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People who knew and worked with Stieg Larsson report that he was obsessed with details. He also had a singular preoccupation. The actions of right-wing extremists - at work in Sweden - had long concerned him. If he started his own magazine, he could privately investigate - then publicly expose - the activities of such groups (like Neo-Nazis).

Stieg already had significant background on the subject. In 1991, he co-authored "The Extreme Right" (Extremhögern), tracing the rise of such right-wing groups. His first issue of *Expo*, released in August of 1995, made clear how Stieg planned to shape the magazine's stories. It would report on:

anti-democratic, right-wing extremist and racist tendencies in Swedish society.

During the first year of *Expo*'s life, Sweden experienced continued violence from Neo-Nazis who opposed (among other things) growing multiculturalism in the country. Daniel Poohl, *Expo*'s current editor, tell us:

In 1995, the white-power music scene was at its peak and Sweden was the world's largest producer of hate propaganda. The same year, seven people were murdered in Sweden in Nazi-related violence.

Although most Swedes paid little, or no, attention to *Expo*, it was followed by one group - the very people Stieg was targeting. Neo-Nazis did not appreciate *Expo*'s articles.

Soon the office which printed *Expo* was vandalized and newsstands, which sold the magazine, endured smashed windows and spray-painted walls. By the summer of 1996, Sweden's two largest newspapers gave *Expo*'s current issue wider circulation:

As soon as the first issue of Expo was published, the magazine became the target of an extensive hate campaign from neo-Nazi groups. Staff members and retailers received death threats and the printing factory used by Expo was vandalized.

All of this was the subject of much media attention in the summer of 1996, when the largest Swedish national evening newspapers Aftonbladet and Expressen also decided to publish 800,000 copies of Expo as a supplement.

Expo was not a money-making venture, so Stieg and his colleagues could not quit their "day jobs." Larsson remained at TT but dedicated a great deal of time to investigating and writing for his magazine. By 1998, several of his colleagues - who were also working "for free" - could no longer keep up the pace:

The first group of editorial staff members "retired" in 1998. By then, the reporters - working on a voluntary basis - had pretty much crashed and burned, having been employed full-time elsewhere and dedicating all free time to Expo.

To keep the magazine going, Stieg and two other staffers faced hard choices. They decided to make *Expo* a part of another magazine:

In April 1998, three original staff members remained. Together, they made the decision to give the [Expo] foundation and the magazine a major overhaul. Social commentator Kurdo Baksi stepped in and suggested that Expo become a supplement to his own magazine, Svartvitt ["Black/White"], and thus offered a way forward. It wasn't an ideal solution, but it gave Expo the opportunity to keep making its voice heard. (Quoted passages from Expo's website.)

For Stieg, it was always about making his voice heard. When *Svartvitt* ended in 2003, after fifteen years of publishing, *Expo* was on its own again. Larsson was back to soliciting funds for the *Expo* Foundation, which at least funded the publication (even if its employees weren't paid).

Growing weary of begging for funds, Stieg followed his father's advice to "do something commercial." He decided to write a series of books about a journalist (named Mikael Blomkvist) who owned and operated "Millenium" (a magazine which investigated, and exposed, right-wing extremists).

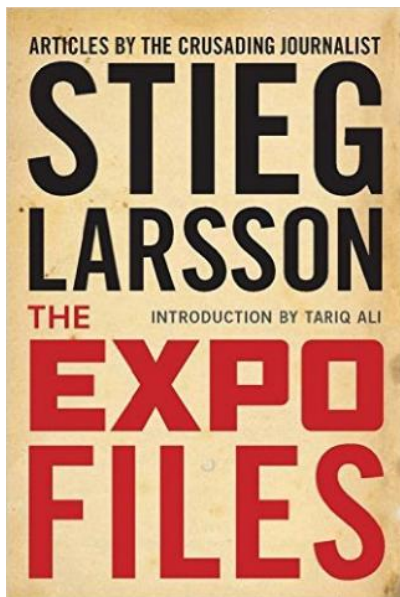
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Media Stream



Stieg Larsson Was Co-Founder of EXPO

Before he was a famous novelist, Stieg Larsson was a hard-hitting journalist who exposed extremist acts in his own country (Sweden) and elsewhere.

He was the co-founder of *EXPO*—surely the model for "Millenium"—and was also its editor during his lifetime.

When publishing his journal became increasingly difficult, because there were insufficient funds to pay his team members, Larsson decided to follow his father's advice to "do something commercial."

His "something commercial" was a series of books about a journalist (named Mikael Blomkvist) who owned and operated "Millenium" (a magazine which investigated, and exposed, right-wing extremists).

About a decade after Stieg's death, MacLehose Press published a book which features some of Stieg's articles. Entitled *The EXPO Files*, the work takes us back to the days before Larsson's stories become a worldwide publishing phenomenon.

In Booklist, Connie Fletcher says this [about The EXPO Files](#):

Mikael Blomkvist, the journalist who helped Lisbeth Salander fight evil in the massively successful Millennium Trilogy, could well have been Stieg Larsson's alter ego.

The late Larsson was a writer and editor with the Swedish magazine Expo before he wrote The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo (2008). This collection brings together 25 of Larsson's Expo articles, spanning the years 1983-2004.

The themes that appear in The Girl with novels, especially racism and the abuse of women, appear prominently here, too. The articles are organized loosely according to subject, including terrorism, the return of anti-Semitism in Europe, homophobia, Islamophobia, and violence against women.

Larsson's writing is more editorial than investigative, with a brisk, incisive tone. There are too many articles focusing on Swedish politics for American readers, and a couple of pieces (one on astrology) seem tacked on. Larsson's essay on the murders of two women in Sweden—one the victim of abuse, the other of an "honor killing"—however, is outraged reporting at its best.

Larsson devotees will want to take a look at the journalist behind the fiction writer. Click on the image for a better view.

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Expo - Stieg Larsson's Magazine

Image online, courtesy the [Expo](#) website.

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Stieg Larsson at TT

Photo of Stieg Larsson, at TT in the late 1980s, by Leif Blom/Scanpix/Sipa Press.

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