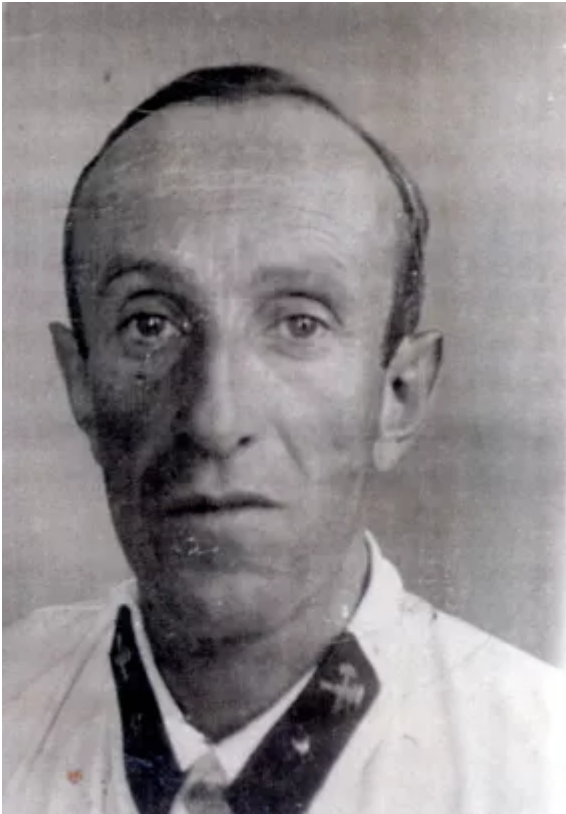


Maks Schiff.



This is my father, Rene-Maks-Aleksander-Johann Schiff. He took picture when he was visiting us in evacuation. I do not know the place where the picture was taken. It happened in 1942. This is a copy.

My parents got married in 1930. I do not know what father did for a living when he was single. When married, he became a traveling salesman. She was not a born salesman, but strange as it might be he did well. The merchants are businesslike people and they liked dealing with an honest man, whose word had weight. My father was the man for whom honor was dearer than life. But his character was very complicated. He was a dictator. It was easier to respect him than love. I do not know why, but father lost his job in a while. Fortunately, mother made pretty good money, which helped our family get buy. Father found a job only in a year.

Probably, father loved me in a special way. He did not show it to me. He was very strict, even cruel at times- he never play with me, did not take me for a walk. He was very rigid even when I was a small child.

In 1940 Estonia was annexed to Soviet Union. My father was a traveling salesman- all commercial enterprises were owned by state, therefore his profession was not needed. He was offered a position of the director of store. Father had never dealt with such work, but he cope wit than. Then he was in charge of two stores. Tallinn denizens worked there in good faith. They did not steal in contrast to soviet people. So, father got along with them.

My father, who was fluent in German, closely followed the events in Germany from the moment when Hitler came to power. Of course, he was informed in a much better way than most Estonian

Jews. I remember that he turned the radio on and listened in Hitler's speech. Only due to the father we were evacuated. My father did not have the right to leave as he was supposed to be drafted in the lines. He persuaded mother not to linger with evacuation.

Father was mobilized in the army after our departure for evacuation, but Stalin's government did not trust the inhabitants of Estonia, recently annexed to USSR, and all mobilized in the army were sent in the labor camps. There the mobilized were in the position of the camp prisoners. They were given skimpy food for them just to stand on their feet. They were exhausted with physical labor. Many guys, even the young ones died by hunger, beriberi. Father was made to work with cement-mixer. I do not know how he managed to survive. In 1942 Estonian corps was established in Red Army and saved those Estonians who had to trudge in labor camps. Father was also drafted there as a supply officer. He had great organizational skills. He was supposed to receive the freight in the rear and accompany them to the front. Fathers' rank was the captain of Red Army. Father visited us in evacuation there when he got a chance. It was a very short visit, he was just passing by. The second time father came in Tashkent was in 1944 when we had already left for Tallinn. That visit was doomed for father. He caught typhus fever there and died in the hospital on 19 December 1944. There was a typhus fever epidemic in Tashkent and people were buried in common graves. We even do not know where father was buried.