

The Argentine military dictatorship affected my family and me even after that, quite independently of the topic of the Book Fair. My wife Dora could no longer travel to her country, and increasingly our friends and acquaintances, and even family members, were disappearing forever, even those to whom one could hardly attribute a left-wing orientation. Many intellectuals tried to leave the country. I learned that Eduardo Galeano, publisher of the Buenos Aires left-wing cultural magazine *Crisis*, had been detained and was in great danger. Through my good contact at the German Embassy in Buenos Aires, the cultural attaché Dr. Gottfried Arens, I was able to have him, together with his wife, receive an official invitation and tickets to Frankfurt for the Book Fair, something that put him in a good position to leave the country.

The situation was somewhat more difficult for Daniel Divinsky and his wife Kuki Miler. This publisher couple of Ediciones de la Flor had already been put in jail because of the publication of a children's book, *Five Fingers Make a Fist*, which they had bought at one of the prior Frankfurt Book Fairs from the German Basis Publishing House. Some friends figured out where the two were in prison and sent me the information. Through Gottfried Arens I sent an official invitation for the two of them through the German Embassy to the spokesman of the military *junta*, General Videla. Gottfried Arens brought the tickets with his own hands to the Divinskys in prison, and they flew directly from there to Frankfurt. After the Book Fair, they traveled to Venezuela, where they lived until the end of the military dictatorship.

Practically all the countries that I had visited in 1975 sent delegations from publishers, and displayed the products of their publishing houses in joint booths, often exhibiting for the first time. Only Cuba laid down conditions, and thus excluded itself from the one-time opportunity of presenting its country, its authors and books, in common with all other Latin American countries. In the following year, however, the Cubans also appeared in Frankfurt, and from then on were permanent participants in the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The special topic had a nice effect on the Fair, even if the presentations didn't run perfectly according to plan. Dieter E.

Zimmer of the weekly *Die Zeit* in particular criticized the two big literary presentations in the Congress Hall. I put this down to my inexperience in putting on a dramatic program, at least when important authors were involved. With real excitement, I had invited the heroes of Latin American literature to a not too fancy dinner in the mayor's room at the Fair. Around that square table there soon heated up a vigorous discussion among Manuel Scorza, Juan Rulfo, Julio Cortázar, Sergio Ramírez, the Chilean-German poet and coordinator of the program Federico Schopf, plus Curt Meyer-Clason, the moderator of the program that was to follow. I was really looking forward to seeing what would happen at the public appearance, but alas, the heroes were tired. Somewhat listless, and at least worn down from eating and drinking wine, they got up, satisfied with what they had already said, and strolled over to the nearby exposition hall. The discussion there was much less impressive to all those members of the public and of the press whom I wanted to bring closer to this literature—600 people had come. The Brazilian poet Thiago de Mello stepped out in front of the podium, dressed all in white, with an unruly beard and long, wavy hair, and in a Jesus-like pose, with arms outstretched, proclaimed his revolutionary message to the people of Latin America. Nobody else dared to contradict him, but simply confirmed what others said. The moderator Meyer-Clason did not intervene; Vargas Llosa said nothing. José Donoso, quite angry, left the podium and the room shouting, "Shame! Shame!" The other presentations by the very few German specialists in Latin American literature suffered clearly from the fact that the moderator, the writer and president of the writer's federation, Carl Amery, who had let himself be convinced by me to take on this role, clearly didn't understand anything at all about the material.

Nonetheless, all of this did not mean a total failure for the topical program. The newspapers and the media reported objectively and profoundly about the authors, the conditions in Latin America and the literature being offered here. The goal that we had set ourselves was reached—the books were translated, and the splendid boom in Latin American literature was set off among us as well.

And one more thing—the negative press reports about the