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Press office

Press release

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Stefan Heym Forum opened at the TIETZ

The centerpiece is the Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library

Lord Mayor Barbara Ludwig and Dr. Ulrike Uhlig, chairwoman of the International Stefan Heym Society, opened the Stefan Heym Forum at the TIETZ today in the presence of Inge Heym and the Saxon State Minister for Culture and Tourism Barbara Klepsch.

Thanks to Inge Heym's precious donation, the Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library moved from the shared house in Berlin-Grünau into the TIETZ as the centerpiece of the forum. The Stefan Heym Forum is a place for vivid encounters between readers of the author, but also a place for Heym research and scientific exchange.

The honorary citizen of Chemnitz, Dr. Ingrid Mössinger, members of the federal and state parliaments, CEO of Sparkasse Chemnitz Dr. Michael Kreuzkamp and members of the Board of Trustees for the awarding of the International Stefan Heym Prize joined the opening of the Stefan Heym Forum.

Lord Mayor Barbara Ludwig: "The library of Stefan Heym and his wife Inge is such a valuable gift for our city. Compiled by a witness to a century who dared to stand against overwhelming powers with great courage and the power of the word. With the library, part of him is now returning to Chemnitz - the city of his birth. That moves me deeply. With the forum at the TIETZ, the memory of Stefan Heym, the son of our city, stays alive. It is now and here, in the Stefan Heym Forum, our task to continue in his spirit and to carry his memory into the younger generations. I am grateful and proud that Inge Heym has given us Chemnitz people the confidence to look after this great legacy."

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“The Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library has found a worthy place here at the TIETZ. In the middle of the cultural life of a culturally vibrant city. And the Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library is sure to become a special jewel in the cultural life of Chemnitz. The combination of education, enjoyment of art and science promises a fertile place of attraction and encounter for very different people. My sincere thanks go to the city of Chemnitz, the Sparkasse Chemnitz and the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung, who made the transformation of the working library into a memorial, cultural and research centre possible, and to the International Stefan Heym Society, which instigated and supported the project. The biggest and most important thanks go to Inge Heym as the keeper and donor of her husband’s library with all the memories”, emphasizes the Saxon State Minister for Culture and Tourism Barbara Klepsch.

Dr. Ulrike Uhlig, chairwoman of the International Stefan Heym Society: “A person's library is a mirror of his soul, his personality, his spiritual world. It can tell stories about the person who brought it together. I am extremely moved, grateful and happy that we can open the Stefan Heym Forum with the Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library today.”

In short, but very emotionally, Inge Heym describes her feeling about the relocation of the Working Library to Chemnitz: “Somehow it is as if all is coming full circle. He's going back home.”

Working library, exhibition and event area at the Stefan Heym Forum

At the center of the Stefan Heym Forum is the original working library of Stefan and Inge Heym. Thanks to a room-in-room system of glass, the working atmosphere of the publicist couple can be experienced by the visitors. The Stefan and Inge Heym working library counts almost 2500 works. Including first editions of Heym's novels, works by fellow writers and friends with personal dedications, research volumes and complete editions, for example by Shakespeare and Heine.

In future, all titles will be listed in the catalogue of the Chemnitz City Library and can be researched using the online catalogue at www.stadtbibliothek-chemnitz.de.

With the books, Stefan and Inge Heym's furniture and personal items also move into the TIETZ.

A public exhibition tells Stefan Heym's life story, explains his extensive work and outlines the almost symbiotic collaboration between Stefan Heym and his wife Inge.

The International Stefan Heym Prize of the City of Chemnitz and its award winners will be presented as well as the International Stefan Heym Sponsorships. The exhibition also provides information about the work of the International Stefan Heym Society.

Also part of the Stefan Heym Forum is a multifunctional event and training area with around 30 seats. This can be used for school lessons, for study purposes, for lectures and events.

Idea and final decision

The idea of founding the Stefan Heym Forum and relocating the working library came from the International Stefan Heym Society. During visits to the house of the writer's widow, Inge Heym, the members got to know the working library. Together with the city of Chemnitz, the project of moving the library to Chemnitz, Stefan Heym's city of birth, was developed.

In order to make this possible, many discussions followed with Inge Heym. Between April and July 2018, all book stocks in Inge and Stefan Heym's working library in Berlin-Grünau were registered in coordination with the Chemnitz City Library and the Stefan Heym Society.

The decision to establish the Stefan Heym Forum at the TIETZ was finally taken unanimously by the Chemnitz city council on 11 December 2018 (see B-318/2018 and press release 868/2018).

Chemnitz as the centre of Heym research

Another essential component of the Stefan Heym Forum is the joint intention of the City of Chemnitz, the International Stefan Heym Society and the Professorship for Modern German and Comparative Literature at the Technical University of Chemnitz to set up a "Stefan Heym Research Centre". In addition to scientific, interdisciplinary conferences and symposia, the researchers plan above all the publication of previously unpublished works by Heym and the publication of a historical-critical edition of his complete works. For this the researchers will apply for financial support from the German Research Association. With this focus, Chemnitz will become - even more so than before – a centre of Heym research.

Joint funding

The total costs for the Stefan Heym Forum amount to 250,000 euros. It was financed jointly from funds from the city of Chemnitz, the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Sparkasse Chemnitz.

Dr. Michael Kreuzkamp, CEO of Sparkasse Chemnitz: "Stefan Heym is one of the most important German writers of the twentieth century. The life and work of the Chemnitz-born writer is to be honoured with the Stefan Heym Forum. As Sparkasse Chemnitz, we are therefore committed to maintaining and presenting the working library in his hometown together with the Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung."

The construction at the TIETZ

The Stefan Heym Forum was built at the TIETZ, on the 3rd floor on an area of approx. 240 square meters as part of the Chemnitz City Library. The former TIETZ café was rebuilt for the forum. The renovation included the dismantling of the café counter and the demolition of walls, doors and ceilings. The exhibition area was redesigned, a platform for the Stefan and Inge Heym Working Library was built, the flooring in this area was renewed and walls were painted. The working library was created as a secure space within the room with glass partition wall elements. The building services systems were also adapted to the new structural conditions. Six construction companies were involved in the construction project. Construction time was from April to July 2020. The construction schedule was adhered to.

Inge and Stefan Heym

Inge Heym (* 1933) is the valuable chronicler of a man who became a witness to a century. She was at his side, as the first reader, critic, advisor and wife. She gave up her job at GDR television to work and support her husband on his books. The fact that the working library in Chemnitz bears the names of both, Stefan and Inge Heym, is a visible appreciation of their decades of closely interwoven, almost symbiotic work, which for a long time was only visible to a few.

The writer and politician Stefan Heym (1913–2001) spent his life critically examining the social conditions in which he lived. His unsparingly frank and not infrequently discomfiting style brought him up against the restrictions imposed on him by government. In bestowing honorary citizenship on Stefan Heym in 2001, the City of Chemnitz honoured an internationally respected individual who was born and raised in Chemnitz. The extent of his lifetime achievements makes Stefan Heym one of the most important German writers of the twentieth century.

Internationaler Stefan-Heym-Preis der Stadt Chemnitz

In honour of its son and honorary citizen Stefan Heym, the city of Chemnitz awards the International Stefan Heym Prize every three years.

The literature prize endowed with 20,000 euros is awarded to individuals with the courage to criticise our times and who like Stefan Heym have produced outstanding literary and/or journalistic work that will stand the test of time.

International Stefan Heym Sponsorships

In addition to the International Stefan Heym Prize, the city of Chemnitz awards the International Stefan Heym Sponsorships every three years, too. With the sponsorships totalling 20,000 euros, the city of Chemnitz supports projects and initiatives that have a particular focus on Stefan Heym's life, work and legacy. The application phase ends on 31 December 2020.

More information and application forms:

www.stefan-heyms-preis.de