

Interviewee:	<u>HEIMANN</u> , Gerhard	Date:	October 17, 1999
Interviewer:	Josey G. Fisher		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

## SUMMARY

Gerhard Heimann was born on February 11, 1929 in Berlin, Germany. His father was a traveling salesman. The family belonged to the *Liberale Kultusgemeinde*, a liberal congregation. Gerhard describes his expulsion from his German primary school because he was a Jew. In 1935 his father lost his job. Gerhard vividly describes his childhood memories of *Kristallnacht* (1938), what he saw and that the Jewish school that he had started attending and the synagogue attached were not burned. He describes his family's reaction to *Kristallnacht*, a cousin leaving immediately after and his parents making plans to leave Germany in January 1939. They finally left for Shanghai in April 1939, travelled via train to Genoa, then took the Italian liner, Lloyd-Tiesti and arrived in Shanghai on June 27, 1939.

As German refugees the family received some assistance from HIAS and they managed to buy a home in Hongkew, the Jewish section. They rarely left this area. Gerhard describes life and politics of Jewish Shanghai in detail. The family was quite poor. They rented out part of their home and Gerhard's father cleaned windows. Gerhard finished high school, the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School, also known as the Kadoorie School, and joined the Zionist youth movement, Betar. He apprenticed for three years and in 1943 became a barber. In 1947 he gave a Jewish GI a haircut and invited him home for Shabbat. Later this GI, Irving Radar, sent Gerhard an affidavit to come to the United States; he arrived on May 21, 1948. Gerhard's picture is in James Ross' book, "Escape to Shanghai".

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## SUBJECT HEADINGS

Berlin, Germany  
*Kristallnacht*  
Personal Narrative, Jewish  
Rickshaw Reunion  
Shanghai  
World War II 1938-1945