

Edit Kovacs' Daughter Maria Daragos



Photo of Maria Daragos, my daughter. Vilmos and I had one daughter, Maria. She was born in August 1942. My husband had already been drafted into forced labor in June 1942, but he was allowed to come home to see his newborn baby. He saw her only a few more times before he died in 1945. During the war, in June 1944, my daughter and I, my mother and my sister, and my sister's little son, who was the same age as Maria, were together in a yellow-star house in Nepszinhaz Street. We were crammed into a three-room flat with a dozen other people. The men were in forced labor battalions. In July, the women and children were taken to a stadium from where we would have been deported. A decent Arrow Cross (Hungarian Fascist) man?because

there existed such people as well?told me that everybody with a child under the age of two should try to sneak away, while they would be looking the other way. My family and I went back to the yellow-star house and we were left in peace until the German occupation on October 15, 1944. I married again in 1948. My second husband, Jozsef Schwarz, was born in 1911 in Nadar, Szatmar county (now in Romania). I know nothing about his family and very little about his life before and during the war. I know that he was in a forced labor battalion during the war in Poland. He was not religious at all, but I think that he came from quite a religious family, because when I asked him to come with me to synagogue on the high holidays, he would always say: ?I would do anything, absolutely anything for you, but I am not going to the shul (synagogue) because I have been through such horrible things that I have already expiated all the wrongs I have done.? He died four years after we got married in 1952, and I felt that such a man should be buried in a kitl as any good observant Jew. I got married a third time in 1984?I was not so young then?but he died three years later. He was not Jewish. My daughter did not know that Jozsef was not her real father. I asked him to magyarize his surname to Varnai so that I could change my daughter's name, Weisz (after her father, my first husband), to Varnai, and I could allow her to believe that Jozsef was her father. Jozsef agreed to it readily. But after his death a ?friendly? neighbor told my daughter that Jozsef was only her stepfather. When she asked me why I had never told her this, I replied: ?Jozsef loved you as if you were his own child, and anyway, the last time you and your father saw each other was when you were six months old. Even though you are his daughter inside, you needed, and you received, a father for your life.? Maria graduated from an economic high school and worked as a referee first in a ministry and later in the social services. She has two sons, Zoltan and Tibor. Tibor lost close contact with the family after marrying a gypsy girl. Zoltan, who is a cook, lives with his Bulgarian wife and son at his grandmother's Edit.