

Leo Lerner, born on September 3, 1929 in Göppingen, died in 2002 in the USA/California

Leo's parents Miriam, née Antmann, and Tobias Lerner had lived in Eislingen/Fils since June 1924, where Tobias Lerner was employed by the Fleischer paper factory. The family lived in Eislingen's Körnerstraße in changing company apartments of the paper factory. Both parents came from



Galicia, which belonged to Austria-Hungary until 1920. There, in Przemysl, Leo's older sister Helene was also born.

Leo Lerner left

(Source: Initiative Stolpersteine Göppingen)

In the summer of 1936, Leo went to primary school in Eislingen, where he was the only Jewish child in the class, and he was harassed, insulted and pelted with stones from the very beginning. In an interview from 1999, Leo mentioned in particular the teacher Bruno Zeller, who had encouraged the boys in the class to "get one over on the Jew". After the Eislingen school was rededicated to the 'Deutsche Schule' ('German School'), which did not tolerate Jewish pupils, Leo attended the Jewish School in Göppingen from November 1936; a classmate, [Pnina Plawner](#), also came from Eislingen. But even on the way to the bus stop to Göppingen, Leo continued to be attacked and ridiculed in Eislingen.



Jewish School Göppingen ca. 1939

(Source: Initiative Stolpersteine Göppingen)

Already after the transfer of power to the Nazis, the family considered leaving Germany. Plans to emigrate to France failed. In 1938, the family, which had Polish citizenship, received several deportation orders. With help and luck, deportation to Poland was prevented. The only escape option was to leave for China/Shanghai in May 1939. Tobias, Miriam and Leo Lerner lived there under limited conditions until September 1945, when the Japanese occupation ended.

Leo Lerner was able to attend a Jewish school in Shanghai, but could hardly make up for what he had missed in Germany. In a watchmaker's workshop and later in a jewelry workshop, he learned a craft with which he later made a living in the USA. In 1949, 16-year-old Leo Lerner traveled alone from Shanghai to the USA before his parents; they followed him in 1950. His sister Helene had fled

to the Philippines in 1939, where she had been interned by the Japanese army. She also later emigrated to the USA.

About Leo Lerner's life in the USA, where he died in 2002, his niece Peggy Kohn reports:

"My uncle Leo served in the National Guard and later switched from working in a jewelry store (...) to a job as a technician repairing autopilot systems for United Airlines. He continued to live in his parents' house (Sunset District, San Francisco) until he sold it and bought a new one in Mission Viejo in Orange County. Later, he cohabited with Heddy Shearer, a widowed acquaintance from Shanghai, and she moved in with him with their three children."