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052140438X - Stefan Heym: The Perpetual Dissident

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Stefan Heym's uncompromising stance made him unpopular with a succession of political regimes. The National Socialists, the CIA, and the East German secret police all held files on him. He was Hitler's youngest literary exile; McCarthyism was to drive him from the USA; and even in what appeared his natural home – the first socialist state on German soil – he was to become the country's leading dissident.

This study traces Heym's career principally by reference to his novels, journalism, and political essays. It considers all stages of his writing, and thus gives more attention than has been common to his earliest, and practically unknown, pieces of poetry, prose, and drama. All his novels are analysed, the major ones in depth, and there is particular focus on Heym's battles against Stalinism and censorship: the way in which his courageous defiance of a repressive regime inspired others and paved a way for the 'new' eastern literature of the eighties. Without Heym, literary opposition in the GDR could well have crumbled. No study of East German literature, or even East German history, can be complete without frequent reference to his achievements.

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STEFAN HEYM

The perpetual dissident

PETER HUTCHINSON

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