

## **Dr Theodor Haubach (15<sup>th</sup> September 1896 – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1945)**

*Stumbling stone laying on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2013 in Falterweg 11*

The German journalist, Social Democrat politician and resistance fighter against National Socialism was born on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1896 in Frankfurt am Main as the only child of the businessman Emil Haubach and his wife Emilie. His father died a year later. Thereafter his mother moved with him to Darmstadt, where he spent his childhood and youth.

At the Darmstadt Ludwig Georgs Grammar School he got to know Carlo Mierendorff, with whom he established a lifelong friendship. Both later Social Democrats were also political companions in the fight against National Socialism.

After matriculation in 1914, Haubach volunteered for the front in World War I and was wounded several times and highly decorated. His gruesome experiences in the war made him an ardent fighter for peace and democracy and he also started to interest himself in social democracy. In 1920 he took part as military commander in the armed suppression of the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch against the Weimar Republic in Darmstadt.

After the war he studied philosophy and sociology and graduated as DPhil under the psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers.

Theodor Haubach joined the SPD in Hamburg in 1920 and worked as a journalist for the social democratic *Hamburger Echo* from 1924 to 1929. He was elected as an SPD member of the Hamburg parliament in 1927.

Haubach recognised at an early stage that the young Weimar Republic needed to be defended, and in 1924 he became founder and leading member of the democratic association for defence of the Weimar Republic, the Reichsbanner Schwarz-Rot-Gold. His Berlin years began with his appointment as a press officer in the Reich Ministry of the Interior in 1929. A year later he became head of the press department of the Berlin police headquarters.

The well-known social democrat, who was protective of the tender shoot of social democracy and hated by the Nazis, was briefly arrested after their take-over of power in 1933 and, after his release, established an SPD underground organisation consisting in principle of his companions from Reichsbanner times. In 1934 he was gaoled for almost two years, at first in the Berlin concentration camp Columbiahaus and later in Esterwegen concentration camp. In 1939 Haubach was again arrested, but still refused to let himself be intimidated and, after his release, joined his friend Mierendorff in the Kreisauer Kreis resistance group. He was earmarked as government spokesperson in a planned interim government.

Following the abortive assassination attempt on Hitler on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1944, he was arrested in his house in Falterweg 11 in the Eichkamp housing estate in Charlottenburg, and was condemned to death by the infamous People's Court on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1945. The upright social democrat and resistance fighter Dr Theodor Haubach was murdered by hanging by the Nazis on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1945.

Haubach was convinced that *“the border to violence can be insofar drawn that it can destroy the person offering resistance. [...] But such elimination can never destroy the memory of the events themselves.”*

His name is remembered in Berlin in the Haubachstraße in Charlottenburg, the Theodor Haubach School and, on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, the Federal Press Office named its briefing room after the German resistance fighter.

From 5 March 2013 a stumbling stone outside his last residence in Berlin, Falterweg 11, initiated by the SPD Neu-Westend as part of the SPD 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, reminds us of Dr Theodor Haubach.

Haubach was right. The national socialists were able to eliminate the person, but not the memory of the convinced social democrat and his efforts for peace, democracy and human rights.

Photo: AdsD/Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung