

Rebecca Schiff With Her Sisters And Brother



This is my mother with her sisters and brother, who survived holocaust. From left to right sitting: my mother's younger sister Ida, mother's elder sister Esfir Frank and mother's brother Lazar Sevio. My mother Rebecca Schiff is standing. The picture was made in Tallinn in 1954.

Upon our return from evacuation my mother started working as a manicurist in the salon. My father died in the hospital on 19 December 1944. In 1946 mother got married. Her second husband Arthur Kartner was Estonian. I do not know how they met. All I know is that Arthur's first wife was also a Jew, who perished during the war. He was a dictator, a very obstinate man, but faithful. He was really reliable and honest. Arthur never prevaricated. He was very decent man, but there were very few women who could live with him. He even washed dishes himself as it seemed to him that mother did it worse. He liked to put things in order in mother's purse.

In 1964 Arthur Kastner died. In 1966 mother got married once again. Her husband was a Jew Ruvim Rubinstein.. Mother was 60. Ruvim as almost 15 years older than she, but he looked good- tall, slender and brisk, with thick grey hair. He was a very handsome man with a good posture. Women liked him when he was old. Ruvim was very well educated and tolerant. My mother was his third wife. He got divorced twice. My mother was against divorces considering that a lady was entitled to get married only being a widow. She considered divorces to be even. This is the way she was brought up in her family.

My uncle Lazar gladly welcome soviet regime starting from the fist days. He was a convinced communist. The party enrolled uncle for 2-year party courses, upon completion of which he could get higher education in commerce required for management positions. We had studied in Leningrad for two years, and also managed to obtain diploma in economy apart from those courses. When he came back in Tallinn, he held different posts in commerce. When doctors' plot was took place Lazar was in charge of trade department by the ministry of commerce. He always worked for three people and was very strict with his subordinates. When the doctors' plot started, his subordinates stopped listening to him as they understood that he would be dismissed soon, but he was not dismissed. It was his decision to resign. Even the minister did not want to let him go. Finally, he was talked into staying. He was not touched after Stalin's death. As far as I understand,

it was not so dangerous for uncle Lazar to lose his job, he feared expulsion from the party. It did not happen. Uncle was happy as at that time many Jews were fired.