

Lea Merenyi



This is me on the balcony of my maternal grandparents' house in Barmen [from 1929: Wuppertal], around 1931. The balcony overlooked the yard of a church, because their house was near a church. I must have been around 17 in this picture. There was a street behind the church, and I saw marches on that street several times. This was already the Hitlerjugend, only I didn't know it. This is a double-storied villa, they were wealthy. They had a double-storied villa, they were wealthy. On the ground floor there was the office, on the first floor the entertainment rooms, the music room and the huge dining room. So they had a really good living. The dining room was very nice and elegant. Above it, on the second floor there were the bedrooms, the living rooms and there was the attic, where we had a small room where we could play. We could do anything, there could be chaos, nobody heard it. There was also a maid's room in the house. My grandparents led a very active social life for quite a while. My grandfather invited big companies. There was a huge dining room, in which there was room for about 20 people, and we, the children, were not allowed to go in there, but there was a smoking-chamber and my younger brother and I stood behind its curtain and peeked in from there. We were curious to see what happened there. If guests came, my parents or grandparents received them on the first floor. Then my grandfather called us to come downstairs and present ourselves, because we were very beautiful kids. And he was proud of us. Grandfather Rappoport and Grandmother Merenyi didn't have children, but our grandfather loved us very much in spite of the fact that we weren't his natural descendants.