



## Chapter 7

**Can I just ask you to sum up for people who won't realise the tremendous risk that saviours put themselves in. Can you just tell me the religion of the man who was looking out for you and the actual risk that he was putting himself and his family at?**

Well Vytautas Rinkevicius like a lot of Lithuanians was a Catholic, a Roman Catholic, apart from being a wonderful man he was also a religious man. He had a family and if and when they discovered people, Lithuanians, hiding Jews they would not only execute the Jew but also the person who hid them. And not only him but the family. And I remember, you know, saying that he didn't only risk his life, he had a wife and a child, only one at the time, Monica, and he said "Doesn't matter, nobody is going to find you and if they do, that is what I have to do". He was absolutely devoted to saving lives, he was absolutely horrified by what was happening in the country and he was not alone. The other man called [Garkovsky] who was the bookkeeper had a child which he was hiding and that child, now there you are, there is good and bad you know. He lived and he had this little Jewish child belonging to an engineer, a Jewish engineer, a neighbour denounced them to the authorities to say that they had got this Jewish child. And they came, they pounced, they arrested him, they killed the child, and somehow, which was maybe I shouldn't tell you this because I just said that they executed but Garkauskas came out of jail. We found all that out while we were in hiding because we thought Garkauskas might have been arrested because of us and you've read in the story that] Vytautas came and said "no, no, it's nothing to do with us you are safe, it is the child". And you could do lots with bribery and I think somebody must have bribed the guards, the prison authorities to let him out. So he didn't perish. But 9 out of 10 people who hid Jews were executed and not alone but with their families. Now Vytautas took that risk gladly, happily. So how can you speak of writers, gentiles, medals. I don't know. I am often wondering whether if I were in his position would I have risked my family to save somebody's life? I don't know the answer to that. Especially if a child was at risk. So I've got a friend who came to see me in the ghetto and who said "I'm so sorry to see you in this mess." A Lithuanian friend, a non-Jewish friend. And she said, "I'm sorry I can't help you with anything but if you want to come and live with us you are very welcome". Now I think – again I probably shouldn't say that but a lot of courage is also not realising dangers. You know? A lot of – you know, I mean

you don't think that that is going to happen to you. You don't think we are going to be discovered. And that's something that you want to do, so you do it. And then disaster can strike.

**You did manage to go back and meet your rescuer, your saviours again after the war.**

Yes, yes the first time I tried to go – you know there was the cold war on and in 1964 long after Stalin had died I said “I'm going to go to Lithuania” and we applied for visas to go to Lithuania and the Foreign Office said OK we'll grant you a visa but we cannot take responsibility for your safety. If anything happens it's on your visa because you've been born and they have prior claim. So Joseph said “That's it, you're not going”. I said “Yes I am going, if you're not going I'm going alone”. He said “What do you mean you're going”. I said “Joseph, I guarantee you that I will come back safe and sound, nothing will happen.” So the first time I went on my own. It was quite, quite, quite amazing. I was not allowed into Lithuania, Lithuania was still considered a sensitive after war zone, it was too near the border, so I had to go to Riga and both Rinkevicius and Macenavicius came to Riga and we had a wonderful time, I have still got lots of photographs of the first '64 Riga trip. Not only did I have Vytautas and Antanas Macenavicus there I also had my cousin Irena who still lives there but who was there, who had survived and still lived in Lithuania and although my parents were both dead, in Lithuania lived the only survivor of that generation who was a cousin of my father's called [?Anushka]. And [?Anushka] was sort of in loco parentis for my brother who was there, for my cousin who was there, so we have lots of photographs with all of us and Vytautas and Antanas. So that was the first time. After that it was already easier then Joseph came once and then we all went to the... a visit to Lithuania is always very emotional because we go to the fort, we went to the fort, we saw where... and there's so many stories that you get told that you always hear stories that you hadn't heard. Horror stories mostly. But you also hear about saviours which is... I went to the ceremony in Lithuania when they were giving awards to righteous Gentiles.

So Lithuania has got a lot of meaning both good and bad.