

Heinzwalter Lenel (1914-1998)

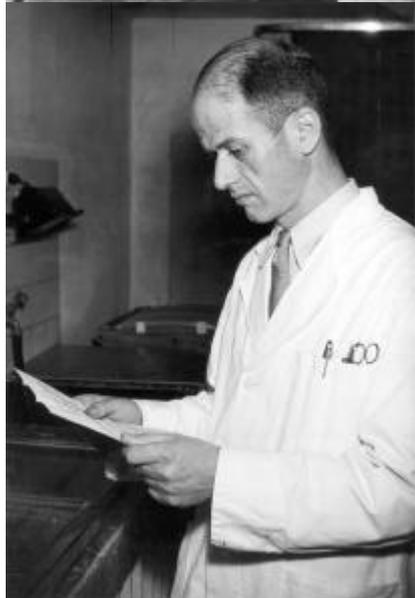
Heinzwalter Lenel (*03.08.1914 Mannheim †05.08.1998 Wetzikon, Switzerland); parents: Richard Lenel (1869-1950), Emilia (Milly) Maas (1880-1959); siblings: Irmgard (1901-????), Ruth (1902-1947), Klaus (1904-1980), Victor (1907-????), Adelheid (1910), Rosmarie (1916-1981), Renate (1916-2010), Ernst (1918-1944); married to: Liselotte Berger (1922-1998); children: Beat (1960), Daniel (1962), Severin (1964)

Heinz Walter Lenel was born on August 3, 1914 as the sixth child of Richard and Milly Lenel in Mannheim. His parents had resigned from the Jewish Community and started to refer to themselves



as free thinkers. He attended his first school years in the private school of Mr. Schwarz. From the fourth class of primary school, he attended the public Pestalozzi school. He then joined the Karl-Friedrich-Gymnasium (grammar school). With the rise of National Socialism, he could not continue his studies in Germany. In 1934 he was forced to emigrate to Berne, where his sister Ruth and her husband Oscar Guldmann were living. There he began to study chemistry.

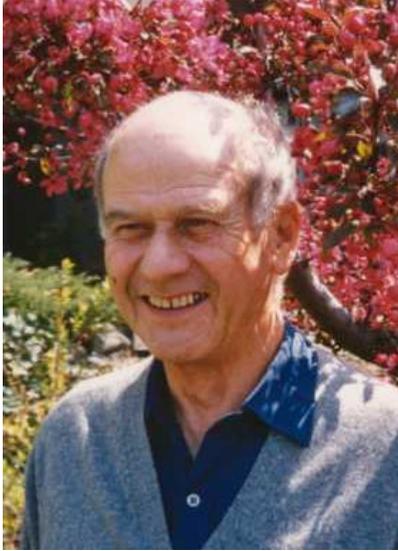
In the winter of 1937/38 he made an interim semester at the University of Geneva. He graduated and was working on his doctoral thesis. Yet after less than two years of work on his thesis, the federal immigration police summoned him in autumn 1940 to the labor camp Sattellegg. Nothing, not even the intervention of Prof. Feitknecht could alter that verdict. From here, he was transferred to a labor camp in Gordola near Locarno. After half a year, he received two months' leave to continue working on his dissertation. Then he had to report back in Locarno. He was subsequently sent to the labor camp Vouvry, where marshland had to be drained. In late 1941, he received a leave of two months and was able to finish his thesis and submit it to the dean's office. His leave was extended, because he had registered for the exam. In February 1942 he completed his final examinations with "magna cum laude". Meanwhile, he was sent again to various labor camps, such as a second time to Locarno, to Davesco and to Serneus near Klosters. In 1944 he was summoned for the last time to a labor camp. In 1945 he was summoned for land service and spent six weeks at a farm in Seewil in the Bernese Seeland.



In 1946 he returned to Berne where he obtained a job as a fourth-class assistant at the Chemical Institute. He then worked at Bigler in Lyss. Through the mediation of Prof. Dr. v.Tavel he obtained a position with Heberlein AG in Wattwil, where he was responsible for the analytical laboratory (see picture bottom left). In that time he lived in a furnished room above a bakery. Since he still had debts from his studies and supported his parents Richard and Milly Lenel in the U.S., his financial situation was always tense. In 1952, he started Swiss naturalization procedures, which were in those days very restrictive. Only after a complicated procedure and a popular vote¹, he obtained in 1955 the Wattwil, St. Gall and Swiss citizenship. In 1956 he traveled to Brazil for his employer Heberlein AG. He did not succeed, though, with his project as the

board of directors did not share his courageous views on the matter. In February 1957 he joined the Colgate-Palmolive company in Wallisellen, which shortly afterwards moved to new premises in Wetzikon. In 1959 he married Lieselotte Berger. She bore him three sons, Beat (1960), Daniel (1962) and Severin (1964). In 1962, he was able to purchase land from the municipality at Leisihalde in Wetzikon. His friend Hans Brunner from Wattwil drew the plans and so he built his own house.

¹ In the public vote, unknown persons were likely not to pass. Thus my father became a member of the popular theatre society, where he played his part so convincingly, that everyone was speaking about it. He passed the vote easily.



In 1976 he suffered a heart attack and subsequently had to reduce his workload. He had to resign as the head of the laboratory and worked part-time with office tasks. In 1979 he retired but still continued in various companies as an external consultant and product developer (particularly shampoo, soap and cleaning agents). In his free time he devoted himself entirely to his stamp collection. In the stamp collector's society, he was head of the youth section. He later became the actuarial. In 1989 he resigned from the board. But when his successor in the youth section died unexpectedly, he took the position back until his death.

1998 his wife Liselotte died after a long and serious cancer illness. His health then deteriorated rapidly. He suffered a massive heart attack and died on August 5, 1998 at the Wetzikon hospital.

Thal, December 14th 2010, B. Lenel (beat@lenel.ch)