



Ruth Weyl

In Memory of Ruth Weyl

We mourn the loss of Ruth Weyl, our long-time friend, and colleague. The Secretary of the Friends and Sponsors of the Martin-Buber-House died on the 12th of Mai (the 3rd Siwan according to the Jewish calendar) in London. She was 89 years old. Until the very end she had hoped to be with us in Aix. Yet her strong will and mental energy did not suffice. She died surrounded by her daughters, Celia and Maya as well as her granddaughters.

The Friends and Sponsors have lost one of its pioneers. Ruth was the driving force and the unrelenting spirit of our organisation. It is hard to believe that she won't join us for the annual meeting in Aix. She kept in contact with you, our members, wrote personal letters thanking you for your contribution, and in her youthful spirit she always found creative ways to gain new members. Interreligious dialogue, especially between Jews and Christians was of primary importance to her, close to her heart. As an adamant upholder of individual responsibility, she was involved in the founding of the Friends and Sponsors, as this allows individuals to support and become involved in the important work of the ICCJ. As late as April we talked at length about our organisation and prepared the changes in our constitution together.

For me personally the loss of Ruth is very painful. It was she who introduced me to the work of the ICCJ in Rome in 1997, and 10 years ago urged me to share her commitment to the Friends and Sponsors. As our Secretary she fulfilled her tasks with an amazing energy, prepared the meetings and gave our organisation its soul.

During the 16 years that we have known each other we became good friends. Ruth was always there when I needed her. Our conversations usually began as business talks and ended as personal conversations. When I was critically ill, it was she who encouraged me not to give up, cheered me with her humour and anecdotes from her rich life. Ruth was one of the last representatives of that special group of German Jews, so prominent until the shattering end.

She was born in 1924 as Ruth Grünfeld, the youngest daughter of Fritz and Hilde Grünfeld, the owners of the well-known Grünfeld department store in Berlin on the Kurfürstendamm. Raised as a liberal Jew with a very strong Jewish identity, she was encouraged from early on, especially by her father, whom she liked to quote, to speak her own mind and not to be afraid. She followed this principle until the very end. The Grünfeld family was forced to flee to Palestine, where she lived from 1938 until 1958, when she and her new family moved to London, where she remained the rest of her life.

In London she became involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue reaching into Continental Europe, especially into Germany. In 2008 the President of the Republic, Horst Köhler, awarded her one of the highest honours the State has to offer, the Bundesverdienstkreuz to honour her for her untiring contribution to German-Jewish and Jewish-Christian understanding. Being multilingual, English, German, French, and Hebrew, she was able to reach out to many countries. I remember her powerful presentation during our joint participation in the annual Conference of the Amitié Judéo-

chrétienne de France in Mulhouse. She was a regular participant at conferences in France.

Ruth Weyl was a builder of bridges. She reached people's minds, but more importantly, she touched people's heart. We from the Friends and Sponsors of the Martin-Buber-House owe it to her to continue her work. May it be given to us to bring the world a bit closer to her hopes and expectations.

May 18, 2013

Friends and Sponsors of the Martin-Buber-House

Eva Schulz-Jander

President

Michael Korn

Acting treasurer

See also:

Deborah Weissman, [Ruth Weyl passed away](#)