

1
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:38,940

2
00:00:38,940 --> 00:00:42,450
--then the reasoning that
could soften the blow.

3
00:00:42,450 --> 00:00:42,950
All right.

4
00:00:42,950 --> 00:00:51,790

5
00:00:51,790 --> 00:00:59,380
So you see, as far as the
separation between my mother

6
00:00:59,380 --> 00:01:05,290
and me and my father, we had
several separations, so to say.

7
00:01:05,290 --> 00:01:10,480
The first one was caused when
we all left Krakow and went

8
00:01:10,480 --> 00:01:15,250
towards the Eastern frontier
hoping that the Germans would

9
00:01:15,250 --> 00:01:17,980
not get there--

10
00:01:17,980 --> 00:01:19,420
would not catch up with us.

11
00:01:19,420 --> 00:01:23,200
Actually, they did not,
but the Russians did.

12
00:01:23,200 --> 00:01:25,630
Then, since my

father was a judge,

13
00:01:25,630 --> 00:01:29,470
he felt threatened under
the Russian occupation.

14
00:01:29,470 --> 00:01:34,390
And he felt that he
had to try to get out.

15
00:01:34,390 --> 00:01:42,460
And this is why he and my uncle
left us alone in Lv³v and they

16
00:01:42,460 --> 00:01:45,350
went to Vilna illegally.

17
00:01:45,350 --> 00:01:48,070
Let's hang on one second.

18
00:01:48,070 --> 00:01:48,840
--the separation.

19
00:01:48,840 --> 00:01:50,880
With a separation, that's right.

20
00:01:50,880 --> 00:01:52,890
OK.

21
00:01:52,890 --> 00:01:55,860
The first and the most
important separation

22
00:01:55,860 --> 00:02:01,920
was when my father decided to go
to Lithuania with his brother.

23
00:02:01,920 --> 00:02:05,760
My mother was absolutely
beside herself.

24
00:02:05,760 --> 00:02:09,449

And forever-- you know,
I have letters from her

25
00:02:09,449 --> 00:02:14,670
to my father where she
keeps harping on this.

26
00:02:14,670 --> 00:02:17,940
"I told you that this
would be a separation

27
00:02:17,940 --> 00:02:22,080
and that we would never
see each other again."

28
00:02:22,080 --> 00:02:25,770
Well, it turned out that
he was right and not she.

29
00:02:25,770 --> 00:02:30,360
That if he acted on emotions
alone, he would be with us

30
00:02:30,360 --> 00:02:32,730
and God knows what would
have happened to him.

31
00:02:32,730 --> 00:02:34,860
This way it was better
for us because we

32
00:02:34,860 --> 00:02:38,400
had the certainty of a better
life in Russia because of him

33
00:02:38,400 --> 00:02:41,560
and his brother being
already in America.

34
00:02:41,560 --> 00:02:45,930
And he certainly escaped
a great deal of discomfort

35

00:02:45,930 --> 00:02:49,200
and, who knows, maybe even
he would have lost his life

36
00:02:49,200 --> 00:02:51,750
if he had stayed in Russia.

37
00:02:51,750 --> 00:02:54,180
So rationally
speaking, of course,

38
00:02:54,180 --> 00:02:56,580
it was the right
decision, especially

39
00:02:56,580 --> 00:02:59,880
knowing with hindsight
how it all ended.

40
00:02:59,880 --> 00:03:02,820
But at the time, it
was very difficult.

41
00:03:02,820 --> 00:03:05,190
And knowing that
he was, of course,

42
00:03:05,190 --> 00:03:08,790
in Vilna and we were in
Lv³v, which is not very far.

43
00:03:08,790 --> 00:03:11,010
There was a border
between us, true.

44
00:03:11,010 --> 00:03:13,800
But we were not too
far from each other.

45
00:03:13,800 --> 00:03:17,430
I have my postcards which I
wrote to him at the time from

46

00:03:17,430 --> 00:03:19,650
LvÃ³v, and they are perfectly--

47
00:03:19,650 --> 00:03:24,720
as if he were traveling
in some foreign country.

48
00:03:24,720 --> 00:03:27,540
When we were deported
to Russia, then things

49
00:03:27,540 --> 00:03:31,860
became looking a
little bit more hairy.

50
00:03:31,860 --> 00:03:34,810
And this was sort of the
second separation that we had.

51
00:03:34,810 --> 00:03:38,190
Because we realized that we
were now separated, really,

52
00:03:38,190 --> 00:03:42,000
by hundreds and
thousands of miles.

53
00:03:42,000 --> 00:03:45,540
And especially when they left
Lithuania and went to Japan

54
00:03:45,540 --> 00:03:47,730
and eventually to America--

55
00:03:47,730 --> 00:03:51,330
well, that was
really a separation.

56
00:03:51,330 --> 00:03:56,580
For us, in those days, this
was an unbridgeable gap.

57
00:03:56,580 --> 00:03:59,920

America was the
end of the world.

58
00:03:59,920 --> 00:04:04,860
And so these were
all difficult times.

59
00:04:04,860 --> 00:04:09,090
And as I looked through my
mother's mail to my father,

60
00:04:09,090 --> 00:04:15,630
I can see every now and
then a note of bitterness.

61
00:04:15,630 --> 00:04:19,279
That we have it-- that's
it's so difficult, et cetera.

62
00:04:19,279 --> 00:04:24,240
And that we should
never have done it.

63
00:04:24,240 --> 00:04:30,390
My father, with all
his love for us,

64
00:04:30,390 --> 00:04:35,760
pretty soon lost the memory
of what Russia is like,

65
00:04:35,760 --> 00:04:39,900
and he would share with us
moments of life in America.

66
00:04:39,900 --> 00:04:44,190
Which made her angry because
he was obviously having

67
00:04:44,190 --> 00:04:45,970
a good time here.

68
00:04:45,970 --> 00:04:51,330

And so all this was
part of those pains,

69
00:04:51,330 --> 00:04:55,140
what families have to go
through when they are separated.

70
00:04:55,140 --> 00:04:58,200
Little did we know at the
time that the whole family--

71
00:04:58,200 --> 00:05:03,480
all surviving family-- will
be reunited in this country.

72
00:05:03,480 --> 00:05:09,300
So that my two grandmothers
came and died here in New York.

73
00:05:09,300 --> 00:05:15,150
Of course, my mother and
I, my aunt and her son,

74
00:05:15,150 --> 00:05:20,490
who is now a physician
in San Antonio, Texas.

75
00:05:20,490 --> 00:05:26,010
And all other living
members of our family

76
00:05:26,010 --> 00:05:33,430
who happen to be in Europe,
they all eventually came.

77
00:05:33,430 --> 00:05:36,150
So this is why I'm saying
that, yes, separations

78
00:05:36,150 --> 00:05:37,330
are difficult at the time.

79
00:05:37,330 --> 00:05:44,190

But if you are lucky, it
all works out for the best.

80
00:05:44,190 --> 00:05:48,450
Tell me why your father
got Sugihara visas.

81
00:05:48,450 --> 00:05:51,990
Well, this was all
hope that we might

82
00:05:51,990 --> 00:05:56,760
be able to leave one day in
the same way that he did.

83
00:05:56,760 --> 00:05:59,120
Could you start with my
father got to Sugihara visas?

84
00:05:59,120 --> 00:06:00,780
I'm sorry, yes.

85
00:06:00,780 --> 00:06:03,960
My father and my uncle
got Sugihara visas,

86
00:06:03,960 --> 00:06:06,960
like so many other
people who were living--

87
00:06:06,960 --> 00:06:09,630
the refugees living in Vilna.

88
00:06:09,630 --> 00:06:14,640
And he got the same papers
for my mother and me

89
00:06:14,640 --> 00:06:17,170
and from my aunt and her son.

90
00:06:17,170 --> 00:06:20,040
Because he hoped
that eventually we

91
00:06:20,040 --> 00:06:22,860
would be allowed to
leave in the same way

92
00:06:22,860 --> 00:06:26,490
as my father and my uncle left.

93
00:06:26,490 --> 00:06:29,100
That is that we would be
released from the camp

94
00:06:29,100 --> 00:06:34,020
and allowed to go to Japan,
and then from Japan to America.

95
00:06:34,020 --> 00:06:36,330
Well, this was a pipe dream.

96
00:06:36,330 --> 00:06:40,110
But one lived on pipe
dreams in those days.

97
00:06:40,110 --> 00:06:44,740
This is why he got us
this Argentinian visa.

98
00:06:44,740 --> 00:06:47,990
This is why he got us
the Chilean citizenship.

99
00:06:47,990 --> 00:06:53,660
All this ended
without any success.

100
00:06:53,660 --> 00:06:56,630
But it was all part
of the same pattern--

101
00:06:56,630 --> 00:07:02,606
to do everything,
to leave no corner

102

00:07:02,606 --> 00:07:07,670

unturned in order to help
the families which were

103

00:07:07,670 --> 00:07:10,180

in this situation in Russia.

104

00:07:10,180 --> 00:07:13,290

105

00:07:13,290 --> 00:07:15,960

How do you--

106

00:07:15,960 --> 00:07:17,670

I mean, obviously
your life in America

107

00:07:17,670 --> 00:07:20,650

has been very successful.

108

00:07:20,650 --> 00:07:24,670

How do you reconcile
the life you had?

109

00:07:24,670 --> 00:07:29,160

Well, you know the
thought of the six

110

00:07:29,160 --> 00:07:34,770

years of the war and
my experiences there

111

00:07:34,770 --> 00:07:39,240

and my existence in this country
and my career in this country

112

00:07:39,240 --> 00:07:46,530

make me feel completely
like a schizo.

113

00:07:46,530 --> 00:07:52,980

That is, I have lived to

absolutely separate existences.

114
00:07:52,980 --> 00:07:58,560
And, very often, I feel
that I am two persons.

115
00:07:58,560 --> 00:08:04,170
That my existence in Russia
is something which I cannot

116
00:08:04,170 --> 00:08:07,200
connect in any way with
what I'm doing now.

117
00:08:07,200 --> 00:08:09,240
That is, my existence
in Russia-- note,

118
00:08:09,240 --> 00:08:13,240
I have used my Russian
experience in my profession.

119
00:08:13,240 --> 00:08:17,220
But I mean on a personal
level, my life in Russia

120
00:08:17,220 --> 00:08:22,510
and my life in this country are
two entirely different things.

121
00:08:22,510 --> 00:08:27,540
Not just different settings,
but different actors,

122
00:08:27,540 --> 00:08:32,980
Two different persons in
these two different settings.

123
00:08:32,980 --> 00:08:35,820
So it's an odd-- it doesn't
make it difficult for me.

124
00:08:35,820 --> 00:08:38,580

I mean, I'm not a
schizo in this sense.

125
00:08:38,580 --> 00:08:42,480
But it is a funny feeling
when you think of yourself

126
00:08:42,480 --> 00:08:43,470
as somebody else.

127
00:08:43,470 --> 00:08:46,460

128
00:08:46,460 --> 00:08:49,440
[COUGHS] I'm sorry.

129
00:08:49,440 --> 00:08:51,880
I've got a cold.

130
00:08:51,880 --> 00:08:54,210
Any questions from you guys?

131
00:08:54,210 --> 00:08:56,780
I think that was--

132
00:08:56,780 --> 00:08:57,620
You rolling in?

133
00:08:57,620 --> 00:08:58,360
I am.

134
00:08:58,360 --> 00:08:59,850
Room tone for
Professor Schenker.

135
00:08:59,850 --> 00:09:16,170

136
00:09:16,170 --> 00:09:18,320
End room tone.

137

00:09:18,320 --> 00:11:17,000

Contact reference@ushmm.org for further information about this collection