

## **Dahrendorf Memorial Lecture EPF 2016**

João Carlos Espada

### **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is now my privilege and great pleasure to say a few words at this Dahrendorf Memorial Lecture at the Estoril Political Forum 2016. Previous Dahrendorf Guest-Speakers have included our good friends Lord Plant, Professor Gordon Wood and Mr. Charles Moore. This year it is our great pleasure and honour to have with us Professor Timothy Garton Ash — who is a very distinguished and famous scholar and public intellectual, a great friend of our Institute, and indeed was a great friend of Ralf Dahrendorf.

Please allow me to say a few words about Ralf Dahrendorf, the patron of our Lecture today. He was born on May 1, 1929, in Hamburg, the most English city in Germany as he enjoyed to recall. His parents were also born in Hamburg and his grandparents, maternal and paternal, went to Hamburg from Anglia – the long desired territory between Germany and Denmark from where the Anglo-Saxons have supposedly departed towards the British isles.

Some years before Ralf Dahrendorf was born, in the mid 1920s, the young lady that would become his mother was carefully preparing her first visit to Britain. However, at the last minute, a sudden illness impeded her from making that journey and made her stay in a small village nearby Hamburg known as Hostein Switzerland. There she met her future husband, Gustav Dahrendorf. They were both admirers of Britain and together decided – as a modest substitute for the failed journey to Britain – that they would present their children with names that could equally be used in Germany and Britain. Thus, the names Ralf – written in the German way with an f, not a ph – and Frank, the name of Ralf Dahrendorf's brother.

Gustav Dahrendorf, the father of Ralf Dahrendorf, was a leader of the Social Democrat party during the Weimar Republic and he devoted himself to politics throughout his whole life. He belonged to the anti-Nazi resistance and was arrested for the first time in 1933, then in 1938 and once again in 20 July 1944, the date of Hitler's assassination attempt.

In November 1944, at the age of 15, Ralf Dahrendorf was arrested by the Gestapo and sent to a concentration camp from where he was released in 1945, the day the soviet troops arrived. The following year, 1946, young Ralf's father was almost arrested again in East Germany, this time by the communists, for refusing to participate in the so called negotiations towards the forced unification of the Social Democratic Party with the Communist party. This double sided experience of totalitarianism – Nazi and communist – and of resistance against them established Dahrendorf's commitment to the cause of Liberty and forewarned him against ideological allurements:

I am a Kantian or, if you would prefer, I am a Popperian, which is equivalent to saying that for me one of the fundamental aspects of human life is that man can not answer all questions. If anyone wishes to find out the answer he must be able to doubt what he is told. We live in a fundamental condition of uncertainty ... and that derives from the fact that no man is God.

Dahrendorf later had a distinguished political career in Federal Germany after the war, as a member of the German Liberal party, the Free Democrats. In the late 1960s he was a member of the coalition government between the liberals and the social-democrats, headed by Willy Brandt. He was for a while a member of the European Commission, representing Germany. In 1975, though, he went back to London, and became Director of the LSE, where he had been a student of Karl Popper shortly after 1945. After ten years heading the LSE, Dahrendorf became Warden of St. Antony's College, Oxford, in 1987 until 1997. He was knighted in the 1980s and became a Peer of the House of Lords in the 1990s. He died in 2009, shortly after St. Antony's College organised a warm tribute to him in his 80th birthday.

Timothy Garton Ash, incidentally, was one of the most prominent speakers and promoters of that birthday party and Dahrendorf seminar at St. Antony's on the 1st of May 2009. Tim was a close friend of Dahrendorf and also a committed Europeanist — Dahrendorf used to describe himself as a “sceptical Europeanist”, as opposed to an “Euro-enthusiast” and to a “Eurosceptic”. Tim was Foreign Editor of *The Spectator* in the 1980s and he famously reported on the emerging democratic movements in Central and Eastern Europe that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall. He published several books on this crucial subject, namely *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of 1989 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague*, which was published in 1990 and is actually studied in several courses at our Lisbon Institute for Political Studies.

Among his many books, there is also a Portuguese translation of *Free World: America, Europe and the Future of the West*, which was published in 2004 and is available at our Estoril Political Forum.

As we all know, Tim Garton Ash is now Isaiah Berlin Professorial Fellow at St Antony's College and Professor of European Studies at the University of Oxford, as well as senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He has written a weekly column in *The Guardian* since 2004 and is a long-time contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. His column is also translated in the Turkish daily *Radikal* and in the Spanish daily *El País*, as well as other papers in Europe. In 2005 Garton Ash was listed in *Time Magazine* as one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

It was actually in 2005 that Tim and his wife Danuta were at our Institute in Lisbon. Tim then delivered the Alexis de Tocqueville Annual Lecture under the famous title “Are you a European?”. Today, he will be speaking on “Free Speech: Ten Principles for a Connected World”.

Before I give the floor to the chairman of our Dahrendorf Lecture today, Mr. Manuel de Araújo, Mayor of Quelimane in Mozambique, I would like to express our deep gratitude to Tim and Danuta Garton Ash for being with us again this year. Thank you very much.