

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:00,500
Here we go.

2
00:00:00,500 --> 00:00:02,130
I'm turning the recording on.

3
00:00:02,130 --> 00:00:04,720

4
00:00:04,720 --> 00:00:09,670
Do you see an indication of
recording on your computer?

5
00:00:09,670 --> 00:00:10,300
Yes.

6
00:00:10,300 --> 00:00:10,800
Yes.

7
00:00:10,800 --> 00:00:12,660
OK.

8
00:00:12,660 --> 00:00:14,550
So we begin.

9
00:00:14,550 --> 00:00:18,090
This is a United States
Holocaust Memorial Museum

10
00:00:18,090 --> 00:00:25,500
interview with Mr. Peter
Stein on September 4, 2020.

11
00:00:25,500 --> 00:00:27,750
Thank you very, very
much, Mr. Stein,

12
00:00:27,750 --> 00:00:29,970
for agreeing to
speak with us today

13

00:00:29,970 --> 00:00:32,700

and to share a little
bit of your life story

14

00:00:32,700 --> 00:00:36,000

and that of your parents
and their experiences

15

00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:38,130

during World War II.

16

00:00:38,130 --> 00:00:42,600

I'm going to start the interview
with very basic questions

17

00:00:42,600 --> 00:00:44,570

and we go from there.

18

00:00:44,570 --> 00:00:48,020

So can you tell me what
is the date of your birth?

19

00:00:48,020 --> 00:00:50,760

First, thank you for
interviewing me and asking me

20

00:00:50,760 --> 00:00:52,170

these questions.

21

00:00:52,170 --> 00:01:00,060

I was born on September 22, 1936
in Prague, then Czechoslovakia.

22

00:01:00,060 --> 00:01:02,430

And what was your name at birth?

23

00:01:02,430 --> 00:01:09,740

Petr, P-E-T-R, Josef
J-O-S-E-F, Stein.

24

00:01:09,740 --> 00:01:11,200

Just as it is today.

25
00:01:11,200 --> 00:01:12,040
Yes.

26
00:01:12,040 --> 00:01:13,390
OK.

27
00:01:13,390 --> 00:01:17,490
And what was your mother's name?

28
00:01:17,490 --> 00:01:21,300
My mother's name was
Zdenka Kvetonova.

29
00:01:21,300 --> 00:01:24,850
How would I spell
Zdenka Kvetonova?

30
00:01:24,850 --> 00:01:35,440
Zdenka, Z-D-E-N-K-A, Kvetonova,
capital K-V-E-T-O-N-O-V-A.

31
00:01:35,440 --> 00:01:36,320
OK.

32
00:01:36,320 --> 00:01:40,520
And then of course, she
became Stein once she married.

33
00:01:40,520 --> 00:01:41,540
Yes.

34
00:01:41,540 --> 00:01:45,960
And do you know the date of
her birth, approximately?

35
00:01:45,960 --> 00:01:46,460
Yeah.

36
00:01:46,460 --> 00:01:51,440
I know exactly, April 16, 1904.

37

00:01:51,440 --> 00:01:52,670

OK.

38

00:01:52,670 --> 00:01:55,130

And your father,
what was his name?

39

00:01:55,130 --> 00:01:58,610

Victor Josef Stein.

40

00:01:58,610 --> 00:02:00,770

And do you know the
date of his birth?

41

00:02:00,770 --> 00:02:06,700

September 19, 1903.

42

00:02:06,700 --> 00:02:09,430

So he was a year older
than your mother.

43

00:02:09,430 --> 00:02:11,290

Yes.

44

00:02:11,290 --> 00:02:13,360

Did you have
brothers and sisters?

45

00:02:13,360 --> 00:02:16,150

No, I'm an only child.

46

00:02:16,150 --> 00:02:17,260

OK.

47

00:02:17,260 --> 00:02:23,110

And were your parents
both from Prague?

48

00:02:23,110 --> 00:02:25,780

My dad was born in
a small town called

49

00:02:25,780 --> 00:02:33,610

Cesky Brod, which is probably
50, 60 kilometers outside

50

00:02:33,610 --> 00:02:35,650

of Prague.

51

00:02:35,650 --> 00:02:38,200

In which direction--
south, north?

52

00:02:38,200 --> 00:02:39,930

North-- northwest.

53

00:02:39,930 --> 00:02:40,430

OK.

54

00:02:40,430 --> 00:02:43,240

55

00:02:43,240 --> 00:02:49,990

Close to a large Jewish
community in Kolin, K-O-L-I-N,

56

00:02:49,990 --> 00:02:53,860

which I think was the second
or third largest concentration

57

00:02:53,860 --> 00:02:57,630

of Jews in Czechoslovakia.

58

00:02:57,630 --> 00:02:58,450

OK.

59

00:02:58,450 --> 00:03:00,610

So he was born in Cesky Brod.

60

00:03:00,610 --> 00:03:03,190

Did he have brothers
and sisters?

61

00:03:03,190 --> 00:03:07,650

Yes, he had two sisters and a brother.

62

00:03:07,650 --> 00:03:09,360

What were their names?

63

00:03:09,360 --> 00:03:20,850

So one was Karla Stein, second one was Kamila, both Ks.

64

00:03:20,850 --> 00:03:25,230

The brother was Richard Stein, and my father

65

00:03:25,230 --> 00:03:27,800

was the youngest of four children.

66

00:03:27,800 --> 00:03:28,920

OK.

67

00:03:28,920 --> 00:03:32,580

And his parents, do you know the name

68

00:03:32,580 --> 00:03:34,630

of your paternal grandparents?

69

00:03:34,630 --> 00:03:35,130

Yes.

70

00:03:35,130 --> 00:03:40,380

So Josef was his father's name, Josef Stein.

71

00:03:40,380 --> 00:03:45,630

And the mother is Sophie Markus Stein.

72

00:03:45,630 --> 00:03:49,500

Her maiden name was Markus, M-A-R-K-U-S.

73
00:03:49,500 --> 00:03:51,560
And she was one of 10.

74
00:03:51,560 --> 00:03:52,060
Whoa.

75
00:03:52,060 --> 00:03:55,810
And that was a larger group.

76
00:03:55,810 --> 00:03:58,650
It certainly-- well, in those--

77
00:03:58,650 --> 00:04:02,370
for that generation,
that was more common

78
00:04:02,370 --> 00:04:05,400
than it would be in
subsequent generations

79
00:04:05,400 --> 00:04:08,400
to come from large
families like that.

80
00:04:08,400 --> 00:04:08,910
Sure.

81
00:04:08,910 --> 00:04:10,260
For sure.

82
00:04:10,260 --> 00:04:12,960
Let's turn to your mother's
side now for a little bit.

83
00:04:12,960 --> 00:04:15,420
Did your mother have
brothers and sisters?

84
00:04:15,420 --> 00:04:20,190
Yeah, the sister named Olga,
about two years her junior,

85

00:04:20,190 --> 00:04:28,260

O-L-G-A, who was also a
Kveton, Olga Kvetonova,

86

00:04:28,260 --> 00:04:34,620

married a Perutz, P-E-R-U-T-Z.

So both the sisters were

87

00:04:34,620 --> 00:04:38,940

Catholic, and the two men
they married were Jews.

88

00:04:38,940 --> 00:04:40,640

Ah, OK.

89

00:04:40,640 --> 00:04:44,340

That's unusual for
those times that there

90

00:04:44,340 --> 00:04:46,470

would be intermarriage--

91

00:04:46,470 --> 00:04:51,760

well, maybe not so much for
one sibling, but for both.

92

00:04:51,760 --> 00:04:54,150

And I often wondered
how the grandparents

93

00:04:54,150 --> 00:04:57,680

felt about their two
beautiful Catholic daughters

94

00:04:57,680 --> 00:04:59,780

marrying Jewish guys.

95

00:04:59,780 --> 00:05:01,850

Did they ever say?

96

00:05:01,850 --> 00:05:03,470

They never did.

97

00:05:03,470 --> 00:05:06,740

And I have no indication
that they were unhappy.

98

00:05:06,740 --> 00:05:09,650

I just wonder.

99

00:05:09,650 --> 00:05:13,520

But it's actually interesting,
Ina, because in Prague, Prague

100

00:05:13,520 --> 00:05:18,590

had the largest intermarriage
rate in Czechoslovakia.

101

00:05:18,590 --> 00:05:25,130

And Katerina Capkova is the
historian at Charles University

102

00:05:25,130 --> 00:05:28,070

and NYU, reports
that it might have

103

00:05:28,070 --> 00:05:33,710

been as high as 25% or
even 30% in Prague itself.

104

00:05:33,710 --> 00:05:35,900

Between Christians and Jews?

105

00:05:35,900 --> 00:05:36,560

Exactly.

106

00:05:36,560 --> 00:05:40,680

Mostly Jewish men
and Christian women.

107

00:05:40,680 --> 00:05:43,870

That's really unusual,
even for that time.

108

00:05:43,870 --> 00:05:47,230

Much less so in
Bohemia and Moravia.

109

00:05:47,230 --> 00:05:50,470

Typically, was the
larger cities--

110

00:05:50,470 --> 00:05:54,830

Brno and Bratislava
were the others.

111

00:05:54,830 --> 00:05:57,020

And was-- did she
give any explanation,

112

00:05:57,020 --> 00:05:59,990

or do you have any explanation
as to why this was so?

113

00:05:59,990 --> 00:06:02,770

114

00:06:02,770 --> 00:06:04,730

Why the two of them
married, or the large--

115

00:06:04,730 --> 00:06:07,550

No, no, no, in general, you
were talking in general.

116

00:06:07,550 --> 00:06:09,880

Was there any explanation given?

117

00:06:09,880 --> 00:06:12,280

I guess, my sense was socially.

118

00:06:12,280 --> 00:06:14,950

They met, they both
like music, they

119

00:06:14,950 --> 00:06:20,770

both like art, and the
universities, as far as I know,

120
00:06:20,770 --> 00:06:24,610
Charles University, and
some of the other colleges,

121
00:06:24,610 --> 00:06:27,970
did not discriminate
against Jews.

122
00:06:27,970 --> 00:06:34,270
And so my impression is that
was a reasonable place to meet.

123
00:06:34,270 --> 00:06:36,820
You're talking about your
parents specifically.

124
00:06:36,820 --> 00:06:38,820
And that's one of my questions.

125
00:06:38,820 --> 00:06:39,910
I will come to that.

126
00:06:39,910 --> 00:06:45,880
But you mentioned an historian
who said up to 25% of people

127
00:06:45,880 --> 00:06:46,960
were intermarried.

128
00:06:46,960 --> 00:06:49,900
And my question was,
did she give a reason

129
00:06:49,900 --> 00:06:53,410
why there was such a high
percentage for that generation

130
00:06:53,410 --> 00:06:54,760
at that time?

131

00:06:54,760 --> 00:06:57,030

Yeah.

132

00:06:57,030 --> 00:07:01,300

You're going to make me
reread the 35 page article.

133

00:07:01,300 --> 00:07:05,470

But I think partly,
again, that they

134

00:07:05,470 --> 00:07:08,260

were in similar social circles.

135

00:07:08,260 --> 00:07:14,230

I mean, my mother's parents,
the dad was a professional.

136

00:07:14,230 --> 00:07:16,780

And my parent-- my
father's parents

137

00:07:16,780 --> 00:07:21,360

were professional or educated.

138

00:07:21,360 --> 00:07:26,110

So I think in terms of social
class, it was not a stretch.

139

00:07:26,110 --> 00:07:28,740

Were they are more
secular people?

140

00:07:28,740 --> 00:07:32,580

Yes, absolutely.

141

00:07:32,580 --> 00:07:35,540

My dad always-- sorry.

142

00:07:35,540 --> 00:07:37,860

The question-- yeah, were
they more secular people?

143
00:07:37,860 --> 00:07:41,490

144
00:07:41,490 --> 00:07:46,340
Really, he was much
less culturally Jewish

145
00:07:46,340 --> 00:07:47,960
than were his parents.

146
00:07:47,960 --> 00:07:51,620
His father was a major of--

147
00:07:51,620 --> 00:07:55,100
supporter of the
synagogue in Kolin,

148
00:07:55,100 --> 00:07:58,550
where I said there was a
significant Jewish population.

149
00:07:58,550 --> 00:08:04,580
I did some research on
people on the financial--

150
00:08:04,580 --> 00:08:08,890
finance committee of
the Kolin synagogue,

151
00:08:08,890 --> 00:08:13,490
and my grandfather was
one of the major donors,

152
00:08:13,490 --> 00:08:17,720
and then became the head
of the finance committee.

153
00:08:17,720 --> 00:08:19,592
It's hard to be more
involved than that.

154

00:08:19,592 --> 00:08:20,376

This is true.

155

00:08:20,376 --> 00:08:23,410

This is true.

156

00:08:23,410 --> 00:08:28,240

And my dad moved to Prague and
had Christian friends, as well

157

00:08:28,240 --> 00:08:34,030

as Jewish friends, and somehow
met my mother that way.

158

00:08:34,030 --> 00:08:36,020

And I think the
same thing for her.

159

00:08:36,020 --> 00:08:43,429

My mother's sister, Olga,
who married Robert Perutz,

160

00:08:43,429 --> 00:08:47,430

also they met each
other socially.

161

00:08:47,430 --> 00:08:52,590

Do you-- do you know what
kind of profession your--

162

00:08:52,590 --> 00:08:57,810

both grandfathers had from your
father's side and your mother's

163

00:08:57,810 --> 00:08:59,610

side?

164

00:08:59,610 --> 00:09:03,420

I mean, they were really
more business persons.

165

00:09:03,420 --> 00:09:10,680

My grandfather was a grain

merchant who supplied,

166
00:09:10,680 --> 00:09:16,560
among other things, supplied
ingredients to breweries.

167
00:09:16,560 --> 00:09:20,450
And my-- our--

168
00:09:20,450 --> 00:09:23,090
sorry, I get a little weepy.

169
00:09:23,090 --> 00:09:29,830
Our son, Mike, is a historian,
but also he brews beer.

170
00:09:29,830 --> 00:09:31,460
[INAUDIBLE]

171
00:09:31,460 --> 00:09:36,050
He was fascinated with
his great grandfather what

172
00:09:36,050 --> 00:09:42,600
he was selling all the
various ingredients for beer,

173
00:09:42,600 --> 00:09:43,600
both in Czechoslovakia--

174
00:09:43,600 --> 00:09:44,680
Hops and things.

175
00:09:44,680 --> 00:09:49,220
Yeah, hops-- I'm blocked here.

176
00:09:49,220 --> 00:09:50,980
What else?

177
00:09:50,980 --> 00:09:55,700
Malts and other
kinds of ingredients.

178
00:09:55,700 --> 00:09:57,940
Now, this is Josef Stein.

179
00:09:57,940 --> 00:09:59,160
Josef Stein.

180
00:09:59,160 --> 00:09:59,900
OK.

181
00:09:59,900 --> 00:10:02,630
What were your mother's
parents' names?

182
00:10:02,630 --> 00:10:12,540
So the-- my Catholic grandfather
was Antonin Kveton, Anthony.

183
00:10:12,540 --> 00:10:16,860
And the grandmother was Zdenka--

184
00:10:16,860 --> 00:10:19,830
also Zdenka Kveton.

185
00:10:19,830 --> 00:10:27,420
And he was trained in lumber
and trees and forests.

186
00:10:27,420 --> 00:10:33,230
He had some kind of
commercial college degree,

187
00:10:33,230 --> 00:10:38,120
and he worked for
Count Von Schwarzenberg

188
00:10:38,120 --> 00:10:44,640
who was very successful--
economically successful family.

189
00:10:44,640 --> 00:10:48,260
And he was their major--

190
00:10:48,260 --> 00:10:49,990
I don't know exactly
what his title

191
00:10:49,990 --> 00:10:58,840
was, but overseer of vast
mileage of trees and forests.

192
00:10:58,840 --> 00:11:01,560
And was that within
Czechoslovakia?

193
00:11:01,560 --> 00:11:02,920
Czechoslovakia.

194
00:11:02,920 --> 00:11:11,120
And he overran-- he was
in charge of a mill, which

195
00:11:11,120 --> 00:11:15,640
was about maybe 20 miles
or so outside of Prague,

196
00:11:15,640 --> 00:11:20,600
and where we used
to go as kids, even

197
00:11:20,600 --> 00:11:22,670
during the German occupation.

198
00:11:22,670 --> 00:11:24,170
The mill was working.

199
00:11:24,170 --> 00:11:25,940
They were cutting logs.

200
00:11:25,940 --> 00:11:29,900
And on some days, we would
go with the grandfather

201
00:11:29,900 --> 00:11:33,560

and get a sense of the
forest and the trees.

202
00:11:33,560 --> 00:11:39,520
And they had a small, small
railroad that transported

203
00:11:39,520 --> 00:11:44,050
the logs from the logging
area to the water,

204
00:11:44,050 --> 00:11:47,150
the [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH],,
and they were loaded.

205
00:11:47,150 --> 00:11:50,850
So that was his domain.

206
00:11:50,850 --> 00:11:53,510
That's how he made his money.

207
00:11:53,510 --> 00:11:57,810
The grandmother, I don't think,
worked outside of the home.

208
00:11:57,810 --> 00:11:58,920
OK.

209
00:11:58,920 --> 00:12:04,890
So the person who owned
this was nobility.

210
00:12:04,890 --> 00:12:05,390
Yes.

211
00:12:05,390 --> 00:12:08,280
Austrian nobility,
German nobility?

212
00:12:08,280 --> 00:12:09,840
I think, Austrian.

213

00:12:09,840 --> 00:12:16,850
And there's a building with his
name near the palace in Prague,

214

00:12:16,850 --> 00:12:22,860
where among other people, Václav
Havel used to live when he was

215

00:12:22,860 --> 00:12:24,900
president.

216

00:12:24,900 --> 00:12:27,870
And there's a lovely
gallery in the Schwarzenberg

217

00:12:27,870 --> 00:12:30,810
Palace near the castle.

218

00:12:30,810 --> 00:12:33,750
So yes, they're well off.

219

00:12:33,750 --> 00:12:35,310
And a descendant--

220

00:12:35,310 --> 00:12:38,370
I'm sorry if I'm
going too far afield.

221

00:12:38,370 --> 00:12:40,310
No, no, no, I like the detail.

222

00:12:40,310 --> 00:12:44,010
I really like the detail
because it gives us the picture.

223

00:12:44,010 --> 00:12:47,860
So don't feel self-conscious
about that at all.

224

00:12:47,860 --> 00:12:50,190
So yes, tell me.

225

00:12:50,190 --> 00:12:52,200
So here's one of
his descendants,

226
00:12:52,200 --> 00:12:55,320
I don't know how many
generations away,

227
00:12:55,320 --> 00:12:59,640
was the Czechoslovakian
Ambassador to the United

228
00:12:59,640 --> 00:13:08,110
Nations, Schwarzenberg, when
Havel was the president.

229
00:13:08,110 --> 00:13:14,940
And so there were certainly
nationalists, but that's fine.

230
00:13:14,940 --> 00:13:16,530
Well, it is interesting.

231
00:13:16,530 --> 00:13:20,290
It speaks to the
fact that this family

232
00:13:20,290 --> 00:13:24,760
had roots, this aristocratic
Austrian nobility family,

233
00:13:24,760 --> 00:13:28,360
had roots in the country,
and that those roots were not

234
00:13:28,360 --> 00:13:31,120
for just one generation.

235
00:13:31,120 --> 00:13:34,910
The time period you are
speaking of is not so long ago.

236
00:13:34,910 --> 00:13:40,570

It's maybe 20 to 30 years ago
when Václav Havel was president

237
00:13:40,570 --> 00:13:44,710
of the Czech Republic
between 1990 and 2000.

238
00:13:44,710 --> 00:13:46,990
And so one of the
descendants of this man

239
00:13:46,990 --> 00:13:49,420
who owned this
vast forests where

240
00:13:49,420 --> 00:13:55,990
your grandfather was an
overseer, apparently,

241
00:13:55,990 --> 00:13:58,150
his family stayed.

242
00:13:58,150 --> 00:13:59,740
They didn't leave.

243
00:13:59,740 --> 00:14:01,000
Yes.

244
00:14:01,000 --> 00:14:01,690
OK.

245
00:14:01,690 --> 00:14:03,350
Did you ever meet him?

246
00:14:03,350 --> 00:14:05,050
Did you ever meet
them-- the people

247
00:14:05,050 --> 00:14:06,700
who employed your grandfather?

248
00:14:06,700 --> 00:14:09,900

249

00:14:09,900 --> 00:14:11,690

It's conceivable,
but I would have

250

00:14:11,690 --> 00:14:14,340

been too young to remember.

251

00:14:14,340 --> 00:14:18,690

That would have been when I
was three, four, five years old

252

00:14:18,690 --> 00:14:19,710

at the latest.

253

00:14:19,710 --> 00:14:21,300

So I don't know.

254

00:14:21,300 --> 00:14:24,060

But he certainly knew
him, my grandfather,

255

00:14:24,060 --> 00:14:26,820

because he was employed by him.

256

00:14:26,820 --> 00:14:32,900

And did you know both
sets of your grandparents?

257

00:14:32,900 --> 00:14:36,410

Were you-- were they
part of your life?

258

00:14:36,410 --> 00:14:37,760

They were.

259

00:14:37,760 --> 00:14:41,900

We would visit periodically
with the Catholic grandparents.

260

00:14:41,900 --> 00:14:45,270

And when I get to the war,
they became very important

261
00:14:45,270 --> 00:14:47,210
in my life.

262
00:14:47,210 --> 00:14:50,300
The Jewish
grandparents, so Josef,

263
00:14:50,300 --> 00:14:53,660
my father's father,
my Jewish grandfather,

264
00:14:53,660 --> 00:15:01,330
died of cancer in 1937, which
is just a year after I was born.

265
00:15:01,330 --> 00:15:02,510
So you never knew him.

266
00:15:02,510 --> 00:15:04,150
I have-- I have no memories.

267
00:15:04,150 --> 00:15:09,260
I see photos of him, but
I'm never in the same photo.

268
00:15:09,260 --> 00:15:11,570
So I don't know him.

269
00:15:11,570 --> 00:15:15,050
My grandmother, I
knew because she

270
00:15:15,050 --> 00:15:18,440
would come over periodically.

271
00:15:18,440 --> 00:15:22,100
I think, perhaps, not as much
as the Catholic grandparents.

272

00:15:22,100 --> 00:15:24,710
But I'm not sure.

273
00:15:24,710 --> 00:15:28,670
My most dramatic memory
of my grandmother, Sophie,

274
00:15:28,670 --> 00:15:35,600
was when we lived in a section
called Branik, B-R-A-N-I-K,

275
00:15:35,600 --> 00:15:41,920
which is 20 minutes outside
of downtown Prague on--

276
00:15:41,920 --> 00:15:44,140
South, north?

277
00:15:44,140 --> 00:15:48,720
The direction of
Pilsen, so going west.

278
00:15:48,720 --> 00:15:51,100
Pilsen as in Pilsner.

279
00:15:51,100 --> 00:15:51,600
Oh, OK.

280
00:15:51,600 --> 00:15:54,720
So it was going in the
western part of Prague?

281
00:15:54,720 --> 00:15:57,350

282
00:15:57,350 --> 00:16:00,280
Branik, is it on the side of--

283
00:16:00,280 --> 00:16:05,660
is it on the same side of
the river as the castle?

284

00:16:05,660 --> 00:16:07,720
No, the other side.

285
00:16:07,720 --> 00:16:08,290
OK.

286
00:16:08,290 --> 00:16:09,610
The other side.

287
00:16:09,610 --> 00:16:11,110
But yes--

288
00:16:11,110 --> 00:16:15,250
It's on the side where
Václavská náměstí is,

289
00:16:15,250 --> 00:16:18,620
where the Wenceslas Square is.

290
00:16:18,620 --> 00:16:20,140
Yes, yes.

291
00:16:20,140 --> 00:16:24,010
And the National Theater,
and other landmarks.

292
00:16:24,010 --> 00:16:30,640
So the Tram 21, I believe,
ran from downtown Prague

293
00:16:30,640 --> 00:16:34,540
to and through Branik
where we lived,

294
00:16:34,540 --> 00:16:39,340
and continued further west.

295
00:16:39,340 --> 00:16:44,530
I lived in-- for several
years in Prague myself,

296
00:16:44,530 --> 00:16:47,720

and we lived near Pankrã;c.

297

00:16:47,720 --> 00:16:52,720

And so Branik is familiar to me.

298

00:16:52,720 --> 00:16:56,730

Roughly, what years would
you have been there?

299

00:16:56,730 --> 00:16:58,930

'95 to 2000.

300

00:16:58,930 --> 00:17:00,320

Wow.

301

00:17:00,320 --> 00:17:00,820

Yeah.

302

00:17:00,820 --> 00:17:03,490

So after the Velvet Revolution.

303

00:17:03,490 --> 00:17:06,180

After the Velvet
Revolution, yes.

304

00:17:06,180 --> 00:17:07,050

Yes.

305

00:17:07,050 --> 00:17:08,589

Yes.

306

00:17:08,589 --> 00:17:11,310

So-- OK.

307

00:17:11,310 --> 00:17:14,329

So I was asking--

308

00:17:14,329 --> 00:17:15,678

I forget what I was asking.

309

00:17:15,678 --> 00:17:17,095

The grandmother--
the grandmother.

310
00:17:17,095 --> 00:17:18,569
The grandmother, Sophie.

311
00:17:18,569 --> 00:17:19,290
Yes.

312
00:17:19,290 --> 00:17:20,010
So this--

313
00:17:20,010 --> 00:17:21,839
So she would visit
you in Branik.

314
00:17:21,839 --> 00:17:22,770
Exactly.

315
00:17:22,770 --> 00:17:24,280
And I was five years old.

316
00:17:24,280 --> 00:17:26,040
It was 1941.

317
00:17:26,040 --> 00:17:30,210
She was wearing a black
outfit, and she even

318
00:17:30,210 --> 00:17:36,870
had a ribbon still memorializing
her husband who had died.

319
00:17:36,870 --> 00:17:42,300
And the mood was very
heavy, very somber.

320
00:17:42,300 --> 00:17:47,310
She did bring a small
dish of chicken livers

321
00:17:47,310 --> 00:17:54,640

and a casserole for my dad.

322

00:17:54,640 --> 00:17:58,080

This was one of my father's
favorite snack foods

323

00:17:58,080 --> 00:18:01,330

was to put a little
chicken liver on a cracker,

324

00:18:01,330 --> 00:18:05,000

or small piece of rye bread,
something of that sort.

325

00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:07,340

So that part was very lovely.

326

00:18:07,340 --> 00:18:11,710

She brought it and she offered
me a taste on a cracker.

327

00:18:11,710 --> 00:18:13,420

That was lovely.

328

00:18:13,420 --> 00:18:17,230

And then she and my father and
mother go into the living room

329

00:18:17,230 --> 00:18:20,320

and I stay in the kitchen.

330

00:18:20,320 --> 00:18:24,880

And I don't know whether I was
reading or playing or whatever.

331

00:18:24,880 --> 00:18:26,920

It seemed like a long time.

332

00:18:26,920 --> 00:18:31,330

They come out and
she's in tears.

333

00:18:31,330 --> 00:18:34,470
My dad is upset.

334
00:18:34,470 --> 00:18:35,760
They hugged goodbye.

335
00:18:35,760 --> 00:18:41,970
She comes to me, gives me a
kiss and says, I love you.

336
00:18:41,970 --> 00:18:44,430
And she leaves.

337
00:18:44,430 --> 00:18:48,310
And it was a week
or 10 days later

338
00:18:48,310 --> 00:18:53,671
she's on a train from
Prague to Theresienstadt

339
00:18:53,671 --> 00:19:02,350
in one of the earliest
waves of Czechs, Czech Jews.

340
00:19:02,350 --> 00:19:07,050
So my feeling is, it's
also the last time, or one

341
00:19:07,050 --> 00:19:10,820
of the last times, that
my dad saw his mother.

342
00:19:10,820 --> 00:19:14,400
And is this the last
time you see her?

343
00:19:14,400 --> 00:19:17,210
Yes.

344
00:19:17,210 --> 00:19:20,450
And did anybody explain to
you why they were upset?

345
00:19:20,450 --> 00:19:23,960

346
00:19:23,960 --> 00:19:28,310
I didn't-- throughout the
war, I would ask my mother,

347
00:19:28,310 --> 00:19:29,390
especially, my--

348
00:19:29,390 --> 00:19:30,620
I'll talk about my dad.

349
00:19:30,620 --> 00:19:32,660
He's in and out.

350
00:19:32,660 --> 00:19:38,220
He would always say, don't ask
those questions, or I can't--

351
00:19:38,220 --> 00:19:39,390
where's my father?

352
00:19:39,390 --> 00:19:41,850
My father's on a business trip.

353
00:19:41,850 --> 00:19:43,680
When will he be back?

354
00:19:43,680 --> 00:19:44,880
As soon as he can.

355
00:19:44,880 --> 00:19:46,170
Don't worry.

356
00:19:46,170 --> 00:19:49,260
He'll finish his
business and come back.

357
00:19:49,260 --> 00:19:53,670

So she was very concerned
about protecting me.

358
00:19:53,670 --> 00:19:56,490
And I think my not
having information

359
00:19:56,490 --> 00:19:59,190
that would get me into trouble.

360
00:19:59,190 --> 00:20:02,390
That's the way I understand.

361
00:20:02,390 --> 00:20:05,470
So the thing about
my grandmother,

362
00:20:05,470 --> 00:20:08,410
I don't even know
what they said.

363
00:20:08,410 --> 00:20:12,250
I'm not sure I asked,
what does she mean, I'll--

364
00:20:12,250 --> 00:20:15,970
why was she so upset?

365
00:20:15,970 --> 00:20:19,330
They might have said, well,
because your grandfather died

366
00:20:19,330 --> 00:20:21,600
not that long ago.

367
00:20:21,600 --> 00:20:23,070
So--

368
00:20:23,070 --> 00:20:23,800
OK.

369
00:20:23,800 --> 00:20:25,780

So they wouldn't have told you--

370

00:20:25,780 --> 00:20:28,750

they wouldn't have told
you any real reason.

371

00:20:28,750 --> 00:20:30,550

Whatever reason they
would have told you,

372

00:20:30,550 --> 00:20:35,090

it would have been one to try to
protect you one way or another,

373

00:20:35,090 --> 00:20:38,710

either emotionally
or even so that you

374

00:20:38,710 --> 00:20:41,320

don't pass on information
and get yourself

375

00:20:41,320 --> 00:20:42,890

or them into trouble.

376

00:20:42,890 --> 00:20:43,670

Absolutely.

377

00:20:43,670 --> 00:20:44,710

Absolutely.

378

00:20:44,710 --> 00:20:48,790

And her stern warning
was, never tell anyone

379

00:20:48,790 --> 00:20:52,170

that your father's Jewish.

380

00:20:52,170 --> 00:20:53,950

This is from your mother?

381

00:20:53,950 --> 00:20:54,910

My mother.

382
00:20:54,910 --> 00:20:58,750
I started school
in 1942 at age 6.

383
00:20:58,750 --> 00:21:04,840
And I often took a tram alone
from Branik to downtown Prague,

384
00:21:04,840 --> 00:21:07,960
usually 7:00 in the
morning, thereabouts.

385
00:21:07,960 --> 00:21:11,440
And to-- always
she would walk me

386
00:21:11,440 --> 00:21:16,980
to the tram, which was
almost in front of our house,

387
00:21:16,980 --> 00:21:19,320
and to be careful,
and don't tell anyone

388
00:21:19,320 --> 00:21:21,120
that your father's Jewish.

389
00:21:21,120 --> 00:21:24,760
It's none of their
business was--

390
00:21:24,760 --> 00:21:26,372
Let's go back a little bit.

391
00:21:26,372 --> 00:21:27,610
Sure.

392
00:21:27,610 --> 00:21:32,360
Did your mother have
higher education?

393

00:21:32,360 --> 00:21:36,240

And did your father
have higher education?

394

00:21:36,240 --> 00:21:39,840

My father got a degree
from a business college,

395

00:21:39,840 --> 00:21:42,060

and I don't know the exact name.

396

00:21:42,060 --> 00:21:46,560

It wasn't Charles University,
but it was in Prague.

397

00:21:46,560 --> 00:21:50,280

He majored in
economics, and he worked

398

00:21:50,280 --> 00:21:53,010

for some other
companies, including

399

00:21:53,010 --> 00:21:57,780

a bank, for a while, before
he started his own business.

400

00:21:57,780 --> 00:22:00,255

My mother went to also
a commercial college.

401

00:22:00,255 --> 00:22:03,870

402

00:22:03,870 --> 00:22:06,060

And I don't know--
she had a major

403

00:22:06,060 --> 00:22:10,440

or what exactly she studied.

404

00:22:10,440 --> 00:22:13,550

But she loved the arts.

405
00:22:13,550 --> 00:22:23,550
And this family story
that goes around

406
00:22:23,550 --> 00:22:26,460
that she really wanted
to be an artist,

407
00:22:26,460 --> 00:22:30,030
but her parents did
not encourage that.

408
00:22:30,030 --> 00:22:32,520
And in fact, they
discouraged it.

409
00:22:32,520 --> 00:22:39,230
And she studied painting and
art with some Czech artist.

410
00:22:39,230 --> 00:22:43,210
And I don't know what the full--

411
00:22:43,210 --> 00:22:44,480
she had a crush on him.

412
00:22:44,480 --> 00:22:45,940
He had a crush on her.

413
00:22:45,940 --> 00:22:52,640
She winds up leaving for Paris,
and she works outside of Paris.

414
00:22:52,640 --> 00:22:59,020
This would have
been in 1932, 1933.

415
00:22:59,020 --> 00:23:01,870
She got a job with
a French nursery,

416

00:23:01,870 --> 00:23:05,990

so she took care of
small French children.

417

00:23:05,990 --> 00:23:09,350

And her French was quite
good so they hired her.

418

00:23:09,350 --> 00:23:12,030

So I think--

419

00:23:12,030 --> 00:23:16,060

It's unusual for a young
woman of her situation

420

00:23:16,060 --> 00:23:19,630

and her class at that
time, in that generation,

421

00:23:19,630 --> 00:23:22,570

to by herself go to Paris.

422

00:23:22,570 --> 00:23:25,270

And was she there
to study something?

423

00:23:25,270 --> 00:23:28,990

Was she-- was she there as
an au pair, for example,

424

00:23:28,990 --> 00:23:32,290

as young women
sometimes do even today?

425

00:23:32,290 --> 00:23:37,390

They go to foreign countries
at a certain age, a young age,

426

00:23:37,390 --> 00:23:41,780

to look after
children, do you know?

427

00:23:41,780 --> 00:23:44,170
The only story I know
for sure, and I'm

428
00:23:44,170 --> 00:23:48,210
going to ask my cousin who
is four years older than I,

429
00:23:48,210 --> 00:23:49,890
and she might know exactly.

430
00:23:49,890 --> 00:23:54,540
I do know that she worked
for this French nursery,

431
00:23:54,540 --> 00:23:58,890
but she might have worked as an
au pair before or after that.

432
00:23:58,890 --> 00:24:00,630
That would make sense.

433
00:24:00,630 --> 00:24:03,810
And that would be a way to
learn French, of course.

434
00:24:03,810 --> 00:24:08,490
But was there a
connection to art?

435
00:24:08,490 --> 00:24:12,180
When she travels to Paris,
she travels to France, does--

436
00:24:12,180 --> 00:24:16,440
was there something
with her desire

437
00:24:16,440 --> 00:24:21,780
to learn how to be an
artist or participate

438
00:24:21,780 --> 00:24:23,060

in the arts in any way?

439

00:24:23,060 --> 00:24:28,980

Is that any compelling-- is that a factor in why she was there?

440

00:24:28,980 --> 00:24:33,750

I would think so, because she did, as I said, studied art.

441

00:24:33,750 --> 00:24:38,460

We still have some of her oil paintings, primarily,

442

00:24:38,460 --> 00:24:39,630

of still objects--

443

00:24:39,630 --> 00:24:46,020

flowers, vases, oranges, those kinds of things.

444

00:24:46,020 --> 00:24:55,790

But she also had an eye sort of in a Monet kind of style.

445

00:24:55,790 --> 00:25:00,500

I mean, I don't know how else to describe it, but sort

446

00:25:00,500 --> 00:25:04,700

of still life, a lot of nice colors and things.

447

00:25:04,700 --> 00:25:09,170

So maybe she fancied that she could become an artist,

448

00:25:09,170 --> 00:25:12,410

or maybe was a way of getting it out of her system,

449

00:25:12,410 --> 00:25:18,620

then coming back and having a

more normal middle class life.

450

00:25:18,620 --> 00:25:20,960

Do you know how long
she was there for?

451

00:25:20,960 --> 00:25:24,980

Apparently, a year and a half.

452

00:25:24,980 --> 00:25:27,140

But I will check with
Gerti to see if I

453

00:25:27,140 --> 00:25:31,700

can get you a specific date.

454

00:25:31,700 --> 00:25:37,490

And tell me a little bit about
your parents' personalities,

455

00:25:37,490 --> 00:25:40,580

your father's and your mother's.

456

00:25:40,580 --> 00:25:44,120

Well, my mom was much
more introverted than he.

457

00:25:44,120 --> 00:25:47,690

My dad was more the
life of the party,

458

00:25:47,690 --> 00:25:50,570

felt comfortable socially.

459

00:25:50,570 --> 00:25:55,190

And as a business man had a fair
amount of interaction selling--

460

00:25:55,190 --> 00:25:56,465

tried to sell his products.

461

00:25:56,465 --> 00:25:59,180

462
00:25:59,180 --> 00:26:04,580
He had a bentwood manufacturing
company near Branik.

463
00:26:04,580 --> 00:26:06,440
Can you explain that?

464
00:26:06,440 --> 00:26:07,040
Sure.

465
00:26:07,040 --> 00:26:11,150
So it's furniture and
sporting equipment

466
00:26:11,150 --> 00:26:19,520
made out of bentwood, so
rocking chairs, or recliners.

467
00:26:19,520 --> 00:26:22,610
They made carriage--
baby carriages made out

468
00:26:22,610 --> 00:26:29,780
of wood, tennis rackets,
skis, ping-pong paddles,

469
00:26:29,780 --> 00:26:32,390
those kinds of things.

470
00:26:32,390 --> 00:26:37,860
His one-- his major achievement
was that one of the four

471
00:26:37,860 --> 00:26:42,930
Frenchmen who were on the
French Davis Cup team,

472
00:26:42,930 --> 00:26:47,550
Borotra, Jean Borotra, played
with his racket for a while.

473

00:26:47,550 --> 00:26:50,130

So I don't know if
that meant 10 minutes

474

00:26:50,130 --> 00:26:54,180

with the racket, or a couple
of matches with the rackets.

475

00:26:54,180 --> 00:26:56,730

But he was very,
very proud of that.

476

00:26:56,730 --> 00:27:01,020

That would have happened
before the War, of course.

477

00:27:01,020 --> 00:27:05,700

So he was more comfortable
in social gatherings.

478

00:27:05,700 --> 00:27:08,970

She was more
reticent at a party.

479

00:27:08,970 --> 00:27:13,560

I have photos after
our son was born,

480

00:27:13,560 --> 00:27:16,620

so she would have been
in her 70s or 80s,

481

00:27:16,620 --> 00:27:20,790

typically sitting as far
away from the interaction as

482

00:27:20,790 --> 00:27:27,120

possible, observing,
periodically, involving

483

00:27:27,120 --> 00:27:28,110

herself.

484

00:27:28,110 --> 00:27:33,060

But not-- none the
center of interaction.

485

00:27:33,060 --> 00:27:34,560

That was just--

486

00:27:34,560 --> 00:27:37,330

I think similar to
her dad, in a way,

487

00:27:37,330 --> 00:27:42,960

she took her dad's style,
the woodsman, who--

488

00:27:42,960 --> 00:27:46,140

whose major recreation
from what I could tell,

489

00:27:46,140 --> 00:27:51,590

was to take walks in the
woods, which kind of--

490

00:27:51,590 --> 00:27:53,430

he's not at the
bar getting drunk.

491

00:27:53,430 --> 00:27:56,670

He's in the woods.

492

00:27:56,670 --> 00:28:03,810

Well, it's-- the irony is
is that your grandfather,

493

00:28:03,810 --> 00:28:09,720

your Catholic grandfather, is
sort of involved in the same

494

00:28:09,720 --> 00:28:12,950

business as your Jewish father,
both has to do with woods.

495

00:28:12,950 --> 00:28:16,880

496

00:28:16,880 --> 00:28:19,130

I don't hear you
very well right now.

497

00:28:19,130 --> 00:28:22,670

Yes, that's a very
interesting, yes.

498

00:28:22,670 --> 00:28:26,960

And I don't know whether some
of the wood that my dad used

499

00:28:26,960 --> 00:28:31,700

came from his father-in-law.

500

00:28:31,700 --> 00:28:33,590

Quite possible.

501

00:28:33,590 --> 00:28:36,800

Now, I go back to the
other question that I had.

502

00:28:36,800 --> 00:28:40,840

Do you know how
your parents met?

503

00:28:40,840 --> 00:28:44,660

So this is Chapter 2 of my book.

504

00:28:44,660 --> 00:28:47,240

Everything I know is in there.

505

00:28:47,240 --> 00:28:51,680

Apparently, he-- thank you.

506

00:28:51,680 --> 00:29:01,070

He was-- his factory was on the
same road as the grandfather's

507

00:29:01,070 --> 00:29:04,280
lumber mill, much further down.

508
00:29:04,280 --> 00:29:07,670
And my mother would see him
periodically driving down

509
00:29:07,670 --> 00:29:09,050
this road.

510
00:29:09,050 --> 00:29:13,390
And one day she was
walking, and he stopped,

511
00:29:13,390 --> 00:29:15,530
asked her if she wanted a lift.

512
00:29:15,530 --> 00:29:16,940
She said yes.

513
00:29:16,940 --> 00:29:20,590
And that was the
initial meeting.

514
00:29:20,590 --> 00:29:24,400
Then they had some other
meetings on this road,

515
00:29:24,400 --> 00:29:27,340
and they discovered
they both like to dance.

516
00:29:27,340 --> 00:29:30,900
So on Sunday afternoons,
they would go to Prague.

517
00:29:30,900 --> 00:29:34,360
And at one of the
hotels, they would dance.

518
00:29:34,360 --> 00:29:35,860
And they liked that.

519

00:29:35,860 --> 00:29:40,720

So-- and they were both
liked skiing, and tennis,

520

00:29:40,720 --> 00:29:41,380

and swimming.

521

00:29:41,380 --> 00:29:44,590

They were both athletic.

522

00:29:44,590 --> 00:29:48,010

So that's another way they met.

523

00:29:48,010 --> 00:29:50,800

524

00:29:50,800 --> 00:29:54,250

The question of marrying
out of the religion

525

00:29:54,250 --> 00:29:59,860

was in a way handled by
her younger sister first,

526

00:29:59,860 --> 00:30:05,080

because she met Leo Perutz,
who was in textiles,

527

00:30:05,080 --> 00:30:08,440

and a major, major firm.

528

00:30:08,440 --> 00:30:11,920

I think three brothers,
the Perutz brothers--

529

00:30:11,920 --> 00:30:12,880

excuse me.

530

00:30:12,880 --> 00:30:16,180

So whatever objections
her parents might

531

00:30:16,180 --> 00:30:19,990

have had to a Jew
joining the family

532

00:30:19,990 --> 00:30:23,380

were worked out by
the time my mother

533

00:30:23,380 --> 00:30:25,450

fell in love with my dad.

534

00:30:25,450 --> 00:30:27,880

So even though she
was the older one,

535

00:30:27,880 --> 00:30:30,430

she married second,
rather than first.

536

00:30:30,430 --> 00:30:34,000

537

00:30:34,000 --> 00:30:37,990

Did you ever have-- did you
have any other relatives

538

00:30:37,990 --> 00:30:42,280

on either side of the
family that you would often

539

00:30:42,280 --> 00:30:46,610

get in touch with, that
you would interact with,

540

00:30:46,610 --> 00:30:48,945

that you socialized with?

541

00:30:48,945 --> 00:30:49,445

Yeah.

542

00:30:49,445 --> 00:30:52,910

543
00:30:52,910 --> 00:30:56,230
So before the war,
I do have a lot

544
00:30:56,230 --> 00:31:01,000
of photographs of my
father's two sisters,

545
00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:02,590
and especially, the brother.

546
00:31:02,590 --> 00:31:05,650
The brother is Richard.

547
00:31:05,650 --> 00:31:09,490
They called him
Richard, [INAUDIBLE],,

548
00:31:09,490 --> 00:31:14,620
who was married to Elsa, a very
energetic, lovely young woman.

549
00:31:14,620 --> 00:31:16,480
But they had no children.

550
00:31:16,480 --> 00:31:21,910
So they would visit us regularly
and always bring a toy.

551
00:31:21,910 --> 00:31:30,495
So I had so many stuffed
zebras, and horses, and goats.

552
00:31:30,495 --> 00:31:31,700
They spoiled me.

553
00:31:31,700 --> 00:31:36,960
But-- and he introduced
me to classical music.

554
00:31:36,960 --> 00:31:43,360

Because somewhere before-- and
he also disappeared in 1942.

555
00:31:43,360 --> 00:31:45,850
Before that, he would--

556
00:31:45,850 --> 00:31:49,490
he brought me a Victrola,
or my-- somebody did.

557
00:31:49,490 --> 00:31:54,970
And he gave me these
RCA red label albums

558
00:31:54,970 --> 00:31:56,972
with the dog listening to the--

559
00:31:56,972 --> 00:31:57,680
Yeah, yeah, yeah.

560
00:31:57,680 --> 00:32:04,670
And Beethoven and Brahms,
[PERSONAL NAME],, [? Smetana. ?]

561
00:32:04,670 --> 00:32:09,720
And so this is what I listened
to when I work, when I write.

562
00:32:09,720 --> 00:32:12,110
I have classical music.

563
00:32:12,110 --> 00:32:13,000
Calms me down.

564
00:32:13,000 --> 00:32:15,350
It's pretty heavy
stuff for a little kid.

565
00:32:15,350 --> 00:32:16,120
That's true.

566
00:32:16,120 --> 00:32:19,910

567

00:32:19,910 --> 00:32:23,710

No Louis Armstrong, no
Benny Goodman, none of that.

568

00:32:23,710 --> 00:32:26,970

569

00:32:26,970 --> 00:32:33,081

And did you have any extended
family on your mother's side?

570

00:32:33,081 --> 00:32:36,070

Well, there was this--
the sister, Olga.

571

00:32:36,070 --> 00:32:41,740

And they-- she has two kids,
both this young woman Gerti,

572

00:32:41,740 --> 00:32:43,780

who I'm going to--

573

00:32:43,780 --> 00:32:50,850

who I am in touch with and
lives in North Carolina in--

574

00:32:50,850 --> 00:32:54,490

575

00:32:54,490 --> 00:32:55,660

she moved.

576

00:32:55,660 --> 00:32:56,950

No, not in Chapel Hill.

577

00:32:56,950 --> 00:32:59,180

Where does she live?

578

00:32:59,180 --> 00:33:02,170

King-- Kingston--

doesn't matter.

579

00:33:02,170 --> 00:33:03,530

So we would see her.

580

00:33:03,530 --> 00:33:05,470

And sometimes she
would even come over

581

00:33:05,470 --> 00:33:09,880

during the war and
kind of babysit me.

582

00:33:09,880 --> 00:33:13,390

Just a four year
difference, but a playmate.

583

00:33:13,390 --> 00:33:17,960

And her brother, Robert, who
is 9 months older than I am.

584

00:33:17,960 --> 00:33:20,380

So these were first cousins.

585

00:33:20,380 --> 00:33:22,450

First cousin--
two first cousins.

586

00:33:22,450 --> 00:33:25,300

So we would see them.

587

00:33:25,300 --> 00:33:29,230

And the major get-together was
at the Catholic grandparents

588

00:33:29,230 --> 00:33:34,750

on Sundays, particularly, during
the war with food shortages

589

00:33:34,750 --> 00:33:36,130

and everything.

590

00:33:36,130 --> 00:33:39,820
And somehow, my grandmother
would put a meal together

591
00:33:39,820 --> 00:33:41,100
for everyone.

592
00:33:41,100 --> 00:33:46,130
And was a wonderful baker, so
there was chocolate, vanilla,

593
00:33:46,130 --> 00:33:48,450
whatever it took.

594
00:33:48,450 --> 00:33:51,000
And my mother used to
joke that why don't we

595
00:33:51,000 --> 00:33:54,780
start with the desserts
and then work our way--

596
00:33:54,780 --> 00:33:56,130
I mean--

597
00:33:56,130 --> 00:34:00,360
A woman after my own heart.

598
00:34:00,360 --> 00:34:02,070
Well, you've been to Prague.

599
00:34:02,070 --> 00:34:04,980
You know about good desserts.

600
00:34:04,980 --> 00:34:07,700
Straight out of the
Austria Hungarian Empire.

601
00:34:07,700 --> 00:34:10,840
Oh, wow.

602
00:34:10,840 --> 00:34:14,590

So it sounds from
what you're telling me

603
00:34:14,590 --> 00:34:20,139
that you were born into at
least a very comfortable, middle

604
00:34:20,139 --> 00:34:25,540
class family, would you say
so, or were you even well-off?

605
00:34:25,540 --> 00:34:29,191
Would you say that you're
well off for the times?

606
00:34:29,191 --> 00:34:30,690
I thin k more middle class.

607
00:34:30,690 --> 00:34:35,280
But my dad did own a car.

608
00:34:35,280 --> 00:34:37,375
You know what kind?

609
00:34:37,375 --> 00:34:47,350
A Tatra, the two-seater
convertible Tatra.

610
00:34:47,350 --> 00:34:49,870
And I know it was convertible
because it leaked.

611
00:34:49,870 --> 00:34:53,580

612
00:34:53,580 --> 00:34:55,469
And this is before the war?

613
00:34:55,469 --> 00:34:56,159
Before the war.

614
00:34:56,159 --> 00:34:58,420

Before the war.

615
00:34:58,420 --> 00:35:02,790
During the war, it stood
in a outdoor garage

616
00:35:02,790 --> 00:35:07,260
looked after by one my
father's Christian friends

617
00:35:07,260 --> 00:35:09,390
who lived in the same area.

618
00:35:09,390 --> 00:35:12,360
And then he got it
back after the war.

619
00:35:12,360 --> 00:35:13,470
Quite amazing.

620
00:35:13,470 --> 00:35:16,140
Did you say outdoor garage?

621
00:35:16,140 --> 00:35:17,720
Outdoor.

622
00:35:17,720 --> 00:35:20,700
So the garage was not enclosed?

623
00:35:20,700 --> 00:35:25,530
It had a kind of a wooden
roof, but it was not

624
00:35:25,530 --> 00:35:27,300
part of a building.

625
00:35:27,300 --> 00:35:27,870
OK.

626
00:35:27,870 --> 00:35:32,110
And it was-- when it
was cold, it was cold.

627
00:35:32,110 --> 00:35:33,000
OK.

628
00:35:33,000 --> 00:35:37,020
Well, I remember you were
describing in your book

629
00:35:37,020 --> 00:35:41,880
trying to turn the car on
and get the engine turned

630
00:35:41,880 --> 00:35:42,520
and rolling.

631
00:35:42,520 --> 00:35:46,890
And so I wondered what the
circumstances of all that was.

632
00:35:46,890 --> 00:35:48,610
Exactly what it was, yes.

633
00:35:48,610 --> 00:35:50,090
Yeah.

634
00:35:50,090 --> 00:35:53,010
But it did-- they
were comfortable,

635
00:35:53,010 --> 00:35:54,720
let's put it that way.

636
00:35:54,720 --> 00:35:56,310
They weren't struggling.

637
00:35:56,310 --> 00:35:59,220
Well, what do you
remember of your home?

638
00:35:59,220 --> 00:36:03,690
Tell me about the kind of place
that your earliest memories,

639
00:36:03,690 --> 00:36:07,050
the place you were
born, you grew--

640
00:36:07,050 --> 00:36:09,680
were you born at home or
were you born in a hospital?

641
00:36:09,680 --> 00:36:11,130
In a hospital.

642
00:36:11,130 --> 00:36:11,960
OK.

643
00:36:11,960 --> 00:36:13,388
Do you remember which one?

644
00:36:13,388 --> 00:36:14,430
Did your mother tell you?

645
00:36:14,430 --> 00:36:17,770

646
00:36:17,770 --> 00:36:20,990
It was in downtown Prague,
but I don't know which one.

647
00:36:20,990 --> 00:36:22,550
I don't.

648
00:36:22,550 --> 00:36:26,780
The story was that it was
difficult for my mother

649
00:36:26,780 --> 00:36:28,280
to give birth.

650
00:36:28,280 --> 00:36:33,380
And it was a long birth
and that was induced,

651

00:36:33,380 --> 00:36:36,490
so she had a C-section.

652

00:36:36,490 --> 00:36:42,040
And-- which somehow
led them to decide--

653

00:36:42,040 --> 00:36:44,150
it's a convoluted story.

654

00:36:44,150 --> 00:36:48,130
But what I heard was her
mother made her promise

655

00:36:48,130 --> 00:36:52,060
not to have any more
children because--

656

00:36:52,060 --> 00:36:57,160
I don't know how bad the
pregnancy was or the delivery,

657

00:36:57,160 --> 00:37:02,560
but it sounds like it was
difficult, certainly difficult.

658

00:37:02,560 --> 00:37:07,720
So from the hospital--

659

00:37:07,720 --> 00:37:15,530
so they had a nurse maid who
was with me when I came home.

660

00:37:15,530 --> 00:37:17,790
And I don't even
know if my mother--

661

00:37:17,790 --> 00:37:19,210
I guess, my mother--

662

00:37:19,210 --> 00:37:20,580
I came home with my mother.

663

00:37:20,580 --> 00:37:21,945

I don't know, right?

664

00:37:21,945 --> 00:37:23,820

Otherwise, I would have
been in the hospital.

665

00:37:23,820 --> 00:37:26,430

666

00:37:26,430 --> 00:37:34,950

But-- so anyway-- so we live
in Branik in a four story

667

00:37:34,950 --> 00:37:39,390

apartment building with
one family on each floor.

668

00:37:39,390 --> 00:37:42,090

So we lived on the third floor.

669

00:37:42,090 --> 00:37:50,430

And we had living room, dining
room, my room, their bedroom,

670

00:37:50,430 --> 00:37:56,640

kitchen, a room off the kitchen
where the nurse maid lived,

671

00:37:56,640 --> 00:38:01,930

slept, and a bathroom,
and a stove in the center

672

00:38:01,930 --> 00:38:06,210

as you came into the
apartment, coal heated stove.

673

00:38:06,210 --> 00:38:08,260

OK.

674

00:38:08,260 --> 00:38:10,730

And was it the kind that you--

675

00:38:10,730 --> 00:38:15,270
in German, they're called
kachelofen where they're tiled,

676

00:38:15,270 --> 00:38:19,530
and they're usually
sometimes very decorative,

677

00:38:19,530 --> 00:38:22,050
and sometimes they heat a room.

678

00:38:22,050 --> 00:38:23,770
And sometimes if
they're big enough,

679

00:38:23,770 --> 00:38:25,710
they heat several rooms.

680

00:38:25,710 --> 00:38:27,530
That's exactly what we had.

681

00:38:27,530 --> 00:38:30,600
All the heat came from
that central stove

682

00:38:30,600 --> 00:38:37,500
and was spread out in
the apartment, which--

683

00:38:37,500 --> 00:38:39,810
I take it you had electricity.

684

00:38:39,810 --> 00:38:40,591
We did.

685

00:38:40,591 --> 00:38:41,091
We did.

686

00:38:41,091 --> 00:38:43,320
And you had indoor plumbing.

687
00:38:43,320 --> 00:38:44,760
Yes.

688
00:38:44,760 --> 00:38:49,360
And do you know if your
parents had a telephone?

689
00:38:49,360 --> 00:38:51,800
We did have a telephone.

690
00:38:51,800 --> 00:38:57,250
And telephone, I think,
rested in the living room.

691
00:38:57,250 --> 00:38:59,410
I think that's where
the phone calls--

692
00:38:59,410 --> 00:39:00,497
yeah.

693
00:39:00,497 --> 00:39:01,455
And what about a radio?

694
00:39:01,455 --> 00:39:04,620

695
00:39:04,620 --> 00:39:09,880
We had a radio that was, I'm
going to say the kitchen.

696
00:39:09,880 --> 00:39:12,610
I'm not 100% sure, but
we did have a radio.

697
00:39:12,610 --> 00:39:17,689
And I have a funny radio
story later during the war.

698
00:39:17,689 --> 00:39:18,189
OK.

699

00:39:18,189 --> 00:39:21,900

700

00:39:21,900 --> 00:39:27,890

Was there-- were your
parents very social?

701

00:39:27,890 --> 00:39:32,600

That is, did people come
by and visit all the time?

702

00:39:32,600 --> 00:39:37,080

I think before the war,
but my memory, of course,

703

00:39:37,080 --> 00:39:40,200

is much hazier because
I was so young.

704

00:39:40,200 --> 00:39:41,870

They did entertain.

705

00:39:41,870 --> 00:39:47,120

Again, mostly either his family
or sometimes my mother's sister

706

00:39:47,120 --> 00:39:50,000

and her husband and the kids.

707

00:39:50,000 --> 00:39:52,760

But we had some other friends.

708

00:39:52,760 --> 00:39:55,700

But during the
war, I really don't

709

00:39:55,700 --> 00:39:58,160

recall much social activity.

710

00:39:58,160 --> 00:40:01,200

711
00:40:01,200 --> 00:40:04,550
Was Branik in a residential--

712
00:40:04,550 --> 00:40:06,140
I mean, was this
apartment building

713
00:40:06,140 --> 00:40:08,420
in a residential neighborhood?

714
00:40:08,420 --> 00:40:11,390
Well, did you have a yard?

715
00:40:11,390 --> 00:40:13,730
Was there a garden or
anything like that,

716
00:40:13,730 --> 00:40:18,000
or was the building next to
building next to building?

717
00:40:18,000 --> 00:40:19,560
Actually, neither.

718
00:40:19,560 --> 00:40:22,140
It was sort of--

719
00:40:22,140 --> 00:40:25,110
there was a field across the--

720
00:40:25,110 --> 00:40:28,110
across the street.

721
00:40:28,110 --> 00:40:34,840
There were several small stores,
a beer garden probably 50,

722
00:40:34,840 --> 00:40:37,860
60 yards from the building.

723

00:40:37,860 --> 00:40:42,720
But the back sloped up.

724
00:40:42,720 --> 00:40:48,780
I never went all the way
up a long, winding set

725
00:40:48,780 --> 00:40:53,460
of wooden stairs, which led
to another neighborhood.

726
00:40:53,460 --> 00:40:55,950
So it wasn't really
a neighborhood

727
00:40:55,950 --> 00:41:01,550
in the sense with some
stores, and some other houses.

728
00:41:01,550 --> 00:41:06,200
The closest house is
probably another block away,

729
00:41:06,200 --> 00:41:08,380
because I used to play there.

730
00:41:08,380 --> 00:41:11,120
I had some friends
in the neighborhood.

731
00:41:11,120 --> 00:41:15,260
And I don't know why my father
picked that house to live in.

732
00:41:15,260 --> 00:41:19,370
Apparently, it was fairly
modern when he bought it.

733
00:41:19,370 --> 00:41:22,610
It would have been the 1930s.

734
00:41:22,610 --> 00:41:24,770
Did he buy the whole building?

735
00:41:24,770 --> 00:41:28,440
No, but he owned the apartment.

736
00:41:28,440 --> 00:41:28,940
OK.

737
00:41:28,940 --> 00:41:29,470
Yeah.

738
00:41:29,470 --> 00:41:29,970
OK.

739
00:41:29,970 --> 00:41:36,790

740
00:41:36,790 --> 00:41:37,720
And he had a car.

741
00:41:37,720 --> 00:41:40,100
Do you remember
riding in the car?

742
00:41:40,100 --> 00:41:41,740
Oh, yeah.

743
00:41:41,740 --> 00:41:44,200
Well, again, after the war.

744
00:41:44,200 --> 00:41:45,640
Not before.

745
00:41:45,640 --> 00:41:50,040
There must have been one
or two before because--

746
00:41:50,040 --> 00:41:54,730
well, I have that scene
of him starting the car,

747
00:41:54,730 --> 00:41:57,300

but that was really
after the war.

748
00:41:57,300 --> 00:42:03,920
So I honestly don't know
if I was ever in that car

749
00:42:03,920 --> 00:42:06,200
before the war.

750
00:42:06,200 --> 00:42:08,990
Do you have any-- you
mentioned an early memory

751
00:42:08,990 --> 00:42:11,360
with your grandmother, Sophie.

752
00:42:11,360 --> 00:42:16,700
Do you have any other early
memories from being a toddler?

753
00:42:16,700 --> 00:42:19,130
Children, we have--
when we think back

754
00:42:19,130 --> 00:42:22,340
to those early years,
we have like phases

755
00:42:22,340 --> 00:42:26,780
or we have episodes or
not an entire narrative,

756
00:42:26,780 --> 00:42:30,500
but something happens,
or a snapshot.

757
00:42:30,500 --> 00:42:34,080
Do you have anything
like that in your mind?

758
00:42:34,080 --> 00:42:36,870
The first that comes to

mind is Richard, the uncle,

759

00:42:36,870 --> 00:42:38,580

who I really liked.

760

00:42:38,580 --> 00:42:42,630

And I have, for example
photographs of my being

761

00:42:42,630 --> 00:42:45,240

on the grass as an infant.

762

00:42:45,240 --> 00:42:49,580

So I was-- if I was a year
old, maybe I was seven,

763

00:42:49,580 --> 00:42:50,910

eight months old.

764

00:42:50,910 --> 00:42:55,680

And he's wearing a jacket and
a tie, but he's next to me

765

00:42:55,680 --> 00:43:00,570

sitting on the ground, a
couple of photos, and his wife,

766

00:43:00,570 --> 00:43:02,430

as well.

767

00:43:02,430 --> 00:43:03,150

So obviously--

768

00:43:03,150 --> 00:43:04,076

So he liked to play.

769

00:43:04,076 --> 00:43:06,690

770

00:43:06,690 --> 00:43:07,950

They liked to play.

771
00:43:07,950 --> 00:43:09,050
Sorry?

772
00:43:09,050 --> 00:43:10,760
Did he like to play with you?

773
00:43:10,760 --> 00:43:11,570
Absolutely.

774
00:43:11,570 --> 00:43:12,470
Absolutely.

775
00:43:12,470 --> 00:43:16,850
Often, he had this just a little
ball that we would push around

776
00:43:16,850 --> 00:43:18,530
or kick or--

777
00:43:18,530 --> 00:43:20,870
he would've made a good dad.

778
00:43:20,870 --> 00:43:23,060
And she would've made
a wonderful mother.

779
00:43:23,060 --> 00:43:25,940
But for whatever reason,
they had no children.

780
00:43:25,940 --> 00:43:31,010
So I remember him
as sort of gentle,

781
00:43:31,010 --> 00:43:34,490
giving kind of a fellow,
even though apparently he

782
00:43:34,490 --> 00:43:35,730
was also in the bank--

783

00:43:35,730 --> 00:43:38,150
he worked for a bank.

784
00:43:38,150 --> 00:43:42,790
I think more as a clerk
than as the manager.

785
00:43:42,790 --> 00:43:49,630
And the two sisters
are fuzzy in my memory.

786
00:43:49,630 --> 00:43:52,570
I think they both lived
outside of Prague.

787
00:43:52,570 --> 00:43:55,180
One lived in the Sudeten area.

788
00:43:55,180 --> 00:43:58,750
And he was also in textiles,
and they apparently

789
00:43:58,750 --> 00:44:03,490
were the most affluent
of the four siblings.

790
00:44:03,490 --> 00:44:08,410
One of the girls who married
somebody who was in textiles?

791
00:44:08,410 --> 00:44:10,510
Exactly.

792
00:44:10,510 --> 00:44:16,390
The other one, I'm not sure
what the other husband did.

793
00:44:16,390 --> 00:44:20,540
But there was one
other person who

794
00:44:20,540 --> 00:44:25,320
was my father's first cousin.

795
00:44:25,320 --> 00:44:28,782
She was also a Markus.

796
00:44:28,782 --> 00:44:32,510
So your grandmother
Sophie's relations.

797
00:44:32,510 --> 00:44:35,260
He married a Procházka, Fred--

798
00:44:35,260 --> 00:44:39,370
Frederick Procházka,
who was a Protestant.

799
00:44:39,370 --> 00:44:42,070
And the fact that she
married a Christian

800
00:44:42,070 --> 00:44:48,370
saved her life, because she
went to Theresienstadt late--

801
00:44:48,370 --> 00:44:51,520
late 1944, early '45.

802
00:44:51,520 --> 00:44:57,040
So those were the two people
out of that family who survived.

803
00:44:57,040 --> 00:45:01,990
Everyone else-- there were eight
people in the Markus family.

804
00:45:01,990 --> 00:45:06,020
My father, the two sisters,
and the brother, the father,

805
00:45:06,020 --> 00:45:11,400
the mother, they all
perished in the camps.

806

00:45:11,400 --> 00:45:15,660
So what a major
issue that my dad

807
00:45:15,660 --> 00:45:21,330
struggled with was why me,
the survivor guilt, which

808
00:45:21,330 --> 00:45:26,600
I heard him talk about when
he was in his 50s or 60s

809
00:45:26,600 --> 00:45:29,000
when I would see him socially.

810
00:45:29,000 --> 00:45:31,970

811
00:45:31,970 --> 00:45:36,525
So your father survived and
this particular cousin survived.

812
00:45:36,525 --> 00:45:37,770
Yes.

813
00:45:37,770 --> 00:45:42,830
She was probably, I'm
going to say, two,

814
00:45:42,830 --> 00:45:45,740
three years younger than he.

815
00:45:45,740 --> 00:45:46,810
And they both survived--

816
00:45:46,810 --> 00:45:49,210
And was what?

817
00:45:49,210 --> 00:45:50,630
Two or three years younger.

818
00:45:50,630 --> 00:45:51,130

Yeah.

819

00:45:51,130 --> 00:45:54,520

What was her name, again?

820

00:45:54,520 --> 00:45:56,820

Her nickname was EmÄ a.

821

00:45:56,820 --> 00:46:00,810

And her name was Ema, E-M-A.

822

00:46:00,810 --> 00:46:04,530

So it was Ema Markus ProchÄzka.

823

00:46:04,530 --> 00:46:05,970

Exactly.

824

00:46:05,970 --> 00:46:10,100

And her sister-- her
daughter lives in Canada.

825

00:46:10,100 --> 00:46:14,310

I'm in touch with her.

826

00:46:14,310 --> 00:46:18,550

They left when the
Communists came, took--

827

00:46:18,550 --> 00:46:20,950

it's a whole different story.

828

00:46:20,950 --> 00:46:24,960

Well, this is Central
Europe, and Central Europe

829

00:46:24,960 --> 00:46:26,850

has seen an awful
lot of activity.

830

00:46:26,850 --> 00:46:31,480

831
00:46:31,480 --> 00:46:38,640
You're born at a
very particular time.

832
00:46:38,640 --> 00:46:45,570
There's a lot going on in
the world in the mid-1930s.

833
00:46:45,570 --> 00:46:51,820
Do you-- did your
parents ever tell you--

834
00:46:51,820 --> 00:46:58,120
did they ever explain to
you what was going on?

835
00:46:58,120 --> 00:47:01,720
I mean, as a child,
how would you know?

836
00:47:01,720 --> 00:47:07,300
But did they have views
about the Czechoslovakia

837
00:47:07,300 --> 00:47:08,140
as a country?

838
00:47:08,140 --> 00:47:09,770
It was a new country.

839
00:47:09,770 --> 00:47:13,870
It had been formed in 1918 and--

840
00:47:13,870 --> 00:47:16,030
out of the
Austro-Hungarian Empire.

841
00:47:16,030 --> 00:47:19,490
And so-- and there
was the Sudetenland.

842
00:47:19,490 --> 00:47:25,780

Which was heavily
populated by ethnic Germans

843
00:47:25,780 --> 00:47:28,060
and figured in all of this.

844
00:47:28,060 --> 00:47:29,680
Did you-- do you
know whether or not

845
00:47:29,680 --> 00:47:32,350
your parents followed politics?

846
00:47:32,350 --> 00:47:35,830
Were they politically
interested, aware?

847
00:47:35,830 --> 00:47:38,510

848
00:47:38,510 --> 00:47:41,630
My father-- my
father very much so.

849
00:47:41,630 --> 00:47:48,410
He, in fact, spent probably
five or six months in Berlin

850
00:47:48,410 --> 00:47:55,340
in 1923 or '24, because he
was sent there by the bank,

851
00:47:55,340 --> 00:47:58,327
or he was training
there with the bank.

852
00:47:58,327 --> 00:47:58,910
I don't know--

853
00:47:58,910 --> 00:48:01,370
He was bank-- he was
in banking before he

854
00:48:01,370 --> 00:48:03,460
started manufacturing.

855
00:48:03,460 --> 00:48:06,250
Yes.

856
00:48:06,250 --> 00:48:07,800
Why he left, I don't know.

857
00:48:07,800 --> 00:48:09,740
Well, he wanted to be
on his own, I know--

858
00:48:09,740 --> 00:48:10,950
I know why.

859
00:48:10,950 --> 00:48:14,860
He didn't like to be told
by other people what to do.

860
00:48:14,860 --> 00:48:18,280
But I remember him talking
about the inflation and the fact

861
00:48:18,280 --> 00:48:23,920
that at lunchtime, a loaf
of bread cost 1,000 marks.

862
00:48:23,920 --> 00:48:27,850
And by the end of the
day, it was 3,000 marks.

863
00:48:27,850 --> 00:48:31,930
I mean, that-- he had
several stories like that.

864
00:48:31,930 --> 00:48:33,340
And he knew about Hitler.

865
00:48:33,340 --> 00:48:40,520
He said that he had read
Mein Kampf in German.

866

00:48:40,520 --> 00:48:45,560
And I asked him years ago when
I was in college, having read

867

00:48:45,560 --> 00:48:47,780
that, why didn't you leave?

868

00:48:47,780 --> 00:48:53,540
And he said what so many other
Jewish men and women said.

869

00:48:53,540 --> 00:48:56,570
He said, we knew it
would be difficult,

870

00:48:56,570 --> 00:49:01,220
but we thought we would survive,
that we never had a sense--

871

00:49:01,220 --> 00:49:04,130
an idea of how bad it would be.

872

00:49:04,130 --> 00:49:07,340
And another time,
he said he thought

873

00:49:07,340 --> 00:49:12,050
the Germans would rise up
against Hitler, a mad man,

874

00:49:12,050 --> 00:49:16,520
that the German business
people were rational.

875

00:49:16,520 --> 00:49:19,820
They wouldn't stand for this.

876

00:49:19,820 --> 00:49:22,890
So he knew.

877

00:49:22,890 --> 00:49:27,720

And at one point, they had a plan of going to Switzerland.

878
00:49:27,720 --> 00:49:28,620
Your father?

879
00:49:28,620 --> 00:49:32,610
My father and my mother and me and the nursemaid.

880
00:49:32,610 --> 00:49:37,290
In fact, I think in 1938, thereabouts,

881
00:49:37,290 --> 00:49:39,300
but they never followed up.

882
00:49:39,300 --> 00:49:43,450
For-- I don't know the reason they decided not to go.

883
00:49:43,450 --> 00:49:46,320
Then he said, well, we were going to send you--

884
00:49:46,320 --> 00:49:48,390
me-- and the nursemaid.

885
00:49:48,390 --> 00:49:51,620
And that never happened, either.

886
00:49:51,620 --> 00:49:53,560
My mother wasn't as political.

887
00:49:53,560 --> 00:49:58,020
I think her major focus was, how do I keep everyone safe.

888
00:49:58,020 --> 00:50:04,540
How do I feed them, pretty nurturing kinds of concerns.

889

00:50:04,540 --> 00:50:05,570
Yeah.

890
00:50:05,570 --> 00:50:08,270
So your nursemaid, the
one that you come home

891
00:50:08,270 --> 00:50:10,850
with from the hospital,
is she someone

892
00:50:10,850 --> 00:50:13,180
who is part of your life?

893
00:50:13,180 --> 00:50:14,250
Yes.

894
00:50:14,250 --> 00:50:15,900
Her-- I guess--

895
00:50:15,900 --> 00:50:18,390
I never knew her real name.

896
00:50:18,390 --> 00:50:24,225
I named her Paka, P-A-K-A.
She was a German--

897
00:50:24,225 --> 00:50:28,680

898
00:50:28,680 --> 00:50:29,640
a German Czech.

899
00:50:29,640 --> 00:50:32,500
She was from the Sudeten.

900
00:50:32,500 --> 00:50:36,810
She never-- she spoke
Czech very haltingly.

901
00:50:36,810 --> 00:50:41,400
But my parents got her

to be my nursemaid,

902
00:50:41,400 --> 00:50:45,960
because my father's
sister, an older sister,

903
00:50:45,960 --> 00:50:52,790
had used her to raise her son,
Eric, several years earlier.

904
00:50:52,790 --> 00:50:56,390
And they found her and they
asked her to come to Prague.

905
00:50:56,390 --> 00:50:58,610
So is this the
sister whose husband

906
00:50:58,610 --> 00:51:02,630
had the textile factory, and
who lived in Sudetenland?

907
00:51:02,630 --> 00:51:03,450
Yes, yes.

908
00:51:03,450 --> 00:51:04,280
OK.

909
00:51:04,280 --> 00:51:08,360
Who-- and the two of
them and their son, Eric,

910
00:51:08,360 --> 00:51:10,340
were all killed in Auschwitz.

911
00:51:10,340 --> 00:51:11,270
I know-- I know--

912
00:51:11,270 --> 00:51:13,550
I know that history.

913
00:51:13,550 --> 00:51:16,580

But anyway, so Paka--

914
00:51:16,580 --> 00:51:19,620
Paka was interesting,
very similar to my mother.

915
00:51:19,620 --> 00:51:24,380
Not terri-- didn't-- not
a motive, not showing,

916
00:51:24,380 --> 00:51:29,810
a lot of feelings, but very
dedicated to me and always

917
00:51:29,810 --> 00:51:30,720
there.

918
00:51:30,720 --> 00:51:34,130
She helped me with ice skating.

919
00:51:34,130 --> 00:51:38,160
She even could
kick a soccer ball.

920
00:51:38,160 --> 00:51:41,240
So in the absence of
playmates during the war,

921
00:51:41,240 --> 00:51:46,910
she really became a key person,
my sister, older sister.

922
00:51:46,910 --> 00:51:51,970
Was she-- was she much
younger than your mother?

923
00:51:51,970 --> 00:51:53,490
I think by 10--

924
00:51:53,490 --> 00:51:55,740
I'm going to guess
10 years or so.

925
00:51:55,740 --> 00:51:59,070
Eight, 10 years.

926
00:51:59,070 --> 00:52:03,940
So already a young adult.

927
00:52:03,940 --> 00:52:07,690
I take it I made an
assumption, but let me ask

928
00:52:07,690 --> 00:52:09,760
the question just to find out.

929
00:52:09,760 --> 00:52:13,030
What was the language that
you all spoke at home?

930
00:52:13,030 --> 00:52:13,830
Yeah.

931
00:52:13,830 --> 00:52:17,130
It was Czech, but I
had German, of course,

932
00:52:17,130 --> 00:52:19,170
starting with grade one.

933
00:52:19,170 --> 00:52:25,050
And Paka was of great help
in my learning that language,

934
00:52:25,050 --> 00:52:27,090
doing the homework.

935
00:52:27,090 --> 00:52:30,960
Did you know anything
of her family at all?

936
00:52:30,960 --> 00:52:36,540
Only that the parents lived on
a farm, or worked on a farm,

937
00:52:36,540 --> 00:52:38,070
or owned a farm.

938
00:52:38,070 --> 00:52:41,880
Farming was her background.

939
00:52:41,880 --> 00:52:44,300
I don't know anything else.

940
00:52:44,300 --> 00:52:48,260
And I don't think my
cousin does, either.

941
00:52:48,260 --> 00:52:49,210
No.

942
00:52:49,210 --> 00:52:49,710
No.

943
00:52:49,710 --> 00:52:50,730
And--

944
00:52:50,730 --> 00:52:52,810
But she was no fan of Hitler.

945
00:52:52,810 --> 00:52:57,360
It was clear that she was
apolitical, pretty much

946
00:52:57,360 --> 00:52:58,650
like my mother was.

947
00:52:58,650 --> 00:53:04,590
I don't think they had
long discussions about will

948
00:53:04,590 --> 00:53:06,480
democracy come back to Germany.

949
00:53:06,480 --> 00:53:07,836
That wasn't part of it.

950
00:53:07,836 --> 00:53:11,110

951
00:53:11,110 --> 00:53:12,970
Well, I mean, in some--

952
00:53:12,970 --> 00:53:17,410
at times like that
when there were such--

953
00:53:17,410 --> 00:53:21,380
when life is not
normal, even things

954
00:53:21,380 --> 00:53:23,540
that you do that are
not political statements

955
00:53:23,540 --> 00:53:26,240
say something about
what your values are.

956
00:53:26,240 --> 00:53:29,390
So she worked for a Jewish
family in Sudetenland,

957
00:53:29,390 --> 00:53:32,990
and then goes and works
for another family that

958
00:53:32,990 --> 00:53:34,640
is half Jewish.

959
00:53:34,640 --> 00:53:36,800
So that's saying something.

960
00:53:36,800 --> 00:53:37,330
Yeah.

961
00:53:37,330 --> 00:53:37,830
Yeah.

962
00:53:37,830 --> 00:53:40,070
That's a very good point.

963
00:53:40,070 --> 00:53:41,450
Did she-- yeah.

964
00:53:41,450 --> 00:53:43,970
Did she stay-- how long
did she stay with you?

965
00:53:43,970 --> 00:53:46,370
How long was she
part of your life?

966
00:53:46,370 --> 00:53:50,390
Well, she was still
with us in 1945

967
00:53:50,390 --> 00:53:53,990
when it was clear that
the war was about to end.

968
00:53:53,990 --> 00:54:00,140
She was with us in May
of 1945, right, May 8.

969
00:54:00,140 --> 00:54:01,760
My dad comes back to--

970
00:54:01,760 --> 00:54:06,080
from Theresienstadt on May 9.

971
00:54:06,080 --> 00:54:09,410
She would always pick
me up after school.

972
00:54:09,410 --> 00:54:12,630
In those days, I didn't
get on the tram by myself.

973
00:54:12,630 --> 00:54:15,650

She would pick me up.

974

00:54:15,650 --> 00:54:18,920
And I'd come out of the school
building in downtown Prague

975

00:54:18,920 --> 00:54:24,340
near Václavská náměstí,
and there's my mother.

976

00:54:24,340 --> 00:54:27,460
And so I said, where's Paka?

977

00:54:27,460 --> 00:54:30,396
Well, I'm sorry,
Paka had to leave.

978

00:54:30,396 --> 00:54:31,630
Leave?

979

00:54:31,630 --> 00:54:35,230
Her father became ill
and she had to go back.

980

00:54:35,230 --> 00:54:36,700
And I was destitute.

981

00:54:36,700 --> 00:54:39,310
I was really broken
because it was--

982

00:54:39,310 --> 00:54:40,300
and then I got angry.

983

00:54:40,300 --> 00:54:42,350
How could she
leave me like this?

984

00:54:42,350 --> 00:54:45,040
I went-- had a whole episode.

985

00:54:45,040 --> 00:54:49,260

Well, it turns out the reason
she left is they rounded up--

986
00:54:49,260 --> 00:54:53,920
the Czech government decided
it was time for retribution

987
00:54:53,920 --> 00:54:58,300
and rounded up 40,000 or
50,000 German speakers

988
00:54:58,300 --> 00:55:00,930
from Prague and
throughout Bohemia Moravia

989
00:55:00,930 --> 00:55:03,250
and shipped them to Germany.

990
00:55:03,250 --> 00:55:04,930
She had never lived in Germany.

991
00:55:04,930 --> 00:55:06,490
She lived in the Sudetenland.

992
00:55:06,490 --> 00:55:11,080
So-- and apparently, my
parents tried to find her

993
00:55:11,080 --> 00:55:13,670
and they never reconnected.

994
00:55:13,670 --> 00:55:14,880
How sad.

995
00:55:14,880 --> 00:55:15,690
Yeah.

996
00:55:15,690 --> 00:55:16,380
Really sad.

997
00:55:16,380 --> 00:55:16,880
How sad.

998
00:55:16,880 --> 00:55:17,380
Yeah.

999
00:55:17,380 --> 00:55:20,080
Yeah.

1000
00:55:20,080 --> 00:55:24,505
But also, how telling of what
was going on in those years.

1001
00:55:24,505 --> 00:55:28,500

1002
00:55:28,500 --> 00:55:34,010
Significant that she is with
you throughout the entire war.

1003
00:55:34,010 --> 00:55:37,430
It was a bedrock.

1004
00:55:37,430 --> 00:55:42,470
She and my mom kept me going,
and the Catholic grandparents.

1005
00:55:42,470 --> 00:55:42,970
Yeah.

1006
00:55:42,970 --> 00:55:48,170

1007
00:55:48,170 --> 00:55:50,750
Let's talk about the events.

1008
00:55:50,750 --> 00:55:56,190
I mean, when you are two years
old, when there's talk of you,

1009
00:55:56,190 --> 00:55:58,370
your family, going
to Switzerland,

1010

00:55:58,370 --> 00:56:02,960

that's a crucial year
for Czechoslovakia.

1011

00:56:02,960 --> 00:56:05,170

There are a lot of events.

1012

00:56:05,170 --> 00:56:08,860

There is-- Czechoslovakia
is more or less abandoned

1013

00:56:08,860 --> 00:56:12,520

by her allies through
the Munich Agreement.

1014

00:56:12,520 --> 00:56:15,220

1015

00:56:15,220 --> 00:56:19,430

Did that have an
impact on your family,

1016

00:56:19,430 --> 00:56:25,940

the outcome, the ramifications
of the Munich Agreement?

1017

00:56:25,940 --> 00:56:29,030

Well, I'm going to
answer that first

1018

00:56:29,030 --> 00:56:31,790

by a slightly different story.

1019

00:56:31,790 --> 00:56:35,540

It turns out-- it turns
out that my cousin, Gerti,

1020

00:56:35,540 --> 00:56:38,510

and her brother, Robert,
and their mother,

1021

00:56:38,510 --> 00:56:43,340

Olga, took a train
from Prague to Romania.

1022
00:56:43,340 --> 00:56:44,300
Why?

1023
00:56:44,300 --> 00:56:48,770
Because the father,
Leo Perutz, told

1024
00:56:48,770 --> 00:56:51,650
them to get out
because he didn't think

1025
00:56:51,650 --> 00:56:53,120
that Munich would work.

1026
00:56:53,120 --> 00:56:55,580
He didn't think they would
ever reach an agreement.

1027
00:56:55,580 --> 00:57:00,530
And he thought Czechoslovakia
would be invaded in November--

1028
00:57:00,530 --> 00:57:04,060
October or November of 1938.

1029
00:57:04,060 --> 00:57:05,960
And Gerti told me the story.

1030
00:57:05,960 --> 00:57:10,190
They went all the way to Romania
where they had some relatives.

1031
00:57:10,190 --> 00:57:12,770
And in a few days,
they came back

1032
00:57:12,770 --> 00:57:16,820
once the Munich Agreement
had been signed.

1033

00:57:16,820 --> 00:57:20,630
Knowing that I don't know what--

1034

00:57:20,630 --> 00:57:25,290
if my father and mother
had any inkling of that

1035

00:57:25,290 --> 00:57:28,290
they should leave.

1036

00:57:28,290 --> 00:57:30,990
Apparently, they might
have had conversations,

1037

00:57:30,990 --> 00:57:32,970
but they didn't do anything.

1038

00:57:32,970 --> 00:57:37,160
Plus, my mother's parents
are smack dab in Prague.

1039

00:57:37,160 --> 00:57:40,400
And she is the older
of the two sisters

1040

00:57:40,400 --> 00:57:45,080
with a reputation of being
family-oriented and sort

1041

00:57:45,080 --> 00:57:52,280
of more aware of the parent's
needs than her younger sister.

1042

00:57:52,280 --> 00:57:55,110
And I'm partly
reporting family lore.

1043

00:57:55,110 --> 00:57:59,380
But the younger sister
had a busy social agenda

1044

00:57:59,380 --> 00:58:01,430

before she found a husband.

1045
00:58:01,430 --> 00:58:03,070
So [INAUDIBLE].

1046
00:58:03,070 --> 00:58:04,440
Olga.

1047
00:58:04,440 --> 00:58:05,400
[INAUDIBLE]

1048
00:58:05,400 --> 00:58:09,720

1049
00:58:09,720 --> 00:58:12,850
So I-- it's a good question.

1050
00:58:12,850 --> 00:58:15,280
How did they--

1051
00:58:15,280 --> 00:58:18,480
Well, it's clear from that,
from what you tell me,

1052
00:58:18,480 --> 00:58:21,990
that they were following--

1053
00:58:21,990 --> 00:58:26,370
that generation, your parents
and your mother's sister

1054
00:58:26,370 --> 00:58:29,790
and her husband were
following these events

1055
00:58:29,790 --> 00:58:32,970
and were thinking what should
we do in light of them.

1056
00:58:32,970 --> 00:58:35,770

1057

00:58:35,770 --> 00:58:39,760

And for people who are going
to be watching this interview

1058

00:58:39,760 --> 00:58:43,720

later, and who are not familiar
with the Munich Agreement, that

1059

00:58:43,720 --> 00:58:50,870

is when Hitler wanted to
take the Sudetenland away

1060

00:58:50,870 --> 00:58:54,200

from Czechoslovakia
and needed to make sure

1061

00:58:54,200 --> 00:58:56,060

that no one is to come--

1062

00:58:56,060 --> 00:59:00,320

Czechoslovakia's allies
will not declare war on him.

1063

00:59:00,320 --> 00:59:05,420

And they renege, the
British and the French

1064

00:59:05,420 --> 00:59:08,900

renege on their alliances
to Czechoslovakia.

1065

00:59:08,900 --> 00:59:11,232

And Chamberlain goes
home, Neville Chamberlain,

1066

00:59:11,232 --> 00:59:13,190

the British Prime Minister,
goes home and says,

1067

00:59:13,190 --> 00:59:16,270

we will have peace in our time.

1068

00:59:16,270 --> 00:59:18,760
And more or less
abandoned the country.

1069
00:59:18,760 --> 00:59:23,110
So being right in
Czechoslovakia,

1070
00:59:23,110 --> 00:59:28,020
that has an effect on
how life continues.

1071
00:59:28,020 --> 00:59:31,150
And I should add
the following story.

1072
00:59:31,150 --> 00:59:35,010
My dad was also in
the Army Reserve.

1073
00:59:35,010 --> 00:59:38,100
He was a First Lieutenant
in the Czech Army.

1074
00:59:38,100 --> 00:59:43,750
And before the Munich
Agreement in September of 1938,

1075
00:59:43,750 --> 00:59:45,990
there was--

1076
00:59:45,990 --> 00:59:51,550
it was-- it was clear,
or becoming quite clear,

1077
00:59:51,550 --> 00:59:54,200
the Germans will
invade the Sudetenland.

1078
00:59:54,200 --> 00:59:54,700
Right?

1079
00:59:54,700 --> 00:59:58,780

This was Hitler
banging the war drums.

1080
00:59:58,780 --> 01:00:01,190
So the Czech Army was mobilized.

1081
01:00:01,190 --> 01:00:06,610
And there is a wonderful
10 minute clip of the Czech

1082
01:00:06,610 --> 01:00:10,780
Armada, they called
it, A-R-M-A-D-A,

1083
01:00:10,780 --> 01:00:12,880
getting ready to fight.

1084
01:00:12,880 --> 01:00:18,390
And a young man waving goodbye
to their wives, or girlfriends,

1085
01:00:18,390 --> 01:00:20,650
and all of that.

1086
01:00:20,650 --> 01:00:22,930
And the Czechs were
pretty well equipped.

1087
01:00:22,930 --> 01:00:28,630
They had the French build
tanks, and they had arms,

1088
01:00:28,630 --> 01:00:31,510
and they were in good shape.

1089
01:00:31,510 --> 01:00:35,650
So my dad and his regiment
went to Sudetenland,

1090
01:00:35,650 --> 01:00:39,070
but other than the few
skirmishes here and there,

1091

01:00:39,070 --> 01:00:40,750

there was no fighting.

1092

01:00:40,750 --> 01:00:42,700

The Munich Agreement was signed.

1093

01:00:42,700 --> 01:00:45,220

And the Army came back.

1094

01:00:45,220 --> 01:00:50,230

So I don't know,

I guess he felt,

1095

01:00:50,230 --> 01:00:53,590

OK, it's not going to happen.

1096

01:00:53,590 --> 01:00:57,500

We have an agreement.

1097

01:00:57,500 --> 01:01:02,310

But just stop me if I'm

getting too far afield.

1098

01:01:02,310 --> 01:01:05,510

But-- so my grandmother

is one of 10.

1099

01:01:05,510 --> 01:01:09,790

She's the oldest of

the Markus children.

1100

01:01:09,790 --> 01:01:13,960

Among those children were

several other men who

1101

01:01:13,960 --> 01:01:21,540

were in the Czech Army,

one of whom, Kurt Markus,

1102

01:01:21,540 --> 01:01:24,150

is a socialist, or a communist.

1103

01:01:24,150 --> 01:01:28,590

And he decides to flee
to the Soviet Union

1104

01:01:28,590 --> 01:01:33,420

with a Czech General whose
name is Svoboda, "freedom."

1105

01:01:33,420 --> 01:01:36,870

Svoboda, S-V-O-B-O-D-A.

1106

01:01:36,870 --> 01:01:43,530

And the first Czech Army is
housed in the Soviet Union.

1107

01:01:43,530 --> 01:01:47,550

And Kurt, being Jewish,
spent the war there,

1108

01:01:47,550 --> 01:01:51,810

fought with the Russians,
and eventually came back.

1109

01:01:51,810 --> 01:01:56,730

There were other Markus's
who left for Palestine.

1110

01:01:56,730 --> 01:02:00,870

Sister of my grandmother,
[? Thena, ?] and her husband

1111

01:02:00,870 --> 01:02:02,880

decided we're
getting out of here.

1112

01:02:02,880 --> 01:02:07,080

And it might have been
as early as 1934, '35.

1113

01:02:07,080 --> 01:02:09,960

So under these 10
children, there

1114
01:02:09,960 --> 01:02:14,970
were different kinds of
responses to what happened.

1115
01:02:14,970 --> 01:02:18,400

1116
01:02:18,400 --> 01:02:19,460
Interesting.

1117
01:02:19,460 --> 01:02:24,660
All being made with limited
information, as you suggested.

1118
01:02:24,660 --> 01:02:27,100
I mean, who the hell knows
what's going to happen?

1119
01:02:27,100 --> 01:02:28,040
Yeah.

1120
01:02:28,040 --> 01:02:30,130
Yeah.

1121
01:02:30,130 --> 01:02:33,010
And that's something
that is hard for us

1122
01:02:33,010 --> 01:02:37,390
to imagine when we already
know what happened.

1123
01:02:37,390 --> 01:02:41,110
And when we have
more information,

1124
01:02:41,110 --> 01:02:46,600
it's hard to place oneself in
that situation, where truly,

1125
01:02:46,600 --> 01:02:50,170
you don't have enough

information upon which

1126
01:02:50,170 --> 01:02:51,310
to make decisions.

1127
01:02:51,310 --> 01:02:58,850

1128
01:02:58,850 --> 01:03:01,284
So your parents decide to stay.

1129
01:03:01,284 --> 01:03:01,784
Yes.

1130
01:03:01,784 --> 01:03:06,130

1131
01:03:06,130 --> 01:03:12,560
Again, I imagine the pressure
must have been very strong.

1132
01:03:12,560 --> 01:03:15,950
Yet another relative--
this is the Austrian part

1133
01:03:15,950 --> 01:03:18,520
of the Markus's.

1134
01:03:18,520 --> 01:03:23,020
Another sister of my
grandmother marries

1135
01:03:23,020 --> 01:03:28,940
an Austrian who is a major
stamp dealer in Vienna.

1136
01:03:28,940 --> 01:03:31,206
The name is Ehrlich.

1137
01:03:31,206 --> 01:03:35,400

1138

01:03:35,400 --> 01:03:38,400

And as we know-- so the
Germans, Hitler's army,

1139

01:03:38,400 --> 01:03:44,770

goes into Austria by the
Anschluss in the fall of '38,

1140

01:03:44,770 --> 01:03:46,980

and they face the same decision.

1141

01:03:46,980 --> 01:03:48,660

Do we leave?

1142

01:03:48,660 --> 01:03:49,805

Can we go to the states?

1143

01:03:49,805 --> 01:03:51,870

Will we stay here?

1144

01:03:51,870 --> 01:03:55,200

So the stamp dealer
and his wife decide

1145

01:03:55,200 --> 01:03:59,190

to stay in Vienna because
they're too old to leave.

1146

01:03:59,190 --> 01:04:03,580

Their daughter,
Marianne, urges--

1147

01:04:03,580 --> 01:04:08,100

urges them, pleads
with them, everything.

1148

01:04:08,100 --> 01:04:09,720

They're clearly not going.

1149

01:04:09,720 --> 01:04:16,810

She's on one of the last
planes from Vienna to New York

1150
01:04:16,810 --> 01:04:21,960
and works at Macy's in
the stamp department.

1151
01:04:21,960 --> 01:04:22,690
I'm sorry.

1152
01:04:22,690 --> 01:04:27,120

1153
01:04:27,120 --> 01:04:29,570
I think partly because
we're in a covirus time

1154
01:04:29,570 --> 01:04:33,270
and we don't know what's ahead.

1155
01:04:33,270 --> 01:04:35,940
But these folks
were trying to make

1156
01:04:35,940 --> 01:04:38,620
decisions in their
best interests,

1157
01:04:38,620 --> 01:04:40,920
but also the family
disagreement.

1158
01:04:40,920 --> 01:04:42,030
What do we do?

1159
01:04:42,030 --> 01:04:43,590
A or B.

1160
01:04:43,590 --> 01:04:44,120
Yeah.

1161
01:04:44,120 --> 01:04:44,880
Yeah.

1162
01:04:44,880 --> 01:04:46,270
Exactly.

1163
01:04:46,270 --> 01:04:50,020
And they were compelled-- with
the absence of information,

1164
01:04:50,020 --> 01:04:54,480
then there are compelling,
contradictory reasons.

1165
01:04:54,480 --> 01:04:57,630
That is, each side has stra--

1166
01:04:57,630 --> 01:04:59,600
compelling arguments.

1167
01:04:59,600 --> 01:05:03,270
And which ones are actually
the ones that matter?

1168
01:05:03,270 --> 01:05:04,560
They don't know.

1169
01:05:04,560 --> 01:05:06,540
They just make their
decisions with that.

1170
01:05:06,540 --> 01:05:08,530
Yeah.

1171
01:05:08,530 --> 01:05:11,510
So what happens then?

1172
01:05:11,510 --> 01:05:15,760
So '38 happens, and
Munich Agreement happens.

1173
01:05:15,760 --> 01:05:18,640
Your father comes home,
and there is no skirmish.

1174

01:05:18,640 --> 01:05:19,580

There is no fighting.

1175

01:05:19,580 --> 01:05:21,460

There is no bloodshed.

1176

01:05:21,460 --> 01:05:23,335

How does life proceed
for your family?

1177

01:05:23,335 --> 01:05:27,970

1178

01:05:27,970 --> 01:05:32,770

He has this factory called--
it's called Standard,

1179

01:05:32,770 --> 01:05:38,030

S-T-A-N-D-A-R-D. And they
make this bentwood furniture.

1180

01:05:38,030 --> 01:05:43,820

So as far as I know, he's back
there trying to sell his goods.

1181

01:05:43,820 --> 01:05:45,780

My mom is taking care of me.

1182

01:05:45,780 --> 01:05:47,600

I'm now two years old.

1183

01:05:47,600 --> 01:05:49,100

Paka is there.

1184

01:05:49,100 --> 01:05:52,910

And I think they try to
resume as much of normal life

1185

01:05:52,910 --> 01:05:54,320

as possible.

1186

01:05:54,320 --> 01:05:57,220
Read-- my dad read the
paper, The [? Novi Listy ?],,

1187
01:05:57,220 --> 01:06:00,920
every single day.

1188
01:06:00,920 --> 01:06:05,450
And my mom went to
church on Sundays.

1189
01:06:05,450 --> 01:06:07,750
He didn't go to
synagogue on Saturdays,

1190
01:06:07,750 --> 01:06:09,170
although, maybe he snuck in.

1191
01:06:09,170 --> 01:06:11,870

1192
01:06:11,870 --> 01:06:21,100
And until March,
right, March 15,

1193
01:06:21,100 --> 01:06:25,210
the German troops march into
Prague, into Czechoslovakia.

1194
01:06:25,210 --> 01:06:25,710
So--

1195
01:06:25,710 --> 01:06:27,210
And this was '39, March--

1196
01:06:27,210 --> 01:06:27,990
'39.

1197
01:06:27,990 --> 01:06:31,270
So six months after
Munich, we see

1198

01:06:31,270 --> 01:06:33,610
that it was a phony
piece of paper, right,

1199
01:06:33,610 --> 01:06:38,350
despite what Chamberlain
waved, the piece of paper,

1200
01:06:38,350 --> 01:06:41,630
peace in our time.

1201
01:06:41,630 --> 01:06:44,680
So I don't know-- so what
goes through his head?

1202
01:06:44,680 --> 01:06:48,550
I think, partly this
question of Switzerland

1203
01:06:48,550 --> 01:06:54,170
must enter into their calculus
somewhere along the way.

1204
01:06:54,170 --> 01:06:56,710
But my dad also had
a history of having

1205
01:06:56,710 --> 01:07:01,530
a lot of interesting ideas,
only some of which he pursued.

1206
01:07:01,530 --> 01:07:02,200
OK.

1207
01:07:02,200 --> 01:07:07,140
And maybe it just fizzled out,
or it got too complicated.

1208
01:07:07,140 --> 01:07:07,720
Who knows?

1209
01:07:07,720 --> 01:07:10,870

1210
01:07:10,870 --> 01:07:12,460
So--

1211
01:07:12,460 --> 01:07:15,870
How does life change
after the Germans march in

1212
01:07:15,870 --> 01:07:19,280
for them, for your family?

1213
01:07:19,280 --> 01:07:22,130
I think the changes were slow.

1214
01:07:22,130 --> 01:07:24,860
I mean, at first, it was
the Germans were there.

1215
01:07:24,860 --> 01:07:26,510
There were signs.

1216
01:07:26,510 --> 01:07:32,300
There were now photos of
Hitler all over downtown Prague

1217
01:07:32,300 --> 01:07:34,140
and elsewhere.

1218
01:07:34,140 --> 01:07:39,230
And in our neighborhood in
Branik, this I found out later,

1219
01:07:39,230 --> 01:07:46,130
but they knew, there was a
detachment of the German Army

1220
01:07:46,130 --> 01:07:48,260
that was stationed--

1221
01:07:48,260 --> 01:07:51,540
I think it was a transportation
unit because mostly it

1222

01:07:51,540 --> 01:07:56,090
was trucks coming in and
out and being serviced.

1223

01:07:56,090 --> 01:08:01,060
But they saw German
soldiers every day.

1224

01:08:01,060 --> 01:08:06,190
And yet at that point,
there was not yet

1225

01:08:06,190 --> 01:08:12,620
any action against Jews, which
pretty much started, I think,

1226

01:08:12,620 --> 01:08:16,640
when Heydrich came in.

1227

01:08:16,640 --> 01:08:23,069
But there was another
German soldier General

1228

01:08:23,069 --> 01:08:27,180
who was in charge of
affairs in Prague.

1229

01:08:27,180 --> 01:08:30,006
I'm blocking on his
name, but it was a Von--

1230

01:08:30,006 --> 01:08:34,670

1231

01:08:34,670 --> 01:08:35,649
Well--

1232

01:08:35,649 --> 01:08:36,899
Well, anyway--

1233

01:08:36,899 --> 01:08:40,040

--half a year-- half a year
after they march into Prague,

1234
01:08:40,040 --> 01:08:43,640
actually, World War II
begins on September 1.

1235
01:08:43,640 --> 01:08:45,380
That's right, September 1.

1236
01:08:45,380 --> 01:08:46,160
Yeah.

1237
01:08:46,160 --> 01:08:52,069
So a year after
Munich, I remember--

1238
01:08:52,069 --> 01:08:55,640
was it in your book that I
read this, or somewhere else,

1239
01:08:55,640 --> 01:09:01,460
that Churchill responds to
Neville's claim that peace

1240
01:09:01,460 --> 01:09:03,350
in our time, he says--

1241
01:09:03,350 --> 01:09:06,920
well, he said--
he criticizes it,

1242
01:09:06,920 --> 01:09:12,810
he goes, there will be no
peace, and they will have war.

1243
01:09:12,810 --> 01:09:15,729
They wanted to avoid war, but
they're going to have it now.

1244
01:09:15,729 --> 01:09:19,430
Yeah, that's in my book, and
I got that out of Churchill.

1245
01:09:19,430 --> 01:09:20,600
That's a wonder--

1246
01:09:20,600 --> 01:09:22,750
I mean, it's so true.

1247
01:09:22,750 --> 01:09:23,410
Yeah.

1248
01:09:23,410 --> 01:09:24,630
That's what happened.

1249
01:09:24,630 --> 01:09:28,050
Yeah, yeah.

1250
01:09:28,050 --> 01:09:29,760
So I-- yeah.

1251
01:09:29,760 --> 01:09:32,279
At that point then, after--

1252
01:09:32,279 --> 01:09:34,170
a year after Mu--

1253
01:09:34,170 --> 01:09:37,170
a year after your father
returns after having

1254
01:09:37,170 --> 01:09:40,740
been in the reserves to fight
in this iss-- in the skirmish

1255
01:09:40,740 --> 01:09:44,200
or war with the Germans,
which becomes a non-issue,

1256
01:09:44,200 --> 01:09:46,859
there's an actual
war that begins.

1257

01:09:46,859 --> 01:09:52,904
And does life change at
that point for your parents?

1258
01:09:52,904 --> 01:09:56,090

1259
01:09:56,090 --> 01:09:57,860
That's a wonderful question.

1260
01:09:57,860 --> 01:10:02,740
I'm not sure I can
answer right now.

1261
01:10:02,740 --> 01:10:03,240
OK.

1262
01:10:03,240 --> 01:10:07,830
So I'm at that point
five years old.

1263
01:10:07,830 --> 01:10:10,687
'36, '41-- no, '39.

1264
01:10:10,687 --> 01:10:11,520
I'm three years old.

1265
01:10:11,520 --> 01:10:12,930
No, '39, you're three years old.

1266
01:10:12,930 --> 01:10:19,430

1267
01:10:19,430 --> 01:10:22,160
How would it have
changed for them?

1268
01:10:22,160 --> 01:10:23,570
I think not yet.

1269
01:10:23,570 --> 01:10:30,850
I think probably

by 1940, I think

1270
01:10:30,850 --> 01:10:38,350
the first group of Jewish men
are sent to Terezin in '41

1271
01:10:38,350 --> 01:10:40,360
to develop it.

1272
01:10:40,360 --> 01:10:43,700
And it had been a
military barracks,

1273
01:10:43,700 --> 01:10:46,600
and they were sent there
to do some more housing

1274
01:10:46,600 --> 01:10:48,920
and to clean it up, or whatever.

1275
01:10:48,920 --> 01:10:49,420
And then--

1276
01:10:49,420 --> 01:10:51,700
Terezin is not so
far from Prague.

1277
01:10:51,700 --> 01:10:54,190
I believe it's
like an hour north?

1278
01:10:54,190 --> 01:10:57,310
Exactly, hour, hour
and a half, exactly.

1279
01:10:57,310 --> 01:10:59,320
Exactly.

1280
01:10:59,320 --> 01:11:04,360
And when my grandmother
was put on a train in 1942,

1281

01:11:04,360 --> 01:11:08,500
it apparently took a little
longer because it was--

1282
01:11:08,500 --> 01:11:09,250
whatever.

1283
01:11:09,250 --> 01:11:12,500
But under two hours.

1284
01:11:12,500 --> 01:11:18,380
And virtually all Jewish
men and women and children

1285
01:11:18,380 --> 01:11:21,375
from Bohemia and
Moravia were sent

1286
01:11:21,375 --> 01:11:25,890
to Theresienstadt
somewhere along the way.

1287
01:11:25,890 --> 01:11:29,540
So it was-- that's interesting.

1288
01:11:29,540 --> 01:11:32,570
I didn't realize that it
was like a central holding

1289
01:11:32,570 --> 01:11:40,260
point for all Jews in Bohemia
Moravia, the Protectorate,

1290
01:11:40,260 --> 01:11:41,150
in other words.

1291
01:11:41,150 --> 01:11:45,110
I think that Slovakian
Jews went to a different--

1292
01:11:45,110 --> 01:11:46,460
I'm not 100% sure.

1293

01:11:46,460 --> 01:11:50,210

But not necessarily Terezin.

1294

01:11:50,210 --> 01:11:55,040

So I think as many as
30,000 to 40,000 people

1295

01:11:55,040 --> 01:11:57,470

died in Terezin itself.

1296

01:11:57,470 --> 01:12:00,340

Most were shipped to
Auschwitz or Maly Trostenets,

1297

01:12:00,340 --> 01:12:01,610

and that's where my uncle--

1298

01:12:01,610 --> 01:12:04,760

1299

01:12:04,760 --> 01:12:09,740

but, yeah, they all went
through Terezin pretty much.

1300

01:12:09,740 --> 01:12:12,890

Who was shipped to
Maly Trostenets?

1301

01:12:12,890 --> 01:12:15,410

My-- that favorite
Uncle Richard,

1302

01:12:15,410 --> 01:12:18,680

Richard and his wife Elsa.

1303

01:12:18,680 --> 01:12:23,120

And the little bit of
research, it was in the Ukraine

1304

01:12:23,120 --> 01:12:25,650

at that point, now Belarus--

1305
01:12:25,650 --> 01:12:26,630
sorry?

1306
01:12:26,630 --> 01:12:27,800
I think it was Belarus.

1307
01:12:27,800 --> 01:12:29,400
Oh, it was Belarus then?

1308
01:12:29,400 --> 01:12:30,030
Yeah.

1309
01:12:30,030 --> 01:12:31,310
OK.

1310
01:12:31,310 --> 01:12:34,120
But apparently,
99% of people died,

1311
01:12:34,120 --> 01:12:38,260
and they died within a
few hours of arrival.

1312
01:12:38,260 --> 01:12:40,430
Sounds a nightmare.

1313
01:12:40,430 --> 01:12:42,180
Yeah.

1314
01:12:42,180 --> 01:12:50,460
It's not one of the
better known camps,

1315
01:12:50,460 --> 01:12:52,500
because it's so far east.

1316
01:12:52,500 --> 01:12:56,660
But as you say, it
was pretty lethal.

1317
01:12:56,660 --> 01:13:03,480

And Belarus was also a
very tough, tough place

1318
01:13:03,480 --> 01:13:06,960
with a lot of
bloodshed going on.

1319
01:13:06,960 --> 01:13:10,170
Anyway, let's go
back to Terezin.

1320
01:13:10,170 --> 01:13:15,120
And so in the beginning,
you say the changes

1321
01:13:15,120 --> 01:13:18,210
were gradual as far as
what you were told, as far

1322
01:13:18,210 --> 01:13:21,840
as what you understand.

1323
01:13:21,840 --> 01:13:23,910
You mentioned Heydrich.

1324
01:13:23,910 --> 01:13:26,860
Tell us who was Heydrich.

1325
01:13:26,860 --> 01:13:31,480
Reinhard Heydrich was one
of the major functionaries

1326
01:13:31,480 --> 01:13:35,000
of the Nazi regime.

1327
01:13:35,000 --> 01:13:41,560
Thought of-- sort of a
handsome, tall, I guess,

1328
01:13:41,560 --> 01:13:46,840
somewhat blond haired, blue
eyed, prototypical fascist,

1329

01:13:46,840 --> 01:13:51,100

who as I understand it was
brought to Bohemia Moravia

1330

01:13:51,100 --> 01:13:54,970

to clamp-- put the
clamps on Jews,

1331

01:13:54,970 --> 01:13:59,630

and to really figure out--
because the previous Reich

1332

01:13:59,630 --> 01:14:00,550

protector--

1333

01:14:00,550 --> 01:14:02,500

I think that was his title--

1334

01:14:02,500 --> 01:14:06,550

was not-- was a little
too lenient on the Jews.

1335

01:14:06,550 --> 01:14:12,190

So Heydrich comes in
with very clear orders

1336

01:14:12,190 --> 01:14:13,685

to start evacuating Jews.

1337

01:14:13,685 --> 01:14:16,940

1338

01:14:16,940 --> 01:14:22,730

And later, of course,
he was assassinated

1339

01:14:22,730 --> 01:14:31,160

by two-- one Czech and one
Slovak who ambushed his car.

1340

01:14:31,160 --> 01:14:35,420

Very interesting plot where they

knew his movements every day.

1341

01:14:35,420 --> 01:14:38,660

And there was a turn in the
road before you entered Prague

1342

01:14:38,660 --> 01:14:39,980

where the car slowed down.

1343

01:14:39,980 --> 01:14:41,750

And that's when they opened up.

1344

01:14:41,750 --> 01:14:46,490

But one submachine gun
jammed, and the other guy

1345

01:14:46,490 --> 01:14:51,350

threw a bomb, or something,
detonated the car.

1346

01:14:51,350 --> 01:14:56,060

Heydrich lived for another
five, six, seven days,

1347

01:14:56,060 --> 01:14:57,170

and then he died.

1348

01:14:57,170 --> 01:15:00,080

And then all hell broke
loose because the Nazis

1349

01:15:00,080 --> 01:15:04,100

wanted revenge and
destroyed a town called

1350

01:15:04,100 --> 01:15:07,490

Lidice, and a second one.

1351

01:15:07,490 --> 01:15:09,650

Basically, killed all
the men, rounded up

1352

01:15:09,650 --> 01:15:13,280
the women and children,
and sent them to camps.

1353
01:15:13,280 --> 01:15:16,430
So Heydrich is of
course called--

1354
01:15:16,430 --> 01:15:21,570
the nickname-- his nickname
was The Butcher of Prague.

1355
01:15:21,570 --> 01:15:25,770
And you say after
Heydrich's assassination,

1356
01:15:25,770 --> 01:15:27,955
is that when life
changed for your family?

1357
01:15:27,955 --> 01:15:30,970

1358
01:15:30,970 --> 01:15:31,990
It must have.

1359
01:15:31,990 --> 01:15:36,850
I wish I could give you a
specific chapter and verse,

1360
01:15:36,850 --> 01:15:46,160
but certainly, my father
then had to register.

1361
01:15:46,160 --> 01:15:50,126
And he was sent to a--

1362
01:15:50,126 --> 01:15:55,610
became part of a labor group
that worked in, around Prague,

1363
01:15:55,610 --> 01:16:04,090
and outside of Prague, doing

manual labor of various sorts.

1364

01:16:04,090 --> 01:16:06,520

He still remained at home.

1365

01:16:06,520 --> 01:16:10,260

So that-- there was--

1366

01:16:10,260 --> 01:16:12,920

in my mind, he was

a shadowy figure.

1367

01:16:12,920 --> 01:16:15,230

That is, he would

sometimes appear

1368

01:16:15,230 --> 01:16:17,750

and then he would disappear--

1369

01:16:17,750 --> 01:16:19,870

appear and disappear.

1370

01:16:19,870 --> 01:16:24,080

And I'm asking my

mother, where is he?

1371

01:16:24,080 --> 01:16:24,650

Excuse me.

1372

01:16:24,650 --> 01:16:28,010

The standard answer was,

he's on a business trip

1373

01:16:28,010 --> 01:16:31,250

and he'll be back

as soon as he can.

1374

01:16:31,250 --> 01:16:35,750

I knew he was a businessman,

I knew he had this factory.

1375

01:16:35,750 --> 01:16:40,250

He often wore a shirt,
tie, and a jacket,

1376
01:16:40,250 --> 01:16:44,990
either a suit or sport jacket.

1377
01:16:44,990 --> 01:16:47,120
And so he-- when
he left the house,

1378
01:16:47,120 --> 01:16:50,550
he looked like he was on
his way to a business trip.

1379
01:16:50,550 --> 01:16:52,310
I didn't question it.

1380
01:16:52,310 --> 01:16:54,990

1381
01:16:54,990 --> 01:17:02,660
But how long he went on
these labor assignments,

1382
01:17:02,660 --> 01:17:09,500
and where exactly, I have a very
sketchy understanding of that.

1383
01:17:09,500 --> 01:17:11,630
All I know, he
wasn't in my life.

1384
01:17:11,630 --> 01:17:14,210
Well, he was-- he
was back and forth.

1385
01:17:14,210 --> 01:17:18,119
And at this point, his
business had been confiscated.

1386
01:17:18,119 --> 01:17:19,510
Yes.

1387

01:17:19,510 --> 01:17:24,370

The Germans were
running the factory.

1388

01:17:24,370 --> 01:17:30,790

And among the new products were
barrels for rifles made out

1389

01:17:30,790 --> 01:17:34,010

of wood, the stock,
with a certain bent,

1390

01:17:34,010 --> 01:17:35,830

or a certain shape.

1391

01:17:35,830 --> 01:17:37,840

And I think--

1392

01:17:37,840 --> 01:17:41,350

I don't know for a while,
I don't know how long,

1393

01:17:41,350 --> 01:17:44,770

they used my father as--

1394

01:17:44,770 --> 01:17:50,770

his knowledge of how the
machinery works to do whatever

1395

01:17:50,770 --> 01:17:53,270

construction they wanted.

1396

01:17:53,270 --> 01:17:56,540

And then somewhere along
the way, he was let go,

1397

01:17:56,540 --> 01:17:58,510

or he was arrested.

1398

01:17:58,510 --> 01:18:00,405

I don't know the exact details.

1399

01:18:00,405 --> 01:18:03,020

1400

01:18:03,020 --> 01:18:06,080

So he was in these
labor brigades,

1401

01:18:06,080 --> 01:18:09,270

but he would come
home sometimes.

1402

01:18:09,270 --> 01:18:10,350

That's my memory of it.

1403

01:18:10,350 --> 01:18:13,210

1404

01:18:13,210 --> 01:18:21,160

At least several times when
we then all went for lunch

1405

01:18:21,160 --> 01:18:23,710

at my grandparents' house.

1406

01:18:23,710 --> 01:18:25,600

Your Catholic grandparents.

1407

01:18:25,600 --> 01:18:26,440

Right.

1408

01:18:26,440 --> 01:18:30,750

Earlier, Leo Perutz
was also part of that.

1409

01:18:30,750 --> 01:18:33,790

And I wish I could
tell you when it ended.

1410

01:18:33,790 --> 01:18:35,590

Was it '42, '43?

1411

01:18:35,590 --> 01:18:37,840

I'm not sure.

1412

01:18:37,840 --> 01:18:40,540

But after a while,
Leo wouldn't come.

1413

01:18:40,540 --> 01:18:42,330

And then my dad would show up.

1414

01:18:42,330 --> 01:18:46,700

1415

01:18:46,700 --> 01:18:52,680

And was it-- at those times
when he didn't come anymore,

1416

01:18:52,680 --> 01:18:57,050

he didn't show up, what
had really happened to him?

1417

01:18:57,050 --> 01:19:00,270

1418

01:19:00,270 --> 01:19:09,930

He was somewhere in the Bohemia
Moravia doing manual labor.

1419

01:19:09,930 --> 01:19:13,110

Was there a point where he
gets deported to Terezin?

1420

01:19:13,110 --> 01:19:17,530

Oh, yes, towards
the end of 1944.

1421

01:19:17,530 --> 01:19:18,920

So it-- oh, I see.

1422

01:19:18,920 --> 01:19:24,120

So up until 1944, he's
in labor brigades.

1423

01:19:24,120 --> 01:19:30,980

Czech-- Czech Jews, men and women married to Christians,

1424

01:19:30,980 --> 01:19:34,350

were typically put on these labor groups.

1425

01:19:34,350 --> 01:19:37,530

Again, the research by Capkova.

1426

01:19:37,530 --> 01:19:41,090

In one case, they say it's 15,000--

1427

01:19:41,090 --> 01:19:44,310

14,000 Jewish men and 1,000 Jewish women

1428

01:19:44,310 --> 01:19:47,280

working on these labor brigades, which

1429

01:19:47,280 --> 01:19:51,570

was the same program that they used in Austria and Germany

1430

01:19:51,570 --> 01:19:53,120

with Jews.

1431

01:19:53,120 --> 01:19:54,820

Who were married to Christians.

1432

01:19:54,820 --> 01:19:55,740

OK.

1433

01:19:55,740 --> 01:19:56,250

Right.

1434

01:19:56,250 --> 01:19:57,780

Right.

1435

01:19:57,780 --> 01:19:59,340

And I know my--

1436

01:19:59,340 --> 01:20:06,330

this cousin of my
father, Ema, EmÄ a,

1437

01:20:06,330 --> 01:20:10,890

her husband who was Protestant,
was also in the same labor

1438

01:20:10,890 --> 01:20:14,260

group as my father
some of the time.

1439

01:20:14,260 --> 01:20:18,600

So he had-- they had similar
experiences where he would go

1440

01:20:18,600 --> 01:20:21,620

and work, and then sometimes
come back, and then,

1441

01:20:21,620 --> 01:20:23,760

I don't know, I suppose--

1442

01:20:23,760 --> 01:20:27,750

Did your father-- your
father survives the war.

1443

01:20:27,750 --> 01:20:29,490

He does come home.

1444

01:20:29,490 --> 01:20:33,990

Did he ever talk about any
of this in later years?

1445

01:20:33,990 --> 01:20:36,120

Did he ever talk
about what he was

1446

01:20:36,120 --> 01:20:39,050

doing on those labor brigades?

1447

01:20:39,050 --> 01:20:41,580

He did towards the
end of his life.

1448

01:20:41,580 --> 01:20:45,570

He-- my dad died of
cancer at age 80.

1449

01:20:45,570 --> 01:20:47,550

And for the last two
years of his life,

1450

01:20:47,550 --> 01:20:51,990

he had a lot of appointments
with an oncologist in New York.

1451

01:20:51,990 --> 01:20:54,720

And I would often go with him.

1452

01:20:54,720 --> 01:20:58,290

And I wish I'd had
a tape recorder.

1453

01:20:58,290 --> 01:21:01,800

I asked a lot of
questions, and I'm not sure

1454

01:21:01,800 --> 01:21:05,490

how much I remember,
or how much was clear.

1455

01:21:05,490 --> 01:21:09,000

It was clear he was
on this labor group.

1456

01:21:09,000 --> 01:21:13,560

They did various kinds
of jobs in and around

1457

01:21:13,560 --> 01:21:15,720

and outside of Prague.

1458
01:21:15,720 --> 01:21:19,080
I never heard any
stories of encounters

1459
01:21:19,080 --> 01:21:23,430
with German soldiers
or overseers.

1460
01:21:23,430 --> 01:21:25,890
They were not fed very well.

1461
01:21:25,890 --> 01:21:27,160
It was hard work.

1462
01:21:27,160 --> 01:21:28,530
It was cold.

1463
01:21:28,530 --> 01:21:32,110
It was pretty miserable.

1464
01:21:32,110 --> 01:21:37,980
And I don't know when they
came back and then left again.

1465
01:21:37,980 --> 01:21:41,940
I never fully got clear on that.

1466
01:21:41,940 --> 01:21:46,770
But it was difficult. I mean,
there was no way around it.

1467
01:21:46,770 --> 01:21:51,780
So it sounds like your
father has his hands full

1468
01:21:51,780 --> 01:21:58,410
just barely trying to keep
alive on these brigades.

1469
01:21:58,410 --> 01:22:02,200
Now, who puts food on

the table at that point?

1470

01:22:02,200 --> 01:22:06,720

There's you, your
mother, and Paka at home.

1471

01:22:06,720 --> 01:22:10,350

How do you folks survive?

1472

01:22:10,350 --> 01:22:12,500

What happens there?

1473

01:22:12,500 --> 01:22:16,060

Well, they had a system of
coupons, the Germans did.

1474

01:22:16,060 --> 01:22:20,320

They were coupons for meat, for
butter, for milk, for bread,

1475

01:22:20,320 --> 01:22:22,430

all kinds of things.

1476

01:22:22,430 --> 01:22:25,900

And I think there
were monthly coupons.

1477

01:22:25,900 --> 01:22:29,170

I don't think they--
there were weekly.

1478

01:22:29,170 --> 01:22:33,580

When I did some research on
it, it wasn't fully clear.

1479

01:22:33,580 --> 01:22:37,510

But that was the
essence of what we ate.

1480

01:22:37,510 --> 01:22:41,070

So either my mother or
Paka would go shopping.

1481

01:22:41,070 --> 01:22:43,280

And I'll tell you
about Paka in a minute.

1482

01:22:43,280 --> 01:22:48,250

But my-- but the coupons got
small-- the rations got smaller

1483

01:22:48,250 --> 01:22:50,000

and smaller and smaller.

1484

01:22:50,000 --> 01:22:54,140

So at the end of the war
by, I would say, four--

1485

01:22:54,140 --> 01:23:00,406

winter of '44 and spring of
1945, we became vegetarians.

1486

01:23:00,406 --> 01:23:05,010

Not because we wanted to,
but that's pretty much.

1487

01:23:05,010 --> 01:23:05,810

And I have one--

1488

01:23:05,810 --> 01:23:09,860

I have to tell you
quick 30 second story.

1489

01:23:09,860 --> 01:23:13,400

I learned how to ice skate
on Saturday afternoons

1490

01:23:13,400 --> 01:23:14,930

during the day.

1491

01:23:14,930 --> 01:23:20,150

I would go skating on the
Vltava, which froze over,

1492

01:23:20,150 --> 01:23:22,010

with my buddies from school.

1493

01:23:22,010 --> 01:23:26,630

And we would finish, and one
day, we were all very hungry

1494

01:23:26,630 --> 01:23:31,700

and there was a hot dog vendor
on the banks of the river.

1495

01:23:31,700 --> 01:23:37,130

So we went and we each
of us ordered a pɠrky,

1496

01:23:37,130 --> 01:23:41,330

and he sliced this rye
bread and a huge pɠrky,

1497

01:23:41,330 --> 01:23:42,480

put mustard on it.

1498

01:23:42,480 --> 01:23:44,900

And he said, all right,
boys, here you go.

1499

01:23:44,900 --> 01:23:48,680

I need five crowns and a coupon.

1500

01:23:48,680 --> 01:23:51,710

Well, I was the only
one with the coupons.

1501

01:23:51,710 --> 01:23:55,700

The other boys had money
but no ration cards.

1502

01:23:55,700 --> 01:24:00,570

So I gave them mine and
he punched it four times.

1503

01:24:00,570 --> 01:24:03,370

And when I got home
later, my mother

1504
01:24:03,370 --> 01:24:07,580
was very, very upset, because
pretty much the four boys had

1505
01:24:07,580 --> 01:24:09,950
ate the weeks quota of meat.

1506
01:24:09,950 --> 01:24:15,545

1507
01:24:15,545 --> 01:24:17,830
Did you know at the
time that that was

1508
01:24:17,830 --> 01:24:22,590
something that was a bit risky?

1509
01:24:22,590 --> 01:24:24,900
Did you feel it as a child?

1510
01:24:24,900 --> 01:24:28,950
Or you only realized
it when you got home?

1511
01:24:28,950 --> 01:24:30,450
No, I sort of knew that.

1512
01:24:30,450 --> 01:24:33,350
Well, they all said, well,
I'll give it back to you.

1513
01:24:33,350 --> 01:24:34,500
Did it ever happen?

1514
01:24:34,500 --> 01:24:35,520
Did they give it back?

1515
01:24:35,520 --> 01:24:41,910
No, because the mothers knew
they wouldn't give that limit.

1516
01:24:41,910 --> 01:24:43,080
Yeah.

1517
01:24:43,080 --> 01:24:48,390
But my mother's specialty became
potatoes with mushroom gravy

1518
01:24:48,390 --> 01:24:51,870
with really good mushrooms.

1519
01:24:51,870 --> 01:24:53,190
That's not bad.

1520
01:24:53,190 --> 01:24:55,470
That's not bad.

1521
01:24:55,470 --> 01:24:56,760
Did she work?

1522
01:24:56,760 --> 01:24:58,860
Did she go to work?

1523
01:24:58,860 --> 01:25:01,350
No, she-- in '44 and '45--

1524
01:25:01,350 --> 01:25:05,970
was assigned to work in a
factory, a German textile

1525
01:25:05,970 --> 01:25:11,850
factory that made either socks,
or underwear, or T-shirts

1526
01:25:11,850 --> 01:25:14,010
for German soldiers.

1527
01:25:14,010 --> 01:25:18,160
And that's where she
worked during the day.

1528
01:25:18,160 --> 01:25:21,960

And then they put
her on a night shift.

1529
01:25:21,960 --> 01:25:23,890
And it was very hard work.

1530
01:25:23,890 --> 01:25:29,880
I-- somewhere in the book, I
recall her coming home sort

1531
01:25:29,880 --> 01:25:32,940
of in the morning as I'm
about to go to school,

1532
01:25:32,940 --> 01:25:34,770
and her face looked tired.

1533
01:25:34,770 --> 01:25:37,680
She had blue ink on her hands.

1534
01:25:37,680 --> 01:25:41,020
So she must have been doing
something with the cloth,

1535
01:25:41,020 --> 01:25:45,310
or with the material,
to mark it off.

1536
01:25:45,310 --> 01:25:48,750
I don't quite know what.

1537
01:25:48,750 --> 01:25:51,120
It was difficult for her.

1538
01:25:51,120 --> 01:25:54,170
I could see how hard it was.

1539
01:25:54,170 --> 01:25:54,670
And thank--

1540
01:25:54,670 --> 01:25:57,110
Was it far from home?

1541
01:25:57,110 --> 01:26:00,350
Was this factory far from home?

1542
01:26:00,350 --> 01:26:04,820
It was on the other
side of the Vltava.

1543
01:26:04,820 --> 01:26:11,930
So I imagine she would
go street tram there.

1544
01:26:11,930 --> 01:26:18,230
And the one time Prague
was bombed in April--

1545
01:26:18,230 --> 01:26:26,910
no, February 1945, the same
day that Dresden was bombed,

1546
01:26:26,910 --> 01:26:30,480
Kurt Vonnegut's book--

1547
01:26:30,480 --> 01:26:32,670
it's a long story.

1548
01:26:32,670 --> 01:26:36,810
But basically, it was
American airlines--

1549
01:26:36,810 --> 01:26:39,930
American planes and British
and Canadian planes.

1550
01:26:39,930 --> 01:26:45,630
And one squadron
of American flyers

1551
01:26:45,630 --> 01:26:49,710
misread the bombing site.

1552
01:26:49,710 --> 01:26:53,730

Because from 30,000
feet up, Prague

1553
01:26:53,730 --> 01:26:56,300
looks very much like Dresden.

1554
01:26:56,300 --> 01:26:59,250
There's water, a lot
of small bridges,

1555
01:26:59,250 --> 01:27:05,250
and they bombed some
hospitals, some schools.

1556
01:27:05,250 --> 01:27:07,350
They bombed Prague.

1557
01:27:07,350 --> 01:27:14,260
Something like 700 Czechs died,
1,200 who were injured, not--

1558
01:27:14,260 --> 01:27:19,730
but no German factories were
hit, and no Germans died.

1559
01:27:19,730 --> 01:27:23,060
And I remember being
in school that day,

1560
01:27:23,060 --> 01:27:28,850
which was again downtown
Prague, worrying that why

1561
01:27:28,850 --> 01:27:34,810
are they bombing with my male
friends with Jiri and Tomas,

1562
01:27:34,810 --> 01:27:37,970
trying to figure out why
would the Allies bomb

1563
01:27:37,970 --> 01:27:39,710
downtown Prague.

1564
01:27:39,710 --> 01:27:43,130
And then I thought, well,
maybe they hit the factory

1565
01:27:43,130 --> 01:27:44,770
where my mother worked.

1566
01:27:44,770 --> 01:27:47,972
And it was a very scary moment.

1567
01:27:47,972 --> 01:27:48,956
Yeah.

1568
01:27:48,956 --> 01:27:51,910
Yeah.

1569
01:27:51,910 --> 01:27:54,620
You hit upon something I
wanted to ask you about,

1570
01:27:54,620 --> 01:27:56,800
and that is school life.

1571
01:27:56,800 --> 01:28:02,950
I mean, the irony is that you
enter school during a war.

1572
01:28:02,950 --> 01:28:07,390
You start school during a war
and during an occupation, which

1573
01:28:07,390 --> 01:28:11,620
means that it's not the
kind of schooling that would

1574
01:28:11,620 --> 01:28:15,170
have existed in normal times.

1575
01:28:15,170 --> 01:28:17,640
That's the assumption I make.

1576

01:28:17,640 --> 01:28:20,820

Can you-- do you have
memories of your school?

1577

01:28:20,820 --> 01:28:23,490

Do you have memories
of the classes?

1578

01:28:23,490 --> 01:28:25,290

Do you have memories
of the teachers?

1579

01:28:25,290 --> 01:28:28,010

1580

01:28:28,010 --> 01:28:30,590

Fortunately, I have
all of the above.

1581

01:28:30,590 --> 01:28:31,610

Wonderful.

1582

01:28:31,610 --> 01:28:33,470

Wonderful.

1583

01:28:33,470 --> 01:28:34,760

It had some--

1584

01:28:34,760 --> 01:28:37,250

I don't think it
was a public school.

1585

01:28:37,250 --> 01:28:43,190

I think it was private, because
my cousin, four years my elder,

1586

01:28:43,190 --> 01:28:44,900

was in the same school.

1587

01:28:44,900 --> 01:28:45,920

Gerti?

1588

01:28:45,920 --> 01:28:47,330

Gerti.

1589

01:28:47,330 --> 01:28:52,010

And she has good memories
of it, too, being older.

1590

01:28:52,010 --> 01:28:57,640

But it was not far from
Václavská náměstí in Prague.

1591

01:28:57,640 --> 01:29:01,010

And a lot of the
kids had parents

1592

01:29:01,010 --> 01:29:05,640

who were professionals, at
least one was a professor.

1593

01:29:05,640 --> 01:29:08,560

His name was [? Mahotka ?],,
Pavel [? Mahotka ?]..

1594

01:29:08,560 --> 01:29:11,600

And out of the
classroom of about 15,

1595

01:29:11,600 --> 01:29:13,470

two became sociologists.

1596

01:29:13,470 --> 01:29:16,190

1597

01:29:16,190 --> 01:29:17,475

And you're one of them, huh?

1598

01:29:17,475 --> 01:29:18,790

I'm one of them.

1599

01:29:18,790 --> 01:29:23,150

But his specialty
was sociology of art.

1600
01:29:23,150 --> 01:29:25,340
So he also liked to paint.

1601
01:29:25,340 --> 01:29:28,650
But-- so that's where
we went to school.

1602
01:29:28,650 --> 01:29:31,460
And that's why I took the tram.

1603
01:29:31,460 --> 01:29:35,630
In your book, you mention is
the reason you go to the school

1604
01:29:35,630 --> 01:29:39,184
because you were thrown
out of the public school?

1605
01:29:39,184 --> 01:29:41,150
I don't know if
I was thrown out,

1606
01:29:41,150 --> 01:29:45,350
but maybe I was asked to leave,
or maybe my parents were told,

1607
01:29:45,350 --> 01:29:50,300
I'm sorry, we don't take
kids who are half Jewish.

1608
01:29:50,300 --> 01:29:51,080
OK.

1609
01:29:51,080 --> 01:29:56,270
But I suspect so, because my
cousin, who is same as me,

1610
01:29:56,270 --> 01:30:01,250
half Jewish, half Catholic,
went to the school.

1611

01:30:01,250 --> 01:30:05,360
And several of the other kids
were from mixed marriages.

1612
01:30:05,360 --> 01:30:07,560
OK.

1613
01:30:07,560 --> 01:30:10,680
What's interesting,
another area of research I

1614
01:30:10,680 --> 01:30:12,150
should think about.

1615
01:30:12,150 --> 01:30:19,770
But wonderful teachers-- an
older man and a younger woman.

1616
01:30:19,770 --> 01:30:27,690
The woman, her name was, I
think, Novotná, taught Czech,

1617
01:30:27,690 --> 01:30:30,690
and art, and music, and biology.

1618
01:30:30,690 --> 01:30:33,360
So we had biology
in the second grade.

1619
01:30:33,360 --> 01:30:38,700
The gentleman-- I
don't know his name--

1620
01:30:38,700 --> 01:30:43,230
math, German, science.

1621
01:30:43,230 --> 01:30:48,060
But he was very strict but fair.

1622
01:30:48,060 --> 01:30:50,520
But we had the feeling,
the boys and I,

1623

01:30:50,520 --> 01:30:52,920
that he didn't like the Germans.

1624

01:30:52,920 --> 01:30:55,620
Because whenever we
were asking questions

1625

01:30:55,620 --> 01:30:59,028
about German, the language,
he'd say, it's in the book.

1626

01:30:59,028 --> 01:30:59,820
You can look it up.

1627

01:30:59,820 --> 01:31:02,600

1628

01:31:02,600 --> 01:31:05,040
So he wasn't very
proactive in getting

1629

01:31:05,040 --> 01:31:09,060
you to be actively learning.

1630

01:31:09,060 --> 01:31:10,500
Absolutely.

1631

01:31:10,500 --> 01:31:16,230
And yet, they were told
by the administration

1632

01:31:16,230 --> 01:31:18,480
to talk about German victories.

1633

01:31:18,480 --> 01:31:21,600
So periodically, we
would get a mini lecture

1634

01:31:21,600 --> 01:31:24,330
about how well
Germany was doing.

1635

01:31:24,330 --> 01:31:29,070

And at least twice, we were
taken to parades around

1636

01:31:29,070 --> 01:31:33,660

the main square,
Wenceslas náměstí,

1637

01:31:33,660 --> 01:31:36,810

to welcome the
German soldiers back.

1638

01:31:36,810 --> 01:31:39,970

This was during the war.

1639

01:31:39,970 --> 01:31:43,590

So I had this
cognitive dissonance,

1640

01:31:43,590 --> 01:31:46,530

because my
grandfather on Sundays

1641

01:31:46,530 --> 01:31:51,990

would make it clear that
the Allies are progressing

1642

01:31:51,990 --> 01:31:54,180

and will eventually win.

1643

01:31:54,180 --> 01:31:56,880

And then we get the
lectures in school

1644

01:31:56,880 --> 01:32:00,910

that, no, the Germans
are doing very well and--

1645

01:32:00,910 --> 01:32:04,670

Well, what were the sources
of news for your grandfather?

1646

01:32:04,670 --> 01:32:07,230
Well-- so this is a great story.

1647
01:32:07,230 --> 01:32:11,700
My-- first of all, it was
against the law to own a radio.

1648
01:32:11,700 --> 01:32:14,610
And it was equally against
the law to listen to a radio,

1649
01:32:14,610 --> 01:32:18,350
if you had one,
which he violated

1650
01:32:18,350 --> 01:32:21,570
regularly listening to the BBC.

1651
01:32:21,570 --> 01:32:24,020
Oh, gosh.

1652
01:32:24,020 --> 01:32:27,680
So on Sunday at 5:00-- so
we'd have a nice meal--

1653
01:32:27,680 --> 01:32:29,630
this is partly
answering your question

1654
01:32:29,630 --> 01:32:31,130
earlier about the food.

1655
01:32:31,130 --> 01:32:34,610
We had-- we knew we'd get
a really good meal Sunday

1656
01:32:34,610 --> 01:32:36,920
afternoon at my grandmother's.

1657
01:32:36,920 --> 01:32:44,450
At 5:00 Prague time, which
I think was 6:00 London time

1658

01:32:44,450 --> 01:32:46,463
or was it the other way around?

1659

01:32:46,463 --> 01:32:47,880
I think it's the
other way around.

1660

01:32:47,880 --> 01:32:49,830
Other way around.

1661

01:32:49,830 --> 01:32:52,790
So in Prague, it would have
been 6:00, London 5:00.

1662

01:32:52,790 --> 01:33:00,380
Big Ben chimes and
Beethoven's Fifth

1663

01:33:00,380 --> 01:33:04,250
comes on-- da, da da,
da, da, da, da, da.

1664

01:33:04,250 --> 01:33:08,270
And here comes the news.

1665

01:33:08,270 --> 01:33:13,310
And in the news one
day, we weren't there,

1666

01:33:13,310 --> 01:33:16,070
but my grandfather
told us about it,

1667

01:33:16,070 --> 01:33:18,820
was the landing in Normandy.

1668

01:33:18,820 --> 01:33:21,220
So the next time Robert and I--

1669

01:33:21,220 --> 01:33:24,610
was typically Robert
and I sat with him.

1670
01:33:24,610 --> 01:33:26,920
And the two mothers
and my cousin Gerti

1671
01:33:26,920 --> 01:33:29,300
were in the other room.

1672
01:33:29,300 --> 01:33:31,030
But sometimes they
would come in.

1673
01:33:31,030 --> 01:33:37,040
So he would lay out a
checker cloth on his table,

1674
01:33:37,040 --> 01:33:44,120
on the study table, red
checkers for the Allies,

1675
01:33:44,120 --> 01:33:46,890
and black checkers for
the German positions.

1676
01:33:46,890 --> 01:33:50,810
And he would outline
the Normandy landing.

1677
01:33:50,810 --> 01:33:51,850
Who knew?

1678
01:33:51,850 --> 01:33:54,890

1679
01:33:54,890 --> 01:33:58,890
And whenever we ended,
he would always say,

1680
01:33:58,890 --> 01:34:01,170
well, don't tell
any of your friends.

1681

01:34:01,170 --> 01:34:06,780
Well, of course, the boys
in school exchanged stories.

1682
01:34:06,780 --> 01:34:10,590
But he was endangering
all of us and himself

1683
01:34:10,590 --> 01:34:12,150
by listening to the radio.

1684
01:34:12,150 --> 01:34:14,160
And it would drive
my mother mad,

1685
01:34:14,160 --> 01:34:17,880
because my grandfather was
slightly hard of hearing.

1686
01:34:17,880 --> 01:34:20,730
And you could hear
his radio coming in.

1687
01:34:20,730 --> 01:34:26,560
It would start with music, but
then it would turn to the BBC.

1688
01:34:26,560 --> 01:34:30,330
How-- was-- did he live
in a single family home,

1689
01:34:30,330 --> 01:34:33,070
or did he live in
apartment house?

1690
01:34:33,070 --> 01:34:37,000
Also, an apartment
house close to downtown

1691
01:34:37,000 --> 01:34:39,640
in a different
section from ours.

1692

01:34:39,640 --> 01:34:41,576
Do you know the name
of the neighborhood?

1693
01:34:41,576 --> 01:34:48,520

1694
01:34:48,520 --> 01:34:50,745
Yeah, but I'm blocking
on it right now.

1695
01:34:50,745 --> 01:34:52,600
That's OK.

1696
01:34:52,600 --> 01:34:54,380
Yeah.

1697
01:34:54,380 --> 01:34:55,880
We took two trains--

1698
01:34:55,880 --> 01:34:56,540
two trams.

1699
01:34:56,540 --> 01:35:00,310
We took a tram from Branik,
to Vã¼clavskã© nã¼mã»stã¼,

1700
01:35:00,310 --> 01:35:05,240
and to tram number 12,
I think, to their house.

1701
01:35:05,240 --> 01:35:09,742
By the way do you remember
your address in Branik,

1702
01:35:09,742 --> 01:35:10,575
your street address?

1703
01:35:10,575 --> 01:35:19,300

1704
01:35:19,300 --> 01:35:20,020

Give me a little.

1705
01:35:20,020 --> 01:35:21,320
I have it here.

1706
01:35:21,320 --> 01:35:24,438
I don't have it in my memory.

1707
01:35:24,438 --> 01:35:26,070
OK.

1708
01:35:26,070 --> 01:35:29,890
Partly because it's
two addresses the way--

1709
01:35:29,890 --> 01:35:32,950
we had a blue sign and
then there's a red--

1710
01:35:32,950 --> 01:35:35,950
different blue with
the one set of numbers,

1711
01:35:35,950 --> 01:35:38,760
and red with another
set of numbers.

1712
01:35:38,760 --> 01:35:42,560
And I'll-- I'll get it to you.

1713
01:35:42,560 --> 01:35:43,160
OK.

1714
01:35:43,160 --> 01:35:44,140
OK.

1715
01:35:44,140 --> 01:35:47,530
So at any rate, grandpa lives
in another apartment house

1716
01:35:47,530 --> 01:35:50,410
and listens to the BBC,

and kind of turns up

1717
01:35:50,410 --> 01:35:52,620
the volume because
he needs to hear it.

1718
01:35:52,620 --> 01:35:53,710
Exactly.

1719
01:35:53,710 --> 01:35:54,670
Exactly.

1720
01:35:54,670 --> 01:35:55,930
OK.

1721
01:35:55,930 --> 01:35:59,050
Which drove not only
my mother, his wife,

1722
01:35:59,050 --> 01:36:05,270
mad because they knew
of the danger but, yeah.

1723
01:36:05,270 --> 01:36:07,530
So which one did you
believe, the teachers

1724
01:36:07,530 --> 01:36:10,830
at school or your
grandpa and the BBC?

1725
01:36:10,830 --> 01:36:15,230
Well, I learned to
listen to my grand--

1726
01:36:15,230 --> 01:36:22,140
granddad knowing, and of course
hoping, that that would happen.

1727
01:36:22,140 --> 01:36:26,080
And there must have been other--

1728

01:36:26,080 --> 01:36:28,240
I mean, it was clear
as the bombing--

1729
01:36:28,240 --> 01:36:34,270
in 1944 and '45, there were
more frequent allied flights

1730
01:36:34,270 --> 01:36:35,560
over Prague.

1731
01:36:35,560 --> 01:36:39,700
So in the school, we
would have drills,

1732
01:36:39,700 --> 01:36:41,690
just like they would
for a fire drill

1733
01:36:41,690 --> 01:36:47,560
in an American school, which
when the sirens went off,

1734
01:36:47,560 --> 01:36:52,940
we were to leave our
books in the desk.

1735
01:36:52,940 --> 01:36:57,540
Our coats were hanging on a
hanger in the back of the room,

1736
01:36:57,540 --> 01:37:00,660
and we would go down
one or two flights

1737
01:37:00,660 --> 01:37:05,760
to the basement, which was
kind of dark and somewhat dank.

1738
01:37:05,760 --> 01:37:09,960
But that's where we rehearsed
what would happen in case

1739

01:37:09,960 --> 01:37:12,000
there was a bombing.

1740
01:37:12,000 --> 01:37:17,310
And we liked it, because
often, these drills

1741
01:37:17,310 --> 01:37:24,160
happened during the German
class, just by chance.

1742
01:37:24,160 --> 01:37:26,730
So nobody-- nobody minded.

1743
01:37:26,730 --> 01:37:28,740
But if it happened
during math, then

1744
01:37:28,740 --> 01:37:32,760
we had to make up the subject.

1745
01:37:32,760 --> 01:37:39,720
But that went on certainly
from all the fall of 1944

1746
01:37:39,720 --> 01:37:42,820
till spring of '45.

1747
01:37:42,820 --> 01:37:45,790
And then the bombing occurred.

1748
01:37:45,790 --> 01:37:49,295
And that really changed
things, because it--

1749
01:37:49,295 --> 01:37:52,870
The missed bombing on the way
to-- on the way to Dresden.

1750
01:37:52,870 --> 01:37:54,260
I mean, the time when it was--

1751

01:37:54,260 --> 01:37:57,790

The mistaken bombing,
yeah, yeah, yeah.

1752

01:37:57,790 --> 01:37:59,170

What was the name of the school?

1753

01:37:59,170 --> 01:38:02,480

1754

01:38:02,480 --> 01:38:08,510

It was, before the war, called
the Czech English School.

1755

01:38:08,510 --> 01:38:13,750

So they taught English,
as well as Czech.

1756

01:38:13,750 --> 01:38:18,610

But by 1942, it wasn't
English, it was German--

1757

01:38:18,610 --> 01:38:20,210

Czech and German.

1758

01:38:20,210 --> 01:38:21,190

OK.

1759

01:38:21,190 --> 01:38:23,680

So was it known then as
the Czech German School?

1760

01:38:23,680 --> 01:38:27,780

1761

01:38:27,780 --> 01:38:29,610

You're asking questions
I should have,

1762

01:38:29,610 --> 01:38:32,580

I feel, on the tip of my tongue.

1763

01:38:32,580 --> 01:38:33,810
They're not there right now.

1764
01:38:33,810 --> 01:38:34,710
It's OK.

1765
01:38:34,710 --> 01:38:35,670
It's OK.

1766
01:38:35,670 --> 01:38:38,640
I mean, I ask them
simply because it

1767
01:38:38,640 --> 01:38:42,740
helps in anchoring the
information that you give me.

1768
01:38:42,740 --> 01:38:43,470
Of course.

1769
01:38:43,470 --> 01:38:49,410
But it's not necessary,
and it's something

1770
01:38:49,410 --> 01:38:53,040
that if you find
later, we can always

1771
01:38:53,040 --> 01:38:56,160
add to the interview
at another date.

1772
01:38:56,160 --> 01:38:59,700
So it's OK, not to worry.

1773
01:38:59,700 --> 01:39:03,780
My last trip to Prague must have
been three or four years ago.

1774
01:39:03,780 --> 01:39:06,510
And I went searching
for that school

1775

01:39:06,510 --> 01:39:11,130

with my aunt, who is 10 years
older than I. She knows it.

1776

01:39:11,130 --> 01:39:13,275

And we spent an hour and
a half looking for it

1777

01:39:13,275 --> 01:39:17,640

and I never quite was
sure which building,

1778

01:39:17,640 --> 01:39:20,970

because it's no longer
there officially.

1779

01:39:20,970 --> 01:39:23,250

So it's there somewhere.

1780

01:39:23,250 --> 01:39:25,060

I'll try and find out.

1781

01:39:25,060 --> 01:39:25,660

OK.

1782

01:39:25,660 --> 01:39:26,370

OK.

1783

01:39:26,370 --> 01:39:26,870

Yeah.

1784

01:39:26,870 --> 01:39:30,630

But it's also--
it's at these years

1785

01:39:30,630 --> 01:39:33,690

that children begin
to have memories.

1786

01:39:33,690 --> 01:39:35,910

It's actually the war years.

1787

01:39:35,910 --> 01:39:38,640

In the late '30s,
you're still a toddler,

1788

01:39:38,640 --> 01:39:43,890

and so what you remember
would be episodic.

1789

01:39:43,890 --> 01:39:49,360

And now, when you
start going to school,

1790

01:39:49,360 --> 01:39:52,210

it can-- there can
be more of them.

1791

01:39:52,210 --> 01:39:55,630

And that's also
interesting to learn

1792

01:39:55,630 --> 01:40:01,675

more about what is life under
occupation, during wartime.

1793

01:40:01,675 --> 01:40:05,400

1794

01:40:05,400 --> 01:40:09,150

Is it a-- is it--
did you feel fear?

1795

01:40:09,150 --> 01:40:13,730

Did you ever have encounters
with German soldiers?

1796

01:40:13,730 --> 01:40:18,950

Did you-- those are the sorts of
questions that come to my mind.

1797

01:40:18,950 --> 01:40:20,310

No, absolutely.

1798

01:40:20,310 --> 01:40:25,730
The major encounter that I
had was on a tram from Branik

1799
01:40:25,730 --> 01:40:30,770
going to school on
something like close to 7:00

1800
01:40:30,770 --> 01:40:36,650
in the morning, getting
on the tram, pretty empty.

1801
01:40:36,650 --> 01:40:39,830
So I took out a book and
I was reading the book.

1802
01:40:39,830 --> 01:40:44,880
And maybe 10 minutes
into the ride, I notice--

1803
01:40:44,880 --> 01:40:46,670
I'm looking at
the book and I see

1804
01:40:46,670 --> 01:40:49,910
a pair of black leather boots.

1805
01:40:49,910 --> 01:40:54,920
And I look up, I see a green
gray uniform, still looking up,

1806
01:40:54,920 --> 01:41:00,930
and I see a cap with the
cross had the bones, cross--

1807
01:41:00,930 --> 01:41:04,430
crossed had bones,
and the German eagle.

1808
01:41:04,430 --> 01:41:07,430
And I knew right away
this was an SS man--

1809

01:41:07,430 --> 01:41:09,140
I mean, a [INAUDIBLE].

1810
01:41:09,140 --> 01:41:13,880
And he in a very
loud German says,

1811
01:41:13,880 --> 01:41:17,060
get up and give me your place.

1812
01:41:17,060 --> 01:41:18,460
And it petrified me.

1813
01:41:18,460 --> 01:41:19,510
I mean, I didn't know.

1814
01:41:19,510 --> 01:41:23,800
But I quickly put the
book in my knapsack,

1815
01:41:23,800 --> 01:41:28,390
and I went as far away from
him as possible, thinking,

1816
01:41:28,390 --> 01:41:30,280
does he know who I am?

1817
01:41:30,280 --> 01:41:32,980
Does he know that
my father is Jewish?

1818
01:41:32,980 --> 01:41:35,590
Does he know where my father is?

1819
01:41:35,590 --> 01:41:43,760
I really had a major, major,
I don't know, episode, the--

1820
01:41:43,760 --> 01:41:45,540
scary.

1821
01:41:45,540 --> 01:41:47,500

I was paranoid.

1822

01:41:47,500 --> 01:41:52,610

And he-- so I got
to school, and the--

1823

01:41:52,610 --> 01:41:56,480

Mrs. Novotny saw that I
was really very upset.

1824

01:41:56,480 --> 01:41:59,810

And she tried to calm
me down and reassured me

1825

01:41:59,810 --> 01:42:01,000

he didn't know who I was.

1826

01:42:01,000 --> 01:42:02,120

He didn't know my father.

1827

01:42:02,120 --> 01:42:03,490

He just wanted a seat.

1828

01:42:03,490 --> 01:42:06,290

Was it-- by then,
it was crowded.

1829

01:42:06,290 --> 01:42:10,370

Here's a kid sitting there where
an adult should be sitting.

1830

01:42:10,370 --> 01:42:12,680

But to me, it was
very, very scary.

1831

01:42:12,680 --> 01:42:16,920

And that whole-- with the
SS, because we all knew that

1832

01:42:16,920 --> 01:42:17,730

stayed--

1833

01:42:17,730 --> 01:42:19,940
crossed the street or
stay away from them.

1834
01:42:19,940 --> 01:42:22,450

1835
01:42:22,450 --> 01:42:26,900
That was a major thing
that stayed with me.

1836
01:42:26,900 --> 01:42:31,460
At this point, did
you know that--

1837
01:42:31,460 --> 01:42:36,895
did you know that Jews
were in mortal danger?

1838
01:42:36,895 --> 01:42:40,976

1839
01:42:40,976 --> 01:42:41,920
I did not.

1840
01:42:41,920 --> 01:42:44,570
I knew that my mother
kept saying, don't

1841
01:42:44,570 --> 01:42:47,840
tell anyone you're Jewish.

1842
01:42:47,840 --> 01:42:52,010
One of the boys-- we had a
bully in the second grade.

1843
01:42:52,010 --> 01:42:55,460
His first name was Joseph
also, sort of a husky.

1844
01:42:55,460 --> 01:42:58,850
And I've got a photo of
that classroom in the book,

1845
01:42:58,850 --> 01:43:02,570
and he's sitting in front of me.

1846
01:43:02,570 --> 01:43:05,780
He would bully whoever he could.

1847
01:43:05,780 --> 01:43:07,770
And a couple of points--

1848
01:43:07,770 --> 01:43:11,030
a couple of times he
said, Stein, you're a Jew.

1849
01:43:11,030 --> 01:43:12,470
And I said, no, I'm not.

1850
01:43:12,470 --> 01:43:14,000
He said, your father's a Jew.

1851
01:43:14,000 --> 01:43:15,140
No, he's not.

1852
01:43:15,140 --> 01:43:17,210
And we got into a fight.

1853
01:43:17,210 --> 01:43:20,850
And he was-- got a
couple of punches in,

1854
01:43:20,850 --> 01:43:24,950
the teacher broke
it up, and went down

1855
01:43:24,950 --> 01:43:31,780
to the principal, who was not
at all a German sympathizer.

1856
01:43:31,780 --> 01:43:33,890
But he somehow worked it out.

1857

01:43:33,890 --> 01:43:35,640

And when I got home,
my mother said, well,

1858

01:43:35,640 --> 01:43:37,240

why did you tell him?

1859

01:43:37,240 --> 01:43:38,740

I said, I didn't tell him.

1860

01:43:38,740 --> 01:43:44,410

But he was-- the parents
clearly were antisemitic.

1861

01:43:44,410 --> 01:43:55,950

And that's-- and I was with him
in school the rest of the time.

1862

01:43:55,950 --> 01:44:00,260

And so the teachers
sat me in a couple

1863

01:44:00,260 --> 01:44:03,350

of the rows away from him
so we wouldn't interact.

1864

01:44:03,350 --> 01:44:07,450

But that was--

1865

01:44:07,450 --> 01:44:08,710

I didn't understand.

1866

01:44:08,710 --> 01:44:12,220

I never comprehended
that the Jewish relatives

1867

01:44:12,220 --> 01:44:18,150

who disappeared were on their
way to their destruction.

1868

01:44:18,150 --> 01:44:20,110

That was my next question.

1869

01:44:20,110 --> 01:44:22,860

That was my next question
is that when they disappear,

1870

01:44:22,860 --> 01:44:26,100

was it simply they're away
on business, like father was?

1871

01:44:26,100 --> 01:44:29,070

1872

01:44:29,070 --> 01:44:32,870

Did you ever wonder what had
happened to grandma Sophie?

1873

01:44:32,870 --> 01:44:34,030

I did.

1874

01:44:34,030 --> 01:44:37,120

My cousin Gerti had
exactly the same story

1875

01:44:37,120 --> 01:44:40,900

with her mother,
my mother's sister,

1876

01:44:40,900 --> 01:44:44,860

that Leo Perutz, who
was also a business man,

1877

01:44:44,860 --> 01:44:46,490

was on a business trip.

1878

01:44:46,490 --> 01:44:49,480

That was a standard-- and then
I checked with my other cousin

1879

01:44:49,480 --> 01:44:52,870

Robert who's closer to my
age, that was the family--

1880

01:44:52,870 --> 01:44:56,560

somehow the two sisters,
or the grandparents,

1881
01:44:56,560 --> 01:44:59,920
decided to don't tell
the kids anything.

1882
01:44:59,920 --> 01:45:01,600
And then I think
about it, because

1883
01:45:01,600 --> 01:45:06,550
as a teacher, how much should
a seven or eight-year-old

1884
01:45:06,550 --> 01:45:08,770
know about that?

1885
01:45:08,770 --> 01:45:12,520
What if it's a prison,
say in the States,

1886
01:45:12,520 --> 01:45:17,290
your dad, your older brother's
in jail, do you tell the kid?

1887
01:45:17,290 --> 01:45:19,960

1888
01:45:19,960 --> 01:45:22,615
So I never knew.

1889
01:45:22,615 --> 01:45:25,750

1890
01:45:25,750 --> 01:45:28,690
And I wondered-- I mean,
I did wonder, well,

1891
01:45:28,690 --> 01:45:31,270
where is he, really?

1892

01:45:31,270 --> 01:45:32,690
Where's the business?

1893
01:45:32,690 --> 01:45:34,540
What's going on?

1894
01:45:34,540 --> 01:45:38,880
But I can't say I pursued it.

1895
01:45:38,880 --> 01:45:42,310
I tried pursuing it with
an older relative once,

1896
01:45:42,310 --> 01:45:43,870
and I didn't get very far.

1897
01:45:43,870 --> 01:45:46,240
She said, well, it's just--

1898
01:45:46,240 --> 01:45:49,870
it's the war and things
are happening, but never--

1899
01:45:49,870 --> 01:45:53,880
no one ever told me Jews were
being rounded up and killed.

1900
01:45:53,880 --> 01:45:56,670
So that I didn't learn
till after the war.

1901
01:45:56,670 --> 01:45:59,340

1902
01:45:59,340 --> 01:46:04,320
There is-- the funny thing is is
that when you say that phrase,

1903
01:46:04,320 --> 01:46:06,660
well, he's away on
business, there's actually

1904

01:46:06,660 --> 01:46:09,900
a movie that was made
called, When Father

1905
01:46:09,900 --> 01:46:13,350
was Away on Business
by, I believe

1906
01:46:13,350 --> 01:46:16,470
it was Bosnians, or
Serbia Croatians,

1907
01:46:16,470 --> 01:46:18,370
or something like that.

1908
01:46:18,370 --> 01:46:21,300
And I believe the
father was away

1909
01:46:21,300 --> 01:46:24,420
on the same kind of business
that your father was away

1910
01:46:24,420 --> 01:46:26,190
on in--

1911
01:46:26,190 --> 01:46:28,950
is that the whole thing
is is this little kid

1912
01:46:28,950 --> 01:46:31,020
doesn't know where his dad is.

1913
01:46:31,020 --> 01:46:33,210
He's just gone on business.

1914
01:46:33,210 --> 01:46:38,670
And it's a legitimate--
it's a legitimate question

1915
01:46:38,670 --> 01:46:41,550
to ponder is, was there damage?

1916

01:46:41,550 --> 01:46:47,280
Sometimes I've talked to people
who were young at that point

1917

01:46:47,280 --> 01:46:51,330
and not knowing was
worse than knowing.

1918

01:46:51,330 --> 01:46:52,680
But it depended on what.

1919

01:46:52,680 --> 01:46:55,530

1920

01:46:55,530 --> 01:46:59,910
And depended on whether or
not the false answer actually

1921

01:46:59,910 --> 01:47:01,560
satisfied them.

1922

01:47:01,560 --> 01:47:06,570
If it didn't satisfy them,
then it's in the vacuum.

1923

01:47:06,570 --> 01:47:09,970
You can fill in the worst
kind of information.

1924

01:47:09,970 --> 01:47:13,770
But if it's an answer
that satisfies,

1925

01:47:13,770 --> 01:47:15,965
then it makes a lot of sense.

1926

01:47:15,965 --> 01:47:18,880

1927

01:47:18,880 --> 01:47:22,810
My guess is that my
mother didn't want

1928
01:47:22,810 --> 01:47:28,500
to open the door unnecessarily.

1929
01:47:28,500 --> 01:47:31,980
Just knowing that I'd have more
questions and more questions.

1930
01:47:31,980 --> 01:47:36,000
What if it somehow comes out
that the mother's telling is

1931
01:47:36,000 --> 01:47:38,340
complaining,
because the father's

1932
01:47:38,340 --> 01:47:40,620
in the camp, or the mo--

1933
01:47:40,620 --> 01:47:44,230
the mother-in-law disappeared.

1934
01:47:44,230 --> 01:47:45,480
Yeah.

1935
01:47:45,480 --> 01:47:48,990
Did you-- go back to another
question that I had is,

1936
01:47:48,990 --> 01:47:50,750
did you have a--

1937
01:47:50,750 --> 01:47:52,770
were you afraid
just this one time

1938
01:47:52,770 --> 01:47:57,750
when you had the encounter
with the SS officer,

1939
01:47:57,750 --> 01:48:03,370
or were you constantly

afraid, or wary?

1940

01:48:03,370 --> 01:48:05,470

I think I was pretty fearful.

1941

01:48:05,470 --> 01:48:12,370

I think that's-- it sort of
partly in my nature and partly

1942

01:48:12,370 --> 01:48:19,960

what I learned early, never
having an explanation as to why

1943

01:48:19,960 --> 01:48:25,660

there were German soldiers
in the streets, in the trams,

1944

01:48:25,660 --> 01:48:28,960

in the neighborhood,
this trucking depot.

1945

01:48:28,960 --> 01:48:30,850

I didn't have much
interaction with it,

1946

01:48:30,850 --> 01:48:33,550

but I would see
trucks of Germans

1947

01:48:33,550 --> 01:48:37,210

going out or coming
back, including

1948

01:48:37,210 --> 01:48:40,810

the fact that when
the war first started,

1949

01:48:40,810 --> 01:48:43,520

those soldiers
were of normal age

1950

01:48:43,520 --> 01:48:46,780

and looked pretty

healthy and pretty mean.

1951

01:48:46,780 --> 01:48:49,630

I remember by the
time 1945 rolled

1952

01:48:49,630 --> 01:48:54,160

around, some of those kids
were a few years older than I.

1953

01:48:54,160 --> 01:48:56,800

And then there were these
older war veterans that

1954

01:48:56,800 --> 01:48:58,960

looked like my grandfather.

1955

01:48:58,960 --> 01:49:02,050

I mean, that-- literally,
that's who was fighting

1956

01:49:02,050 --> 01:49:04,220

with the Germans at that point.

1957

01:49:04,220 --> 01:49:06,040

But the fear was there.

1958

01:49:06,040 --> 01:49:09,850

And the bomb-- the
flights were fearful.

1959

01:49:09,850 --> 01:49:11,860

We try and make light of it.

1960

01:49:11,860 --> 01:49:15,580

I had one of my friends
loved the engines

1961

01:49:15,580 --> 01:49:20,410

and he claimed that he could
tell from listening to it

1962

01:49:20,410 --> 01:49:27,040
whether it was a Rolls-Royce
engine, or an American Boeing.

1963
01:49:27,040 --> 01:49:30,130
We thought he was kidding,
but I think he could.

1964
01:49:30,130 --> 01:49:32,880

1965
01:49:32,880 --> 01:49:38,290
So your father is sent
away in Theresienstadt

1966
01:49:38,290 --> 01:49:41,560
to Terezin in 1944.

1967
01:49:41,560 --> 01:49:44,380
Do you know whether that was
early in the year or later on

1968
01:49:44,380 --> 01:49:45,340
in the year?

1969
01:49:45,340 --> 01:49:51,710
Later-- later on in the year,
in the fall or early winter,

1970
01:49:51,710 --> 01:49:52,880
because he spoke--

1971
01:49:52,880 --> 01:49:54,860
after the war, many
years after that,

1972
01:49:54,860 --> 01:49:59,630
I went to Terezin with
him, and he took me

1973
01:49:59,630 --> 01:50:04,010
to the area, the
men's barracks, which

1974
01:50:04,010 --> 01:50:06,350
were terribly overcrowded.

1975
01:50:06,350 --> 01:50:12,890
And he talked about how cold
the winter of '44, '45 was--

1976
01:50:12,890 --> 01:50:20,360
very few blankets, little heat,
and the terrible conditions.

1977
01:50:20,360 --> 01:50:26,210
But he survived.

1978
01:50:26,210 --> 01:50:31,730
He-- apparently, there's a
woodworking area in Terezin.

1979
01:50:31,730 --> 01:50:36,680
And that's where he worked
given his background in wood.

1980
01:50:36,680 --> 01:50:43,700
And very little food, and
dysentery, and constipation,

1981
01:50:43,700 --> 01:50:45,680
and all kinds of things.

1982
01:50:45,680 --> 01:50:52,070
It was difficult. But he was
never sent out of Terezin,

1983
01:50:52,070 --> 01:50:56,020
unlike so many other Jews.

1984
01:50:56,020 --> 01:50:58,060
Yeah.

1985
01:50:58,060 --> 01:51:00,280
Did your grandmother

die in Terezin,

1986

01:51:00,280 --> 01:51:02,870
or did she die somewhere else?

1987

01:51:02,870 --> 01:51:06,730
Died there 19 days after
she was sent there.

1988

01:51:06,730 --> 01:51:10,630
Because she was a Type 1
diabetic, and the Germans

1989

01:51:10,630 --> 01:51:16,570
took away all the medication
that any prisoner came in with,

1990

01:51:16,570 --> 01:51:20,920
including her diabetes,
which she needed, which she

1991

01:51:20,920 --> 01:51:26,260
took regularly before the war.

1992

01:51:26,260 --> 01:51:27,610
And how do you know this?

1993

01:51:27,610 --> 01:51:30,100
How do you know
that it was 19 days

1994

01:51:30,100 --> 01:51:33,130
and that they took
away her medication?

1995

01:51:33,130 --> 01:51:36,910
Because they sent-- the
German authorities sent back

1996

01:51:36,910 --> 01:51:42,930
a postcard saying to my
parents and to my father,

1997

01:51:42,930 --> 01:51:56,790

your mother Sophie Markus
Stein died on August 19, 1942.

1998

01:51:56,790 --> 01:52:04,350

Cause, health complications,
something-- some generic thing.

1999

01:52:04,350 --> 01:52:08,350

But it was there with a picture
of Hitler on the other side.

2000

01:52:08,350 --> 01:52:13,090

And I think they have maybe--

2001

01:52:13,090 --> 01:52:17,010

yeah, in those days
for whatever reason,

2002

01:52:17,010 --> 01:52:23,010

they really sent these
death notices to relatives.

2003

01:52:23,010 --> 01:52:25,040

So that's what told you.

2004

01:52:25,040 --> 01:52:28,290

You knew when she was
taken, and then you

2005

01:52:28,290 --> 01:52:30,780

have the postcard that
tells you when she was--

2006

01:52:30,780 --> 01:52:31,500

when she died.

2007

01:52:31,500 --> 01:52:33,350

Yeah.

2008

01:52:33,350 --> 01:52:39,220

I suspect that he also knew

because she was sent in,

2009

01:52:39,220 --> 01:52:40,850

what did I say, in August?

2010

01:52:40,850 --> 01:52:42,330

No, she died in August--

2011

01:52:42,330 --> 01:52:45,490

July, so she sent in July.

2012

01:52:45,490 --> 01:52:50,890

Then her-- at least
one sister daughter

2013

01:52:50,890 --> 01:52:54,030

is sent the next month,
and then the next month--

2014

01:52:54,030 --> 01:52:55,950

so they all came.

2015

01:52:55,950 --> 01:52:57,990

And there was
still communication

2016

01:52:57,990 --> 01:53:03,150

between people in Theresienstadt
and my parents back home.

2017

01:53:03,150 --> 01:53:08,670

And I'm sure they sent a
card saying Sophie died.

2018

01:53:08,670 --> 01:53:09,730

OK.

2019

01:53:09,730 --> 01:53:11,010

OK.

2020

01:53:11,010 --> 01:53:12,940

And they even sent packages.

2021
01:53:12,940 --> 01:53:15,510
My understanding is
that for a while,

2022
01:53:15,510 --> 01:53:19,630
they were able to send
some food packages.

2023
01:53:19,630 --> 01:53:21,820
Now, I know, did they arrive?

2024
01:53:21,820 --> 01:53:23,530
I don't know how that worked.

2025
01:53:23,530 --> 01:53:25,650
But there was at
least some of that.

2026
01:53:25,650 --> 01:53:29,020
And I heard the same
story from other relatives

2027
01:53:29,020 --> 01:53:32,050
who were sending food.

2028
01:53:32,050 --> 01:53:36,410
Well, this brings us close
to the end of the war.

2029
01:53:36,410 --> 01:53:38,620
What was that like in Prague?

2030
01:53:38,620 --> 01:53:42,100
Did you-- did your
grandfather Antonin

2031
01:53:42,100 --> 01:53:46,450
know that the end of the
war is coming from the BBC?

2032
01:53:46,450 --> 01:53:47,520

Did he let you know?

2033

01:53:47,520 --> 01:53:49,690

I mean, were there signs that--

2034

01:53:49,690 --> 01:53:53,080

were there signs that this is
not going well for the Germans,

2035

01:53:53,080 --> 01:53:55,070

it's going to be over soon.

2036

01:53:55,070 --> 01:53:55,840

Absolutely.

2037

01:53:55,840 --> 01:53:57,490

Absolutely signs.

2038

01:53:57,490 --> 01:54:04,060

So the same BBC News work was
sometimes broadcast in Czech.

2039

01:54:04,060 --> 01:54:08,320

It turns out BBC is something
like 45 different languages

2040

01:54:08,320 --> 01:54:10,320

in their reporting.

2041

01:54:10,320 --> 01:54:16,880

And so we heard regularly on
Sunday the progress of the war.

2042

01:54:16,880 --> 01:54:18,160

So that was one.

2043

01:54:18,160 --> 01:54:20,830

And also, you knew with
increasing flights,

2044

01:54:20,830 --> 01:54:23,600

more and more allied

flights going over,

2045

01:54:23,600 --> 01:54:28,210
it suggested there's more and
more action against Germany.

2046

01:54:28,210 --> 01:54:34,840
And at least once, maybe twice,
I saw wounded German soldiers

2047

01:54:34,840 --> 01:54:39,290
from the tram car.

2048

01:54:39,290 --> 01:54:42,260
The tram went around
downtown Prague and left.

2049

01:54:42,260 --> 01:54:44,180
You could see a couple of--

2050

01:54:44,180 --> 01:54:47,150
I saw at least one
soldier on crutches.

2051

01:54:47,150 --> 01:54:49,460
And then another time,
someone who looked--

2052

01:54:49,460 --> 01:54:54,380
so these little
signs were there.

2053

01:54:54,380 --> 01:55:00,640
And then in 19--

2054

01:55:00,640 --> 01:55:07,660
so on May 5, 1945, there's an
uprising in downtown Prague.

2055

01:55:07,660 --> 01:55:13,150
The Czech resistance
and Czech citizens

2056

01:55:13,150 --> 01:55:15,010

took up arms
against the Germans,

2057

01:55:15,010 --> 01:55:17,620

and there was fighting
in downtown Prague.

2058

01:55:17,620 --> 01:55:19,800

We heard some of that--

2059

01:55:19,800 --> 01:55:25,840

the explosions, and the
shooting at a distance.

2060

01:55:25,840 --> 01:55:29,620

There was no direct
action in Branik.

2061

01:55:29,620 --> 01:55:33,010

But we know it was in downtown.

2062

01:55:33,010 --> 01:55:40,930

And then-- so we lived in
this house, my mother and I,

2063

01:55:40,930 --> 01:55:45,070

and the super
comes to our house.

2064

01:55:45,070 --> 01:55:49,150

This would have
been, I think, May 7.

2065

01:55:49,150 --> 01:55:51,670

He knocks on the door,
knocks on everybody's door,

2066

01:55:51,670 --> 01:55:54,880

he says, the
Germans are planning

2067

01:55:54,880 --> 01:55:58,630
to blow up part of the street,
because this is a street that

2068
01:55:58,630 --> 01:56:01,510
leads from Prague to Pilsen.

2069
01:56:01,510 --> 01:56:08,320
By that time, Patton's Third
Army, the US Third Army,

2070
01:56:08,320 --> 01:56:10,520
is in Pilsen.

2071
01:56:10,520 --> 01:56:13,280
And he'd like to come to Prague.

2072
01:56:13,280 --> 01:56:15,710
Big ego, he was splits--

2073
01:56:15,710 --> 01:56:18,050
[? take him. ?]
And apparently, he

2074
01:56:18,050 --> 01:56:21,050
had a serious
exchange with Truman,

2075
01:56:21,050 --> 01:56:24,710
who forbade him, right,
to liberate Prague

2076
01:56:24,710 --> 01:56:27,170
because of the Yalta agreement.

2077
01:56:27,170 --> 01:56:29,930
But that was somehow in the air.

2078
01:56:29,930 --> 01:56:34,460
So anyway, so my mom and I
and the super said be fast,

2079

01:56:34,460 --> 01:56:35,760
couple of minutes.

2080
01:56:35,760 --> 01:56:39,680
And so there was a
basement that they--

2081
01:56:39,680 --> 01:56:43,830
in an empty house maybe
a block and a half away.

2082
01:56:43,830 --> 01:56:48,660
We grab some stuff, a
sweater and whatever else,

2083
01:56:48,660 --> 01:56:51,120
and we go and hide.

2084
01:56:51,120 --> 01:56:58,020
And the same super was in
charge of this hiding place.

2085
01:56:58,020 --> 01:57:01,770
And he basically said,
OK, if you need to go now,

2086
01:57:01,770 --> 01:57:04,530
you've got to go now,
then I'm closing the door.

2087
01:57:04,530 --> 01:57:07,800
Nobody gets out at night.

2088
01:57:07,800 --> 01:57:11,760
And then somebody in that
basement, one of the men,

2089
01:57:11,760 --> 01:57:15,300
said, we heard that the Germans
are going around knocking

2090
01:57:15,300 --> 01:57:18,020
on doors and shooting people.

2091
01:57:18,020 --> 01:57:19,530
That's-- so that--

2092
01:57:19,530 --> 01:57:23,100
everybody panicked and
they stayed nice and quiet.

2093
01:57:23,100 --> 01:57:31,740
And I had a dream that night in
which my Catholic grandfather

2094
01:57:31,740 --> 01:57:34,650
comes and saves us with food.

2095
01:57:34,650 --> 01:57:39,360

2096
01:57:39,360 --> 01:57:44,170
So he was one of my
heroes in those days.

2097
01:57:44,170 --> 01:57:50,590
And fortunately, the next
day on the 8th, the Germans

2098
01:57:50,590 --> 01:57:54,480
withdraw, even though
there's still some action

2099
01:57:54,480 --> 01:57:57,090
and the shooting going on.

2100
01:57:57,090 --> 01:58:01,960
That took, I guess, four
or five days in all.

2101
01:58:01,960 --> 01:58:05,230
One day later on May 9, we're--

2102
01:58:05,230 --> 01:58:10,210
we know the war's over but

there's no fa-- no dad.

2103

01:58:10,210 --> 01:58:14,950

So I'm sitting at the
window looking at the road.

2104

01:58:14,950 --> 01:58:17,470

And in the middle
of the day or so,

2105

01:58:17,470 --> 01:58:23,260

I see a Russian Soviet Army
truck with a five sided star

2106

01:58:23,260 --> 01:58:26,190

and olive colors.

2107

01:58:26,190 --> 01:58:31,030

Two Russian soldiers
stop the truck.

2108

01:58:31,030 --> 01:58:36,850

They come around the back, and
they help maybe a dozen men

2109

01:58:36,850 --> 01:58:44,160

and women wearing the yellow
star in ragged clothing,

2110

01:58:44,160 --> 01:58:46,442

and one of them is my dad.

2111

01:58:46,442 --> 01:58:48,206

Oh, my.

2112

01:58:48,206 --> 01:58:50,270

Oh, my.

2113

01:58:50,270 --> 01:58:53,040

So we-- I told my mom.

2114

01:58:53,040 --> 01:58:55,860

She ran down the stairs--
we ran down and had

2115
01:58:55,860 --> 01:58:58,230
the most joyous hug.

2116
01:58:58,230 --> 01:59:01,920
I mean, my world was full again.

2117
01:59:01,920 --> 01:59:05,190
And he was wearing
the same jacket

2118
01:59:05,190 --> 01:59:08,760
that I knew he had
with the yellow star

2119
01:59:08,760 --> 01:59:15,000
that my mother sewed on
this jacket, an overcoat.

2120
01:59:15,000 --> 01:59:18,670
You never had to
wear one, or did you?

2121
01:59:18,670 --> 01:59:22,210
No, I did not wear
the yellow star.

2122
01:59:22,210 --> 01:59:26,290
Because officially, I was a
Catholic, as was my mother.

2123
01:59:26,290 --> 01:59:29,250
But I remember earlier
before he was--

2124
01:59:29,250 --> 01:59:32,050
went to Terezin,
my mother putting--

2125
01:59:32,050 --> 01:59:38,880
sewing all those stars on his

jacket that he took with him.

2126
01:59:38,880 --> 01:59:41,430
I was told on a business trip.

2127
01:59:41,430 --> 01:59:44,550
They knew that he
was going elsewhere.

2128
01:59:44,550 --> 01:59:48,300
Well, father came
home from business.

2129
01:59:48,300 --> 01:59:49,250
Right.

2130
01:59:49,250 --> 01:59:50,730
Absolutely.

2131
01:59:50,730 --> 01:59:52,000
Absolutely.

2132
01:59:52,000 --> 01:59:53,340
And what was that like?

2133
01:59:53,340 --> 01:59:56,070
Now, he is home for good.

2134
01:59:56,070 --> 01:59:56,800
It was joyous.

2135
01:59:56,800 --> 01:59:58,240
It was-- sorry?

2136
01:59:58,240 --> 01:59:59,310
Had he changed?

2137
01:59:59,310 --> 02:00:04,520

2138
02:00:04,520 --> 02:00:08,070

If he did, I didn't notice it.

2139
02:00:08,070 --> 02:00:11,220
There wasn't much
talk of what went on.

2140
02:00:11,220 --> 02:00:13,620
I mean, we knew there
were German soldiers,

2141
02:00:13,620 --> 02:00:16,680
and the Russian
soldiers liberated them,

2142
02:00:16,680 --> 02:00:17,460
and there were--

2143
02:00:17,460 --> 02:00:21,610
people found it difficult, and
there was very little food,

2144
02:00:21,610 --> 02:00:22,530
and all of that.

2145
02:00:22,530 --> 02:00:26,010
But he didn't go
into the people dying

2146
02:00:26,010 --> 02:00:31,790
or being shipped to Auschwitz,
as was my Uncle Leo.

2147
02:00:31,790 --> 02:00:38,330
He was on one of the last trains
from Terezin to Auschwitz.

2148
02:00:38,330 --> 02:00:39,740
This is Olga's husband?

2149
02:00:39,740 --> 02:00:43,720
Olga's husband, yeah, yeah.

2150

02:00:43,720 --> 02:00:46,180

Which also like all
those questions,

2151

02:00:46,180 --> 02:00:51,240

how come one of these guys dies
and the other one survives?

2152

02:00:51,240 --> 02:00:55,690

That's-- and there was tension
between the two sisters from

2153

02:00:55,690 --> 02:00:58,960

early childhood on.

2154

02:00:58,960 --> 02:01:02,620

And I think there was some
other kind of bone of contention

2155

02:01:02,620 --> 02:01:04,620

between them, what happened.

2156

02:01:04,620 --> 02:01:07,190

2157

02:01:07,190 --> 02:01:09,470

But anyway-- but
it was-- so then

2158

02:01:09,470 --> 02:01:12,680

what happened in the
next couple of years

2159

02:01:12,680 --> 02:01:16,070

is a reconnection with
people who survived,

2160

02:01:16,070 --> 02:01:17,900

which I also wrote
about, including

2161

02:01:17,900 --> 02:01:22,310

the two brothers who survived

Auschwitz and the death march.

2162
02:01:22,310 --> 02:01:27,500
Then my Aunt Manya,
Manya was her name,

2163
02:01:27,500 --> 02:01:30,590
and her 15-year-old
daughter Sonya also

2164
02:01:30,590 --> 02:01:32,510
survived the death march.

2165
02:01:32,510 --> 02:01:35,780
It was astounding because
they were all in Auschwitz.

2166
02:01:35,780 --> 02:01:40,010
And they wound up in
Terezin where my father was.

2167
02:01:40,010 --> 02:01:44,560
And she was-- they tried to
escape, she and her daughter.

2168
02:01:44,560 --> 02:01:50,590
And they were put in
an isolation chamber

2169
02:01:50,590 --> 02:01:54,740
in the Theresienstadt camp.

2170
02:01:54,740 --> 02:01:59,840
And my father knew the chef
from his soccer playing days,

2171
02:01:59,840 --> 02:02:03,740
and they somehow gathered
enough food for the two women

2172
02:02:03,740 --> 02:02:05,180
to survive.

2173

02:02:05,180 --> 02:02:06,050

And I learned this--

2174

02:02:06,050 --> 02:02:08,342

I know you said earlier that
from your father's family,

2175

02:02:08,342 --> 02:02:10,550

only two people survived--

2176

02:02:10,550 --> 02:02:13,820

your father and another cousin.

2177

02:02:13,820 --> 02:02:15,770

And now these are different
people, I believe,

2178

02:02:15,770 --> 02:02:16,520

you're mentioning.

2179

02:02:16,520 --> 02:02:17,740

These are all Markus's.

2180

02:02:17,740 --> 02:02:20,960

So Sonya was my--

2181

02:02:20,960 --> 02:02:23,360

around my father's
age, but her mother

2182

02:02:23,360 --> 02:02:26,030

was the sister of
my grandmother--

2183

02:02:26,030 --> 02:02:27,050

OK.

2184

02:02:27,050 --> 02:02:32,510

--of those 10
people or families.

2185

02:02:32,510 --> 02:02:33,980
OK.

2186
02:02:33,980 --> 02:02:36,830
But anyway, after
the war, we kind of

2187
02:02:36,830 --> 02:02:40,310
had some reunions with
the people who survived.

2188
02:02:40,310 --> 02:02:44,410
And it's then that I
first began to realize--

2189
02:02:44,410 --> 02:02:48,670
have some sense of the
magnitude of the Holocaust

2190
02:02:48,670 --> 02:02:51,310
and what people had
to do to survive.

2191
02:02:51,310 --> 02:02:53,930
It was really--

2192
02:02:53,930 --> 02:02:56,310
And when did you really know--

2193
02:02:56,310 --> 02:02:59,730
I mean, that's when you
first start to realize it.

2194
02:02:59,730 --> 02:03:04,230
When did you realize that
this was continent wide

2195
02:03:04,230 --> 02:03:08,190
in scope, not just my
family, not just our country?

2196
02:03:08,190 --> 02:03:12,450

2197
02:03:12,450 --> 02:03:17,950
Probably not till the history
class in city college.

2198
02:03:17,950 --> 02:03:21,600
And then I also
had that encounter

2199
02:03:21,600 --> 02:03:23,700
with a Holocaust denier.

2200
02:03:23,700 --> 02:03:28,260
And I decided I need
to teach about this.

2201
02:03:28,260 --> 02:03:30,750
So I learned a lot more.

2202
02:03:30,750 --> 02:03:33,540
But it really takes
a while to understand

2203
02:03:33,540 --> 02:03:39,030
the magnitude and the
evil intent of what

2204
02:03:39,030 --> 02:03:44,100
the Germans and the Nazis were
doing, much more than just one

2205
02:03:44,100 --> 02:03:45,445
family or another family.

2206
02:03:45,445 --> 02:03:49,990

2207
02:03:49,990 --> 02:03:55,630
My cousin Gerti got a Master's
degree at Indiana University.

2208
02:03:55,630 --> 02:03:58,820

And she wrote
about some of this.

2209
02:03:58,820 --> 02:04:04,580
And I read that, and
that was really helpful,

2210
02:04:04,580 --> 02:04:08,980
both from the families'
perspective and the larger

2211
02:04:08,980 --> 02:04:11,260
question of what happened.

2212
02:04:11,260 --> 02:04:13,810
So in other words, it wasn't--

2213
02:04:13,810 --> 02:04:17,920
it wasn't like all this
knowledge is open at once.

2214
02:04:17,920 --> 02:04:23,625
It comes in phases and
it comes in pieces.

2215
02:04:23,625 --> 02:04:29,250
Is that-- is it--
is that how it was?

2216
02:04:29,250 --> 02:04:30,840
Absolutely.

2217
02:04:30,840 --> 02:04:35,530
For example, we were
liberated by the Soviet Army.

2218
02:04:35,530 --> 02:04:36,550
And that was clear.

2219
02:04:36,550 --> 02:04:39,120
Anybody could-- any
adult child could

2220

02:04:39,120 --> 02:04:43,740

see the Russian soldiers and
the tanks, wonderful heroes.

2221

02:04:43,740 --> 02:04:50,300

A year later, [PERSONAL NAME]
Markus, who is a Czech guy,

2222

02:04:50,300 --> 02:04:52,010

who is a communist--

2223

02:04:52,010 --> 02:04:53,218

Well, you mentioned him, yes.

2224

02:04:53,218 --> 02:04:54,177

[INAUDIBLE] Czech Army.

2225

02:04:54,177 --> 02:04:55,430

And where was he stationed?

2226

02:04:55,430 --> 02:04:56,990

In the Ukraine.

2227

02:04:56,990 --> 02:05:00,710

And he talked about
the terrible conditions

2228

02:05:00,710 --> 02:05:04,610

that the Ukrainian peasants
encountered and what happened

2229

02:05:04,610 --> 02:05:05,610

and some of the--

2230

02:05:05,610 --> 02:05:10,190

and so this, again,
cognitive dissonance.

2231

02:05:10,190 --> 02:05:13,610

These are heroes and yet
they behave very badly,

2232
02:05:13,610 --> 02:05:15,620
including towards the Jews.

2233
02:05:15,620 --> 02:05:19,400
His wife was a nurse
in the Soviet Army,

2234
02:05:19,400 --> 02:05:21,320
but she was also Jewish.

2235
02:05:21,320 --> 02:05:25,670
So a conversation in
my parents' house,

2236
02:05:25,670 --> 02:05:28,460
I began to get a
better sense of what

2237
02:05:28,460 --> 02:05:31,610
it was like for some
Jews in the Ukraine

2238
02:05:31,610 --> 02:05:35,290
under the Soviet occupation.

2239
02:05:35,290 --> 02:05:38,980
I think that's why I
became a sociologist,

2240
02:05:38,980 --> 02:05:41,800
try and figure some of this out.

2241
02:05:41,800 --> 02:05:47,500
It's-- and it's difficult to
teach, very difficult to teach,

2242
02:05:47,500 --> 02:05:50,200
because you get a
little slice of life.

2243
02:05:50,200 --> 02:05:55,380
But meanwhile, there's a much

broader horizon out there of--

2244
02:05:55,380 --> 02:05:57,460
Well, you used the
phrase cognitive

2245
02:05:57,460 --> 02:06:02,800
dissonance a couple of times
in our interview today.

2246
02:06:02,800 --> 02:06:08,275
Do you-- do you feel,
or do you think that--

2247
02:06:08,275 --> 02:06:12,860

2248
02:06:12,860 --> 02:06:15,770
has your experience
been that people

2249
02:06:15,770 --> 02:06:20,690
tend to want a simplistic
explanation of things,

2250
02:06:20,690 --> 02:06:26,580
and when something contradicts
an initial impression,

2251
02:06:26,580 --> 02:06:29,520
they dismiss it?

2252
02:06:29,520 --> 02:06:33,370
I don't want to talk about
American politics in 2020.

2253
02:06:33,370 --> 02:06:34,610
OK.

2254
02:06:34,610 --> 02:06:36,240
That's OK.

2255

02:06:36,240 --> 02:06:43,120
But one sees around
a virus, which

2256
02:06:43,120 --> 02:06:45,640
is a scientific
issue, it's biology.

2257
02:06:45,640 --> 02:06:48,010
It's not political.

2258
02:06:48,010 --> 02:06:54,740
Some see it as one way, and
other people see it another way

2259
02:06:54,740 --> 02:06:57,220
because they cognitively
understand it

2260
02:06:57,220 --> 02:06:58,220
in different ways.

2261
02:06:58,220 --> 02:07:01,950

2262
02:07:01,950 --> 02:07:03,400
My wife just entered--

2263
02:07:03,400 --> 02:07:03,900
Here.

2264
02:07:03,900 --> 02:07:05,155
--bearing a cup of coffee.

2265
02:07:05,155 --> 02:07:05,655
Thank you.

2266
02:07:05,655 --> 02:07:06,810
Tea, tea, tea.

2267
02:07:06,810 --> 02:07:07,410
Tea.

2268
02:07:07,410 --> 02:07:09,160
Do you want to say to Ina?

2269
02:07:09,160 --> 02:07:09,660
This is--

2270
02:07:09,660 --> 02:07:10,590
Hello.

2271
02:07:10,590 --> 02:07:11,090
Hello.

2272
02:07:11,090 --> 02:07:11,950
Hi, how are you?

2273
02:07:11,950 --> 02:07:14,030
Michelle [INAUDIBLE]

2274
02:07:14,030 --> 02:07:14,760
OK.

2275
02:07:14,760 --> 02:07:17,870
Whose college roommate was--

2276
02:07:17,870 --> 02:07:19,890
No, it's not roommate
but good friend.

2277
02:07:19,890 --> 02:07:20,490
Good friend--

2278
02:07:20,490 --> 02:07:20,990
Yeah.

2279
02:07:20,990 --> 02:07:22,220
--was [PERSONAL NAME]--

2280
02:07:22,220 --> 02:07:22,720
Yeah.

2281
02:07:22,720 --> 02:07:24,090
--at Trinity College.

2282
02:07:24,090 --> 02:07:25,590
Yes.

2283
02:07:25,590 --> 02:07:27,120
Where they serve tea.

2284
02:07:27,120 --> 02:07:28,180
Anyway, thank you.

2285
02:07:28,180 --> 02:07:30,760
OK.

2286
02:07:30,760 --> 02:07:31,260
Yeah.

2287
02:07:31,260 --> 02:07:38,510
That somehow-- I'm going
to use the word bamboozle.

2288
02:07:38,510 --> 02:07:43,100
We got bamboozled into seeing
the world a particular way.

2289
02:07:43,100 --> 02:07:47,510
I mean, this is what
Hitler did, right?

2290
02:07:47,510 --> 02:07:50,330
The Germans are going to win.

2291
02:07:50,330 --> 02:07:54,230
They have your best
interests in mind.

2292
02:07:54,230 --> 02:07:57,030
They'll take care of you.

2293
02:07:57,030 --> 02:08:01,880

We set up the protectorate
of Bohemia and Moravia.

2294
02:08:01,880 --> 02:08:03,170
What could be wrong with that?

2295
02:08:03,170 --> 02:08:05,060
We're protecting you.

2296
02:08:05,060 --> 02:08:08,180
By the way, we're going to take
all your Jews and kill them.

2297
02:08:08,180 --> 02:08:12,890
But-- and so--

2298
02:08:12,890 --> 02:08:14,220
I do a lot of teaching.

2299
02:08:14,220 --> 02:08:20,180
I've been a college professor
for close to 40 years.

2300
02:08:20,180 --> 02:08:25,250
How do you-- how to present
this information and make it--

2301
02:08:25,250 --> 02:08:29,900
and open student's
minds to understand

2302
02:08:29,900 --> 02:08:33,860
that there are several
realities of the world,

2303
02:08:33,860 --> 02:08:36,420
and somehow we have
to make some choices.

2304
02:08:36,420 --> 02:08:41,960
But use evidence, use
the truth, use evidence

2305

02:08:41,960 --> 02:08:47,870
to formulate your
hypotheses about the world.

2306

02:08:47,870 --> 02:08:49,820
Did you when you
were growing up,

2307

02:08:49,820 --> 02:08:51,800
feel this kind of confusion?

2308

02:08:51,800 --> 02:08:54,600

2309

02:08:54,600 --> 02:08:55,560
Yeah.

2310

02:08:55,560 --> 02:08:59,940
Partly having to do with
the disappearance of my dad,

2311

02:08:59,940 --> 02:09:03,250
of my grandmother,
and I'm not sure

2312

02:09:03,250 --> 02:09:06,450
how I processed it, if at all.

2313

02:09:06,450 --> 02:09:10,870
And this uncle that I really
loved, and even other--

2314

02:09:10,870 --> 02:09:14,350
my father's two sisters,
who I didn't know very well,

2315

02:09:14,350 --> 02:09:15,430
but where did they go?

2316

02:09:15,430 --> 02:09:19,150

2317

02:09:19,150 --> 02:09:22,970

And then towards the end of
the war, the disappearance

2318

02:09:22,970 --> 02:09:25,230

of Paka, my second mother.

2319

02:09:25,230 --> 02:09:26,570

Why?

2320

02:09:26,570 --> 02:09:29,366

She was great.

2321

02:09:29,366 --> 02:09:33,780

So try to understand that.

2322

02:09:33,780 --> 02:09:38,800

And one other quick photo--

2323

02:09:38,800 --> 02:09:40,150

1948.

2324

02:09:40,150 --> 02:09:43,430

So February 1948,
we're in Prague.

2325

02:09:43,430 --> 02:09:45,900

I'm in school.

2326

02:09:45,900 --> 02:09:48,560

I said that my dad read
the paper every day.

2327

02:09:48,560 --> 02:09:52,400

He comes home from
work and the front page

2328

02:09:52,400 --> 02:09:59,390

is full of white
columns, missing stories.

2329

02:09:59,390 --> 02:10:00,470
Why?

2330
02:10:00,470 --> 02:10:02,960
It was taken over by
the Communist Party

2331
02:10:02,960 --> 02:10:06,710
and they began censorship
on the daily newspaper

2332
02:10:06,710 --> 02:10:11,790
that up until then had honest
reporting every single day.

2333
02:10:11,790 --> 02:10:18,650
And it's such a dramatic
vision for me of cognitive--

2334
02:10:18,650 --> 02:10:22,550
I don't know-- cognitive
disappearance, a whitening

2335
02:10:22,550 --> 02:10:28,120
out of what's really going on.

2336
02:10:28,120 --> 02:10:32,520
Well, 1948 was dramatic,
unbelievably dramatic

2337
02:10:32,520 --> 02:10:35,040
in Czechoslovakia.

2338
02:10:35,040 --> 02:10:41,950
There was the
defenestration, of Masaryk,

2339
02:10:41,950 --> 02:10:48,190
and the various ministries that
are taken over by pro communist

2340
02:10:48,190 --> 02:10:49,630
and/or communist from--

2341
02:10:49,630 --> 02:10:52,040
I mean, key ministries-- the
Ministry of the Interior,

2342
02:10:52,040 --> 02:10:53,990
things like that.

2343
02:10:53,990 --> 02:10:56,330
Did that affect your family?

2344
02:10:56,330 --> 02:11:00,960
Did these post-war political
events affect your family?

2345
02:11:00,960 --> 02:11:02,530
Absolutely.

2346
02:11:02,530 --> 02:11:03,330
In what way?

2347
02:11:03,330 --> 02:11:04,980
Certainly upset my dad.

2348
02:11:04,980 --> 02:11:08,940
So my dad was trying
to get the factory back

2349
02:11:08,940 --> 02:11:11,970
after the end of the war.

2350
02:11:11,970 --> 02:11:16,830
And it just got very,
very complicated.

2351
02:11:16,830 --> 02:11:19,920
And my understanding
is he was on the verge,

2352
02:11:19,920 --> 02:11:22,830
or getting close to
getting the factory back

2353
02:11:22,830 --> 02:11:24,870
and starting it up again.

2354
02:11:24,870 --> 02:11:28,200
Well, communists came into
power and they nationalized it.

2355
02:11:28,200 --> 02:11:31,890
Because at one point, he had
up to 50 employees or somewhere

2356
02:11:31,890 --> 02:11:33,450
around that figure.

2357
02:11:33,450 --> 02:11:36,540
Well, it was-- and we spent--

2358
02:11:36,540 --> 02:11:41,290
even when I came to the
States, I went back to Prague.

2359
02:11:41,290 --> 02:11:45,240
I hired-- Mrs. [? Chermakova ?].

2360
02:11:45,240 --> 02:11:46,770
She was a character.

2361
02:11:46,770 --> 02:11:50,280
I went into her office near
the main railroad station,

2362
02:11:50,280 --> 02:11:55,170
and I've never seen so
many stacks of folders

2363
02:11:55,170 --> 02:11:58,950
as the last time I
went to the library.

2364
02:11:58,950 --> 02:12:02,280
Anyway we're trying to

get some recompensation.

2365

02:12:02,280 --> 02:12:05,550

And about 20 years
later, I think

2366

02:12:05,550 --> 02:12:10,400

I got a check for about
\$1,500 for that factory.

2367

02:12:10,400 --> 02:12:10,900

So--

2368

02:12:10,900 --> 02:12:19,040

2369

02:12:19,040 --> 02:12:21,410

Well, you eventually--
you eventually

2370

02:12:21,410 --> 02:12:24,530

leave Czechoslovakia.

2371

02:12:24,530 --> 02:12:27,680

We do, in 1948.

2372

02:12:27,680 --> 02:12:29,810

So my mom and I got the visas.

2373

02:12:29,810 --> 02:12:32,060

And it took them
almost two years

2374

02:12:32,060 --> 02:12:37,180

to get the Czech visa, because
the quota was very small based

2375

02:12:37,180 --> 02:12:41,450

on the 1924 population
of the United States.

2376

02:12:41,450 --> 02:12:45,350

But my dad was still trying
to get some money out

2377
02:12:45,350 --> 02:12:47,240
of Prague, out of--

2378
02:12:47,240 --> 02:12:52,870
he also had partial ownership
of a building, or something.

2379
02:12:52,870 --> 02:12:54,890
And he wanted to
keep doing that.

2380
02:12:54,890 --> 02:12:57,760
So it's just my mother
and I and my father

2381
02:12:57,760 --> 02:13:01,780
get on a train from
Prague to Amsterdam.

2382
02:13:01,780 --> 02:13:05,560
He gets off at the last
stop in Czechoslovakia,

2383
02:13:05,560 --> 02:13:07,840
because he doesn't
have an American visa.

2384
02:13:07,840 --> 02:13:09,850
I mean, we knew that.

2385
02:13:09,850 --> 02:13:13,670
So he goes back, and there's
another 2 and 1/2 years

2386
02:13:13,670 --> 02:13:16,130
when I don't see him.

2387
02:13:16,130 --> 02:13:21,440
One year he's in Prague,
finally gets a French visa.

2388

02:13:21,440 --> 02:13:28,550

He goes to Wiesenburg and works
for French furniture dealer,

2389

02:13:28,550 --> 02:13:33,380

and then comes to the
States in April 1951.

2390

02:13:33,380 --> 02:13:35,140

How did you get
an American visa?

2391

02:13:35,140 --> 02:13:38,030

2392

02:13:38,030 --> 02:13:43,690

Well, there was the quota, and
I guess our numbers came up.

2393

02:13:43,690 --> 02:13:44,360

OK.

2394

02:13:44,360 --> 02:13:45,090

OK.

2395

02:13:45,090 --> 02:13:46,402

Did you need sponsors?

2396

02:13:46,402 --> 02:13:47,860

Did you need sponsors
to get into--

2397

02:13:47,860 --> 02:13:53,410

Yes, so my two
cou-- again, Marc--

2398

02:13:53,410 --> 02:14:00,270

Markus, who got out of
Vienna just around Anschluss

2399

02:14:00,270 --> 02:14:02,650

came to the States.

2400
02:14:02,650 --> 02:14:06,300
Maryanne [? Aldheim ?],,
this is the father.

2401
02:14:06,300 --> 02:14:09,230
Her father was a major
stamp dealer in Vienna.

2402
02:14:09,230 --> 02:14:14,490
And that's the family, they
perished, and she survived.

2403
02:14:14,490 --> 02:14:19,470
Husband couldn't get an
American visa because,

2404
02:14:19,470 --> 02:14:23,760
again, trying to get his parents
to come out, didn't happen.

2405
02:14:23,760 --> 02:14:26,600
He spent the war in Shanghai.

2406
02:14:26,600 --> 02:14:28,710
And just yesterday,
or two days ago,

2407
02:14:28,710 --> 02:14:31,320
I saw the preview
of the new film

2408
02:14:31,320 --> 02:14:35,070
about Shanghai, Safe
Harbor, which is

2409
02:14:35,070 --> 02:14:37,685
going to be on PBS next week.

2410
02:14:37,685 --> 02:14:38,400
Great.

2411

02:14:38,400 --> 02:14:40,810

I kept looking at
the film to see

2412

02:14:40,810 --> 02:14:43,830

if I could recognize this face.

2413

02:14:43,830 --> 02:14:45,600

I didn't, but it was astounding.

2414

02:14:45,600 --> 02:14:49,110

20,000 Jews saved there.

2415

02:14:49,110 --> 02:14:51,330

So they were our sponsors.

2416

02:14:51,330 --> 02:14:55,070

They sponsored our visit.

2417

02:14:55,070 --> 02:14:57,900

OK.

2418

02:14:57,900 --> 02:15:01,200

Can I just jump in
one other thing that

2419

02:15:01,200 --> 02:15:04,570

happened with the cognitive?

2420

02:15:04,570 --> 02:15:06,670

So I was a young
assistant professor

2421

02:15:06,670 --> 02:15:08,620

at a college in New Jersey.

2422

02:15:08,620 --> 02:15:10,270

I'm sitting in my office.

2423

02:15:10,270 --> 02:15:12,370

These four students come in.

2424
02:15:12,370 --> 02:15:16,090
They're very upset,
young woman crying.

2425
02:15:16,090 --> 02:15:20,650
One of my colleagues turned
out to be a Holocaust denier.

2426
02:15:20,650 --> 02:15:27,100
And in a sociology
class, it was in 1993

2427
02:15:27,100 --> 02:15:30,640
when Schindler's List
was released as a film,

2428
02:15:30,640 --> 02:15:33,730
he questioned the number
of Jews in the camps

2429
02:15:33,730 --> 02:15:35,530
and what really happened.

2430
02:15:35,530 --> 02:15:38,530
And he had a handout.

2431
02:15:38,530 --> 02:15:42,990
I have a paragraph of
his handout in the book.

2432
02:15:42,990 --> 02:15:46,020
He says the actual number,
according to the latest

2433
02:15:46,020 --> 02:15:50,310
research, it was only
700,000 to 800,000 Jews

2434
02:15:50,310 --> 02:15:52,410
who perished in the camps.

2435

02:15:52,410 --> 02:15:54,690
And the reason they
perished is the Germans

2436
02:15:54,690 --> 02:15:59,580
didn't have enough food
themselves to feed them.

2437
02:15:59,580 --> 02:16:03,000
I talk about the
cognitive dissonance here.

2438
02:16:03,000 --> 02:16:05,820
And so these kids
asked me to come--

2439
02:16:05,820 --> 02:16:07,650
they wanted to have him fired.

2440
02:16:07,650 --> 02:16:08,610
Well, he had tenure.

2441
02:16:08,610 --> 02:16:10,410
You don't lose your
job just because you're

2442
02:16:10,410 --> 02:16:12,960
lying through your teeth.

2443
02:16:12,960 --> 02:16:16,650
And that got me started on
becoming a Holocaust educator,

2444
02:16:16,650 --> 02:16:19,770
to really focus on that.

2445
02:16:19,770 --> 02:16:23,130
So I somehow wanted
to include that in.

2446
02:16:23,130 --> 02:16:26,950
Well, I think it's important
and I'm glad that you did.

2447
02:16:26,950 --> 02:16:27,900
I'm glad that you did.

2448
02:16:27,900 --> 02:16:36,139
It is-- it leads up to kind of
my final question, which is--

2449
02:16:36,139 --> 02:16:40,639
which was, what is the most
important-- why do you do this?

2450
02:16:40,639 --> 02:16:44,719
What is it that you'd
want people to take away

2451
02:16:44,719 --> 02:16:47,719
from the interview
that we've had,

2452
02:16:47,719 --> 02:16:51,080
the experiences
that you've shared,

2453
02:16:51,080 --> 02:16:54,980
and how would you like
them to understand

2454
02:16:54,980 --> 02:16:58,370
what you have shared,
what you have explained?

2455
02:16:58,370 --> 02:17:00,290
And we touched on it
when you were talking

2456
02:17:00,290 --> 02:17:02,240
about cognitive dissonance.

2457
02:17:02,240 --> 02:17:06,920
But this is sort of
the final question.

2458

02:17:06,920 --> 02:17:11,595

How would you-- how
would you address it?

2459

02:17:11,595 --> 02:17:13,840

Oh, boy.

2460

02:17:13,840 --> 02:17:18,209

Well, first of all, I
think all humans are alike

2461

02:17:18,209 --> 02:17:21,209

in some fundamental ways.

2462

02:17:21,209 --> 02:17:22,959

And they have a right to live.

2463

02:17:22,959 --> 02:17:27,719

They have a right to do the best
they can to develop themselves,

2464

02:17:27,719 --> 02:17:29,639

to love others.

2465

02:17:29,639 --> 02:17:38,900

And it's-- one of my jobs is to
try and support people who are

2466

02:17:38,900 --> 02:17:41,180

learning about the
world, who are growing,

2467

02:17:41,180 --> 02:17:45,200

who are grappling with truth,
trying to understand how does

2468

02:17:45,200 --> 02:17:49,350

one survive so that
everybody else can survive.

2469

02:17:49,350 --> 02:17:53,850

And so education is the

avenue that I've chosen.

2470
02:17:53,850 --> 02:17:55,040
I like to teach.

2471
02:17:55,040 --> 02:17:57,129
I like to work with students.

2472
02:17:57,129 --> 02:18:00,620
And I like to examine
what happened.

2473
02:18:00,620 --> 02:18:05,430
And I'm hoping that in a
way that I encourage people

2474
02:18:05,430 --> 02:18:13,719
to seek the truth and to do
things that support diversity,

2475
02:18:13,719 --> 02:18:20,719
oppose racism, antisemitism, all
of these terrible anti things

2476
02:18:20,719 --> 02:18:24,770
that prevent full
human development.

2477
02:18:24,770 --> 02:18:28,660
And so that's my little
part, and in a way, honoring

2478
02:18:28,660 --> 02:18:33,670
the relatives who perished,
and my dad who survived,

2479
02:18:33,670 --> 02:18:36,959
and others.

2480
02:18:36,959 --> 02:18:38,340
Thank you.

2481

02:18:38,340 --> 02:18:41,250
Thank you very, very much.

2482
02:18:41,250 --> 02:18:42,809
Thank you.

2483
02:18:42,809 --> 02:18:44,730
And I will say--

2484
02:18:44,730 --> 02:18:49,020
I will say that this then
concludes the United States

2485
02:18:49,020 --> 02:18:52,950
Holocaust Memorial Museum
interview with Mr. Peter

2486
02:18:52,950 --> 02:19:01,530
Stein on September 4,
2020, in Washington DC.

2487
02:19:01,530 --> 02:19:03,209
Thank you very, very much.

2488
02:19:03,209 --> 02:19:04,935
You've been a
wonderful interviewer.

2489
02:19:04,935 --> 02:19:05,602
I appreciate it.

2490
02:19:05,602 --> 02:19:07,099
Thank you.

2491
02:19:07,099 --> 02:19:08,000