

Hirsh-Leib Tsivian



This photograph shows my father, Hirsh-Leib Tsivian. It was taken in Tallinn in 1940. For his whole life, even in the hardest times, my father was a true believer. He started his morning by washing his hands and putting on his tefillin. He prayed at home several times a day, often went to the synagogue for evening prayers, kept the Yom Kippur fast, and attended the synagogue every Saturday and on holidays. After our family moved to Tallinn, my father worked a lot. He helped my mother by setting up the workshops, purchasing equipment and fabrics, maintained financial affairs, and then, in the middle of the 1930s, he opened a furniture shop of his own. They both built and sold furniture there. In June 1940 the Soviet regime was established in Estonia and

nationalization began. Someone suggested a resourceful idea to my father. In order to display his loyalty to the Soviet authorities father gave both of our shops to 'spetstorg', that is to the trade network belonging to the NKVD. He continued working there - he just wasn't the proprietor any more. But this didn't help him. In June 1941, my father was deported and he spent five years in a Soviet camp in the Northern Urals.