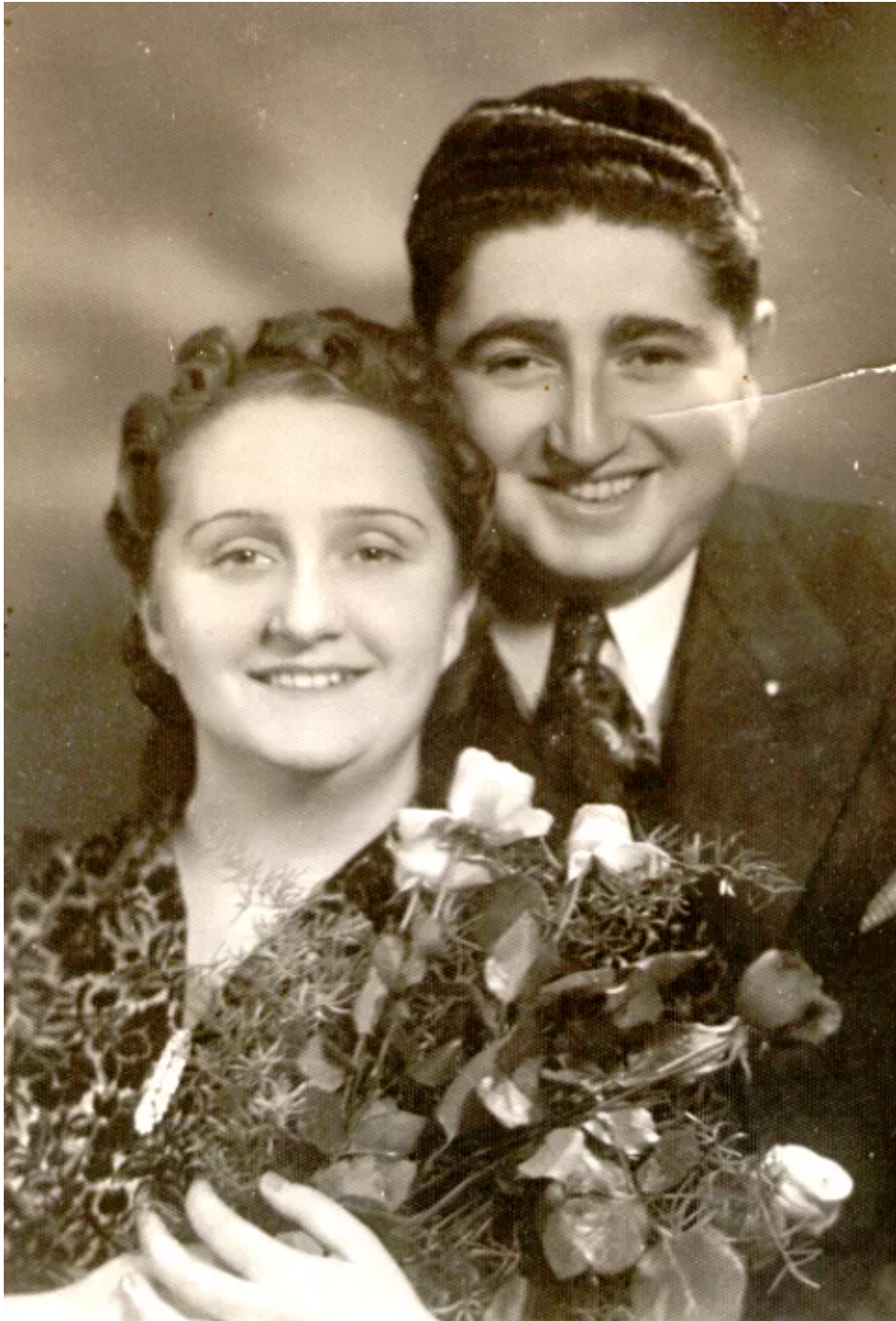


Samuel Berkovits With His Wife Sarah



This is my brother Samuel Berkovits with his wife Sarah. The picture was taken in Tallinn in 1939, after their wedding. There were five children in the family. The eldest brother Samuel was named after my maternal grandfather. He was born on 4th April 1915. My elder sister Ida was born on 11th September 1916. My second sister Vera was born on 14th September 1918. Her Jewish name was Dveira. Rudolf was born on 9th November 1919. I, the youngest, was born in 1922. I was named Liya. The war was unleashed on 22nd June 1941. We were on the verge of staying in Estonia, but fortunately my elder brother Samuel insisted on our evacuation. We left on 9th July 1941. Samuel was called-up and was to be on the frontline within two days. Shortly before war broke out, he married his classmate Sarah Katsev. They had been in love since childhood, either from fifth or sixth grade. Unfortunately they weren't able to live together for a long time. Sarah came to see us

off. I begged her to leave with us, but she refused. Her mother was dying of cancer and Sarah couldn't leave her. Besides, Samuel had already been mobilized and Sarah was afraid that Samuel wouldn't be able to find her if she was evacuated. Sarah's married sister Mary Lurie stayed with her son Hersh as well. Mary was a surgeon. Later, when we came back from evacuation, the warden of the Jewish cemetery told us that they had all been taken during the night to the concentration camp Harku. A couple of nights later, two Estonian men brought the corpses of Mary Lurie and little Hersh to the cemetery. Mary couldn't stand the ordeal of the concentration camp and couldn't bare to see the execution of her little son, so she poisoned him and cut her veins. Those wonderful Estonian guys brought their bodies to the Jewish cemetery and asked for them to be buried in accordance with Jewish law. The warden did as she asked, though according to Jewish law, those who commit suicide are not meant to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. But if you think deeper, Mary and her son were murdered by the fascists. Sarah and her mother were also killed in the Harku concentration camp. My brother Samuel was killed on 10th January 1943 in the battle in the vicinity of Velikiye Luki.