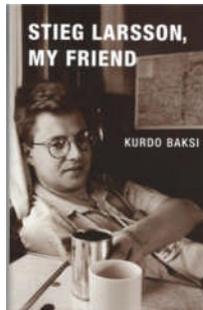


the one page book review



Title: Steig Larsson, My Friend
Author: Kurdo Baksi
Publisher: Maclehose Press
Price: £14.99

Made famous by the Millennium trilogy, the author Stieg Larsson died in 2004 at the age of 50 before the books were ever published. In this book Kurdo Baksi his best friend, describes what drove the man and the back drop to Larsson's eventual outstanding success as an acclaimed author.

During Larsson's career as a journalist he was a crucial protagonist in the battle against racism and democracy in Sweden and in Europe and one of the co-founders of the anti-fascist magazine *Expo*.

The book describes that he was '*a tireless hero in the fight against racism – there was no battle for democracy and equality that he was unwilling to take part in. He was aware that there was a high price to pay attached to doing so, but it was a price he was prepared to pay. The constant threats, the lack of financial resources and the sleepless nights. It was a struggle that shaped his whole life.*'

The magazine *Expo* was one of the most important projects of Larsson's life which was founded in 1995 as a result of his belief that it was essential to create a Swedish version of *Searchlight*. Due to the increasing popularity of the Swedish Democratic Party Larsson felt compelled to act, the established parliamentary parties weren't sure of how to deal with it and had washed their hands of the party as an aberration, but one that grew bigger and in 2006 the Swedish Democrats won 281 local council seats. *Expo's* remit is '*to study and survey anti-democratic, right wing extremist and racial tendencies in Swedish society. All activities are idealistic and non-profit making. The foundations policy is to safeguard democracy and freedom of expression against racist, right-wing extremist, anti-Semitic and totalitarian tendencies in society.*'

I have to admit that I was drawn to read this book after reading the beautifully written and complex plots and inter plots of the trilogy, (The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, The Girl that Played with Fire, The Girl that kicked the Hornet's Nest) first published in 2005, 2006 and 2007 respectively, and subsequently being astounded at the real story that lay behind the authors inspiration.

It caused me to consider, what have I stood up for and against in the pursuit of equality and the greater good in my life? When we see atrocities in the media do we sit back and think that would never happen and that of course we would step in if we saw the same treatment of others in 'our own back yard'.

Whilst in business we may not directly exposed to the type of extremes Larsson fought to uncover, speaking out and standing up for what is just and fair takes courage and bravery. Along with that, it's the sensitivity and ability to handle the conflict and potential fallout that may ensue. The longer issues are left; often the more difficult they are to manage.

In closing I would say this book gets you to question yourself and delve into your own personal value system whilst being a heart wrenching farewell from a friend, thoroughly recommended.