

Interviewee:	<u>KURSCHNER</u> , Paul	Date:	December 5, 1982
Interviewer:	Ruth K. Hartz ¹		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	Interviewee retains literary rights		

SUMMARY

Paul Kurschner was born May 16, 1916 in Vienna, Austria into a wealthy, Reform Jewish family. As a boy, he experienced antisemitism and engaged in bloody fights at school. His family belonged to the *Oesterreicher Juden Centralverein*, an anti-Zionist group of Austrian Jews, but Paul broke away from that affiliation at age 13. He joined *HaShomer HaTzair*, *Kidut Tsurim*, *Betar* and *Gedut HaKhoyal*. In 1936 he became the youngest member elected to the New Zionist Congress.

In 1937, Paul joined the Austrian Army and in 1938, he became a German soldier. He then deserted and was hidden by gentile friends until he fled to Italy. There, he met hundreds of other young Zionists who traveled together to Greece. Aided by the mayor and priest in a fishing village, they soon sailed on the *Artemisia* to Palestine.

Paul had been an atheist until the Israeli War of Independence. He then came to believe in a higher power and became a Conservative Jew. He left Israel in 1950 and settled in the United States, living in Philadelphia, where he joined B'nai Tikvah B'nai Jeshurun congregation. He married and had two children in Israel in 1942 and remarried in the United States in 1982.

¹Ruth (Renee) K. Hartz.