

I find it difficult to over estimate the role which the annual conferences of the Institute have played in my own academic life and development. I have attended the majority of the conferences and I have found all of them intellectually bracing and stimulating focussing on problems of freedom and democracy in the development of the West and in concerns about how the western intellectual and political inheritance can be defended and protected against the obvious challenges in the modern world. Many famous and influential figures from academia, politics and public affairs have participated in the conferences in a collegial atmosphere in which there has always been a great deal of audience participation. Obviously in its earliest days when attendance was smaller this kind of interaction was easier but it has always been at the heart of the series and remains so. I think that over the years the conferences will have made a substantial impact on generations of students and I have been pleased that several have decided to come to study further with me in Oxford and London and have gone on to fill important roles in public life in Portugal. These students had developed through a programme in Lisbon that is based on strong democratic values and the figure of Professor Espada has been pivotal in this and he and his team deserve enormous credit for this.

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