

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:01,476

[INAUDIBLE]

2

00:00:01,476 --> 00:00:04,430

3

00:00:04,430 --> 00:00:07,910

This is a United States

Holocaust Memorial Museum

4

00:00:07,910 --> 00:00:14,240

interview with Mr. Tomas

Venclova on September 30, 2018

5

00:00:14,240 --> 00:00:16,190

in Vilnius, Lithuania.

6

00:00:16,190 --> 00:00:18,530

Thank you very

much, Mr. Venclova,

7

00:00:18,530 --> 00:00:21,170

for agreeing to

speak with us today

8

00:00:21,170 --> 00:00:26,600

to share both your life story,

your thoughts, and something

9

00:00:26,600 --> 00:00:29,420

about what you might have

seen during World War

10

00:00:29,420 --> 00:00:34,800

II as the Holocaust developed

and evolved in this country.

11

00:00:34,800 --> 00:00:37,670

I understand you were

quite young at that time.

12

00:00:37,670 --> 00:00:40,370

But I'm sure you'll
be able to tell us

13

00:00:40,370 --> 00:00:43,220

about those first
memories as well as what

14

00:00:43,220 --> 00:00:47,450

the other generations, the older
generations were involved in.

15

00:00:47,450 --> 00:00:50,600

Right now, I will start with
the most basic questions.

16

00:00:50,600 --> 00:00:54,960

And the first one is could you
tell me the date of your birth?

17

00:00:54,960 --> 00:00:59,930

I was born on
September 11, 1937.

18

00:00:59,930 --> 00:01:00,950

Where were you born?

19

00:01:00,950 --> 00:01:06,950

In Klaipeda, a Lithuanian
city on the Baltic Sea.

20

00:01:06,950 --> 00:01:09,200

What was it called
in another language?

21

00:01:09,200 --> 00:01:11,270

In German, it's called Memel.

22

00:01:11,270 --> 00:01:12,500

I see.

23

00:01:12,500 --> 00:01:17,450

Even today, some German speaking

people use this name, Memel.

24

00:01:17,450 --> 00:01:22,220

But officially, for
many years, it's

25

00:01:22,220 --> 00:01:24,290

called Klaipeda,
the Lithuanian name.

26

00:01:24,290 --> 00:01:25,070

OK.

27

00:01:25,070 --> 00:01:28,760

And can you tell me, was
your name at birth the same

28

00:01:28,760 --> 00:01:30,080

as it is today?

29

00:01:30,080 --> 00:01:30,930

Oh, yes.

30

00:01:30,930 --> 00:01:31,730

Oh, yes.

31

00:01:31,730 --> 00:01:33,900

Tomas Venclova,
as simple as that.

32

00:01:33,900 --> 00:01:34,400

OK.

33

00:01:34,400 --> 00:01:38,340

Tomas Andrius Venclova,
I have two first names.

34

00:01:38,340 --> 00:01:41,360

But I virtually never
used the second one.

35

00:01:41,360 --> 00:01:47,060

Is the second name your
baptismal name or not.

36
00:01:47,060 --> 00:01:49,790
That I even don't
know, probably yes.

37
00:01:49,790 --> 00:01:53,700
Probably both names are
the baptismal names.

38
00:01:53,700 --> 00:01:55,610
OK.

39
00:01:55,610 --> 00:01:58,340
And were you the only
child in your family?

40
00:01:58,340 --> 00:02:01,790
Yes, unfortunately, the only
one child in the family.

41
00:02:01,790 --> 00:02:02,730
OK.

42
00:02:02,730 --> 00:02:05,540
And let's talk about your
parents a little bit.

43
00:02:05,540 --> 00:02:07,380
What was your father's name?

44
00:02:07,380 --> 00:02:11,360
My father names but his
name was Antanas Venclova.

45
00:02:11,360 --> 00:02:12,860
Do you know when he was born?

46
00:02:12,860 --> 00:02:15,020
He was born in 1906.

47

00:02:15,020 --> 00:02:16,230

And your mother?

48

00:02:16,230 --> 00:02:18,560

My mother was born in 1911.

49

00:02:18,560 --> 00:02:20,340

And what was her name?

50

00:02:20,340 --> 00:02:23,960

Her name was Eliza Rackauskaite.

51

00:02:23,960 --> 00:02:25,700

Eliza Rackauskaite.

52

00:02:25,700 --> 00:02:26,420

Rackauskaite.

53

00:02:26,420 --> 00:02:30,470

Her father was

Merkelis Racauskas.

54

00:02:30,470 --> 00:02:36,230

He taught classical languages
at the Kaunas University.

55

00:02:36,230 --> 00:02:37,100

Ah.

56

00:02:37,100 --> 00:02:41,750

And was that how it was known
at the time, Kaunas University?

57

00:02:41,750 --> 00:02:42,410

Well, yes.

58

00:02:42,410 --> 00:02:46,100

It was called Kaunas
University or the University

59

00:02:46,100 --> 00:02:47,570

of Vytautas the Great--

60
00:02:47,570 --> 00:02:48,110
OK.

61
00:02:48,110 --> 00:02:50,900
--the name which
is used also today.

62
00:02:50,900 --> 00:02:51,830
OK.

63
00:02:51,830 --> 00:02:54,980
And were your parents
from the same region

64
00:02:54,980 --> 00:02:56,580
where you were born?

65
00:02:56,580 --> 00:02:57,930
Were they from Klaipeda?

66
00:02:57,930 --> 00:02:59,000
No.

67
00:02:59,000 --> 00:03:03,020
My father was born
in south Lithuania

68
00:03:03,020 --> 00:03:09,950
in the peasant family, close to
the Polish border, by the way.

69
00:03:09,950 --> 00:03:14,090
And my mother was
born in the Ukraine.

70
00:03:14,090 --> 00:03:14,840
Oh, really?

71
00:03:14,840 --> 00:03:15,470
Yes.

72

00:03:15,470 --> 00:03:20,000
Because our grandfather,
Merkelis Racauskas, a professor

73

00:03:20,000 --> 00:03:23,570
of Greek and Latin, of
classical philology,

74

00:03:23,570 --> 00:03:29,840
he graduated from
Odessa University

75

00:03:29,840 --> 00:03:31,640
during the tsarist period.

76

00:03:31,640 --> 00:03:35,270
In that period,
Lithuanians were not

77

00:03:35,270 --> 00:03:40,400
allowed to work in
their native regions.

78

00:03:40,400 --> 00:03:46,280
Only somewhere in Russia, or in
other parts of Russian Empire,

79

00:03:46,280 --> 00:03:48,440
let us put it this way.

80

00:03:48,440 --> 00:03:53,420
And he worked in
Ukraine as a high school

81

00:03:53,420 --> 00:03:55,370
teacher of Greek and Latin.

82

00:03:55,370 --> 00:03:59,930
And my mother was born
in the city of Belgrade,

83

00:03:59,930 --> 00:04:02,270

which now belongs to Ukraine.

84

00:04:02,270 --> 00:04:08,090

And at that time, it was part
of the Russian Empire in 1911.

85

00:04:08,090 --> 00:04:09,950

Can you tell me,
two things I would

86

00:04:09,950 --> 00:04:12,900

like to spell out so that we
would have it for the future.

87

00:04:12,900 --> 00:04:17,829

One is the first name of your
grandfather, your mother's

88

00:04:17,829 --> 00:04:18,329

father.

89

00:04:18,329 --> 00:04:19,040

You mentioned it.

90

00:04:19,040 --> 00:04:21,290

But I can't really
understand it.

91

00:04:21,290 --> 00:04:22,500

It's Merkelis?

92

00:04:22,500 --> 00:04:24,680

Merkelis or Melchior.

93

00:04:24,680 --> 00:04:25,460

Melchior?

94

00:04:25,460 --> 00:04:27,180

Melchior--

95

00:04:27,180 --> 00:04:28,490

It's like the biblical name--

96
00:04:28,490 --> 00:04:31,070
Melchior is a biblical,
a Catholic name,

97
00:04:31,070 --> 00:04:34,820
and the name of one
of the three Magi

98
00:04:34,820 --> 00:04:39,580
who greeted Jesus Christ
in-- yes, in his cradle.

99
00:04:39,580 --> 00:04:42,290

100
00:04:42,290 --> 00:04:46,880
But in Lithuania, it's
sometimes spelled Melkeris.

101
00:04:46,880 --> 00:04:48,730
So that would be
M-E-L-K-E-R-I-S?

102
00:04:48,730 --> 00:04:51,740

103
00:04:51,740 --> 00:04:53,400
M like--

104
00:04:53,400 --> 00:04:53,900
Mary?

105
00:04:53,900 --> 00:04:55,430
--Mary.

106
00:04:55,430 --> 00:05:00,320
E-R-K-E-L-I-S.

107
00:05:00,320 --> 00:05:01,340
E-L-I-S, Merkelis.

108
00:05:01,340 --> 00:05:02,340
Merkelis.

109
00:05:02,340 --> 00:05:02,840
OK.

110
00:05:02,840 --> 00:05:04,180
Now I understand.

111
00:05:04,180 --> 00:05:07,300
And so last name, Racauskas--

112
00:05:07,300 --> 00:05:12,710
and I will spell it, which
would be RA-C, with a C-H sound?

113
00:05:12,710 --> 00:05:13,510
Yes.

114
00:05:13,510 --> 00:05:16,870
A-U-S-K-A-S. Racauskas.

115
00:05:16,870 --> 00:05:18,460
I think that's true.

116
00:05:18,460 --> 00:05:24,940
He was of a impoverished
noble family.

117
00:05:24,940 --> 00:05:28,480
His first language was
Polish, not Lithuanian.

118
00:05:28,480 --> 00:05:32,920
Because Lithuanian nobility
mainly spoke Polish.

119
00:05:32,920 --> 00:05:36,370
But he knew Lithuanian also
from his early childhood.

120

00:05:36,370 --> 00:05:40,240

And later, he opted for
the Lithuanian citizenship

121

00:05:40,240 --> 00:05:42,490

and for the
Lithuanian nationality

122

00:05:42,490 --> 00:05:45,370

and switched his
language to Lithuanian.

123

00:05:45,370 --> 00:05:47,920

So did you know
your grandfather?

124

00:05:47,920 --> 00:05:48,550

Oh, yes.

125

00:05:48,550 --> 00:05:49,490

You did.

126

00:05:49,490 --> 00:05:53,490

And so if he was
from that nobility--

127

00:05:53,490 --> 00:05:53,990

Yes.

128

00:05:53,990 --> 00:05:57,060

--what part of Lithuania
would that have been from?

129

00:05:57,060 --> 00:06:00,850

He was born in
so-called Zemaitija.

130

00:06:00,850 --> 00:06:01,470

OK.

131

00:06:01,470 --> 00:06:02,430

Samogitia.

132

00:06:02,430 --> 00:06:03,310

Samogitia.

133

00:06:03,310 --> 00:06:07,960

And this is not very far
from Klaipeda, Memel.

134

00:06:07,960 --> 00:06:10,015

But it never
belonged to Germany.

135

00:06:10,015 --> 00:06:10,840

OK.

136

00:06:10,840 --> 00:06:13,540

It belonged to the
Russian Empire.

137

00:06:13,540 --> 00:06:16,990

It is known of a
different dialect,

138

00:06:16,990 --> 00:06:23,320

the Zemaitijan dialect differs
from standard Lithuanian

139

00:06:23,320 --> 00:06:27,130

more or less like Portuguese
differs from Spanish.

140

00:06:27,130 --> 00:06:28,160

Yes, that's true.

141

00:06:28,160 --> 00:06:28,660

[LAUGHTER]

142

00:06:28,660 --> 00:06:32,980

Sometimes you even cannot
understand Zemaitijans

143

00:06:32,980 --> 00:06:33,670

speaking.

144
00:06:33,670 --> 00:06:35,230
Yeah.

145
00:06:35,230 --> 00:06:41,080
And he was born there, in the
northern part of Zemaitija,

146
00:06:41,080 --> 00:06:42,460
or Samogitia.

147
00:06:42,460 --> 00:06:49,810
And so in 1886, I
believe, in 1886.

148
00:06:49,810 --> 00:06:53,770
And later graduated
from Odessa University

149
00:06:53,770 --> 00:06:57,670
and became a professor in
Kaunas and later in Vilnius.

150
00:06:57,670 --> 00:06:59,560
But then, your mother
was born while he

151
00:06:59,560 --> 00:07:01,780
was a teacher in Ukraine?

152
00:07:01,780 --> 00:07:05,170
And now my second spelling,
which is the name of the town

153
00:07:05,170 --> 00:07:06,160
she was born in.

154
00:07:06,160 --> 00:07:07,300
I didn't quite get it.

155
00:07:07,300 --> 00:07:08,650
It sounded like Belgrade.

156
00:07:08,650 --> 00:07:09,940
No, Bolgrad.

157
00:07:09,940 --> 00:07:10,690
Bolgrad.

158
00:07:10,690 --> 00:07:14,530
B-O-L-G-R-A-D.

159
00:07:14,530 --> 00:07:16,990
And about where in the
Ukraine would it be?

160
00:07:16,990 --> 00:07:20,800
It's very close to the
so-called Moldova Republic.

161
00:07:20,800 --> 00:07:23,680
But it does not belong
to Moldova Republic.

162
00:07:23,680 --> 00:07:24,940
It belongs to Ukraine.

163
00:07:24,940 --> 00:07:28,435
But it is next to the
border, almost a border city.

164
00:07:28,435 --> 00:07:30,560
And did she have brothers
and sisters, your mother?

165
00:07:30,560 --> 00:07:31,210
Yes.

166
00:07:31,210 --> 00:07:34,420
She got a brother and a sister.

167
00:07:34,420 --> 00:07:39,970
Her brother was a photographer
and a photographer artist,

168
00:07:39,970 --> 00:07:42,280
artistic photographer,
so to speak.

169
00:07:42,280 --> 00:07:46,340
And later, he emigrated and
he died in the United States.

170
00:07:46,340 --> 00:07:47,380
What was his name?

171
00:07:47,380 --> 00:07:48,250
Vytautas.

172
00:07:48,250 --> 00:07:49,000
Racauskas?

173
00:07:49,000 --> 00:07:49,840
Racauskas.

174
00:07:49,840 --> 00:07:50,710
OK.

175
00:07:50,710 --> 00:07:53,950
Well, he shortened--
in the United States,

176
00:07:53,950 --> 00:07:58,270
he shortened his
last name to Rachkus

177
00:07:58,270 --> 00:08:00,850
He lived in the city of Toledo.

178
00:08:00,850 --> 00:08:01,600
In Ohio?

179
00:08:01,600 --> 00:08:02,680
In Ohio, yes.

180

00:08:02,680 --> 00:08:06,910

I met him even during
my emigration years.

181

00:08:06,910 --> 00:08:10,850

So he was still alive
in the 1970s and 1980s?

182

00:08:10,850 --> 00:08:11,350

Yes.

183

00:08:11,350 --> 00:08:13,090

He was still alive at that time.

184

00:08:13,090 --> 00:08:15,910

He was more or less
of the age I am now.

185

00:08:15,910 --> 00:08:20,620

But pretty alive and
kicking, I would say.

186

00:08:20,620 --> 00:08:22,180

And what about her sister?

187

00:08:22,180 --> 00:08:23,600

Yeah, her sister was Maria.

188

00:08:23,600 --> 00:08:24,450

Uh huh.

189

00:08:24,450 --> 00:08:26,860

Maria Rackauskaite.

190

00:08:26,860 --> 00:08:29,050

And she was a painter.

191

00:08:29,050 --> 00:08:31,870

She was one of the better
Lithuanian painters

192

00:08:31,870 --> 00:08:36,640

of the 20th century
and post-Impressionist.

193
00:08:36,640 --> 00:08:37,270
Oh, wow.

194
00:08:37,270 --> 00:08:39,370
She studied in Paris.

195
00:08:39,370 --> 00:08:44,020
And her paintings are in
many Lithuanian museums.

196
00:08:44,020 --> 00:08:50,080
Considered classical
heritage of Lithuanian art.

197
00:08:50,080 --> 00:08:53,230
I also have several
of her paintings

198
00:08:53,230 --> 00:08:55,090
in my private possession.

199
00:08:55,090 --> 00:08:57,310
Well, it sounds like
your mother's family

200
00:08:57,310 --> 00:09:00,460
was very much what the Russians
would call intelligent,

201
00:09:00,460 --> 00:09:01,660
intelligentsia.

202
00:09:01,660 --> 00:09:02,490
Yes.

203
00:09:02,490 --> 00:09:02,990
Yeah.

204
00:09:02,990 --> 00:09:03,850

Yes, that's true.

205

00:09:03,850 --> 00:09:05,650

OK.

206

00:09:05,650 --> 00:09:07,900

Let's turn a little
bit to your father.

207

00:09:07,900 --> 00:09:13,780

And you said he came from
a farming family, a peasant

208

00:09:13,780 --> 00:09:14,590

family?

209

00:09:14,590 --> 00:09:20,920

My father came from a peasant
family of moderate means.

210

00:09:20,920 --> 00:09:22,990

But they were not poor.

211

00:09:22,990 --> 00:09:29,170

But they got about
15 hectares of land

212

00:09:29,170 --> 00:09:31,750

and they were pretty successful.

213

00:09:31,750 --> 00:09:33,790

His father was literate.

214

00:09:33,790 --> 00:09:37,660

It was rather an exception
in Lithuania at that time.

215

00:09:37,660 --> 00:09:38,170

Yes.

216

00:09:38,170 --> 00:09:43,150

And read books and newspapers

and so on and even kept

217

00:09:43,150 --> 00:09:50,680

a sort of a small library in
his hut, in his peasant hut.

218

00:09:50,680 --> 00:09:52,960

Well, that's pretty impressive.

219

00:09:52,960 --> 00:09:53,600

Yeah.

220

00:09:53,600 --> 00:09:54,100

Yeah.

221

00:09:54,100 --> 00:09:56,470

And my father-- he died.

222

00:09:56,470 --> 00:09:59,590

My grandfather,
peasant grandfather

223

00:09:59,590 --> 00:10:04,180

died during the World
War I of typhus--

224

00:10:04,180 --> 00:10:04,680

OK.

225

00:10:04,680 --> 00:10:07,380

226

00:10:07,380 --> 00:10:10,170

--a rather young
man at that time.

227

00:10:10,170 --> 00:10:18,300

And my father entered
the Kaunas University

228

00:10:18,300 --> 00:10:21,240

and graduated from

229
00:10:21,240 --> 00:10:23,070
In what?

230
00:10:23,070 --> 00:10:28,410
He studied Lithuanian literature
but also French literature.

231
00:10:28,410 --> 00:10:35,850
And his, well, not PhD thesis.

232
00:10:35,850 --> 00:10:42,330
I would say that was probably--

233
00:10:42,330 --> 00:10:44,732
how do you say it in English?

234
00:10:44,732 --> 00:10:46,067
Well, say it in Lithuanian.

235
00:10:46,067 --> 00:10:48,150
What would it have been
in either the tsarist time

236
00:10:48,150 --> 00:10:49,140
or the Lithuanian time?

237
00:10:49,140 --> 00:10:51,030
Diplominis darbas.

238
00:10:51,030 --> 00:10:52,630
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

239
00:10:52,630 --> 00:10:54,180
A master's degree, probably.

240
00:10:54,180 --> 00:10:55,390
A master's degree.

241
00:10:55,390 --> 00:10:57,960

His diploma-- his
work for his diploma

242
00:10:57,960 --> 00:10:59,120
is the direct translation.

243
00:10:59,120 --> 00:11:03,040
His master's diploma, well,
that was less than PhD,

244
00:11:03,040 --> 00:11:05,880
but still a--

245
00:11:05,880 --> 00:11:07,632
Substantial?

246
00:11:07,632 --> 00:11:10,390
--substantial
achievement at that time.

247
00:11:10,390 --> 00:11:13,480
It was about symbolism.

248
00:11:13,480 --> 00:11:17,670
He compared French symbolists
and Lithuanian symbolists.

249
00:11:17,670 --> 00:11:26,820
He knew Verlaine, Baudelaire,
Rimbaud, such poets and also

250
00:11:26,820 --> 00:11:30,540
Lithuanian symbolists,
part of whom

251
00:11:30,540 --> 00:11:32,742
were his teachers, by the way.

252
00:11:32,742 --> 00:11:36,390
There was a very
famous symbolist poet,

253

00:11:36,390 --> 00:11:41,010
Mykolaitis-Putinas, who was
at the same time, my father's

254
00:11:41,010 --> 00:11:42,960
teacher at the university.

255
00:11:42,960 --> 00:11:45,510
Tell me, now, was
he the only son,

256
00:11:45,510 --> 00:11:48,000
was he the only
child in the family?

257
00:11:48,000 --> 00:11:48,510
No.

258
00:11:48,510 --> 00:11:54,640
As many peasant families,
it was extensive.

259
00:11:54,640 --> 00:12:00,930
He had five surviving brothers
and three surviving sisters.

260
00:12:00,930 --> 00:12:03,580
That mean more were born,
but they didn't survive.

261
00:12:03,580 --> 00:12:04,080
Yeah.

262
00:12:04,080 --> 00:12:05,130
Well, yes.

263
00:12:05,130 --> 00:12:11,040
Well, don't-- five surviving,
four surviving brothers.

264
00:12:11,040 --> 00:12:13,830
The fifth one was he himself.

265

00:12:13,830 --> 00:12:14,340

Got it.

266

00:12:14,340 --> 00:12:16,560

So five boys and three girls?

267

00:12:16,560 --> 00:12:17,130

Yes.

268

00:12:17,130 --> 00:12:19,795

Where was he in the
line of children?

269

00:12:19,795 --> 00:12:22,170

Was he the oldest, the youngest,
somewhere in the middle?

270

00:12:22,170 --> 00:12:24,750

He was in the-- yes,
in the very middle.

271

00:12:24,750 --> 00:12:26,130

He was the third.

272

00:12:26,130 --> 00:12:29,700

Did you know your aunts and
uncles from your father's side?

273

00:12:29,700 --> 00:12:30,450

Yes.

274

00:12:30,450 --> 00:12:32,250

Can you name them for me?

275

00:12:32,250 --> 00:12:38,010

The first was Pijus, who
became a schoolteacher

276

00:12:38,010 --> 00:12:40,840

and emigrated and
died in Chicago.

277

00:12:40,840 --> 00:12:41,340

OK.

278

00:12:41,340 --> 00:12:46,610

I also met him in

Chicago before his death,

279

00:12:46,610 --> 00:12:48,660

yes, in the late '70s.

280

00:12:48,660 --> 00:12:50,700

Now when he

emigrated, would have

281

00:12:50,700 --> 00:12:54,560

that been in the early part

of the 20th century or later?

282

00:12:54,560 --> 00:12:55,060

No.

283

00:12:55,060 --> 00:13:01,500

He emigrated in 1944, as many

Lithuanians did at that time.

284

00:13:01,500 --> 00:13:02,340

So Pijus.

285

00:13:02,340 --> 00:13:03,330

Pijus.

286

00:13:03,330 --> 00:13:04,750

He was the oldest one.

287

00:13:04,750 --> 00:13:05,250

Then--

288

00:13:05,250 --> 00:13:07,690

The oldest among

surviving children.

289

00:13:07,690 --> 00:13:08,190
OK.

290
00:13:08,190 --> 00:13:10,470
I don't know,
unfortunately, even

291
00:13:10,470 --> 00:13:13,110
the names of the children
who did not survive.

292
00:13:13,110 --> 00:13:14,100
That's OK.

293
00:13:14,100 --> 00:13:16,030
Then the second one was Juozas.

294
00:13:16,030 --> 00:13:17,930
Juozas.

295
00:13:17,930 --> 00:13:26,400
Juozas, who was village elder
in his part of Lithuania.

296
00:13:26,400 --> 00:13:30,690
And as such, he was
arrested with the Soviets

297
00:13:30,690 --> 00:13:35,850
after the World War II, sent
to Kazakhstan to the mine.

298
00:13:35,850 --> 00:13:38,940
And he died while
working in that mine.

299
00:13:38,940 --> 00:13:39,960
So he was deported?

300
00:13:39,960 --> 00:13:40,890
He was deported?

301

00:13:40,890 --> 00:13:41,970
He was deported.

302
00:13:41,970 --> 00:13:44,850
And just for English
speaking, people

303
00:13:44,850 --> 00:13:47,040
will say Pijus means pious in--

304
00:13:47,040 --> 00:13:47,700
Yes.

305
00:13:47,700 --> 00:13:48,210
--English?

306
00:13:48,210 --> 00:13:49,500
And Juozas means Joseph?

307
00:13:49,500 --> 00:13:50,100
Yes.

308
00:13:50,100 --> 00:13:52,260
OK.

309
00:13:52,260 --> 00:13:55,545
The third child was my
father, who was Antanas.

310
00:13:55,545 --> 00:13:57,570
In English, it would be Anthony.

311
00:13:57,570 --> 00:13:58,320
OK.

312
00:13:58,320 --> 00:14:02,550
Now you said that Juozas
was the village elder.

313
00:14:02,550 --> 00:14:05,700
And tell me, what village
would this have been?

314
00:14:05,700 --> 00:14:06,720
Do you know?

315
00:14:06,720 --> 00:14:10,350
The village he lived
in was Trempiniai.

316
00:14:10,350 --> 00:14:11,190
Klempiniai?

317
00:14:11,190 --> 00:14:12,600
No, Trempiniai.

318
00:14:12,600 --> 00:14:20,520
T-R-E-M-P-I-N-I-A-I.

319
00:14:20,520 --> 00:14:21,540
OK.

320
00:14:21,540 --> 00:14:23,730
And where would that be?

321
00:14:23,730 --> 00:14:27,600
This is the south
of Lithuania, next

322
00:14:27,600 --> 00:14:30,220
to the contemporary
Polish border,

323
00:14:30,220 --> 00:14:32,880
four kilometers from Poland.

324
00:14:32,880 --> 00:14:35,980
So in other words, where your
whole family comes from--

325
00:14:35,980 --> 00:14:36,480
Yes.

326

00:14:36,480 --> 00:14:37,688
--would have been this place?

327
00:14:37,688 --> 00:14:40,800
My father was also born in
the village of Trempiniai.

328
00:14:40,800 --> 00:14:42,202
Trempiniai.

329
00:14:42,202 --> 00:14:44,160
But Juozas, or Joseph,
remained in that village

330
00:14:44,160 --> 00:14:46,020
and even became a village elder.

331
00:14:46,020 --> 00:14:46,830
All right.

332
00:14:46,830 --> 00:14:50,820
So then after your father,
after Antanas, who comes next?

333
00:14:50,820 --> 00:14:55,600
After Antanas, Pranas,
which means "Francis."

334
00:14:55,600 --> 00:14:56,100
Yes.

335
00:14:56,100 --> 00:15:00,430
And he was a doctor.

336
00:15:00,430 --> 00:15:05,830
And he died after the
war of appendicitis.

337
00:15:05,830 --> 00:15:06,850
I see.

338
00:15:06,850 --> 00:15:11,140

At that time, there was no
penicillin in Lithuania.

339
00:15:11,140 --> 00:15:13,900
They could not help him.

340
00:15:13,900 --> 00:15:16,810
And he died after
much suffering.

341
00:15:16,810 --> 00:15:18,550
So that means World War II?

342
00:15:18,550 --> 00:15:20,500
That means after World War II.

343
00:15:20,500 --> 00:15:22,150
He stayed in Lithuania.

344
00:15:22,150 --> 00:15:24,400
He still worked in his field.

345
00:15:24,400 --> 00:15:28,690
But he caught
appendicitis and died.

346
00:15:28,690 --> 00:15:29,320
OK.

347
00:15:29,320 --> 00:15:32,830
In 1946 or '47, I believe.

348
00:15:32,830 --> 00:15:33,370
OK.

349
00:15:33,370 --> 00:15:38,590
Then the last one was
Kazys, or Casimir, Kazys

350
00:15:38,590 --> 00:15:42,340
who was an engineer in Kaunas.

351

00:15:42,340 --> 00:15:45,850

And during the Soviet period,
he worked as an engineer

352

00:15:45,850 --> 00:15:47,440

for many years.

353

00:15:47,440 --> 00:15:52,010

And died, I think,
in the '70s or '80s,

354

00:15:52,010 --> 00:15:55,090

but already after
I have immigrated.

355

00:15:55,090 --> 00:15:58,120

And then, what about your aunts?

356

00:15:58,120 --> 00:15:59,350

There were three girls.

357

00:15:59,350 --> 00:16:01,570

There were three girls.

358

00:16:01,570 --> 00:16:02,230

Both-- sorry.

359

00:16:02,230 --> 00:16:08,170

All three married peasants and
remained in their native land,

360

00:16:08,170 --> 00:16:11,060

although in different villages.

361

00:16:11,060 --> 00:16:11,560

OK.

362

00:16:11,560 --> 00:16:13,630

What were their names,
their first names?

363

00:16:13,630 --> 00:16:15,970
The first was Constancia.

364
00:16:15,970 --> 00:16:16,690
Constance.

365
00:16:16,690 --> 00:16:17,410
Constance.

366
00:16:17,410 --> 00:16:21,220
The second was Isabella.

367
00:16:21,220 --> 00:16:23,310
The third one was Agota.

368
00:16:23,310 --> 00:16:25,180
Agota would be "Agatha?"

369
00:16:25,180 --> 00:16:26,350
Yes, Agatha.

370
00:16:26,350 --> 00:16:29,340
So Isabel, Constance,
and Agatha.

371
00:16:29,340 --> 00:16:32,000
So all of these sound
like very Christian names.

372
00:16:32,000 --> 00:16:32,500
Oh, yes.

373
00:16:32,500 --> 00:16:34,360
They were Christian names.

374
00:16:34,360 --> 00:16:36,970
Was your grandfather's
family very religious,

375
00:16:36,970 --> 00:16:41,080
do you think, the family
your father was born into?

376
00:16:41,080 --> 00:16:48,800
I think that my grandfather
was rather indifferent.

377
00:16:48,800 --> 00:16:49,390
Yes.

378
00:16:49,390 --> 00:16:52,960
Maybe I am mistaken, but I think
that he was rather different.

379
00:16:52,960 --> 00:16:57,520
But his wife, as usually peasant
women in Lithuania at the time,

380
00:16:57,520 --> 00:16:58,870
was religious.

381
00:16:58,870 --> 00:17:01,030
I remember my grandmother.

382
00:17:01,030 --> 00:17:06,430
She survived the war and
lived in her native part

383
00:17:06,430 --> 00:17:07,960
for many years.

384
00:17:07,960 --> 00:17:09,940
And yes, she was religious.

385
00:17:09,940 --> 00:17:11,720
What was her name,
her first name?

386
00:17:11,720 --> 00:17:13,480
Her name was Elzbieta.

387
00:17:13,480 --> 00:17:14,460
Elzbieta?

388

00:17:14,460 --> 00:17:16,450

Elzbieta, which
means "Elizabeth."

389

00:17:16,450 --> 00:17:19,614

And do you remember what her
maiden name might have been?

390

00:17:19,614 --> 00:17:24,130

Her maiden name was Veliviute

391

00:17:24,130 --> 00:17:25,670

Veliviute

392

00:17:25,670 --> 00:17:26,170

Yes.

393

00:17:26,170 --> 00:17:26,920

I see.

394

00:17:26,920 --> 00:17:29,770

And was she from around
that area as well?

395

00:17:29,770 --> 00:17:32,170

She was from around
that area, but probably

396

00:17:32,170 --> 00:17:36,940

around 40 to 50 kilometers
from my grandfather's village.

397

00:17:36,940 --> 00:17:40,940

Well, as you're telling me
about your father's siblings,

398

00:17:40,940 --> 00:17:43,540

your aunts and uncles,
it sounds like there

399

00:17:43,540 --> 00:17:49,930

was a great leap between having

been born into a farming family

400

00:17:49,930 --> 00:17:52,910

and then going on
to higher education,

401

00:17:52,910 --> 00:17:55,300

not just for one but
for several of them.

402

00:17:55,300 --> 00:17:55,870

Yes.

403

00:17:55,870 --> 00:17:56,500

You know?

404

00:17:56,500 --> 00:18:03,340

Was education something that
was very valued in the family

405

00:18:03,340 --> 00:18:04,600

as far as you know?

406

00:18:04,600 --> 00:18:07,050

Yes, of course,
education in Lithuania

407

00:18:07,050 --> 00:18:11,620

meant social
mobility, definitely.

408

00:18:11,620 --> 00:18:18,090

And so at least four,
yes, at least four

409

00:18:18,090 --> 00:18:24,810

of the five brothers, but
no sisters, became educated.

410

00:18:24,810 --> 00:18:30,300

And as I have said, one
of them was an engineer,

411

00:18:30,300 --> 00:18:32,160
the other one was a doctor.

412

00:18:32,160 --> 00:18:35,550
And the third one
was a schoolteacher.

413

00:18:35,550 --> 00:18:38,550
And my father was also
a high school teacher.

414

00:18:38,550 --> 00:18:39,220
Oh, was he?

415

00:18:39,220 --> 00:18:39,720
Yes.

416

00:18:39,720 --> 00:18:42,570
He was for many years in
the independent Lithuania,

417

00:18:42,570 --> 00:18:43,800
he was a high school teacher.

418

00:18:43,800 --> 00:18:44,040
Yes.

419

00:18:44,040 --> 00:18:44,220
Yes.

420

00:18:44,220 --> 00:18:44,430
Yes.

421

00:18:44,430 --> 00:18:45,030
You mentioned that.

422

00:18:45,030 --> 00:18:45,540
Excuse me.

423

00:18:45,540 --> 00:18:48,010
I thought about

your grandfather.

424

00:18:48,010 --> 00:18:50,520

No, it's your father who
was the high school teacher.

425

00:18:50,520 --> 00:18:56,310

And he studied at Vytautas
Magnus University?

426

00:18:56,310 --> 00:18:57,270

Yes.

427

00:18:57,270 --> 00:19:01,350

And finished in literature,
Lithuanian literature

428

00:19:01,350 --> 00:19:02,490

and French literature?

429

00:19:02,490 --> 00:19:04,980

He graduated, yes,
as a specialist,

430

00:19:04,980 --> 00:19:09,270

mainly in Lithuanian literature,
but his second specialty

431

00:19:09,270 --> 00:19:10,410

was French literature.

432

00:19:10,410 --> 00:19:16,170

He spoke good French, good
German, but almost no English.

433

00:19:16,170 --> 00:19:18,330

Now what about your
mother's side of the family?

434

00:19:18,330 --> 00:19:21,360

Do if they were very
religious people?

435

00:19:21,360 --> 00:19:24,660

My grandfather,
who was a professor

436

00:19:24,660 --> 00:19:30,030

of classical philosophy, was
the so-called free thinker.

437

00:19:30,030 --> 00:19:34,620

That means that he was not only
indifferent towards religion,

438

00:19:34,620 --> 00:19:37,100

but rather skeptical towards it.

439

00:19:37,100 --> 00:19:37,880

OK.

440

00:19:37,880 --> 00:19:41,580

He did not emphasize it.

441

00:19:41,580 --> 00:19:47,580

For example, he taught at
the department of theology.

442

00:19:47,580 --> 00:19:48,370

Did he really?

443

00:19:48,370 --> 00:19:48,870

Yes.

444

00:19:48,870 --> 00:19:54,300

Because he taught gospel
Greek for the students

445

00:19:54,300 --> 00:19:57,120

studying philology.

446

00:19:57,120 --> 00:19:58,170

Well, that's interesting.

447

00:19:58,170 --> 00:20:01,230

The gospel Greek--
he always used

448

00:20:01,230 --> 00:20:05,130

to say that gospel
Greek is very easy.

449

00:20:05,130 --> 00:20:10,060

It's much easier than Plato
or, let us say, Homer.

450

00:20:10,060 --> 00:20:11,280

OK.

451

00:20:11,280 --> 00:20:15,930

But he made his living
by teaching Greek,

452

00:20:15,930 --> 00:20:19,300

not only in the
department of theology,

453

00:20:19,300 --> 00:20:22,410

but I think also in the
department of philology.

454

00:20:22,410 --> 00:20:23,250

OK.

455

00:20:23,250 --> 00:20:26,340

And my grandmother,
yes, she was religious.

456

00:20:26,340 --> 00:20:27,090

She was religious.

457

00:20:27,090 --> 00:20:28,530

She was religious, yes.

458

00:20:28,530 --> 00:20:30,570

What was her first name,
on your mother's side,

459
00:20:30,570 --> 00:20:31,350
your grandmother?

460
00:20:31,350 --> 00:20:35,530
She was of mixed Polish
and Ukrainian origin.

461
00:20:35,530 --> 00:20:38,030
She was born in Ukraine.

462
00:20:38,030 --> 00:20:42,120
Her last name was Latynska.

463
00:20:42,120 --> 00:20:43,030
Latynska.

464
00:20:43,030 --> 00:20:44,370
Latynska.

465
00:20:44,370 --> 00:20:45,720
It's an interesting story.

466
00:20:45,720 --> 00:20:51,420
Because when giving an
interview in Poland,

467
00:20:51,420 --> 00:20:54,870
I mentioned her name.

468
00:20:54,870 --> 00:20:58,140
And then I got a phone
call from a person

469
00:20:58,140 --> 00:21:01,460
whose name was Marek Latynski.

470
00:21:01,460 --> 00:21:06,560
He asked me, was your
grandmother's name Elena,

471

00:21:06,560 --> 00:21:09,030
Helena, Ellen?

472
00:21:09,030 --> 00:21:10,200
I said yes.

473
00:21:10,200 --> 00:21:13,350
So in this case, she's my aunt.

474
00:21:13,350 --> 00:21:14,820
And Marek Latynski.

475
00:21:14,820 --> 00:21:17,730
Was a visible person in Poland.

476
00:21:17,730 --> 00:21:22,710
For some time, he was the head
of a Polish Radio Liberty.

477
00:21:22,710 --> 00:21:23,320
No kidding.

478
00:21:23,320 --> 00:21:23,820
Yes.

479
00:21:23,820 --> 00:21:24,430
No kidding.

480
00:21:24,430 --> 00:21:26,220
And we made friends.

481
00:21:26,220 --> 00:21:26,760
OK.

482
00:21:26,760 --> 00:21:28,560
He was much older than myself.

483
00:21:28,560 --> 00:21:32,550
Now he is, unfortunately,
he is deceased.

484

00:21:32,550 --> 00:21:33,420
He has deceased.

485
00:21:33,420 --> 00:21:38,010
But his family still
lives in Poland.

486
00:21:38,010 --> 00:21:41,340
And we are on very friendly
terms with that family.

487
00:21:41,340 --> 00:21:42,748
But they are our relatives.

488
00:21:42,748 --> 00:21:43,290
That's right.

489
00:21:43,290 --> 00:21:44,373
They're distant relatives.

490
00:21:44,373 --> 00:21:46,200
They're distant relatives, yes.

491
00:21:46,200 --> 00:21:47,340
That's interesting.

492
00:21:47,340 --> 00:21:50,160
You know, what we come to.

493
00:21:50,160 --> 00:21:53,010
One of the reasons I
like exploring this

494
00:21:53,010 --> 00:21:55,500
is that it tells-- it
opens up a whole world

495
00:21:55,500 --> 00:21:57,450
before our 20th century.

496
00:21:57,450 --> 00:21:59,250
It tells us who

people were, where

497

00:21:59,250 --> 00:22:02,940
they came from, what the
19th century was about,

498

00:22:02,940 --> 00:22:03,580
a little bit.

499

00:22:03,580 --> 00:22:04,080
Yes.

500

00:22:04,080 --> 00:22:08,100
And so, yeah.

501

00:22:08,100 --> 00:22:11,460
So tell me, how did
your parents meet?

502

00:22:11,460 --> 00:22:14,470
They come from two different
worlds in some ways.

503

00:22:14,470 --> 00:22:18,220
Both were students in the
Kaunas Vytautas Magnus

504

00:22:18,220 --> 00:22:20,400
or Vytautas the
Great University.

505

00:22:20,400 --> 00:22:25,200
And well, boys and girls meet
in the university, as simple

506

00:22:25,200 --> 00:22:25,870
as that.

507

00:22:25,870 --> 00:22:26,370
OK.

508

00:22:26,370 --> 00:22:30,010

And my father fell in love.

509

00:22:30,010 --> 00:22:35,370

Well, maybe it's a bit
too intimate to tell.

510

00:22:35,370 --> 00:22:40,710

But my mother was probably the
most beautiful girl in Kaunas.

511

00:22:40,710 --> 00:22:46,470

And my father lost
his gut and proposed.

512

00:22:46,470 --> 00:22:48,240

That was accepted.

513

00:22:48,240 --> 00:22:50,730

But that was a bit difficult.

514

00:22:50,730 --> 00:22:52,170

Tell me why.

515

00:22:52,170 --> 00:22:57,780

Because my father was an atheist
and that definite freethinker,

516

00:22:57,780 --> 00:22:58,470

so to speak.

517

00:22:58,470 --> 00:22:59,090

OK.

518

00:22:59,090 --> 00:23:02,250

Which was rather an
exception in Lithuania.

519

00:23:02,250 --> 00:23:05,310

Lithuania was a very Catholic
country at that time.

520

00:23:05,310 --> 00:23:08,820

It still is a Catholic
country, but probably less

521
00:23:08,820 --> 00:23:10,500
than at that time.

522
00:23:10,500 --> 00:23:14,970
And it was one of the very
few countries in Europe, which

523
00:23:14,970 --> 00:23:20,010
did not have civil marriage--

524
00:23:20,010 --> 00:23:20,820
Possibilities?

525
00:23:20,820 --> 00:23:22,200
--possibilities.

526
00:23:22,200 --> 00:23:22,860
OK.

527
00:23:22,860 --> 00:23:26,700
People could marry
only at church.

528
00:23:26,700 --> 00:23:30,550
And well, for my mother,
it was quite acceptable.

529
00:23:30,550 --> 00:23:36,930
At that time, she came from a
family, from a Catholic family.

530
00:23:36,930 --> 00:23:39,630
And her mother was a believer.

531
00:23:39,630 --> 00:23:42,210
She also was available
at that time.

532
00:23:42,210 --> 00:23:45,840

But my father insisted
that they must go only

533
00:23:45,840 --> 00:23:49,260
to the civil marriage office.

534
00:23:49,260 --> 00:23:53,460
Such offices existed not
only in Klaipeda region.

535
00:23:53,460 --> 00:23:58,290
Because Klaipeda region
had an autonomous set

536
00:23:58,290 --> 00:24:05,340
of laws, which was patterned
after the German set of laws.

537
00:24:05,340 --> 00:24:10,680
So in Klaipeda, you could go
to the civil marriage office

538
00:24:10,680 --> 00:24:15,030
and formalize your marriage
without going to church.

539
00:24:15,030 --> 00:24:16,410
And is that what they did?

540
00:24:16,410 --> 00:24:22,050
That is after long
discussions, they did it.

541
00:24:22,050 --> 00:24:26,080
For my mother, that was
a very serious decision.

542
00:24:26,080 --> 00:24:30,210
And so she got some problems
also with her parents.

543
00:24:30,210 --> 00:24:31,980
I would have thought

her father would have

544
00:24:31,980 --> 00:24:34,260
been completely OK with it.

545
00:24:34,260 --> 00:24:35,180
Yes.

546
00:24:35,180 --> 00:24:38,220
Well, father would be
rather OK with that.

547
00:24:38,220 --> 00:24:41,910
But, well, he taught at
the department of theology.

548
00:24:41,910 --> 00:24:46,620
And that endangered his career
even in that department.

549
00:24:46,620 --> 00:24:47,590
Did it really?

550
00:24:47,590 --> 00:24:48,090
Yes.

551
00:24:48,090 --> 00:24:49,740
It did to some degree.

552
00:24:49,740 --> 00:24:52,590
OK.

553
00:24:52,590 --> 00:24:54,510
He did not lose his job.

554
00:24:54,510 --> 00:24:57,480
But there was a distinct
possibility of that.

555
00:24:57,480 --> 00:24:58,110
I see.

556

00:24:58,110 --> 00:25:02,550

And the entire story
became a scandal.

557

00:25:02,550 --> 00:25:05,880

It was discussed
in the newspapers,

558

00:25:05,880 --> 00:25:10,410

in the press that the daughter
of a professor working

559

00:25:10,410 --> 00:25:16,290

at a Catholic university managed
to arrange a civil marriage

560

00:25:16,290 --> 00:25:18,170

with an atheist.

561

00:25:18,170 --> 00:25:22,350

That's a shame, and
so on, and so on.

562

00:25:22,350 --> 00:25:26,770

So my mother went through
a difficult period.

563

00:25:26,770 --> 00:25:31,800

But she was a strong
lady and she survived.

564

00:25:31,800 --> 00:25:33,910

Tell me, what year
did they get married?

565

00:25:33,910 --> 00:25:34,410

Sorry?

566

00:25:34,410 --> 00:25:36,600

What year did they get married?

567

00:25:36,600 --> 00:25:37,540

What year?

568

00:25:37,540 --> 00:25:40,920

Ah, what year, they
married in 1935,

569

00:25:40,920 --> 00:25:42,840

two years before my birth.

570

00:25:42,840 --> 00:25:47,640

So 1935, it's interesting
that that would have

571

00:25:47,640 --> 00:25:49,410

been a scandal in those years.

572

00:25:49,410 --> 00:25:53,970

Because one has the impression
that Lithuania was getting

573

00:25:53,970 --> 00:25:58,710

modern, was becoming a
very sophisticated place,

574

00:25:58,710 --> 00:26:04,890

in very small places in Kaunas,
in certain circles, and so on.

575

00:26:04,890 --> 00:26:07,680

But that this still
would have been an issue.

576

00:26:07,680 --> 00:26:09,810

Yes.

577

00:26:09,810 --> 00:26:12,090

At least, the
Catholic press, which

578

00:26:12,090 --> 00:26:19,710

was influential and
extensive, reacted very badly

579

00:26:19,710 --> 00:26:22,030
to that situation.

580

00:26:22,030 --> 00:26:24,660
And so well, Lithuania
was, of course,

581

00:26:24,660 --> 00:26:27,840
modernizing at that
time, but probably

582

00:26:27,840 --> 00:26:29,730
not in that particular area.

583

00:26:29,730 --> 00:26:30,230
Yeah.

584

00:26:30,230 --> 00:26:30,870
Yeah.

585

00:26:30,870 --> 00:26:31,560
Probably.

586

00:26:31,560 --> 00:26:32,310
Yeah.

587

00:26:32,310 --> 00:26:35,970
So did you ever see any of
those articles that were written

588

00:26:35,970 --> 00:26:37,260
about your parents' marriage?

589

00:26:37,260 --> 00:26:37,760
No.

590

00:26:37,760 --> 00:26:38,950
I never saw it.

591

00:26:38,950 --> 00:26:40,880
But my mother told me about it.

592
00:26:40,880 --> 00:26:41,710
OK.

593
00:26:41,710 --> 00:26:43,200
OK.

594
00:26:43,200 --> 00:26:46,140
So probably-- I am not so sure.

595
00:26:46,140 --> 00:26:50,760
Well, probably there
were some mentions, not

596
00:26:50,760 --> 00:26:52,420
long articles about that.

597
00:26:52,420 --> 00:26:54,210
But some mentions in the press.

598
00:26:54,210 --> 00:26:55,320
But that was enough.

599
00:26:55,320 --> 00:26:56,190
Yeah, of course.

600
00:26:56,190 --> 00:26:57,990
For a private person,
that's enough.

601
00:26:57,990 --> 00:26:59,820
Yes.

602
00:26:59,820 --> 00:27:03,180
Now you mentioned that
your parents or your father

603
00:27:03,180 --> 00:27:07,580
was an atheist, which is
more than just indifference.

604

00:27:07,580 --> 00:27:09,650
You know?

605
00:27:09,650 --> 00:27:12,740
That, though, is a
position towards religion.

606
00:27:12,740 --> 00:27:13,370
Yes.

607
00:27:13,370 --> 00:27:16,070
Did he have political views?

608
00:27:16,070 --> 00:27:20,540
Did your mother have political
views, political points

609
00:27:20,540 --> 00:27:22,880
of view, political leanings?

610
00:27:22,880 --> 00:27:28,640
My father was definitely a
leftist, definitely a leftist.

611
00:27:28,640 --> 00:27:33,590
Well, at that time, such people
were called fellow travelers

612
00:27:33,590 --> 00:27:36,470
with the communists.

613
00:27:36,470 --> 00:27:38,060
At that time, he
was not a member

614
00:27:38,060 --> 00:27:42,980
of the Communist
party and rather

615
00:27:42,980 --> 00:27:48,620
leaning towards social democracy
and left in general, so

616

00:27:48,620 --> 00:27:50,660
to speak.

617

00:27:50,660 --> 00:27:54,380
Among his friends, there
were so called "S-ers"

618

00:27:54,380 --> 00:27:58,700
or socialist revolutionists
and social democrats and so on.

619

00:27:58,700 --> 00:28:04,050
All those parties were banned
in independent Lithuania

620

00:28:04,050 --> 00:28:05,360
between the wars.

621

00:28:05,360 --> 00:28:07,350
You mean between 1926 and--

622

00:28:07,350 --> 00:28:07,850
Yes.

623

00:28:07,850 --> 00:28:08,350
OK.

624

00:28:08,350 --> 00:28:12,200
And 1940, all those
parties were banned.

625

00:28:12,200 --> 00:28:16,010
So that would be after
the first six years,

626

00:28:16,010 --> 00:28:18,950
or the first several years,
they had been allowed to,

627

00:28:18,950 --> 00:28:21,710
in the early '20s, had
been allowed to exist.

628
00:28:21,710 --> 00:28:22,370
Yes.

629
00:28:22,370 --> 00:28:25,220
But that was the period
of Lithuanian democracy,

630
00:28:25,220 --> 00:28:31,080
which lasted only eight
years, from 1918 to make 1926.

631
00:28:31,080 --> 00:28:31,850
OK.

632
00:28:31,850 --> 00:28:35,840
Then there was a
rightist coup d'etat

633
00:28:35,840 --> 00:28:41,570
by Antanas Smetona and the
so-called authoritarian rule,

634
00:28:41,570 --> 00:28:47,060
which was not necessarily
very toxic, but still

635
00:28:47,060 --> 00:28:49,880
rightist and authoritarian.

636
00:28:49,880 --> 00:28:53,810
That means that there was
a sense of censorship.

637
00:28:53,810 --> 00:29:00,480
People could be arrested without
much warning, so to speak,

638
00:29:00,480 --> 00:29:02,060
and so on, and so on.

639
00:29:02,060 --> 00:29:05,120

Did that danger ever--

640
00:29:05,120 --> 00:29:07,580
did that ever come
close to your father,

641
00:29:07,580 --> 00:29:09,120
that he would be arrested?

642
00:29:09,120 --> 00:29:12,770
Well, some of his friends,
like Kazys Boruta.

643
00:29:12,770 --> 00:29:18,910
At that time, he was probably
his best friend, also a poet,

644
00:29:18,910 --> 00:29:20,570
he was arrested.

645
00:29:20,570 --> 00:29:23,740
And he also emigrated
for some time.

646
00:29:23,740 --> 00:29:25,200
He was a political immigrant.

647
00:29:25,200 --> 00:29:27,680
And then he came
back to Lithuania,

648
00:29:27,680 --> 00:29:30,500
was arrested, and spent
some time in prison.

649
00:29:30,500 --> 00:29:32,130
He emigrated to where?

650
00:29:32,130 --> 00:29:32,630
Sorry?

651
00:29:32,630 --> 00:29:35,822

Where did he emigrate to?

652

00:29:35,822 --> 00:29:39,770

At first he emigrated to
Latvia, which at that time

653

00:29:39,770 --> 00:29:43,640

was more democratic than
Lithuania, and then to Austria,

654

00:29:43,640 --> 00:29:45,020
to Vienna.

655

00:29:45,020 --> 00:29:49,460

But he came back from Vienna
to Lithuania, I think, in 1934.

656

00:29:49,460 --> 00:29:50,000
OK.

657

00:29:50,000 --> 00:29:51,810

And then he was arrested.

658

00:29:51,810 --> 00:29:55,800

But he spent in prison
not a very long time.

659

00:29:55,800 --> 00:30:03,830

He was released, I think, in
the year 1936 or something.

660

00:30:03,830 --> 00:30:08,180

But my father was not
under immediate danger.

661

00:30:08,180 --> 00:30:11,960

But for example, he lost
his job as a teacher

662

00:30:11,960 --> 00:30:15,860

for a poem he printed
in Lithuanian press.

663

00:30:15,860 --> 00:30:20,690

And that poem was mildly
pro-Soviet, I would say.

664

00:30:20,690 --> 00:30:25,070

For that he was
thrown out of his job

665

00:30:25,070 --> 00:30:29,470

by a special decision
of the president,

666

00:30:29,470 --> 00:30:31,100

Antanas Smetona, himself.

667

00:30:31,100 --> 00:30:31,740

Wow.

668

00:30:31,740 --> 00:30:32,240

Yes.

669

00:30:32,240 --> 00:30:33,770

And this would have
been what year?

670

00:30:33,770 --> 00:30:37,250

That was the year
1939, I believe.

671

00:30:37,250 --> 00:30:40,790

So was this while he was
still teaching in Klaipeda?

672

00:30:40,790 --> 00:30:42,010

No.

673

00:30:42,010 --> 00:30:47,210

He left Klaipeda and he got
a teacher's job in Kaunas,

674

00:30:47,210 --> 00:30:49,215

in the capital of Lithuania.

675

00:30:49,215 --> 00:30:50,840

And that's where he
published the poem?

676

00:30:50,840 --> 00:30:56,850

And then he published the poem
in the legal Lithuanian press.

677

00:30:56,850 --> 00:31:01,190

But for that, the poem
passed censorship.

678

00:31:01,190 --> 00:31:05,480

But after that, President
Smetona read the poem,

679

00:31:05,480 --> 00:31:08,320

became rather displeased with it.

680

00:31:08,320 --> 00:31:12,530

Though the poem, as I have
said, was mildly pro-Soviet.

681

00:31:12,530 --> 00:31:14,000

Do you remember it?

682

00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:14,630

The poem?

683

00:31:14,630 --> 00:31:15,290

No.

684

00:31:15,290 --> 00:31:21,770

The poem was pacifist,
first of all, about the war.

685

00:31:21,770 --> 00:31:28,040

World War II was starting,
I believe, at that time.

686

00:31:28,040 --> 00:31:33,350

And that was a pacifist poem
about an unknown soldier

687
00:31:33,350 --> 00:31:36,620
who died senselessly,
and so on, and so on.

688
00:31:36,620 --> 00:31:45,080
And that the only way to
cease all wars forever,

689
00:31:45,080 --> 00:31:52,640
to stop all wars forever was
a series of social changes.

690
00:31:52,640 --> 00:31:53,980
So social justice?

691
00:31:53,980 --> 00:31:55,340
Social justice.

692
00:31:55,340 --> 00:31:59,825
He never used the word "Soviet."

693
00:31:59,825 --> 00:32:02,810

694
00:32:02,810 --> 00:32:06,220
That would never pass
censorship, first of all.

695
00:32:06,220 --> 00:32:06,720
OK.

696
00:32:06,720 --> 00:32:11,370
But one could understand that
the subtext was pro-Soviet.

697
00:32:11,370 --> 00:32:11,880
OK.

698
00:32:11,880 --> 00:32:16,140

That social justice can
be brought in mainly

699
00:32:16,140 --> 00:32:20,930
by the social revolution
of the Soviet kind.

700
00:32:20,930 --> 00:32:22,010
I see.

701
00:32:22,010 --> 00:32:23,060
Well, it's interesting.

702
00:32:23,060 --> 00:32:27,920
And I think it's important to
understand that period of time,

703
00:32:27,920 --> 00:32:34,880
just what kind of phraseology is
enough to get one into trouble.

704
00:32:34,880 --> 00:32:36,680
Where are the sensitivities?

705
00:32:36,680 --> 00:32:37,740
And what is the subtext?

706
00:32:37,740 --> 00:32:38,240
Yes.

707
00:32:38,240 --> 00:32:42,110
What is the meaning,
the hidden meaning

708
00:32:42,110 --> 00:32:43,650
that everyone understands?

709
00:32:43,650 --> 00:32:44,360
Yes.

710
00:32:44,360 --> 00:32:48,560
We went through

the same situation

711

00:32:48,560 --> 00:32:50,090
during the Soviet period.

712

00:32:50,090 --> 00:32:51,260
Of course.

713

00:32:51,260 --> 00:32:55,470
In the Soviet period,
it was even more severe.

714

00:32:55,470 --> 00:33:00,620
But to some degree
comparable, I would say.

715

00:33:00,620 --> 00:33:05,570
So did your mother have
any such leanings at all?

716

00:33:05,570 --> 00:33:09,410
Well, being together
with my father,

717

00:33:09,410 --> 00:33:14,570
she became also rather a
leftist, leftist thinking

718

00:33:14,570 --> 00:33:16,490
person.

719

00:33:16,490 --> 00:33:18,290
But that's all.

720

00:33:18,290 --> 00:33:22,010
She never took part in
any political activities.

721

00:33:22,010 --> 00:33:26,270
How is it, when they
got married in Klaipeda,

722

00:33:26,270 --> 00:33:28,040
did they decide to stay there?

723
00:33:28,040 --> 00:33:33,050
Is that how it is that you
were born there in 1937?

724
00:33:33,050 --> 00:33:36,580
Well, after their marriage,
they came back to Kaunas--

725
00:33:36,580 --> 00:33:37,080
OK.

726
00:33:37,080 --> 00:33:38,730
--where my father was a teacher.

727
00:33:38,730 --> 00:33:39,230
OK.

728
00:33:39,230 --> 00:33:43,080
But later, he was offered--

729
00:33:43,080 --> 00:33:46,340
he got a job, a opposition,
job offer in Klaipeda.

730
00:33:46,340 --> 00:33:47,090
OK.

731
00:33:47,090 --> 00:33:53,210
Which was even better
in many reasons.

732
00:33:53,210 --> 00:33:56,000
Klaipeda was considered,
first of all, it

733
00:33:56,000 --> 00:34:00,350
was considered a bit more
civilized part of Lithuania

734

00:34:00,350 --> 00:34:04,190
and more westernized part
of Lithuania, first of all.

735
00:34:04,190 --> 00:34:09,179
And secondly, the
salaries were higher.

736
00:34:09,179 --> 00:34:15,409
So my father removed to
Klaipeda in, I think,

737
00:34:15,409 --> 00:34:18,320
'35, immediately
after his marriage.

738
00:34:18,320 --> 00:34:22,850
And then I was born in 1937.

739
00:34:22,850 --> 00:34:23,900
OK.

740
00:34:23,900 --> 00:34:28,400
Then, as I have said,
Hitler look Klaipeda in '39.

741
00:34:28,400 --> 00:34:30,050
And we have to leave.

742
00:34:30,050 --> 00:34:31,130
We have to leave.

743
00:34:31,130 --> 00:34:32,570
Can we talk about that again?

744
00:34:32,570 --> 00:34:37,100
Because I think that part of it
we lost because we repeated--

745
00:34:37,100 --> 00:34:38,350
we edited the tape a little.

746

00:34:38,350 --> 00:34:38,850
OK.

747
00:34:38,850 --> 00:34:39,350
OK.

748
00:34:39,350 --> 00:34:44,900
So yes, Klaipeda had a
very interesting status--

749
00:34:44,900 --> 00:34:45,530
Yes.

750
00:34:45,530 --> 00:34:47,510
--in the interwar years.

751
00:34:47,510 --> 00:34:53,900
And first of all, do you
have any direct memories

752
00:34:53,900 --> 00:34:56,997
from your first few
years in Klaipeda?

753
00:34:56,997 --> 00:34:57,830
[INTERPOSING VOICES]

754
00:34:57,830 --> 00:34:59,240
Absolutely no memories.

755
00:34:59,240 --> 00:35:02,440
I was two-years-old
when we left Klaipeda.

756
00:35:02,440 --> 00:35:03,830
I could imagine, yes.

757
00:35:03,830 --> 00:35:05,180
But I needed to ask that.

758
00:35:05,180 --> 00:35:06,560
Yes.

759
00:35:06,560 --> 00:35:10,460
So tell us now, from what
you know of Klaipeda,

760
00:35:10,460 --> 00:35:12,740
what kind of
situation was it in?

761
00:35:12,740 --> 00:35:14,540
Why was it in that situation?

762
00:35:14,540 --> 00:35:15,800
And what happened?

763
00:35:15,800 --> 00:35:22,430
Klaipeda belongs to Germany
for many, many years,

764
00:35:22,430 --> 00:35:26,270
for several centuries,
to be precise.

765
00:35:26,270 --> 00:35:29,330
And it was mainly a
German-speaking city.

766
00:35:29,330 --> 00:35:29,870
OK.

767
00:35:29,870 --> 00:35:32,330
But the villages
around Klaipeda were

768
00:35:32,330 --> 00:35:34,200
mainly Lithuanian-speaking.

769
00:35:34,200 --> 00:35:34,700
OK.

770
00:35:34,700 --> 00:35:38,420
But they differed from

other parts of Lithuania,

771

00:35:38,420 --> 00:35:41,810

because they were not
Catholic, but Protestant.

772

00:35:41,810 --> 00:35:46,340

And the Lithuanian peasants
in that region were bilingual.

773

00:35:46,340 --> 00:35:49,760

They spoke as good
German as Lithuanian

774

00:35:49,760 --> 00:35:56,240

and considered themselves
citizens of the-- well,

775

00:35:56,240 --> 00:35:58,400

they don't say citizens.

776

00:35:58,400 --> 00:36:01,250

"Valdiniai" How to
say it in English.

777

00:36:01,250 --> 00:36:03,920

"Valdiniai" would be
those who are governed.

778

00:36:03,920 --> 00:36:04,420

Yes.

779

00:36:04,420 --> 00:36:09,590

So they considered themselves
to be part of the German empire.

780

00:36:09,590 --> 00:36:10,220

Oh, really?

781

00:36:10,220 --> 00:36:11,000

Very-- yes.

782

00:36:11,000 --> 00:36:14,000
Very loyal to the German
Empire, most of them.

783
00:36:14,000 --> 00:36:16,550
So that would have been
in the late 19th century?

784
00:36:16,550 --> 00:36:17,060
Yes.

785
00:36:17,060 --> 00:36:21,080
In the late 19th century,
in early 20th century.

786
00:36:21,080 --> 00:36:21,740
Yes.

787
00:36:21,740 --> 00:36:26,770
Then Klaipeda, according to
the Versailles agreement--

788
00:36:26,770 --> 00:36:27,770
After World War I.

789
00:36:27,770 --> 00:36:31,760
--after World War
I, it was separated

790
00:36:31,760 --> 00:36:35,720
from the German empire
and given to Lithuania.

791
00:36:35,720 --> 00:36:38,860
And so Lithuania took it.

792
00:36:38,860 --> 00:36:45,490
And so it retained a
autonomous set of laws,

793
00:36:45,490 --> 00:36:51,120
including the law of civil
marriage, about which I talked.

794
00:36:51,120 --> 00:36:56,970
It was Lithuanian
from the year 1923

795
00:36:56,970 --> 00:37:02,034
to the year 1939, 16 years.

796
00:37:02,034 --> 00:37:04,320
But that was a
difficult situation,

797
00:37:04,320 --> 00:37:08,520
because many of the
inhabitants of that region

798
00:37:08,520 --> 00:37:10,860
leans towards Germany.

799
00:37:10,860 --> 00:37:13,590
And Hitler, of course,
and Hitler and the Nazis,

800
00:37:13,590 --> 00:37:21,810
of course, they used those
moods among the inhabitants

801
00:37:21,810 --> 00:37:23,070
of Klaipeda.

802
00:37:23,070 --> 00:37:27,130
There were strong, pro-Nazi
parties in Klaipeda region

803
00:37:27,130 --> 00:37:28,170
at that time.

804
00:37:28,170 --> 00:37:34,350
And finally, Hitler
gave an ultimatum

805
00:37:34,350 --> 00:37:39,030

to independent Lithuania,
requesting Klaipeda back

806
00:37:39,030 --> 00:37:42,000
as a German--

807
00:37:42,000 --> 00:37:44,960
yes, German part of Europe.

808
00:37:44,960 --> 00:37:45,780
OK.

809
00:37:45,780 --> 00:37:50,490
That was his very last
peaceful achievement.

810
00:37:50,490 --> 00:37:53,220
After that, he
started World War II.

811
00:37:53,220 --> 00:37:54,330
With Poland.

812
00:37:54,330 --> 00:37:55,110
With Poland.

813
00:37:55,110 --> 00:38:02,340
But Poland, he attacked Poland
in September of 13 of 1939.

814
00:38:02,340 --> 00:38:06,090
And he took Klaipeda
in March of 1939.

815
00:38:06,090 --> 00:38:08,070
Half a year earlier.

816
00:38:08,070 --> 00:38:09,260
Half a year earlier.

817
00:38:09,260 --> 00:38:13,800
He took Klaipeda

relatively peacefully.

818

00:38:13,800 --> 00:38:19,750

Lithuanians were much weaker
than Germany, of course.

819

00:38:19,750 --> 00:38:24,360

Independent Lithuania
could not withstand

820

00:38:24,360 --> 00:38:28,320

an imminent German attack
and simply gave them

821

00:38:28,320 --> 00:38:30,000

the region of Klaipeda.

822

00:38:30,000 --> 00:38:34,350

So it was peaceful
because the Lithuanians

823

00:38:34,350 --> 00:38:35,410

decided not to fight.

824

00:38:35,410 --> 00:38:35,910

Yes.

825

00:38:35,910 --> 00:38:37,578

But there was the threat.

826

00:38:37,578 --> 00:38:38,620

There was a threat that--

827

00:38:38,620 --> 00:38:39,995

Definitely, oh,
yeah, definitely.

828

00:38:39,995 --> 00:38:41,400

Definitely there was the threat.

829

00:38:41,400 --> 00:38:44,120

And that was a very

profound trauma

830
00:38:44,120 --> 00:38:47,370
for the Lithuanian population.

831
00:38:47,370 --> 00:38:51,962
Yes, yes, very serious trauma.

832
00:38:51,962 --> 00:38:52,920
So what happened, then?

833
00:38:52,920 --> 00:38:54,180
Your family left?

834
00:38:54,180 --> 00:38:58,520
My family left and
went to Kaunas.

835
00:38:58,520 --> 00:38:59,680
And what about others?

836
00:38:59,680 --> 00:39:01,050
Did you say others--

837
00:39:01,050 --> 00:39:03,660
did most Lithuanians
leave Klaipeda?

838
00:39:03,660 --> 00:39:06,060
Most Lithuanians,
especially those

839
00:39:06,060 --> 00:39:10,260
who were not born in
Klaipeda region, they left.

840
00:39:10,260 --> 00:39:11,093
What about Jews?

841
00:39:11,093 --> 00:39:11,760
Were there many?

842

00:39:11,760 --> 00:39:13,890

The Jews, I think, left.

843

00:39:13,890 --> 00:39:19,770

Virtually all of them left,
which was quite understandable,

844

00:39:19,770 --> 00:39:20,370

I would say.

845

00:39:20,370 --> 00:39:20,880

OK.

846

00:39:20,880 --> 00:39:24,150

And they also moved to
Kaunas, to various parts

847

00:39:24,150 --> 00:39:27,960

of independent Lithuania.

848

00:39:27,960 --> 00:39:32,890

At that time, experiencing
no problems in Lithuania.

849

00:39:32,890 --> 00:39:37,290

So did your parents tell
you about their leaving,

850

00:39:37,290 --> 00:39:42,640

about how they left, and did
they have a car, for example?

851

00:39:42,640 --> 00:39:43,710

Did they go by train?

852

00:39:43,710 --> 00:39:45,660

Did they go by horse and buggy?

853

00:39:45,660 --> 00:39:46,260

How?

854

00:39:46,260 --> 00:39:51,870

At that time, a very small
number of people in Lithuania

855

00:39:51,870 --> 00:39:52,740

had cars.

856

00:39:52,740 --> 00:39:55,650

My parents did not have a car.

857

00:39:55,650 --> 00:39:57,420

I think they left by train.

858

00:39:57,420 --> 00:39:59,460

But I may be mistaken.

859

00:39:59,460 --> 00:40:02,220

And do you-- when
they moved to Kaunas,

860

00:40:02,220 --> 00:40:05,940

did they move to one place that
became your permanent home?

861

00:40:05,940 --> 00:40:11,340

Well, they rented the
flat in Kaunas next

862

00:40:11,340 --> 00:40:13,500

to my grandfather's house.

863

00:40:13,500 --> 00:40:17,160

On which side, father's
side, mother's side?

864

00:40:17,160 --> 00:40:19,210

Mother's side.

865

00:40:19,210 --> 00:40:21,710

My grandfather, who was
a professor at the Kaunas

866

00:40:21,710 --> 00:40:24,380
University, lived in Kaunas.

867
00:40:24,380 --> 00:40:26,100
He got a house.

868
00:40:26,100 --> 00:40:29,550
There was a house belonging
to another professor who

869
00:40:29,550 --> 00:40:31,530
rented the rooms in that house.

870
00:40:31,530 --> 00:40:37,890
So my parents rented, I think,
two rooms in that house.

871
00:40:37,890 --> 00:40:39,690
And our family lived there.

872
00:40:39,690 --> 00:40:44,460
And we could just
walk 40 to 50 meters

873
00:40:44,460 --> 00:40:45,930
to my grandfather's house.

874
00:40:45,930 --> 00:40:50,730
And is that where you stayed,
or did you move around?

875
00:40:50,730 --> 00:40:54,060
We stayed there until
the Soviets came.

876
00:40:54,060 --> 00:40:58,590
And the Soviets came
in the June of 1940.

877
00:40:58,590 --> 00:41:07,500
Soviets, between September of
'39-- no, between March of '39,

878
00:41:07,500 --> 00:41:11,220
when Klaipeda was taken
by Hitler, March of '39

879
00:41:11,220 --> 00:41:13,680
and June of 1940.

880
00:41:13,680 --> 00:41:16,040
So about 15 months?

881
00:41:16,040 --> 00:41:17,130
About 15 months.

882
00:41:17,130 --> 00:41:18,500
Probably.

883
00:41:18,500 --> 00:41:19,466
OK.

884
00:41:19,466 --> 00:41:23,940
And your father found a
job then at a high school

885
00:41:23,940 --> 00:41:25,740
and then quickly lost that job?

886
00:41:25,740 --> 00:41:27,120
Yes, because of his poem.

887
00:41:27,120 --> 00:41:27,390
Because of the poem.

888
00:41:27,390 --> 00:41:27,890
Yes.

889
00:41:27,890 --> 00:41:29,340
And then what did he do?

890
00:41:29,340 --> 00:41:35,760
Well, he was employed
by a literary magazine

891
00:41:35,760 --> 00:41:40,650
and would make his
modest living by working

892
00:41:40,650 --> 00:41:42,120
in that literary magazine.

893
00:41:42,120 --> 00:41:45,210
And your mother, did she have
any kind of outside employment?

894
00:41:45,210 --> 00:41:45,840
No.

895
00:41:45,840 --> 00:41:50,640
She was just a
homemaker, virtually,

896
00:41:50,640 --> 00:41:52,170
throughout her entire life.

897
00:41:52,170 --> 00:41:52,670
OK.

898
00:41:52,670 --> 00:41:55,380

899
00:41:55,380 --> 00:41:59,640
When would you say your
earliest memories start?

900
00:41:59,640 --> 00:42:04,980
My earliest memories start
with the coming of the Soviets.

901
00:42:04,980 --> 00:42:06,180
Tell me about them.

902
00:42:06,180 --> 00:42:09,030
Well, that's a long story.

903
00:42:09,030 --> 00:42:10,170
Still.

904
00:42:10,170 --> 00:42:19,740
The Soviets entered
Lithuania in June of 1940.

905
00:42:19,740 --> 00:42:26,610
That was an occupation I
think, pretty comparable to,

906
00:42:26,610 --> 00:42:29,850
let us say, German
occupation of Prague,

907
00:42:29,850 --> 00:42:32,850
which happened at
almost the same time.

908
00:42:32,850 --> 00:42:33,570
OK.

909
00:42:33,570 --> 00:42:35,430
They just entered Lithuania.

910
00:42:35,430 --> 00:42:39,000
The president,
Antanas Smetona fled.

911
00:42:39,000 --> 00:42:40,890
He fled first to Germany.

912
00:42:40,890 --> 00:42:45,390
And then, through Portugal,
he reached the United States

913
00:42:45,390 --> 00:42:48,340
and died during
the World War II,

914
00:42:48,340 --> 00:42:54,030
died in Cleveland during

a fire in his house.

915

00:42:54,030 --> 00:42:57,160

He is buried in Cleveland.

916

00:42:57,160 --> 00:43:03,540

Now when the Soviets
invaded Lithuania,

917

00:43:03,540 --> 00:43:08,230

they arranged a new
pro-Soviet government.

918

00:43:08,230 --> 00:43:12,850

In the beginning, it
consisted of mainly people who

919

00:43:12,850 --> 00:43:17,830

opposed Smetona but were
not necessarily communists,

920

00:43:17,830 --> 00:43:21,100

just true communists--
just fellow travelers.

921

00:43:21,100 --> 00:43:23,320

One of them was my father.

922

00:43:23,320 --> 00:43:33,060

He was immediately offered job
of the minister of education

923

00:43:33,060 --> 00:43:36,780

of Lithuania, of
the new pro-Soviet

924

00:43:36,780 --> 00:43:41,070

but still independent, still
formerly independent Lithuania.

925

00:43:41,070 --> 00:43:43,440

And he accepted that offer.

926

00:43:43,440 --> 00:43:47,460
So our life changed
immediately and very much so.

927

00:43:47,460 --> 00:43:53,220
Because he got a
car with a driver.

928

00:43:53,220 --> 00:43:55,110
He got a good apartment.

929

00:43:55,110 --> 00:43:57,840
He got a good salary,
and so on, and so on,

930

00:43:57,840 --> 00:44:08,790
and was expected to
work to establish

931

00:44:08,790 --> 00:44:12,390
the work of all the Lithuanian
schools, of the universities,

932

00:44:12,390 --> 00:44:14,850
all the theaters, for example.

933

00:44:14,850 --> 00:44:17,550
That was not only the
Ministry of Education,

934

00:44:17,550 --> 00:44:20,700
that was also the so-called
Ministry of Culture

935

00:44:20,700 --> 00:44:22,050
at the same time.

936

00:44:22,050 --> 00:44:23,970
That's quite a leap for
a high school teacher.

937

00:44:23,970 --> 00:44:27,420

That's a very big leap, yes.

938

00:44:27,420 --> 00:44:28,950

Yes.

939

00:44:28,950 --> 00:44:33,420

Real social mobility,
which happened

940

00:44:33,420 --> 00:44:37,260

during the Soviet period
rather frequently.

941

00:44:37,260 --> 00:44:41,290

Later those people, would be,
for example, destroyed later.

942

00:44:41,290 --> 00:44:44,370

That also happened, after
the big social leap.

943

00:44:44,370 --> 00:44:48,090

They would be destroyed,
especially in Stalin times.

944

00:44:48,090 --> 00:44:52,020

But that did not
happen to our family,

945

00:44:52,020 --> 00:44:57,090

nor to any other
Lithuanian family of--

946

00:44:57,090 --> 00:45:01,170

I think not too many of them,
in any case, of fellow travelers

947

00:45:01,170 --> 00:45:03,220

or of Lithuanian communists.

948

00:45:03,220 --> 00:45:06,480

Did he have any
kind of apprehension

949
00:45:06,480 --> 00:45:08,550
about taking that job?

950
00:45:08,550 --> 00:45:11,430
Did he have any doubts at all?

951
00:45:11,430 --> 00:45:12,030
Yes.

952
00:45:12,030 --> 00:45:15,480
I think my father had some
apprehension and doubts.

953
00:45:15,480 --> 00:45:19,800
But he was convinced
by some of his friends

954
00:45:19,800 --> 00:45:23,400
who became members of that
pro-Soviet government.

955
00:45:23,400 --> 00:45:25,410
And who would they have been?

956
00:45:25,410 --> 00:45:27,090
Who were some of these friends?

957
00:45:27,090 --> 00:45:29,050
For example, Justas Paleckis--

958
00:45:29,050 --> 00:45:29,550
OK.

959
00:45:29,550 --> 00:45:33,510
--who became a nominal president
of Lithuania, who was also

960
00:45:33,510 --> 00:45:38,250
a leftist journalist
opposed to Antanas Smetona,

961

00:45:38,250 --> 00:45:40,440
not a communist at that time.

962

00:45:40,440 --> 00:45:48,060
But the Soviets appointed
him in a roundabout way,

963

00:45:48,060 --> 00:45:50,520
but that was a
Soviet appointment

964

00:45:50,520 --> 00:45:53,760
to be a president of Lithuania.

965

00:45:53,760 --> 00:45:56,120
Also a big leap
for a journalist.

966

00:45:56,120 --> 00:45:57,450
A very big leap, yes.

967

00:45:57,450 --> 00:45:59,310
And he had a very big leap.

968

00:45:59,310 --> 00:46:03,150
So Justas Paleckis became
a nominal president

969

00:46:03,150 --> 00:46:09,870
and stayed in that job for
several dozens of years

970

00:46:09,870 --> 00:46:12,780
during the war time
and after the war.

971

00:46:12,780 --> 00:46:17,610
He was a nominal head of
state of Soviet Lithuania.

972

00:46:17,610 --> 00:46:22,110
But Soviet Lithuania

was not a state, yes,

973

00:46:22,110 --> 00:46:27,120
to tell the truth, just a
province of the Soviet Union.

974

00:46:27,120 --> 00:46:33,790
And she needed some
facelifting, so to speak.

975

00:46:33,790 --> 00:46:37,890
So Paleckis was
still its president.

976

00:46:37,890 --> 00:46:41,960
I would not necessarily
tell much bad things.

977

00:46:41,960 --> 00:46:44,910
There would be many bad
things about Paleckis.

978

00:46:44,910 --> 00:46:47,510
He was considered liberal.

979

00:46:47,510 --> 00:46:51,360
He tried to help people
persecuted with the Soviets.

980

00:46:51,360 --> 00:46:54,540
Sometimes he succeeded,
sometimes not.

981

00:46:54,540 --> 00:47:00,720
He was considered not
a fully communist--

982

00:47:00,720 --> 00:47:02,580
not a real communist,
although he

983

00:47:02,580 --> 00:47:04,620
became a member of the party.

984
00:47:04,620 --> 00:47:07,950
He was criticized frequently.

985
00:47:07,950 --> 00:47:15,310
But he stayed in his
well-paid and well,

986
00:47:15,310 --> 00:47:19,500
so to speak, very representative
job until his death.

987
00:47:19,500 --> 00:47:21,060
And tell me what
about your father?

988
00:47:21,060 --> 00:47:24,490
Did your father then also enter
the party when he got the job?

989
00:47:24,490 --> 00:47:24,990
No.

990
00:47:24,990 --> 00:47:29,200
My father entered the
party only after the war,

991
00:47:29,200 --> 00:47:31,260
in 1950 or something.

992
00:47:31,260 --> 00:47:37,380
By the way, Paleckis insisted
that he should join the party.

993
00:47:37,380 --> 00:47:42,000
Paleckis himself joined
the party in 1940.

994
00:47:42,000 --> 00:47:44,550
I think at the end of 1940.

995
00:47:44,550 --> 00:47:45,450

I see.

996

00:47:45,450 --> 00:47:47,610

During that first
Soviet occupation?

997

00:47:47,610 --> 00:47:48,160

Yes.

998

00:47:48,160 --> 00:47:51,840

My father joined it only during
the second Soviet occupation.

999

00:47:51,840 --> 00:47:54,510

So he had been
friends with Paleckis?

1000

00:47:54,510 --> 00:47:56,820

Yes, they were on
rather friendly terms.

1001

00:47:56,820 --> 00:47:57,330

OK.

1002

00:47:57,330 --> 00:47:58,170

Yes.

1003

00:47:58,170 --> 00:48:01,690

Even now I am on friendly
terms with that family,

1004

00:48:01,690 --> 00:48:07,170

including Justas Paleckis,
Justas Paleckis the junior.

1005

00:48:07,170 --> 00:48:09,270

Who was the son of this person.

1006

00:48:09,270 --> 00:48:12,750

Who was the son, who was a
Soviet diplomat, but later

1007

00:48:12,750 --> 00:48:15,950
he became a Lithuanian
diplomat, a diplomat

1008
00:48:15,950 --> 00:48:17,490
of independent Lithuania.

1009
00:48:17,490 --> 00:48:20,040
Now he is emeritus, like myself.

1010
00:48:20,040 --> 00:48:22,110
But when we meet
from time to time,

1011
00:48:22,110 --> 00:48:25,920
we also met in our
early childhood.

1012
00:48:25,920 --> 00:48:27,670
Interesting how path's cross.

1013
00:48:27,670 --> 00:48:28,170
Yes.

1014
00:48:28,170 --> 00:48:31,800
That's, well, Lithuania
is a very small country.

1015
00:48:31,800 --> 00:48:33,660
Everybody knows everybody.

1016
00:48:33,660 --> 00:48:36,480
And everybody has some
connections with everybody.

1017
00:48:36,480 --> 00:48:39,880
That's true, one way or another.

1018
00:48:39,880 --> 00:48:43,110
Now you say that's when
your early memories start.

1019

00:48:43,110 --> 00:48:45,480

So what are your
earliest memories?

1020

00:48:45,480 --> 00:48:48,660

Well, my earliest memories are--

1021

00:48:48,660 --> 00:48:51,270

my very earliest
memories are connected

1022

00:48:51,270 --> 00:48:54,570

with that job of my father
as a minister of education.

1023

00:48:54,570 --> 00:48:55,750

What do you remember?

1024

00:48:55,750 --> 00:49:00,030

Well, for example, I remember
his portrait in a magazine.

1025

00:49:00,030 --> 00:49:03,840

And being three-years-old,
I was very proud of it.

1026

00:49:03,840 --> 00:49:14,280

Then an old writer,
and old writer

1027

00:49:14,280 --> 00:49:19,110

who wrote tales for
children, Pranas Masiotas

1028

00:49:19,110 --> 00:49:22,920

died in the beginning of
the Soviet occupation.

1029

00:49:22,920 --> 00:49:31,260

Was this the father of
Juozas Urbsys' wife?

1030

00:49:31,260 --> 00:49:32,990

Because she was a
Masiotaitė, I believe.

1031
00:49:32,990 --> 00:49:33,490
Yes.

1032
00:49:33,490 --> 00:49:34,740
I think he was the father.

1033
00:49:34,740 --> 00:49:35,260
OK.

1034
00:49:35,260 --> 00:49:36,343
I think it was the father.

1035
00:49:36,343 --> 00:49:40,080
That one more just
example that everybody

1036
00:49:40,080 --> 00:49:42,210
is connected with
everybody in Lithuania.

1037
00:49:42,210 --> 00:49:46,710
And she had been-- they were
arrested and sent into solitary

1038
00:49:46,710 --> 00:49:47,293
imprisonment--

1039
00:49:47,293 --> 00:49:47,793
Yes.

1040
00:49:47,793 --> 00:49:48,520
--by the Soviets.

1041
00:49:48,520 --> 00:49:52,890
But her father Masiotas
died in the very beginning

1042
00:49:52,890 --> 00:49:54,570
of the Soviet occupation.

1043
00:49:54,570 --> 00:49:58,150
And he was given
a state funeral.

1044
00:49:58,150 --> 00:50:01,950
My father, as a
minister of education,

1045
00:50:01,950 --> 00:50:04,170
took part in that
funeral and took

1046
00:50:04,170 --> 00:50:10,140
me to see a writer whose
things I have read already

1047
00:50:10,140 --> 00:50:11,460
at that time.

1048
00:50:11,460 --> 00:50:12,960
So you could make
the connection?

1049
00:50:12,960 --> 00:50:13,460
Yes.

1050
00:50:13,460 --> 00:50:17,490
I could make the connection that
this is the same Masiotas whose

1051
00:50:17,490 --> 00:50:20,500
tales I liked very much.

1052
00:50:20,500 --> 00:50:24,390
And this is one of my very
first memories, this funeral.

1053
00:50:24,390 --> 00:50:28,410
You know, a funeral is
a very special thing.

1054

00:50:28,410 --> 00:50:32,040

And it makes an
impression on children.

1055

00:50:32,040 --> 00:50:33,630

Yes, it does.

1056

00:50:33,630 --> 00:50:38,040

Then there was a
meeting at which

1057

00:50:38,040 --> 00:50:44,430

my father gave a speech, a
meeting with red banners,

1058

00:50:44,430 --> 00:50:48,060

with slogans, and
so on, and so on,

1059

00:50:48,060 --> 00:50:53,040

with shouts, hurrah, long live
Comrade Stalin, and so on.

1060

00:50:53,040 --> 00:50:54,960

And my father gave a speech.

1061

00:50:54,960 --> 00:50:57,030

I don't remember
meeting very well.

1062

00:50:57,030 --> 00:51:01,680

But still, it is one of
my very early memories.

1063

00:51:01,680 --> 00:51:03,420

Well, that's the way
it is with children.

1064

00:51:03,420 --> 00:51:05,500

Is that we have
episodic memories.

1065

00:51:05,500 --> 00:51:06,000

Yes.

1066
00:51:06,000 --> 00:51:06,960
But they are there.

1067
00:51:06,960 --> 00:51:07,230
Yes.

1068
00:51:07,230 --> 00:51:07,860
They are there.

1069
00:51:07,860 --> 00:51:09,330
Yes.

1070
00:51:09,330 --> 00:51:14,550
And do you remember much of the
apartment that you moved to?

1071
00:51:14,550 --> 00:51:21,120
Just a bit of it, just a
bit of it, but not much

1072
00:51:21,120 --> 00:51:25,260
of it, but the apartment
is still there.

1073
00:51:25,260 --> 00:51:31,410
It's on the Kudirkos
Street in Vilnius and--

1074
00:51:31,410 --> 00:51:32,260
Vilnius or Kaunas?

1075
00:51:32,260 --> 00:51:32,760
In Vilnius.

1076
00:51:32,760 --> 00:51:33,370
In Vilnius?

1077
00:51:33,370 --> 00:51:33,870
Yes.

1078

00:51:33,870 --> 00:51:37,080

Because the Ministry
of Education moved to

1079

00:51:37,080 --> 00:51:39,900

Vilnius almost immediately.

1080

00:51:39,900 --> 00:51:43,110

Most other ministries
remained in Kaunas.

1081

00:51:43,110 --> 00:51:47,010

But my father moved to
Vilnius and got an apartment.

1082

00:51:47,010 --> 00:51:48,810

And the apartment
is still there.

1083

00:51:48,810 --> 00:51:56,370

When I go by bus or car
on that street, which

1084

00:51:56,370 --> 00:51:59,880

I do almost every
day, I see the windows

1085

00:51:59,880 --> 00:52:01,830

of our former apartment.

1086

00:52:01,830 --> 00:52:04,780

But I don't have very
exact memories of it.

1087

00:52:04,780 --> 00:52:05,520

OK.

1088

00:52:05,520 --> 00:52:09,030

Let's turn now to something
a little bit more personal.

1089

00:52:09,030 --> 00:52:12,600

And that would be your
parents' personalities.

1090
00:52:12,600 --> 00:52:16,200
Tell me a little a bit about
what kind of personality

1091
00:52:16,200 --> 00:52:19,470
your mother had and
then, your father.

1092
00:52:19,470 --> 00:52:24,450
Well, my mother
was, as I have said,

1093
00:52:24,450 --> 00:52:29,910
one of the most beautiful
women in Lithuania.

1094
00:52:29,910 --> 00:52:32,640
Well, she was strong.

1095
00:52:32,640 --> 00:52:35,380
She had a strong personality.

1096
00:52:35,380 --> 00:52:39,030
She was very loyal
to her to her family,

1097
00:52:39,030 --> 00:52:41,580
to her husband and her child.

1098
00:52:41,580 --> 00:52:44,650
And she learned me--

1099
00:52:44,650 --> 00:52:45,760
she taught me.

1100
00:52:45,760 --> 00:52:51,210
She taught me never,
never say lies.

1101

00:52:51,210 --> 00:52:54,210
If you know for sure
that it is untrue,

1102
00:52:54,210 --> 00:52:59,880
never say it, even if it helps
you, even if it helps you.

1103
00:52:59,880 --> 00:53:08,010
This was the best lesson I
was given at a very early age

1104
00:53:08,010 --> 00:53:11,040
from three to six, let us say.

1105
00:53:11,040 --> 00:53:13,700
And that is never,
never tell lies.

1106
00:53:13,700 --> 00:53:16,230
She had an ethical
kind of value system.

1107
00:53:16,230 --> 00:53:17,230
I think so.

1108
00:53:17,230 --> 00:53:18,030
I think so.

1109
00:53:18,030 --> 00:53:24,510
And she, until her late years,
she became rather leftist

1110
00:53:24,510 --> 00:53:26,230
in her views.

1111
00:53:26,230 --> 00:53:29,670
Although in her very
old age, she also

1112
00:53:29,670 --> 00:53:32,700
had some interest in
religion once more.

1113
00:53:32,700 --> 00:53:39,300
And she got a friendly priest,
Kazimieras Vasiliauskas,

1114
00:53:39,300 --> 00:53:41,790
a well-known person
in Lithuanian

1115
00:53:41,790 --> 00:53:44,940
who used to visit her
and to talk with her.

1116
00:53:44,940 --> 00:53:47,820
She died at the year of 95.

1117
00:53:47,820 --> 00:53:49,200
And what year was that?

1118
00:53:49,200 --> 00:53:53,880
That was 2006, I believe.

1119
00:53:53,880 --> 00:53:56,610
Well, her life spanned
so many different eras.

1120
00:53:56,610 --> 00:53:57,360
Oh, yes.

1121
00:53:57,360 --> 00:53:58,350
Oh, yes.

1122
00:53:58,350 --> 00:54:06,810
And so she preserved
good, I would

1123
00:54:06,810 --> 00:54:10,020
say even physical,
but especially psychic

1124
00:54:10,020 --> 00:54:12,720
shape until her death.

1125
00:54:12,720 --> 00:54:16,770
She never got Alzheimer's
or such things.

1126
00:54:16,770 --> 00:54:19,170
Before her death,
she gave an interview

1127
00:54:19,170 --> 00:54:21,330
to a Lithuanian newspaper.

1128
00:54:21,330 --> 00:54:24,570
And that was a perfectly
readable and interesting

1129
00:54:24,570 --> 00:54:25,620
interview.

1130
00:54:25,620 --> 00:54:28,210
Is it the only
one she ever gave?

1131
00:54:28,210 --> 00:54:31,020
She gave, I think,
two interviews.

1132
00:54:31,020 --> 00:54:33,340
That's not much for
such a lifetime.

1133
00:54:33,340 --> 00:54:34,170
Yes, not much.

1134
00:54:34,170 --> 00:54:35,850
But then, it was very long.

1135
00:54:35,850 --> 00:54:37,050
Well, that's interesting.

1136
00:54:37,050 --> 00:54:37,710
Yes.

1137
00:54:37,710 --> 00:54:39,120
They are available.

1138
00:54:39,120 --> 00:54:43,200
I think they are also
available on the internet,

1139
00:54:43,200 --> 00:54:45,060
if you are interested in that.

1140
00:54:45,060 --> 00:54:46,170
I will look them up.

1141
00:54:46,170 --> 00:54:46,950
Yes.

1142
00:54:46,950 --> 00:54:49,500
Look the name of my mother.

1143
00:54:49,500 --> 00:54:53,740
And they will give you,
oh, yes, on the Google,

1144
00:54:53,740 --> 00:54:55,320
they will give you
the interviews.

1145
00:54:55,320 --> 00:54:59,400
And tell me-- here's
another interesting point.

1146
00:54:59,400 --> 00:55:03,000
You say that later in life, she
becomes interested in religion

1147
00:55:03,000 --> 00:55:07,050
and Kazimieras Vasiliasukas
comes to visit her.

1148
00:55:07,050 --> 00:55:09,030
Well, he himself

had been arrested

1149
00:55:09,030 --> 00:55:11,880
and deported by the Soviets
for many, many years.

1150
00:55:11,880 --> 00:55:12,550
Oh, yes.

1151
00:55:12,550 --> 00:55:13,050
Oh, yes.

1152
00:55:13,050 --> 00:55:15,660
But he was a very
tolerant person.

1153
00:55:15,660 --> 00:55:18,120
He was a very wise person.

1154
00:55:18,120 --> 00:55:18,960
Mhm.

1155
00:55:18,960 --> 00:55:25,050
It's probably it would be
probably incorrect to say

1156
00:55:25,050 --> 00:55:26,160
that we were friends.

1157
00:55:26,160 --> 00:55:28,080
But we knew each other well.

1158
00:55:28,080 --> 00:55:30,480
I respected him very highly.

1159
00:55:30,480 --> 00:55:35,880
And he kept quite
fatherly attitudes

1160
00:55:35,880 --> 00:55:37,500
towards my humble person.

1161

00:55:37,500 --> 00:55:38,700

Oh, how nice.

1162

00:55:38,700 --> 00:55:40,341

How nice.

1163

00:55:40,341 --> 00:55:44,760

Well, he was connected,
associated with the Lithuanian

1164

00:55:44,760 --> 00:55:45,787

Helsinki Group.

1165

00:55:45,787 --> 00:55:47,370

And you were part
of that Lithuanian--

1166

00:55:47,370 --> 00:55:48,580

I was part of the group.

1167

00:55:48,580 --> 00:55:50,160

He was probably not a part.

1168

00:55:50,160 --> 00:55:53,640

But he was, so to speak,
a sort of a spiritual

1169

00:55:53,640 --> 00:55:55,410

father for the Helsinki Group.

1170

00:55:55,410 --> 00:55:56,820

Oh, that's interesting.

1171

00:55:56,820 --> 00:56:00,390

And that is part of, let's say,
a post-war Soviet dissident

1172

00:56:00,390 --> 00:56:00,900

history.

1173

00:56:00,900 --> 00:56:03,480

And we're still in World War II.

1174

00:56:03,480 --> 00:56:06,870

But it is all very
interesting, the connections

1175

00:56:06,870 --> 00:56:11,160

and the overlapping of
people's destinies and paths

1176

00:56:11,160 --> 00:56:15,390

in a small country like this,
which is in the path of two

1177

00:56:15,390 --> 00:56:16,770

great powers.

1178

00:56:16,770 --> 00:56:19,590

And what happens when you
have these two totalitarian

1179

00:56:19,590 --> 00:56:24,810

regimes come in and how do
they impact all these lives,

1180

00:56:24,810 --> 00:56:26,910

how do they change
their destinies?

1181

00:56:26,910 --> 00:56:33,900

So it sounds that your mother
had a very strong ethical core.

1182

00:56:33,900 --> 00:56:38,820

That for her, telling the
truth was a very high value.

1183

00:56:38,820 --> 00:56:42,270

Was she the one you were closer
to as you were growing up,

1184

00:56:42,270 --> 00:56:45,690

or was your father someone

you were closer to?

1185
00:56:45,690 --> 00:56:47,730
No, I think I was
closer to my mother.

1186
00:56:47,730 --> 00:56:48,420
OK.

1187
00:56:48,420 --> 00:56:52,680
Although I loved my father,
and I still love him.

1188
00:56:52,680 --> 00:56:53,490
OK.

1189
00:56:53,490 --> 00:56:55,710
So tell me a little bit
about your father, what kind

1190
00:56:55,710 --> 00:56:57,480
of a personality he had.

1191
00:56:57,480 --> 00:57:02,620
Well, he was a pleasant
type of personality.

1192
00:57:02,620 --> 00:57:03,590
What does that mean?

1193
00:57:03,590 --> 00:57:06,300
That means he was--

1194
00:57:06,300 --> 00:57:09,090
well, first of all,
he was cautious.

1195
00:57:09,090 --> 00:57:09,690
OK.

1196
00:57:09,690 --> 00:57:11,220
He was cautious.

1197
00:57:11,220 --> 00:57:18,090
And he was-- well,
how to say it--

1198
00:57:18,090 --> 00:57:23,160

1199
00:57:23,160 --> 00:57:25,410
he was a business-like
personality.

1200
00:57:25,410 --> 00:57:31,000

1201
00:57:31,000 --> 00:57:33,940
Well, As truputi pavargau.

1202
00:57:33,940 --> 00:57:35,050
O, as atsiprasau.

1203
00:57:35,050 --> 00:57:37,110
Let's cut a little bit.