

ladies by the way. That must have been a house which belonged to a Jewish organization. There were only Jews in that building. And downstairs was a family that offered me a room that happened to be empty that belonged to their daughter who was not there so I could stay there overnight.

So we took a cab. And the cab driver offered to take us down town to see the smashed windows.

We thanked him. We didn't really care.

So we went to that place. I stayed downstairs and he went upstairs. But after the first night, the room was right next to the hallway, early in the morning at 6 o'clock I heard very heavy footsteps going down the hall. I thought here they come. But it was the milk man delivering fresh milk to the people. And after I got up the people offered me breakfast. Well I could drink coffee. I couldn't eat. I couldn't eat anything.

They had heard already that we were married only three months so they thought I was pregnant.

But of course I wasn't.

And after a few days the old ladies upstairs got scared. They were afraid because they gave shelter to my husband they might get punished

So we were supposed to find another place.

I got some addresses. I don't know how.

I called people but to no avail. Some of the members from that house were already taken. It wasn't safe.

Several times I was on the street I saw the trucks filled with Jewish men driving away to the concentration camps.

Then, I don't know where this family came from; I unfortunately never got their name. They were gentile. They might even have been Communists. I don't know. They offered us a room. We went there. We stayed there several nights.

Then one night I took my husband out to get a little fresh air. And there was a phone on the street. So I phoned my uncle in Berlin. I didn't know if he was at home. But he was elderly already. And there was he and his wife and another aunt. They lived together. So I called and he answered the phone.



And I said Oh, Uncle Alvin. Can we come to you? I am in Hamburg with my little boy. And he understood. I thought the phone was tapped. I don't know what I thought. I said can we come to you? And he said: Of course. Come with the next train. There's one coming. Tonight.

We went back to the room, packed our things, and left. And I never knew the name of these people.

This was not the main station of Hamburg. It was a substation. But it was on the way to Berlin so it was fine.

When we got there on the platform we wouldn't stay together. We didn't want to show two Jewish faces together. There were Nazis in uniform everywhere.

When the train came my husband went on one wagon and I took another one.

It crawled with Nazis in uniform.

After we were riding for a while I went along that walkway where you can walk along the whole train, I walked along to see if I still could find my husband. After two or three cars there was one window where the curtain was closed but between the end of the window and the curtain there was a gap. I could see his hands on his knees. And I recognized his hands. So I was satisfied he was still there and I went back to my place.

But it was full with Nazis.

In Berlin we both got out, of course

But I let him go ahead.

I followed him from a distance; and he hired a cab and I got in with him and we went to my relatives.

Now we were in Berlin.

And we got in touch with my mother in law. She told us that they had been searching for my husband for days. They searched the house from the top to bottom. They threatened her to tell them where we were. She didn't know. I didn't tell her where we were.

Finally not far ahead of Christmas she said you can come home now. It's safe now. Together.

But while we were in Berlin I went several times to visit my mother in Strelitz which was just half way between Berlin and Rostock. She told me what happened in Strelitz where there were no Jews. So they took the women on the tenth. Including my mother. In the morning a policeman came and told her Mrs. Zemack you need to come with me. You have to give me all the cash you have. And your jewelry. And you have to come with me. And he took her to the prison which was right now a concentration camp. And in Strelitz there were more women Jews than men. There were two friends of my mother who were spinsters who lived together who also had a house. But they had just sold the house. And they had the cash at home. And they had to give that away in the morning.

My mother was now in what they considered a concentration camp in Strelitz. In the afternoon the women were issued blankets.

A little while later I guess a warden changed his mind and he sent the women home.

The next morning a policeman came again and said my mother should come over to the police station and get her things back. We happened to live almost across the street from the police station. And my mother went and she got all her money back. All her jewelry. Everything.

And she was about to leave, and they called after her: Oh Mrs. Zemack. You don't have to worry about your friends. They committed suicide overnight. These two women since they had to give away all the money from the house; they didn't expect to get anything back; they

had nothing to live on. So they thought. And both of them hanged themselves.



My poor mother had to arrange for the funeral. That's what she told me. There's some side story to the prison. Because

the warden was the father of my girlfriend. And during my school years I went to that prison so often. It was built on the side of what several hundred years ago had been a castle. And that burned down. And after that they built up a prison and a huge yard with a big wall around and a moat around and a drawbridge. And I went visiting there. I had to go across. And knock at that big door. Of course the police all knew me. And I went onto the big yard. And the warden had a nice little house on the side. And there I visited so often, and now it was a concentration camp. But the people there had more freedom. But they were not mishandled. And I found out from all around that area including Rostock came to that site.

I stayed in Berlin at my relatives. Erwin Heyman and His wife and his unmarried sister Meta Ephraim. The three of them lived in that apartment.

Adolf Aron Samuel. Hitler decreed that all men had to accept a Jewish name. because most of them had just one name. He didn't have to. I became Hilda Sara. All Jewish women had to have a second name of Sarah. Hitler had a list of names that he thought were Jewish and they could choose from those names. My birth certificate that I had here is Hilda Sara. Because my original birth certificate stayed with my mother.



Shortly before Christmas we went home to Rostock. After this guy was murdered in France there was a big Jewish tax which we had to pay. And it was so much that rich people had to sell their property to be able to pay the tax. In our case we had to sell the house, which we probably would have done anyway. While the sale was still in progress they allowed me to take the money, my part, to pay my tickets to Shanghai. And my mother stayed, of course, until the sale was done. After the sale was finished she moved also to Berlin. She moved in with her sisters.

While we were in Berlin my husband went to any place he could think of, any consulate probably but there was nothing available. All the countries in South America asked for a lot of money, and here you had to have relatives who would give you an affidavit. We didn't have anybody. There was one cousin of my mother's I wrote to but she had two boys she had to bring in. I knew her personally. But she couldn't help me. So Shanghai turned out to be the only place. We didn't think much of it. When we left home we had thought about it, but it didn't have much appeal. But, as it happened, a few days after I got home I met another young woman on the street. Jewish. And she said: Oh Mrs. Samuel I want to talk with you. Can you use two tickets for Shanghai? We bought four. Two for me and my husband and two for my parents. But they don't want to go. I believe it also was too much money for them. Now if they are handed to you of course you took them. The only thing we did was exchange them for first class. That was good because I get sea sick pretty fast. The trip to Shanghai was not too bad in that respect.

So we left for Shanghai on the 23rd of February 1939 and got to Shanghai on the 20th of March. Before we left we had to get permissions for everything. We could not take any valuables except for a wedding band and a gold watch. Besides that \$4 apiece. We left the country with \$8 between us. I had to make a list of how many sheets, how many pillow cases, how many dish cloths. How many towels; you name it. I had to make a list of that. And that was allowed. And when we were ready to pack they came; two packers and a police man. The policeman had the list and the packers packed. And they counted. And I had a little diamond engagement ring. I would have so much liked to take it. I had a shirt on with a little pocket. And I thought maybe some moment I could just drop it in. But I was never alone. And my husband had from his childhood these stuffed animals; and he loved those little guys; and I put them on the floor with the other stuff. That was not on the list of course,

Some people used them to put something into the stuffing. I didn't. I did not have anything in there. And I thought if they take them, fine. If they don't take them ok. So they were finished packing they took them and put them all in. I could have had something in them but I didn't. Of course we applied for our passports. My husband was constantly on the railway getting permission for all sorts of things.

After we came home to Rostock we were ok. At that time Hitler really wanted us (the Jews) to leave. We went to the office to get our passports. When we came there we told the clerk: Samuel He said Samuel. There was something wrong. And he left. And I was so scared. But he came back within a few minutes and said: No that was the other Samuel. This is OK. Everything is fine. My husband's boss was Samuel. And he had gotten away. He probably had money outside the country. So we left with \$8 between us.

I went from Rostoff a day ahead to be with my mother for one day in Strelitz and I left my husband to be with his mother another day. In Strelitz in our house were still these people living who lived there all my life. We lived in the house in the back. So I went to these people to say goodbye. They cried with me and on the wall was Hitler's picture. And much later I got in touch with one of their daughters and she was the one with whom I corresponded. People were not all Nazis. They had a son who was my age. He never joined the party. Somehow he managed to stay away from it. But he died young.

We went by Berlin by train to Geneva. Before we could go on the ship we had to spend one night. We had to spend one dollar. Then we could go onto the ship the night before it left.

The next morning my husband went down to the purser to see there might be some mail.

In my mind I tried to find other people with my maiden name. All



Dancing aboard the ship

My husband went down to that office. He didn't find letters for us. There was a letter to Mr. Leo Zemack. Of course we immediately went to these people. They were older than we were. They had a grown daughter who had just got married. And they were as surprised as we were. We became friends eventually. And Mr. Zemack thinks it's possible that he and my father might have been cousins. There is no way to check that.

through my life I have always tried to find people with my maiden name. never found anyone. When I was in Berlin I looked in the telephone book. Or wherever I was. I never found anyone. Now we were on the ship.



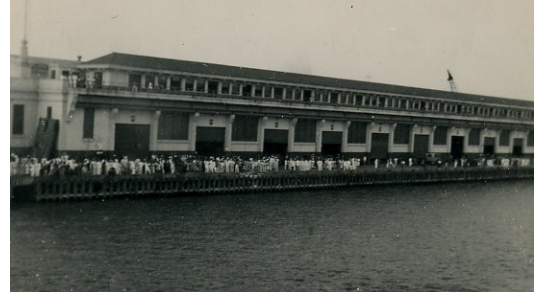


The ship went along the Italian coast. We saw Vesuvius in the background smoking and of course the Mediterranean and the Suez canal. The first stop was at night in the south

Large group of people in Manila

The first stop was at night in the south. It was so hot. WE couldn't get off the ship because it would cost money.

Singapore was as far south as we got. That's two degrees above the equator. Colombo comes first; (Colombo was a large seaport on the western side of Ceylon) Singapore; Manila; Hong Kong, Shanghai.





In Shanghai was a committee from America. Jewish organization had an office in Shanghai for us. Eventually we were 18,000 people in Shanghai.

We got picked up at the harbor with a truck. Like a cattle truck. And we were taken to the embankment camp. That was a catchall at first. It was a big

building with large rooms. Men and women were separated. There we stayed until we found a room. It was not easy because the area where we would have to stay to be close to the office of this committee was Hongkew. That was like a suburb. But a poor one. There were many Chinese people too.



Destruction of HongKew in 1939
Chinese refugees left HongKew

That had been the area where the war was fought between Japan and China. This area was very badly damaged. And the committee tried to repair as many houses as possible.



So that we could find rooms. It was not easy to find a room. We were 10 days in that camp before we found a room in the attic. The room was in the attic but it was a large room. It was ok. But at least it was a room where we could close the door behind us. The problem was we had to pay rent. And we had not the

money. Not the cash. We had something in the trunk which we had brought to sell. But we couldn't get the trunk out before we had a room. So people we had met on the boat lent us the money for the first rent so we could get our trunks and start selling something and pay of course back.

We went back to the embankment building twice a day for our meals. We were really completely relying on that. We walked everywhere. I heard the day after we moved out that one of the meals was not that good. The people were running to the toilet. It was a rampage to the toilets. We missed that.

We got there in March. In May 1939 somebody brought scarlet fever from the ship. I was one who caught it. More than 100 people caught it.



So again the committee arranged. They used a big empty school building as a make shift hospital. There were big rooms. We were maybe 6 to 8 people in each room. And for 2 to 3 months there were my neighbors there. They also caught it. Mother and daughter. Of course it was nice because we could talk with each other. We passed through days with really high fevers. After that we really didn't feel very sick. It wasn't bad. A few people felt more sick but we didn't feel sick at all. I think I had to stay there 6 weeks.

The problem was my husband was alone and he is not a person to be alone. Of course he tried to find something to make money. But he tried the wrong things. He wanted to have a little store. Like a little



grocery store. But not where all the refugees lived.

Because we didn't have any money he figured that they didn't have money either. He rented a little tiny room for a store in the English section. Shanghai consisted at that time of a big Chinese area where you wouldn't go in because you wouldn't find your way. It was all Chinese. Then there was a British sector. And American. And French. So he was in the English sector and rented this little tiny place as a store and on top of it just as tiny was a room with two windows to one side, no cross ventilation. No screens. At night we had to have the windows open.

In summer. The bugs could come in and out at their pleasure. And did. He did this now while I was in the hospital. Of course he no idea how to stock the store. He didn't know what people wanted. Everything was wrong. Right from the beginning. And there I had to go after I got out of the hospital. Lost my first strength. And that really was not a place to recuperate. Overnight I got stung. One morning I woke up with a swollen eye. One time my lip was swollen. I just felt terrible.



He realized it was wrong. And he tried to sell it. And luckily he found somebody. That's where we lost our first money. By the way we made money by selling. He sold his violin eventually. And his typewriter. And I had some diamonds smuggled which I sold. But of course we never got the price what the things were

worth. While we were trying to sell that store one day I was upstairs washing dishes and I had taken off my gold watch which I had brought with me and I put it behind me. And a Chinese came up to look around. He wanted to buy the store. He left again. And after I looked around for my watch it was gone. That wasn't a nice experience. But we did sell. There was a loss. But the first loss is always the best.

In the mean time the Zemacks had located a room for us in the same building where the were. We moved there to Hongkew where all the others were there too. There was one family that did have a grocery

store and they did good business. Even so people bought by the ounce. Not by the pound or half pound. For instance after my daughter was born I bought each day half an ounce of butter. And melted it on a frying pan. I had a little plate. And put in some flour and made a paste. It was what she ate. This was July 39.



In August 1940 first my husband had to be in bed for a few days with a bad cold and then I had it. For days I must have had high fever. I had the feeling I was melting away. Finally we got a doctor and he recognized I was carrying stomach typhoid. And he gave me a shot which cured me eventually. I had lost so much weight that when I got out of bed and went to his office I weighed 77 lbs.

After I got out of bed I couldn't get my strength back. And I complained to the doctor.

And he said the best way for you would be to have a baby.

And I thought he was crazy under the circumstances. But unbeknownst to him and me I was already pregnant. And that's how Ralph was born 9 months later. He was born October 2nd 1941. And you couldn't have any happier parents than we were.



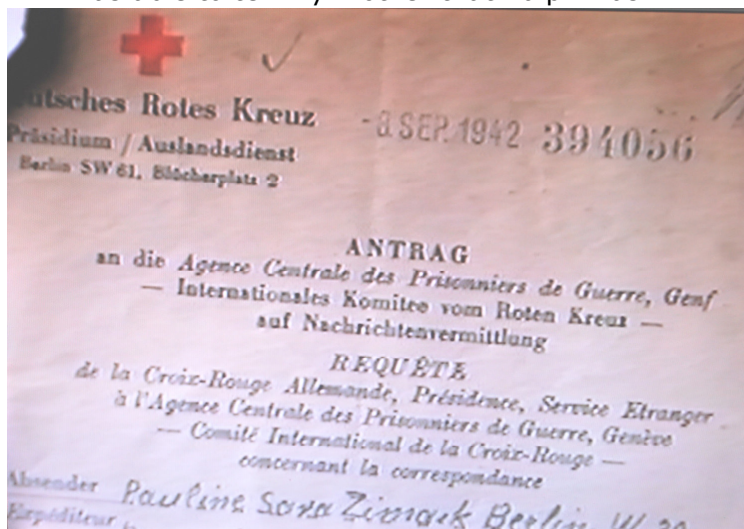
We just didn't expect to have children in Shanghai.

And as it happened in another 2 years or so I became pregnant again. And my daughter was born. And that was in the hardest time, at that time. We didn't have much to eat. We often went to that committee. She was born March 27, 1944. Her name was Ruth Gita.

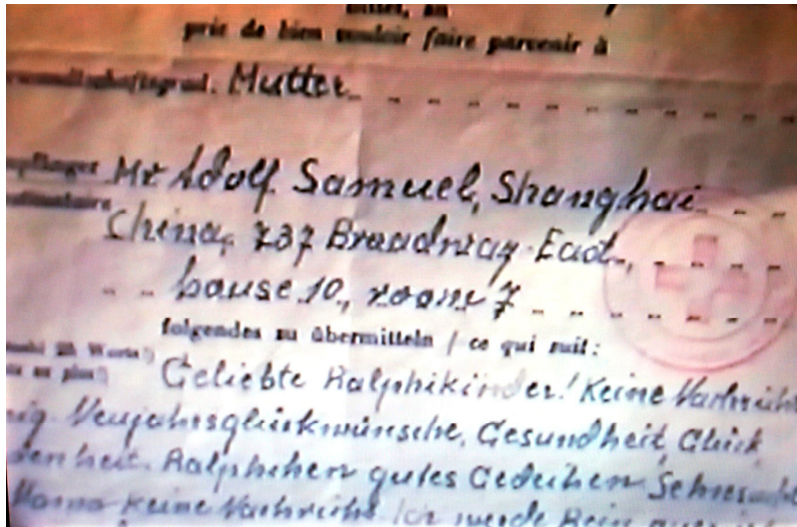
As it happened a few days after Ralph was born Hitler took our citizenship away so we became stateless. And the children were never German. They were stateless. And after they came here they were stateless until we became citizens all four of us.

We had no idea what was happening in Germany. We had correspondence. In 1942 I was able to tell my mother that Ralph was

born. I think that's my last letter to her. There's a letter from her where she answers and she got that letter. But her letter is already a Red Cross letter with 25 words.



And how happy she was. But before that she had told me in another letter that



my mother in law had been taken away. I'm not sure when she was taken but she was taken a week before that to Theresienstadt. After that I haven't heard from my mother any more.

Theresienstadt concentration camp was

established by the [Gestapo](#) in the fortress and garrison city of [Terezin](#) ([German](#) name Theresienstadt), located in what is now the [Czech Republic](#). During [WWII](#), the [Gestapo](#) used [Theresienstadt](#) as a [ghetto](#), concentrating Jews from Czechoslovakia, as well as many from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark. More than 150,000 Jews were sent there, and although it was not an extermination camp about 33,000 died in the ghetto itself, mostly because of the appalling conditions arising out of extreme population density. About 88,000 inhabitants were deported to [Auschwitz](#) and other extermination camps

When we came here we heard what was going on and we didn't believe it. Then there came a list of some survivors and we didn't find anybody. We found one name and it wasn't really a relative. It was an aunt of my cousin who had survived but that was all. We didn't find my aunts and my uncles, my mother or my mother in law. For my husband I don't know if there was anybody who survived. He had quite a few cousins but I don't know if they are around or not. But my family the only people who survived were two male cousins who went to Israel as teenagers. One of them died in the mean time. The other is there. He is 10 years younger than I am. And we keep a correspondence. Unfortunately he doesn't speak English and I don't understand Hebrew so we correspond in German.



Shanghai was a disaster. You couldn't have a job, a real job. My husband didn't have much luck. At one time he heard about some Viennese ladies who designed and made blouses for ladies. Very pretty. They had salesmen who sold them in the city. So my husband went there and they gave him some blouses to try and sell. Now we had one address of a German Jewish couple that were not immigrants. They lived in Shanghai. Most of the foreign people who lived in Shanghai were exporters. We had their address from my sister in law. We had contacted them after we came to Shanghai. They invited us once to dinner. So when my husband got those blouses to sell he went, of course to her. She bought a blouse and gave him the address of friends and he sold. One day somebody mentioned why don't you go to the British school. The teachers are sure to buy. And I even went with him on that day. And they bought. And the next day he went back to his source to get more blouses. And they told him: sorry. We have to take it away from you. We got complaints from stores. You are too much of a competition. We were out.

I don't know how long it took till my husband heard about a Viennese butcher who made excellent German type sausages. So we went there. And we had a little suitcase. And he filled that up with sausages. But of course we had now all the addresses where he sold the blouses before. He went there to try to sell sausage. And they bought. Sausage is something you eat, and they need it again so they ordered for the next week. So he built up a business. He put every day a different route. And people loved the sausage. Then after Pearl Harbor the British and French were taken into concentration camps. Now we sold to Russian people who were friends of these people. They bought sausage to take it to the camp to their friends. So this was still O.K.

A wave of 18,000 Jews from [Germany](#), [Austria](#), and [Poland](#) immigrated to [Shanghai](#) at the end of 1930s and the early of 1940s. Shanghai at the time was an open city and did not have restrictions on immigration, In 1943, the occupying Japanese army required these 18,000 Jews, formally known as "stateless refugees," to relocate to a 3/4 square mile area of Shanghai's Hongkew district where many lived in group homes called "Heime" or "Little Vienna".

Then I heard Hitler tried to get the Japanese people to build a



gas chamber for us. But the Japanese refused. To them it didn't matter if you were Jewish or whatever. To them we were white. That's all. But to do something they made the Ghetto. Which meant the same area where we lived but a little more concentrated. We were living outside now. But we had to move in.