ROBERT S. COHEN (1923-2017)

We are deeply saddened to announce the death of Robert S. Cohen who passed away in his house in Watertown, Boston on June 19, 2017, at the age of 94.

From the beginning of the Institute Vienna Circle Bob was a strong supporter of our aims and activities as well as a close friend of mine and other members. He certainly provided valuable and lasting inspiration for our conferences and publications. Bob leaves an indelible mark as a pioneer of the history and philosophy of science, working together with his friends Marx Wartofsky, Adolf Grünbaum and Gerald Holton. He was greatly inspired by his personal acquaintance with exiled members of the Vienna Circle like Herbert Feigl and Philipp Frank and their heritage in the Anglo-Saxon world, most notably Otto Neurath and Edgar Zilsel..The renowned “Boston Center for the Philosophy and History of Science“ which he founded as a Colloquium in 1960, and his path- breaking book series “Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science“ that has appeared since 1963, the legendary series „”Vienna Circle Collection“, which he edited from 1973 together with Henk Mulder and Brian McGuinness, are some of the milestones of his outstanding lifework. In addition, he contributed to science education and built bridges between Western philosophy of science and traditions all over the world, already in the Cold War period. He also donated his scientific library to the Tsinghua University in Beijing in 2007. Our last joint project was on the life and work of the Chinese philosopher and Vienna Circle member Tscha Hung (= Hong Qian). Unfortunately, we were unable to complete the book but will finish it in honor of Bob’s achievements.

Till the end of his life Bob remained a committed leftist intellectual who stood up for a democratic civil society in the European Enlightenment tradition. His personal charm, his wit and sophisticated humor were unique. He was a most important representative of the legendary founding generation of philosophy of science and advocated a vision of philosophy of science that includes its historical, social and political dimensions. Bob played a decisive role in passing on this vision to the philosophy of science throughout the second half of the 20th century and beyond.

We are proud and grateful that Bob donated the most valuable “Robert S. Cohen Collection and Archives“ to the Institute Vienna Circle. In 2003 he inaugurated this collection in Vienna. <http://www.univie.ac.at/ivc/biblio/rsca.htm#collection>

We will miss Bob immensely. Our deep feelings are with his wife Karin and his children Michael, Danny and Debbie and their families.

*Friedrich Stadler* (Vienna Circle Society and Institute Vienna Circle)

Obituary of the BCPHS: <http://www.bu.edu/cphs/about/robert-cohen/>