

Im Gedenken an Friedrich Katz

Estamos muy tristes. The Latin American Studies community in Germany has not only lost a great mentor but also a good friend. This is particularly true for those of us who are based in Berlin. Friedrich Katz (whom all his friends called Friedel) always had a great affection for this city where he had lived for more than twelve years and which he was forced to leave twice: First, when his family fled from Nazi Germany in 1933, and second, when he and his family left the GDR after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops (including those of the GDR) had crushed the democratic opening in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Friedel kept good and lively memories of the time he lived in Berlin during the 1950s and 1960s with his wife Jana and their small children, and he loved it to come back and visit friends and colleagues in both parts of the city.

Both during his time at the Humboldt University of Berlin (1956-68) and later when he taught at Chicago, Friedel's work has been a great inspiration for younger German historians and students of Latin American affairs, or those interested in comparing revolutions, peasant uprisings or other social movements, not to speak of pre-columbian cultures and, of course, of Mexican politics and society. His books that covered a wide range of topics have served as eye-openers in crucial moments of debate and fascinated more than one scientific community: The path-breaking dissertation: *Die sozioökonomischen Verhältnisse bei den Azteken*; the comparative *Ancient American Civilizations*; the seminal *Berliner Habilitationsschrift: Deutschland, Diaz und diemexikanische Revolution* (and the many articles in German that accompanied it); the magisterial *Secret War in Mexico*; the indispensable volume on *Riot, Rebellion, and Revolution*, and finally the incomparable *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*.

Friedrich Katz has enriched many of our debates, his contributions have always moved things forward (und 'haben die Dinge kenntlich gemacht'), and he was generous enough to share his insights and knowledge with many younger colleagues and students who owe him so much. For some generations of German Mexicanists, Latin Americanists and comparative historians who flocked to Chicago or met him on one of his many trips to Europe he has also served as an important link between the three worlds: Germany, Mexico (and the rest of Latin America), and the United States.

During the last decade we have seen Friedel more often at the *Lateinamerika-Institut* of the *Freie Universität Berlin* where he also received a doctorate *honoris causa* in 2002. The last time we saw him was in December 2009 when he came for a panel with Hans-Jürgen Puhle on "German historical research on Latin America after 1945" at the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut*, and a talk on "The Mexican Revolution of Pancho Villa" at the *Lateinamerika-Institut*.

We are sad that he will not be back, and we will remember him not only for his work and wisdom, but also for his humanism, his wit and esprit, his political insight and engagement, his generosity, and his warmth. Without him the world will be colder. *Seiner Ehefrau Jana Katz, die ihn auf seinen Besuchennach Berlin oft begleitet hat, seiner Tochter Jacqueline Ross, seinem Sohn LeoKatz und seinen vier Enkelkindern fühlen wir uns in tiefer Trauer verbunden.*

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