

AnnMarie Wolpe: 1930-2018

AnnMarie Wolpe who died in February, was a Sociologist and one of the founding members of the Feminist Review Editorial Collective. In the early years after FR was founded in 1979, the Collective often met in Michelle Barratt's house in 'Cally Road' as Caledonian Road was known. The meetings were on Sundays, starting in the morning, breaking for a potlatch lunch, and continuing through the afternoon, with up to 19 of us gathered in intense discussion over the articles and themes that FR should be publishing.

AnnMarie was born in Johannesburg as AnnMarie Kantor and was educated at Witwatersrand University where she met her future husband Harold Wolpe, ANC activist and lawyer. Her life was deeply marked by the anti-apartheid struggle. In 1963 Harold was arrested and jailed as a co-conspirator along with others, including Nelson Mandela, who were to be defendants in the Rivonia 'treason' trials. By then AnnMarie had three children under six years of age, Peta and Tessa, and baby Nicholas then dangerously ill and in a ventilator battling pneumonia. Her memoir *The Long Way Home* recounts how she smuggled tungsten blades hidden in loaves of bread into prison on visits to Harold, and helped plot his successful escape. Harold and another lawyer Arthur Goldreich bribed a warden and managed to flee, dressed as nuns, across the border to Tanzania.

In 1963 AnnMarie found herself exiled in England. She and Harold, with the children joining soon after, settled in Bradford where AnnMarie gained a post in a department of Yugoslav Studies. The family later moved to London, with Harold re-trained as a Sociologist and employed at North London Polytechnic, and AnnMarie teaching Gender Studies at what became Middlesex University. While at Middlesex she co-edited the landmark collection *Feminism and Materialism (1978)* with Annette Kuhn.

Harold later took up a post at Essex University in the Sociology Department, where I was his student and then his colleague and neighbour for many years. The Wolpes lived next door from 1977 until they returned to South Africa when the ANC was unbanned in 1991. Those were happy years in Muswell Hill with the children growing up and AnnMarie's ever-open door, and busy kitchen full of friends, ANC colleagues and animated political debates.

When the family moved back to South Africa, both Harold and AnnMarie took up posts at the University of Western Cape and focused on their principle and long-standing area of interest - education and educational reform. AnnMarie worked in the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education and then at the Education Policy Unit until she retired in 1998, two years after Harold died. She headed up the Gender Equity Task Team for the Ministry of Education and was responsible for creating the Gender Equity Directorate in the Department of Education. AnnMarie's later years, though blighted by ill health, were enriched by her three children who all remained in South Africa, and her six much-loved grandchildren.

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