



Ruth Weyl passed away

31.05.2013 | Deborah Weissman *

I am sorry to have to share bad news with the family of the ICCJ—our beloved friend and colleague, Ruth Weyl, has died at the age of 89. She passed away on Sunday, May 12th (the 3rd of Sivan in the Jewish calendar.)

In the words of her daughter, Celia:

“The past month did not correspond to her wishes and she fought valiantly to regain her health, but declined gradually over the past ten days, despite the doctors' efforts.

Her daughters and grand-daughters were round her the last week though I'm not sure that even the five of us together could have the same energy as this lady generally showed.”

This will be a great personal loss to me. I have known Ruth for just under seven years, and she was old enough to be my mother, yet we became good friends and confidantes. She often called me and she e-mailed me frequently, sharing articles or other items of mutual interest.

But generally, the ICCJ has lost its organizational memory and our living link to Seelisberg. Over the years, Ruth held many positions within the CCJ, the Three Faiths Forum and the ICCJ and, most recently, served as Consultant to our International Executive Board. Despite her illness, she even participated in our February Board meeting in London which led to the publication of our document, “As long as you believe...” With Ruth's fluency in English, French and German (as well as Hebrew), she helped link up people from many of our different member organizations. It is hard to believe that she will not be joining us in Aix. Despite her age, she was one of the youngest and most energetic participants in our activities, by far the most successful of us when it came to communicating with youth and young adults.

Ruth was born in Berlin. Writing about her parents, she said:”... it is due to the wonderful family life I had that I learnt to deal with the less agreeable things in life with a sense of humour and trust. In that sense they also taught me to be firmly grounded in what and who I was, and at the same time open to no matter what life, encounters with others, etc. may have in store.“ From 1938 to 1958 she lived in Jerusalem and then moved to London, where she lived out the rest of her life. Her family is spread out in several different countries, and she took great pride in her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A life-long Liberal Jew, Ruth was active in Jewish causes as well as inter-religious dialogue and the struggle for justice and peace. She was honored on a number of occasions for her work, including by the ICCJ, with its Interfaith Gold Medallion, and the German government. I will conclude with some lines she wrote to me after our meeting in London:” For me, personally, Israel is not so much a culmination of religious longing, as an affirmation of independent freedom and the founding declaration to which we listened on a battered old radio in the then endangered Jerusalem, a promise of the best human endeavor to create a just society. My reference to looking

beyond our present confines really meant looking beyond Israel, looking at the issue increasingly relevant in numerous countries to which we care to spread our model of dialogue and encounter.”

We extend our deepest condolences to Ruth’s family and to all who were fortunate enough to have known her. May her memory be blessed and may we all live up to her hopes and aspirations for us as the ICCJ and as her friends.

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