

## THE STEFAN HEYM ARCHIVE

There has been a steady stream of visitors to consult the Stefan Heym archive since it was deposited in Cambridge two and a half years ago. They have included, of course, two of the speakers this afternoon, but so far the archive has attracted little attention from the academic community here in North America. When I remarked on this to a visiting American professor earlier in the year, who was searching for material relating to Anna Seghers, she replied "Well, they don't know what they are missing. It's an extraordinary collection, a real goldmine"

I am here this afternoon, therefore, to let you know what you are missing, and to emphasise the range and diversity of the Heym collection, which is far, far more than just a literary archive. All I can do is try to give you a flavour of the collection, and to suggest areas in which I consider it to be of particular importance. The volume of material is in any case so great, especially as regards the correspondence, that we still have only a vague idea of what it contains. The library has been fortunate enough to acquire funds from a charitable foundation, the Leverhulme Trust, to employ a full-time archivist. She started work in July, but it will be two years before we have anything like a full listing of the collection and are in a position to answer detailed written enquiries. And of course, embargoes have been placed upon sections of the archive which are particularly personal. This is a relatively small percentage of the whole, but inevitably includes some of the most interesting material, as Mr Meder has already realised to his cost.

Almost sixty years after he arrived in Chicago, it would have been satisfying to begin with some of Heym's observations on the city and its University. Unfortunately almost nothing has survived from that period, and as a general point there is relatively little about the first thirty years of his life. Notable exceptions include his first appearance in print in the local Chemnitz paper, a significant number of poems and short stories composed in the Thirties (mostly in German), and pages from Czech police files of 1935. [In a famous list of those about whom more information is sought Heym appears at number three, and Walter Ulbricht at number seven.] There is also a complete bound set of Deutsches Volksecho, which was published in New York between February 1937 and September 1939, its major goal being to attack elements of Nazism in the USA. Heym was editor in chief.

The most significant date for the history of the archive is October 1942, for it is at this point, with the extraordinary success of his first novel Hostages, of which three editions were produced within a fortnight, that Heym was financially secure, and therefore in a position to keep everything relating to his life as a writer. Prior to that date what is preserved is fragmentary and random, after it almost everything seems to have been kept, the trivial and the significant, a positive welter of material.

You can read the saga of the typewriter damaged on a journey between La Salle and Union Stations, and Heym's attempt to get compensation. A lengthy correspondence with the janitor of his apartment block lies alongside correspondence with Erwin Piscator. In addition, Heym began to subscribe to a Literary Clippings Service, so you can read what every provincial American newspaper had to say about Hostages, ranging from the Oakland Tribune to the Atlanta Constitution to the Greensboro News to the East Hampton Star.

Given the vicissitudes of Heym's life and his peripatetic existence from October 1942 until he settled in the East Berlin suburb of Grunau, it is little short of miraculous that so much survived, and that Heym has never felt the need to sift through this material to discard more 'insignificant' documents. Some who have used the archive, I know, wish that he had done rather more discarding, and that the important documents came more readily to hand without the need to plough through so much that was totally mundane. But, of course, though bills and receipts relating to Heym's life in New York in the Forties may not be very illuminating, similar material is of considerable interest to the social historian when it relates to life in GDR Berlin in the 1950s.

Nowhere have we more cause to be grateful that Heym was not given to wholesale discarding of material than in the case of literary manuscripts. For anyone interested in the genesis of Heym's fiction, or concerned with Heym as a self-translator, the archive is an essential point of reference. On every occasion when he completed a major piece of writing Heym had all the relevant working materials handsomely bound, so that all the documentation concerned with the production of a particular text has been preserved. This is true of the early fiction right through to the mid-1980s, when Heym finally began composition on a word processor. A text which has attracted particular interest from visitors is the King David Report. This exists in a heavily amended four volume English version, and also in one large volume containing a clean copy of the English text. There are three volumes of the German translation, also heavily amended. In addition, there are two volumes of English discards, containing passages of text not incorporated in the final novel, and one volume of discarded material from the German translation. Detailed planning and research has always been a characteristic of Heym's writing, and for most texts there exist detailed plot outlines and character sketches. In the case of the King David Report this is entitled 'Studies. Outline. Characters' and constitutes the final bound volume of the manuscript set. It includes a 26-page, 3-column chart covering 'Organisation of chapter'; 'Method of telling'; 'Points covered'. Unbound manuscript material is contained in another four files, including a film version composed by Heym and the King David Report as a rock opera.

There also exists, of course, a great deal of unpublished material from all periods of Heym's career, short stories, film scripts, radio plays and pieces of journalism. Heym clearly gives pride of place to his unpublished novel The architects, which was inspired by Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin and the return of exiles from Soviet slave labour camps. This is bound in the same manner as the manuscripts of the published works, with accompanying 'outline' and 'character detail' volumes. Of particular significance for German literary history is an autobiographical novel on the Wolf Biermann affair of November to December 1976,

entitled, after Richard III, Der Winter unseres Missvergnügens. There are also two novels from the 1940s, No turnpike gates, a political novel of power struggles in the United States, and The Conspirators, which takes as its theme the Palmer Raids against 'subversive elements' in the US, in 1919 and 1920.

Heym was a tireless and punctilious correspondent. His letters are stored in seventy three boxes, and we estimate that there are about four hundred and fifty letters in each box, making a total of approximately thirty five thousand items. Heym kept all the important letters he received, and usually made carbons of his replies, particularly if they were of a politically sensitive nature. No-one will be surprised to hear that there are exchanges with a large number of other writers, particularly from the GDR, and also with that country's political leaders. Heym's political activity about the time of the Wende, and the pressures he brought to bear upon the government, is well documented in four full boxes for 1989 and three for 1990. Revealing a rather different side of Heym's character are the charming and painstaking replies he sends to a class of German schoolchildren who have been reading his fairytales. One child asked what he looked like, to which he replied that his wife thought he was too fat, but he couldn't help the fact that she was a good cook and that he did justice to her food.

In the 1950s Heym wrote a weekly column in the Berliner Zeitung, and remarkably, the correspondence which he received from his readership has been preserved, an extraordinary record of what the GDR citizen was thinking. These letters are vigorous in their support for Heym's attacks on GDR bureaucracy, often making suggestions about other aspects of GDR society which they think he should discuss. Of more specific value for what it reveals about the nature of publishing in the GDR (and the Eastern Bloc) is the correspondence on royalty agreements, payments and print runs. As you might imagine, the correspondence gives a very clear picture of the creative writer's life in the GDR and all its vicissitudes. The letters for 1979 are particularly illuminating in that regard; the year in which Heym was excluded from the Writers' Union. (If you are interested in the Deutscher Schriftstellerverband, the archive will be invaluable for your research, particularly as Heym later obtained his own file from the Deutscher Schriftstellerverband.)

But the correspondence is not solely of value in so far as it relates to the GDR. There is also much of interest in the American period, of a kind which it is not so easy to predict. The first box of correspondence which our archivist has indexed, includes, for example, lengthy exchanges with executives of MGM, correspondence with Lewis Milestone and James M. Cain. There is also a lot of material documenting Heym's efforts on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal.

The two boxes labelled 'War letters' are for me amongst the most poignant and memorable documents in the archive. Heym wrote to his wife with great regularity between March 1943 and November 21st 1945 when he embarked at Antwerp. This correspondence constitutes

what is surely a unique record of the invasion of Europe, in which Heym, in his role with the Psychological Warfare Division of the United States Army, was at the spearhead. I have always felt that some of Heym's journalistic pieces were amongst the best of his writing, and these letters have that same quality - spontaneous, vivid, and with a wonderful eye for descriptive details - though any reference to exact locations was clearly forbidden by the censor. Heym's letter of June 16th 1944, ten days after D-Day, was headed 'Somewhere in England'. The next, two days later, was headed 'Somewhere in France'. This part of the archive is one upon which an embargo has been placed, but I'd like to read a brief extract from a letter dated June 18th 1944, letter number fifty five in a sequence of more than five hundred items.

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The war correspondence is not the only portion of the archive of value to the historian of the Second World War. A collection of some thirty Flugblätter, dropped over enemy lines to encourage surrender, is in pristine condition. There is also a set of 'Frontpost. Nachrichten fuer den deutschen Soldaten', a sort of mini newspaper dropped over German lines. Heym was responsible for much of the contents, basing his articles partly on information he received from interrogating prisoners. There is also a collection of local newspapers, hurriedly produced by the American Army for the benefit of the civilian population as the Western Front rolled forward. There are fifteen of these, mostly complete runs, with such titles as Hessische Post, Stuttgarter Stimme, Braunschweiger Bote, Augsburger Anzeige.

For the historians of more recent events the archive might be equally rewarding. One file, labelled 'Giessener Gespräche', consists of transcripts of interviews conducted by Stefan and Inge Heym with East German refugees in September 1989. There is a box labelled by Heym as 'Die Wende im Spiegel SHs Statements und Activities', and another 'Short stories. Speeches. Interviews. 1991'.

Other aspects of the collection to which I should briefly draw your attention include the collection of published volumes, which have all been catalogued for the University Library's Main Catalogue. We currently have three hundred and seventy seven entries for editions of Heym's works, so if you want to locate the nineteenth edition of Crusaders as published by Paul List Verlag, or the Brazilian edition of Hostages, or the Cosmic Age in Tamil, or the King David Report in Hebrew, you know where to look. There are more than two hundred other volumes and periodicals in which Heym published articles, short stories or poems. More than fifty percent of the anthologies do not appear on RLIN or OCLC databases. Still not catalogued are four hundred audio cassettes devoted to interviews with journalists, radio interviews and readings, and over one hundred videotapes of interviews, speeches at demonstrations, and films of the novels. Not to mention a few CD-Roms, some cinefilm, and a collection of slides and photographs.

When the archive arrived in Cambridge in December 1992, I naively assumed that at almost eighty Heym's life was almost over, and that there really wouldn't be very much material to add to the collection in the future. Since then, of course, he has published a 568-page novel, Radek, and with his political activities is even more in the public eye. Files of newspaper clippings continue to arrive on a regular basis. Two months ago I received the exchange of correspondence between Heym and Günter Grass, over Heym's decision to run for the Bundestag as an independent allied to the PDS. What we do not yet have are the source materials relating to Radek, nor Heym's Stasi-file (reputedly the largest in the GDR), though we have every hope they will arrive in due course. The Stasi-file, interestingly enough, proves that Heym did throw paper away, but the Heyms' maid was recruited by the secret police, and painstakingly collected every scrap of paper that found its way into a waste-paper basket, whether crumpled, torn or intact. We do already have a few items from the Stasi files, including a document entitled 'Weitere Taktik zur politisch-ideologischen Zerschlagung der Ansichten Havemanns, Heyms, Biermanns und Bielers und zu ihrer politischen Isolierung'.

Heym's recent activities in the political arena bear eloquent testimony to his energy and drive, to his sense of self-belief. Every time I walk into the Heym archive, which is housed in a special room in Cambridge University Library, I am made aware of that personality and confidence. I still find it extraordinary that Heym aimed for fame back in 1942, after just one novel, and that with that aim in view he started to collect material on the scale just described. What is perhaps even more extraordinary is that history has proved him right - as today's session of the German Studies Association goes to testify.