

## *The Stig Dagerman Award and the Stig Dagerman Society in Älvkarleby, Sweden.*

In 1987 we started the Stig Dagerman Society here in Älvkarleby, Sweden. Our objectives were – and are – to see to that the texts of Stig Dagerman are at hand and are discussed. Stig Dagerman (1923-1954) was born in our village and when Urban Forsgren and I took the initiative to start the society, we had long discussed this with the family of Dagerman. The fact that a writer of Dagerman's impact was born here, is something to be proud of, we thought.

Since May 1987, we've been a handful persons working with the Society in our spare time. The interest of our work has been much bigger than we could imagine. We have been invited to France twice and to Belgium once, to lecture on Dagerman. In Sweden we have presented Dagerman and his writing at meetings and cultural events; we've written articles, broadcasted radio programmes and helped students and others with material on Dagerman. Since 1992 we also have a "Dagerman Room", at Laxön in Älvkarleby, a few kilometers from the writer's birth place.

In 1995 the idea of a prize, a Stig Dagerman Award, came up. As Stig Dagerman worked a lot for the freedom of speech and freedom was one of his big themes - as a journalist as well as a novelist and writer for the scene, we decided that the price should be given to "a person, persons or an organisation, who, in the spirit of the writer Stig Dagerman, by his work is defending the importance and access for us all to the free word". We named the day of the price giving ceremony "One Day Every Year" after the title of a daily verse Dagerman wrote in 1954 and decided that "One Day Every Year" was to be held in the island of Laxön, Älvkarleby, in the beginning of June every year. I will not try to translate the verse, but the meaning of it, is to pretend - one day every year - that all evil, all hatred, all bad things, are put away and that everything is good. Even the death is gone, resting in a box this day.

In 1996 the price was given posthumously to John Hron, a fourteen year old boy who saved his friend's life to the cost of his own: tortured and killed by three racists.

In 1997 the turkish writer Yasar Kemal came to us to receive the award and last year The Swedish Public Library got the price. (The sum - SEK 25 000 - was by the Libraty given to the librarians in France who were dismissed from work when Front National took over in four towns in the south of France.)

This year, 1999, we gave the Stig Dagerman Award to **Ahmad Shamloo because he in his poetry and prose touches the heart of the World.**

As Mr Shamloo himself could not participate on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, his friend and translator Azar Mahloujian represented him. On that day, we had a programme on Persian Literature, attended by writers as Kerstin Ekman and Carl-Göran Ekerwald, the film producer Bahman Maghsoudlou, tar player Jamal Samarati and others. We had a very interested and numerous audience and we hope that we through this have spread a little more knowledge and understanding for the literature of the Persian language.

The arrangers are the jury, the municipality Älvkarleby kommun and the Stig Dagerman Society.

The price jury:

Arne Ruth, editor, journalist; chairman of the jury

Maria-Pia Boëthius, writer, journalist

Björn Ranelid, novelist

Hilda Hellwig, director

Jan Bendrik, tourist manager, Älvkarleby kommun

Bengt Söderhäll, teacher, free-lance; chairman of the Stig Dagerman Society

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