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In Memoriam: Leo Luster

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On Saturday 14th January, Leo Luster, a Holocaust survivor originally from Austria, passed away at the age of 89.



Leo Luster at work in the offices of the Central Committee of Jews from Austria in Israel and of the Association of Pensioners from Austria in Israel, August 2015 (c) Bernhard Rothkappel

Leo Luster was born in Vienna in 1927 to Jewish parents. During the Nazi era he and his family were deported to Theresienstadt and, from there, he was deported to Auschwitz with his father. His father was murdered at Auschwitz. Leo Luster survived the camps and slave labor. After the war, he was reunited with his mother, who had survived Theresienstadt. In 1949 he emigrated with her to Israel, where he joined the efforts to build the new state.

Leo Luster was always a man of action. No matter where he was, in the displaced persons camp or later on in Israel, he got involved and worked tirelessly for those in need of assistance. Even after his retirement following many years of service as a chauffeur for the Austrian Ambassador he remained active, dedicating his vast energy to supporting survivors from Austria.

He worked closely with Gideon Gideon Eckhaus, day in, day out, at the “Central Committee of Jews from Austria in Israel”, where he was known to many simply as “Luster”. For many years now, the club has been an important mainstay and meeting place for survivors with Austrian roots.

For the Austrian pensioners in Israel, it was Leo Luster who bridged the gap to Austrian institutions; it is thanks to his dedicated efforts and persistence that many elderly and needy survivors were able to receive pensions and nursing allowance from Austria.

For the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism Leo Luster was an indispensable and dependable ally, without whom it would hardly have been possible to make contact with and provide support to so many survivors in Israel. There were countless phone calls and letters in which he helped the Fund, obtained and forwarded documents and expedited assistance that was so often urgently needed.

The National Fund would like to express its gratitude for Leo Luster, who became a dear friend to Secretary General Hannah M. Lessing and many of her staff over the years, for his truly wonderful work. We extend our heartfelt condolences to Leo Luster’s family.

Links

- Life Story of Leo Luster (Video in German)
- The Central Committee of Jews from Austria in Israel
- The Past is always present - A visit to the Club of the Austrian Pensioners in Israel (PDF taken from the 20th Anniversary of the National Fund magazine)

The Past Is Another Country