

--then the reasoning that could soften the blow.

All right.

So you see, as far as the separation between my mother and me and my father, we had several separations, so to say. The first one was caused when we all left Krakow and went towards the Eastern frontier hoping that the Germans would not get there-- would not catch up with us. Actually, they did not, but the Russians did.

Then, since my father was a judge, he felt threatened under the Russian occupation. And he felt that he had to try to get out. And this is why he and my uncle left us alone in Lv³v and they went to Vilna illegally.

Let's hang on one second.

--the separation.

With a separation, that's right.

OK.

The first and the most important separation was when my father decided to go to Lithuania with his brother. My mother was absolutely beside herself. And forever-- you know, I have letters from her to my father where she keeps harping on this. "I told you that this would be a separation and that we would never see each other again."

Well, it turned out that he was right and not she. That if he acted on emotions alone, he would be with us and God knows what would have happened to him. This way it was better for us because we had the certainty of a better life in Russia because of him and his brother being already in America. And he certainly escaped a great deal of discomfort and, who knows, maybe even he would have lost his life if he had stayed in Russia.

So rationally speaking, of course, it was the right decision, especially knowing with hindsight how it all ended. But at the time, it was very difficult. And knowing that he was, of course, in Vilna and we were in Lv³v, which is not very far. There was a border between us, true. But we were not too far from each other.

I have my postcards which I wrote to him at the time from Lv³v, and they are perfectly-- as if he were traveling in some foreign country. When we were deported to Russia, then things became looking a little bit more hairy. And this was sort of the second separation that we had. Because we realized that we were now separated, really, by hundreds and thousands of miles. And especially when they left Lithuania and went to Japan and eventually to America-- well, that was really a separation. For us, in those days, this was an unbridgeable gap. America was the end of the world.

And so these were all difficult times. And as I looked through my mother's mail to my father, I can see every now and then a note of bitterness. That we have it-- that's it's so difficult, et cetera. And that we should never have done it. My father, with all his love for us, pretty soon lost the memory of what Russia is like, and he would share with us moments of life in America. Which made her angry because he was obviously having a good time here.

And so all this was part of those pains, what families have to go through when they are separated. Little did we know at the time that the whole family-- all surviving family-- will be reunited in this country. So that my two grandmothers came and died here in New York. Of course, my mother and I, my aunt and her son, who is now a physician in San Antonio, Texas. And all other living members of our family who happen to be in Europe, they all eventually came.

So this is why I'm saying that, yes, separations are difficult at the time. But if you are lucky, it all works out for the best.

Tell me why your father got Sugihara visas.

Well, this was all hope that we might be able to leave one day in the same way that he did.

Could you start with my father got to Sugihara visas?

I'm sorry, yes. My father and my uncle got Sugihara visas, like so many other people who were living-- the refugees living in Vilna. And he got the same papers for my mother and me and from my aunt and her son. Because he hoped that eventually we would be allowed to leave in the same way as my father and my uncle left. That is that we would be released from the camp and allowed to go to Japan, and then from Japan to America.

Well, this was a pipe dream. But one lived on pipe dreams in those days. This is why he got us this Argentinian visa. This is why he got us the Chilean citizenship. All this ended without any success. But it was all part of the same pattern-- to do everything, to leave no corner unturned in order to help the families which were in this situation in Russia.

How do you-- I mean, obviously your life in America has been very successful. How do you reconcile the life you had?

Well, you know the thought of the six years of the war and my experiences there and my existence in this country and my career in this country make me feel completely like a schizo. That is, I have lived to absolutely separate existences. And, very often, I feel that I am two persons.

That my existence in Russia is something which I cannot connect in any way with what I'm doing now. That is, my existence in Russia-- note, I have used my Russian experience in my profession. But I mean on a personal level, my life in Russia and my life in this country are two entirely different things. Not just different settings, but different actors, Two different persons in these two different settings.

So it's an odd-- it doesn't make it difficult for me. I mean, I'm not a schizo in this sense. But it is a funny feeling when you think of yourself as somebody else.

[COUGHS] I'm sorry. I've got a cold. Any questions from you guys? I think that was--

You rolling in?

I am.

Room tone for Professor Schenker. End room tone.