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99-årige Ruth vil stadig redde verden 99-year old Ruth still wants to save the world

HimmerlandUkendt ikon holder fest. Unknown ikon in Himmerland holds a party.

Engang var nazister efter hendes The nazis were after her family at one point.

familie. Siden kæmpede hun mod Later she fought against racism

racisme og blev indstillet til Nobels and was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

fredspris. Nu bor hun stille i. Now she lives quietly in

nordjysk landsby og følger a village in northern Jutland

bekymret kloden på computeren worrying about the globe on her computer

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Af Knud Labohn og Lars Pauli

ROLD: Venter du på retfær- If you are waiting for justice

dighed, kan du komme til at you may have to wait for

vente længe. Den skal hjæl- a long time. It has to be

pes på vej. Og jo flere der helped on the way. And the more

hjælper, jo hurtigere går det. who are heling, the quicker the process.

Det ved 99-årige Ruth Wei- 99-year old Ruth Weiss

ss mere om end de fleste. knows more about this than most people.

Som barn flygtede hun med As a child she and her family fled from nazi Germany.

sin jødiske familie ud af nazi-

Tyskland. Siden blev hun en She later became such a strong voice against

markant stemme mod apart- apartheid and injustice

heid og uretfærdighed i en that she was expelled from two countries

grad, så hun blev forvist fra

to lande. Herunder sit nye Among them, her new country South Africa.

hjemland, Sydafrika.

Stemmen er ikke blevet The voice did not remain silent

tavs, selv om hun for længst even though she long ago has been deserving

har gjort sig fortjent til et

stille otium. Ruth Weiss skri- a quiet otium (retirement). Ruth Weiss writes

ver blog-indlæg og skriver blogs, and continues to write articles

stadig på artikler og bøger. and books.

Hun holder også foredrag, She also gives lectures

blandt andet på skoler i sit including in schools in Germany.

gamle hjemland, Tyskland. It often takes place with titles

Det sker under overskrifter

som: "Se ikke væk, når der such as „Don’t look away, when injustice happens.“

sker uretfærdigheder".

Nu sidder kvinden med Now the woman with this unbelieveable destiny

den utrolige skæbne på Rold is at Rold Kro, ready to celebrate.

Storkro, klar til at holde fest.

At det blev i hjertet af Him- The reason for this event in the heart of

merland skyldes blandt Himmerland is because Rebild has a special place

andet, at egnen ved Rebild

har fået en særlig plads i

hendes hjerte. Som 91-årig in her heart. When she was 91 years old, she moved

flyttede hun til Skibsted, to Skibsted

hvor sønnen og hans familie where her son and family live.

bor. Her har hun siden fun- Here she has found her fifth, and probably last,

det sit femte - og formentlig

sidste - hjemland. homeland.

Menneskets dumheder **Human Follies**

Rundt om i verden har 30 Across the world 30 guests packed nice clothes and

gæster fundet det pæne tøj

frem og booket en flybillet i booked tickets to travel to Rold.

retning Rold. En 30 styk, der Among the 30 guests some have passports from

har pas fra blandt andet Syd- South Africa, Holland, Germany, Italy and Russia.

afrika, Holland, Tyskland,

Italien og Rusland. Og – nåja And oh well, Denmark

- Danmark.

Ruth Weiss er nemlig ikke Ruth Weiss is not only a beautiful elderly woman

kun en smuk ældre kvinde,

så tæt på de 100 år man kann as close to 100 years as yon can get.

komme. Den lille kvinde har This small woman has

et stort hjerte og en historie a big heart and a history

og en karriere, der kan tage and career that will

pusten fra de fleste. overwhelm most.

Hun er blevet et ikon for She has become an icon for

sin klare stemme mod uret- her clear voice against injustice.

 And for contuing to speak against

færdighed. Og for stadigt at

tale imod nogle af menne- some of humanity’s largest mistakes

skehedens største dumhe-

der, så de ikke gentages. Især so that they are not repeated. Especially

i Tyskland og Sydafrika. In Germany and South Africa.

- Det handler om tolerance --It is about tolerance

og dialog. Man skal tale med and dialogue. We have to speak with those

dem, man er uenig med, for with whom we disagree in

at lære at forstå hinanden. order to learn to understand done another.

Det er det vigtigste, er hen- This is the most important, her

des helt grundlæggende basic

synspunkt. point of view.

De ældres ansvar **The Responsibility of the Elderly.**

- Vi, der har oplevet ting som -We who have experienced

nazisme og apartheid har et nazism and apartheid have a

ansvar for at fortælle unge responsibility to tell the

generationer om det. Ellers young generations about it. Otherwise

bliver det glemt. Jeg blev for it is forgotten. I was

eksempel chokeret, da en chocked, for example, some years ago when a

ung smuk tysk kvinde for young beautiful German woman

nogle år siden spurgte mig, asked me

hvornår mine forældre var when my parents had arrived in Germany. There

kommet til Tyskland. Der har have been Jews in Germany for several hundred

været jøder i Tyskland i man- years but she did not know that,

ge hundrede år, men det vid- according to Ruth Weiss who continues to see herself

ste hun ikke, nævner Ruth

Weiss, som stadig ser sig som

journalist og forfatter. as a journalist and author.

I Tyskland er der dannet et A Ruth Weiss Association has been formed

Ruth Weiss selskab, der støt-

ter op om hendes aktiviteter, in Germany to support her activities and it also

og også arrangerer festen i organized the party in

Rebild. I farens hjemby - Rebild.

Aschaffenburg sydøst for Almost 25 years ago a school was named

Frankfurt - fik hun for snart after her

25 år siden opkaldt en skole in her father’s hometown Ashaffenburg southeast of

efter sig. En hæder der heller Frankfurt. This is an honor usually not given to

ikke i Tyskland normalt gives persons who still are alive in Germany.

til nulevende personer.

Mandela og de andre **Mandela and the Others.**

De brune øjne ser varmt og Her brown eyes look at me warmly and with

nysgerrigt på mig. Og prø- curiosity. And testing.

vende. Hvordan fortæller How, in few words to convey the knowledge

man i få ord om den viden,

man har kæmpet sig til gen- you have fought for

nem 99 år? during 99 years?

Tidligere har øjnene kigget The eyes looked previously

på ikoner som nobelprista- at ikons like the Nobel Prize winners

gerne Nelson Mandela og Nelson Mandela and

Nadine Gordimer samt et Nadime Gordimer as well as a

hav af statsledere og interna- lot of heads of state and

tionale meningsdannere. International opinion makers.

Ruth Weiss er dog ikke Ruth Weiss is not the

typen, der gør væsen af sig type to make a fuss about herself.

selv. Personligt kan hun godt She would not mind less attention

undvære opmærksomhed. to her as a person.

Men hun vil gøre meget for But she will do a lot to

at fremme sit livsmål: Mere promote her life goal: more

retfærdighed og lighed i ver- justice and equality in

den. the world.

-- Du må undskylde, at jeg --I apologize that I do not

ikke taler dansk. Jeg vil ger- speak Danish. I would like

ne lære det, men jeg synes to learn iit but I think that

jeg er blevet for gammel. Jeg I am too old. In. Fact, I worry how

er faktisk bekymret for hvor- I’ll do if I have to live in a home fort he elderly.

dan det skal gå, hvis jeg kom-

mer på plejehjem.

Der er There are not many here in my generation who speak

ikke mange her i min genera-

tion, der taler tysk eller German or English, she says.

engelsk, siger hun.

Nazister i barndommen **Nazis during childhood**

Ruth Elisabeth Weiss blev Ruth Elizabeth Weiss was

født ind i en jødisk familie i born in 1942 into a Jewish family in

byen Fürth nær Nürnberg i Fürth near Nürnberg.

1924. Her blev opvæksten Her childhood was soon interrupted

snart brudt af brune skjorter, by brown shirts, noisy boots and arms expressing Heil

støvletramp og heilende arme.

- Nürnberg var et af nazis- Nürnberg as one of the centers of nazism. Suddenly

mens højborge. Min far kun- my father became unemployed

ne pludselig ikke få arbejde, and in 1933 he emigrated to

så i 1933 emigrerede han til

Sydafrika, fortæller Ruth South Africa, she tells in the shade of the calming

Weiss i skyggen af Rolds

beroligende blade. leaves of Rold.

[something missing]

Da den fulde magtoverta- When in 1936 the change of power in Germany was

gelse blev gennemtrumfet i forced through, the rest of her family followed.

1936 fulgte resten af famili-

en efter. De kunne se, at Tys- They saw that Germany was not a

kland ikke var blevet et sted

for dem. På den måde und- place for them. In this way

gik kernefamilien den mas- the nuclear family avoided the

seudryddelse, der siden slog mass extinction, that exterminated six million Jews.

seks millioner jøder ihjel.

I en alder af 99 år pakker Ruth At the age of 99, Ruth Weiss still requently packs

Weiss stadig jævnligt kuffer- a suitcase

ten, når der bliver kaldt på when invited.

hende. Hun føler sig forpligtet She feels obliged to share some of her

til at give nogle af sine dyre-

købte erfaringer fra sidste precious experiences from the last century

århundrede videre til nye with new generations.

generationer.

En hård start **A Difficult Start**

I Sydafrika så den purunge In South Africa young Ruth

Ruth dog noget, hun troede saw something she thought

familien var kommet væk the family had left behind.

fra.

Den sorte befolkning blev Black people were treated as the nazis had treated

behandlet, som nazisterne us.

havde behandlet os. Det kun- She explains that

ne jeg ikke lide, forklarer she did not like that.

hun.

Der var ikke råd til at hun There was not money to enable her to study. But

kunne studere. Men Ruth Ruth Weiss was employed in a combined mine and

Weiss fik job i et kombineret

mine- og forsikringsfirma, og insurance firm, and

arbejdede sig op i den advanced in a male dominated setting.

mandsdominerede branche.

Da hun blev gift med en tysk Her life changed when she married a German journalist.

journalist og korrespondent

ændrede livet sig dog.

- Han sendte mig på repor- He sent me on a reporting trip for some days to what today is

tagerejse til det, der nu hed- is Zambia because he could not go himself.

der Zambia i nogle dage, da

han ikke selv kunne. Jeg var I was very nervous but it

meget nervøs, men det gik

godt. Siden fik jeg andre went well. Later i got other tasks and in this way

opgaver og kom på den

måde ind i journalistfaget, I entered the job of a journalist, she recounts.

fortæller hun.

Talentet var der og Ruth She was talented, goal oriented, and her work was

Weiss arbejdede målrettet acknowledged.

med faget og blev mere og

mere anerkendt. Hun kom til She worked a lot with business news and during the early

at arbejde mere med

erhvervsstof og blev først i

60'erne erhvervsredaktør på 1960s, she became business director at two media

to medier i Johannesburg. houses in Johannesburg.

I den periode mødte hun During this period she for he first time met Nelson Mandela

blandt andet Nelson Man- prior to his life imprisonment.

dela første gang, inden han

fik en fængselsdom på livs-

tid.

Skilt og bandlyst **Divorced and Expelled**

Privat gik det dog ikke så In private, it did not go so well for

godt for Ruth Weiss. I 1966 Ruth Weiss.

fik hun ganske vist sønnen In 1966, she gave birth to her son Alexander but also was

Alexander, men hun blev divorced from her domineering husband.

også skilt fra sin domineren-

de mand. Samme år blev The same year, she was banned from South Africa for

hun bandlyst i Sydafrika for her anti-apartheid attitudes and her passport was removed

sine anti-apartheid holdnin-

ger og frataget sit pas efter after 30 years in the country.

30 år i landet.

Ruth Weiss flyttede til det Ruth Weiss moved to what was then Rhodesia and

daværende Rhodesia, der later split into Zambia and Zimbabwe.

siden blev delt op i Zambia

og Zimbabwe. Her blev hun Here she became a single mother, working in a full-time

alenemor med arbejde på and requiring job.

fuld tid i et krævende job.

Også på dette felt blev hun Without wanting to, she became a pioneer also in this

ufrivilligt en foregangskvin- area.

de.

Undervejs boede hun i fle- She lived in London several times, and in

re omgange i London, og i

1975 flyttede hun tilbage til 1975 she moved back to the homeland.

hjemlandet. Tre år senere gik Three years later she returned to London. The stay

turen dog tilbage til London.

Opholdet i Tyskland blev in Germany had not turned out as she had hoped.

ikke hvad hun havde håbet

på.

- Jeg fik flere gange meget Several times, she tells, I was told unpleasant things.

ubehagelige ting at vide. Det

ville jeg ikke blive ved med at

leve med, fortæller hun. I could not continue living like that.

Først da Nelson Mandela Once Mandela was released from prison in 1990 she returned

blev frigivet i 1990 vendte

Ruth Weiss tilbage til Syd- to South Africa. Now as a guest and not on the black list.

afrika. Nu som gæst og uden-

for den sorte liste.

En virkelig historie **A True Story**

Ruth Weiss blev blandt andet Among many other things, Ruth Weiss became a freelancer,

freelancer, foredragsholder lecturer, and author of several specialist books about

og forfatter til flere fagbøger

om det sydlige Afrika. southern Africa. In 1992 she moved to he Isle of Wight

I 1992 flyttede hun til Isle

of Wight og begyndte en ny and began a new career along the others.

karriere ved siden af de

andre. I en alder af 67 år At age 67 she began to write fiction, among others for

begyndte hun at skrive fik-

tion. Blandt andet for børn children and young people.

og unge.

Først kom dog selvbiogra- First her own biography appeared in 1994, “Roads in the

fien "Veje i det hårde græs" Hard Grass,“ in German and English.

på tysk og engelsk i 1994.

Siden har det især glædet Later she especially enjoyed that her book “My sister Sara“,

hende, at bogen "Min søster building on actual events in the wake of

Sara", der bygger på virkeli-

ge hændelser i kølvandet på

anden verdenskrig, i dag er World War Two, today is obligatory reading in high school in

obligatorisk læsning på gym-

nasier i delstaten Baden- the state Baden-Würtemberg. Inspired by the lack of history

Württemberg.

Inspireret af den historie-

løshed, hun har mødt, har she has witnessed, more recently she has pursued historical

hun de senere år kastet sig accounts, especially

over historiske fortællinger,

især med et blik på jødernes

europæiske liv gennem focusing on the lives of Jews throughout time.

tiden.

Fremtiden bekymrer **Worries about the Future.**

Ruth Weiss ser stadig uretfær- Ruth Weiss continues to see injustice many places across

dighed mange steder i ver- the world.

den. Og hun har været og er

stadig kritisk overfor sine tid- And she has been and is critical towards her former African

ligere afrikanske hjemlande. homelands.

Hun blev også udvist af She was expelled from Zimbabwe,

Zimbabwe, hvor hun var where she was among the critics oft he controversial regime

blandt kritikerne af Robert

Mugabes kontroversielle sty- of Robert Mugabe.

re. Og selv om hæderen er And even though honors have rained over her in the new

regnet mildt over hende i det South Africa, the regime has also received criticism.

nye Sydafrika, har styret der

også fået kritik.

- Det er som om, at racis- It is as if racism now has begun to move in a different

men nu bare er begyndt at gå direction, she says, among other things.

den anden vej, siger hun

blandt andet.

Hun er også bekymret over She also worried about our present time, and the future

nutiden. Og den fremtid, that will be that of her son and grandchild.

som bliver hendes søn og barnebarns.

- Den globale opvarmning. Global Warming.

Kunstig intelligens. Sult og Artificial Intelligence.

den store fattigdom i verden. Hunger and global poverty.

Det største håb, jeg har, er, at My biggest hope ist that the world’s richest

de rigeste mennesker i ver- people will realize

den indser, at de skal finde that they need to find another way of spending their riches,

en anden måde at bruge she says.

deres rigdom på, siger hun.

Stemmen er blevet 99 år. The voice is now 99 years. But it still wants to be heard.

Men den vil stadig høres.