

Ilona Seifert's Father Oszkar Riemer In The Roof Terrace Of Their House



My father on the roof terrace of our house in Budapest, in a photo taken sometime in the 1920s. My parents bought this house when they married in 1917. It was a single story house, which they extended by building additional stories on top. We lived in it, and it also housed daddy's bakery and soda-water workshop. Instead of a roof, the house had a terrace, which my parents turned into a lovely garden for their two daughters. Features included a child's sandbox, a flower garden, and a beautiful set of garden furniture. They constructed this garden because the house itself had no garden. Behind the house was father's soda water workshop, a garage for the car, and stables for the horses. When the Arrow-Cross people, the Hungarian Nazis, seized my father's workshop, they found this garden terrace and used it as a base from which to fire at airplanes. One of the planes fired back and hit the house, which was almost completely destroyed. There were eight rooms in our apartment: a master bedroom, a children's room, a parlor, a dining room, a drawing room, and a living room. The parlor was beautiful. It was furnished with gilded furniture, including two large standing mirrors with golden frames. There was also a drawing room for Daddy with a suite of

furniture, a bookshelf and filing cabinet. The living room was very large, and we actually spent the whole day there, even dined there. The dining hall was huge. It was a special room with lovely furniture and carpets, which had to be carefully taken care of. You were not allowed to drop crumbs, or to drag in dirt. We used the dining room whenever we had company. There were always plenty of guests in our house, because at the time, an active social life was very fashionable. My parents usually invited factory owners like themselves, wholesalers, merchants, district borough members and other business people. I loved these guests, and we dressed nicely for these occasions. As entertainment, I sang, and mommy played the piano. My sister did not often come in because she was shy. After supper the women usually went into the parlor for a chat, and the men either stayed in the parlor or went into the drawing room. The children's room was furnished with painted, white furniture. Our 'Fräulein' slept there with us. There was one room just for the live-in cook, and another small room for the maid. No one slept in the kitchen. Naturally, there was a bathroom with running water, and a tub connected to a bathroom stove that had to be heated up. At that time, people took baths only on Sundays. If someone took a bath every day, she was considered a 'bad girl.' But we took baths at least every other day or so.