

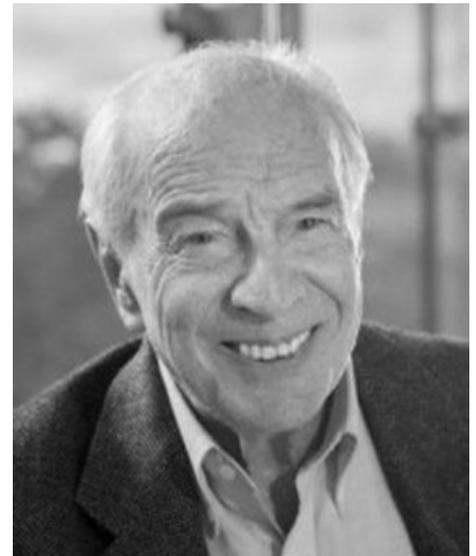
Prof. Dr. Feliks Tych (1929-2015)

An Outstanding Rosa Luxemburg Researcher,
Historian of the European Labour Movement, and of Post-Holocaust Issues



On February 17th, 2015 Feliks Tych passed away in Warsaw at the age of 85. The distinguished Polish scholar is well known to North American and UK historians mainly for his important research results on the famous Polish-German socialist Rosa Luxemburg and on the “Jewish Bund”.

During World War II his Jewish parents could give him to a Polish family. So he survived while all other family members became victims of the Holocaust. After the war he studied history in Warsaw and Moscow and in 1960 he received his post-doctoral degree (habilitation) with a thesis about the Left Polish Socialist Party in World War I. Between 1956 and 1968 he worked at the Institute of History of the Polish Academy of Sciences and in the History Department of the Polish Workers Movement. During these years and later on, too, he initiated several important projects and edited very carefully reference books and document volumes e. g. the *Biographical Dictionary of Polish Labour Movement*, the *Archive of Labour Movement* with unknown documents from Polish and Russian archives in 11 volumes, the journal *Z pola walki* with many essays and documentations like some unknown Rosa Luxemburg letters which were discovered by Feliks Tych in a Moscow archive.



But in 1968 as a result of the anti-Jewish purges in Poland he was dismissed. Nevertheless he continued his scientific work - for the next two years as a “free” academic writer - publishing 3 volumes with the complete Rosa Luxemburg letters to her close companion Leo Jogiches - a pioneer work which was translated into German, French, and English and gave much impact and inspiration to the Rosa Luxemburg research. It was especially this work that gave him an international reputation in the early years of his career. When the anti-Semitic wave in Poland went down again he could work as the head of the archive of the Polish Labour Party and was appointed as extraordinary professor in 1970, as full professor in 1982.

After the cancellation of travel restrictions by the Polish communist authorities for him he could join again the “International Conference of Labour and Social History” an annual congress in the city of Linz in Austria and meeting place for international scholars of labour movement. During his permanent active participation he influenced the meetings as a “bridge constructor” between the “Eastern” and “Western” historians which was quite a difficult but important task in the era of the “Cold War”. In the same sense he worked actively in the “International Rosa Luxemburg Society” (Chairman: Prof. Narihiko Ito, Tokyo) since its foundation in 1980. Due to his international reputation he received invitations from foreign universities and in the 1990s worked as visiting professor at several German universities. From 1995 to 2006 he headed the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw for which he improved its financial stability and of its scientific and public influence and reputation. One result was the “Museum of Polish Jews” which he initiated and realized with the help of many volunteers. Several important publication projects (some of which he even continued after his

retirement) were e. g. document editions like the Ringelblum archive papers from the Warsaw Ghetto, the documents on the Polish Jews who had fled to the Russian occupied part of Poland, children interviews protocols on the holocaust (1944-1948). At the same time he still lectured and published on labour movement issues. As a special honor he was asked to take over the memorial speech before the German Parliament on the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, 27 January 2010.

Prof. Tych leaves a rich scientific heritage: He was author of five monographs, a most careful editor of 26 tomes of reference books on labour movement and Jewish history in Eastern and Central Europe during the late 19th and the 20th century. He was a most appreciated lecturer at international conferences and a much demanded writer by scientific journals with altogether about 300 papers. Many of his works have been published not only in Poland but also in other countries from Germany on to France, Italy, Austria, Hungary, Israel, the US, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

During some well organized conferences in Warsaw (e. g. 1996 on Rosa Luxemburg, 1997 and 2012 on the “Jewish Bund”) friends and colleagues enjoyed his generous hospitality. Feliks Tych will always be kept in mind as an outstanding historian, as an inspiring, encouraging colleague and good friend. ●

Ottokar Luban (“International Rosa Luxemburg Society”)