation – has enabled the Trust to expand its activities.

In 2006 we mark the tenth anniversary of the death of Harold Wolpe, and of the establishment of the Trust. There are a number of plans to strengthen and expand the work of the Trust over the next ten years. The Trust intends to engage new partners in Pretoria and the Limpopo Province in order to bring public dialogue and debate to more audiences around the country. The Trust also aims to become the main repository of the work of Harold Wolpe. Work on a comprehensive bibliography and a small resource centre has already begun. The Trust is also exploring the possibility of producing another television or radio series on socio-political and economic debates, following the success of *The Roundtable* in 2005.

From humble beginnings, the Trust has grown into a formal organisation, with dedicated staff and governance structures, and a range of activities that reach an ever-growing audience in the country. We look forward to another decade of opportunities to contribute to the development of democracy, society and state in South Africa.



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FOSTERING CRITICAL DIALOGUE, DEBATE AND SCHOLARSHIP

by the National Co-ordinator, Tracy Bailey

An important feature of the struggle against apartheid was the ongoing engagement amongst the leadership, rank and file of the mass democratic movement, and in other anti-apartheid networks. Into the early hours of the morning, comrades would get involved in deep discussion and often heated debate, on topics ranging from critical analyses of the apartheid system and its effects on class, race, gender, economy and environment, to what a new democratic state would look like and how the economy should be structured. The participation in these debates was widespread and fervent. In the context of oppression and silencing, the freedom within the movement to express, to associate, to contest, was exercised, celebrated and fiercely protected. It was also to be an integral part of the democracy and culture of human rights in the new South Africa.

During the struggle and in post-apartheid South Africa, Harold Wolpe exercised these rights. He asked challenging questions, identified contradictions and silences, and opened up debates. In addition, Wolpe's rigorous scholarship provided analyses and insights that broke new ground, that resonated with local and international scholars and activists alike, and that offered a substantive basis for dialogue and debate within the struggle movement.

Today, dialogue and debate are alive and well within the tripartite alliance of the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. But, there is a growing sense that this culture of debate, underpinned by critical inquiry, has all but disappeared in the broader South African society.

It is the Trust's view that for our new democracy, state and society to grow and mature, the flames of critical inquiry and public debate must burn bright. It is this belief, together with the spirit of Harold Wolpe's political and intellectual legacy, that inspires and gives direction to the work of the Trust.

Our fundamental aim is to foster critical debate, discussion and research on themes which promote social, political, economic and cultural development. We do this by creating 'intellectual spaces' for policy-makers, academics and civil society to exchange ideas, and debate and discuss key issues, and by disseminating these ideas to a broader audience. The Trust also works towards the renewal and revitalisation of left social science in South Africa, by encouraging and supporting critical and analytical scholarship on pressing concerns, such as the structural relationship between class, race and gender in economy, society and state.

The Trust undertakes its activities in partnership and collaboration with other organisations and individuals, who share a commitment to socio-political and economic transformation in South Africa, and to stimulating dialogue, debate and scholarship on these issues. Our formal partners in Durban, Johannesburg and the Eastern Cape work with us to extend our activities beyond Cape Town to other regions of the country. The Trust also maintains linkages with local and international academics, activists and policy-makers, who contribute actively to the work of the organisation. Increasingly, the Trust is working with media organisations for the purposes of publicity and for broadening participation and dissemination by, for example, publishing articles and reviews in the press, or re-broadcasting lectures and seminars on radio.

As we move into the next ten years of the Trust, we are looking to consolidate our existing activities and partnerships, and to expand these to create further opportunities for public dialogue, and for critical inquiry that seeks out the silences and unresolved issues in contemporary South African political economy.

The year in review

DIALOGUE ACTIVITIES

Open dialogues, lectures and seminars

The year was a busy one for all centres and, in total, 24 events were held around the country. There was an interesting array of topics and speakers, both local and international, on each centre's programme. The speakers included public officials, trade unionists, activists, academics, independent analysts, and business people from the private sector.

Following the Wolpe tradition, there were many political economy topics, such as black economic empowerment, land reform, global capitalism, labour and unemployment. In Cape Town, for example, Haroon Borhat, Joy Papier and Salim Vally looked at the issue of "Youth unemployment and education in South Africa". In Durban, Naomi Klein spoke on "The rise of disaster capitalism", while Halton Cheadle and Gwede Mantashe in Johannesburg focused on the question: "Labour market flexibility: Will a social pact help?". The Eastern Cape partners launched their Wolpe lecture series with a presentation by Lungisile Ntsebeza on: "The land and agrarian question: What does this mean for South Africa today?".

Issues of race, culture and identity in post-apartheid South Africa were on various programmes. Jakes Gerwel and Danie Goosen looked at the question of Afrikaner identities, while Neville Alexander discussed race and ethnicity in nation-building. Stimulating lectures were delivered on the topic of Islam and the 'war on terror' by Mahmood Mamdani in Durban, and Farid Esack in Cape Town.

At separate events in Durban, Amina Mama and William Mervin Gumede considered issues relating to intellectual development, and the role of public intellectuals, dialogue and dissent in the development of democracy. In Johannesburg, where the broader theme for the Wolpe seminar series was "Defining the public interest", Snuki Zikalala and Tawana Kupe discussed the SABC as a public broadcaster. Other burning issues such as HIV/AIDS, nuclear power and the struggle in Zimbabwe were also covered.

Memorial lectures, conferences and colloquia

In 2005, the memorial lecture was presented by Raymond Suttner. The lecture, entitled “Talking to the ancestors: National heritage, the Freedom Charter and nation-building in 2005” was hosted in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of November, respectively. Suttner focused on some of the silences in mainstream political discourse, on our political and intellectual heritage, and on unacknowledged knowledges. He explored the different meanings of ‘nation’, ‘nation-building’ and ‘nationalism’, and the trajectories of democracy that are or might have been followed. Inspired by four years of research, Suttner’s lecture posed thought-provoking questions which, he argued, should be part of public dialogue and debate, and critical inquiry.

In February 2006, our Durban partners, the Centre for Civil Society, hosted a colloquium entitled “The economy, society and nature”. The colloquium drew together academics and activists, including many Marxists, from all over South Africa and internationally. The first day of the colloquium, towards which the Trust contributed funding, was dedicated to the intellectual and political legacy of Harold Wolpe. This event formed part of the package of activities to mark the tenth anniversary of the death of Harold Wolpe, and of the establishment of the Trust. Contributions were made from a diverse gathering, including Michael Perelman (California State University); Ari Sitas, Caroline Skinner, Charles Meth and Ashwin Desai (University of KwaZulu-Natal); Devan Pillay (University of Witwatersrand); and David Hemson (Human Sciences Research Council), amongst others. Themes covered race, gender and labour markets, South Africa’s new ‘developmental state’, and capitalism, racism and sexism in South African political economy theory.

Work on the Trust’s own colloquium, scheduled for September 2006, began during the year under review. This colloquium also forms part of the tenth anniversary activities. The colloquium, entitled “Engaging silences and unresolved issues in the political economy of South Africa”, will draw together academics, activists and policy-makers in two days of dialogue and debate that is based on rigorous, analytical and theoretical work. The themes include: the nature and adequacy of intellectual engagement in post-apartheid South Africa, democracy and nation-building, the state and society, and class formation and capital accumulation.

The year in review

PUBLISHING, DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION

Publications

During the course of the year, one Trust publication was published and a second was near completion. The first was an initiative of our Durban partners, the Centre for Civil Society, who published a selection of papers delivered between 2002 and 2005 in their Wolpe lecture series. The book, entitled *Articulations: A Harold Wolpe Memorial Lecture collection*, was edited by Amanda Alexander. It contains pieces by academics, activists, authors and journalists such as Ferial Haffjee, Naomi Klein, Amina Mama and Darryl Accone. The Trust contributed funding towards this initiative, and intends to encourage similar initiatives in the other centres in the future.

The second publication, *The land question in South Africa: The challenge of transformation and redistribution*, is based on selected contributions from the land reform conference hosted by the Trust in 2004. The book is edited by Lungisile Ntsebe a and Ruth Hall, and will be published by the HSRC Press in 2006. It contains chapters by Henry Bernstein, Sam Moyo, Cheryl Walker, Mercia Andrews and Ben Cousins, amongst others.

Technology and media

Increasingly, the Trust is harnessing technology and the media for publicity and dissemination to a broader audience. The Trust's web site was redesigned and will be launched in 2006. The site is a one-stop-shop for all the available papers, transcripts, reviews and articles of interest that have emerged out of the open dialogues, conferences, colloquia and memorial lectures, and provides up-to-date information about current and forthcoming events. Visitors can also add their contact details to the national or centre-specific mailing lists.

The Trust entered into a pilot arrangement with the community radio station, Bush Radio, in Cape Town. Bush Radio recorded a selection of dialogues and re-broadcast these at a later date. They also interviewed some of the speakers, including Neville Alexander, Raymond Suttner and Fatima Hassan. The Trust would like to extend these kinds of relationships to other regions of the country too.