

Olga Neuwirthova With Her Daughter Ema Panovova



This is me with my mother, Olga Neuwirthova, nee Bondyova. The photo was taken in Prague in the 1930s.

My mother's first marriage didn't last long. Her husband caught typhus and later he became mentally ill; he was treated in a psychiatric clinic. My mother stayed alone with me, later she got divorced and married to a Russian immigrant. He wasn't a Jew. His name was Doctor Sergej Panov and he was a doctor, too. My grandparents didn't like him, but when the political situation got worse, my grandfather asked him to protect the family.

Doctor Panov adopted me and brought me up. He saved my life because with the help of his colleague doctors he proved at court that I was his daughter and that I was the child of a Jewish mother and a Christian father. He bought the house of my real father in Holic and we lived there.

In 1943 I got the documents which said I was a half-Jewish child. My foster-father, with the help of his friend Kotvan, who worked at the Ministry, could arrange on the basis of the documents, that I was allowed to continue my studies at a secondary school. In 1944 I was accepted to the final year and in the same year I passed my final exams. This was the result of the long struggle of my father: he probably just wanted for me to have a normal life, but actually it was a fight for my life.