

Stefan Loewengart

The Family Bing

From the Song of Songs

to the Diesel Engine

From the History of my Family, The Bing Family of Nuremberg.

(From the Song of Songs to the Diesel Motor)

When I wrote down this story for the first time seven years ago in German, it evoked a lively interest far beyond the circle of family and friends.

In order to bring it nearer to the younger generation, mainly in Israel and the U.S.A., I decided to rewrite it in English (with the assistance of Mrs. Susi Levy of Kiriath Bialik) – because this is the language understood by all concerned.

Fortunately I was able to add new information, not contained in the original edition.

I will be happy if I have succeeded in retrieving part of the history of our family for successive generations and in transmitting to them some feeling of continuity.

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Introduction

The ever changing history of European Jewry is reflected in the fates of our own forefathers up to our generation. There is great probability in the assumption that European Jewry stems from a small group, numbering a few thousand heads only, who held important positions in commerce and transport in the Merovingian and Carolinian empire (1). Centuries before the crusades we find our forefathers in the major and minor centres of commerce of Christian Europe up to its outposts in the Eastern World of heathen people. Not only in the trade of money and commodities but also, thanks to their know-how in minting, salt making, glass blowing and dyeing, did they fulfill important functions. They passed through periods of rise and fall, well being and impoverishment and kept their own as long as the government was in the hands of feudal landlords, secular or clerical. There were peaks of autonomous cultural life in cities of the Rhineland, as Mainz, Speyer and Worms and metropolitan cities like Nuernberg and Regensburg.

Contemporaneously, at the end of the so-called Middle Ages, with the rise of civilisation and flourishing of urban life, came the almost total expulsion of Jews from the urban centres. Urban Jewish life and – to a certain degree – also Jewish learning survived mainly in the new centres of the Slavonic East. Mainly among Eastern Jews we find family names which point to the origin of these families from German cities, in which the Jewish population ceased to exist after the 15th or 16th century. The majority of Central European Jews disappears from the stage of history into a state of fella existence in the sense of Spengler, connected with a low level of culture and economic passivity enforced by circumstances. There is only a slow re-emergence from this very depressed state at the beginning of the era of mercantilism and the dawn of enlightenment. They are dispersed around many hundreds of small communities in villages and townlets of a pale of settlement, rather difficult to define, which co-incides with the highest fractionisation of the German-Roman Empire into small and mini sovereignties. Looking at a historical map of southern Germany of the 18th century, Jewish settlement is concentrated where this map is checkered to the utmost. Mainly the small counties, principalities and knightships took advantage of Jewish dependants by allowing them to settle in their territories. There were large districts in which there was no Jewish population at all, such as in the Austrian, Bavarian, Saxonian, Thuringian heartlands, in Wuerttemberg and others.

A kind of stability, albeit on a very low level, some security of the individuum and even of property exist side by side with a far reaching restriction of social and geographic mobility.

Because of the lack of family names it is very difficult to trace our ancestry back beyond the beginning of the 18th century. The majority of the village Jews of southern Germany (only a small minority lived in communities which exceeded the number of 1000 persons, like Frankfurt and Fuerth) emerge only at the beginning of the 19th century out of their historic anonymity. They were constrained into their village, or mini-state ghettos, and used to choose their marriage partners from their own place of residence or its immediate neighbourhood. This is mainly true of my paternal family.

The impact of history appears in a different shape when its anonymous actors are replaced by people of our own flesh and blood. There is a tendency in Jewish family research to glorify the past and to place ancestry into an artificially upgraded hierarchy. We should remember that we all are derived from more or less very humble stock, whose survival is in itself a miracle open to different interpretations.

I found it worthwhile to put the naked facts into the general background of political and socio-economic history.

When I first laid down the outlines of this family history in a small booklet in German for my family and some friends, it aroused much interest among my own generation as well as down to the generation of our grandchildren. I am bringing it forward now for the benefit of the younger generation in the English language which has become the lingua franca of our people throughout the world, sufficiently understood also in our own country in Israel.

After A. Hailey had exposed in his "Roots" the unknown past of his negro people in the United States, a vehement outbreak of interest in family history erupted. Even, as my own correspondence shows, gentile people whose forefathers left the Jewish faith some generations ago took interest in their Jewish ancestors.

My first interest to probe deeper into the history of my family had been awoken by mere chance. Among the few items of traditional family heirlooms we had kept in our possession a commentary written by Beer Abraham Bing on the Song of Songs in the German language. A friend and neighbour of ours published an article about this booklet in a German language weekly in Israel (2). One of the leading bibliographers in Israel directed my attention for the first time to the fact that this ancestor was one of the earlier writers and contributors to the renewal of the Hebrew language in Germany. The author of this book, Beer Abraham Bing, was the son of the well known Rav Abraham Bing, who was for many years the Chief Rabbi of the Grand Duchy of Wuerzburg, after 1815 a very large district of Bavaria. In the twenties and thirties he was one of the main opponents of the rising reform movement (3). Religious traditions hardly persisted more than two generations after Rabbi A. Bing. Knowledge about our forefather is due mainly to personalities among the descendants of his successor, Seligmann Beer Bamberger, the famous Wuerzburger Rav.

Sekel Bamberger, rabbi in Schwersenz, published part of the Gaon Abraham Bing's commentaries to the Shulchan Aruch together with a short biography under the title "Sichron Abraham" (4). Further information is owed to H. Bamberger, who wrote a history of the Wuerzburg rabbinate (5).

Abraham Bing, the Chief Rabbi of Wuerzburg (1752-1841)

Abraham Ben-Enosh Halevi Bing came probably from a relatively well established family in the Frankfurt ghetto. According to the very informative book of Dietz (6) about the Jews in Frankfurt, different families immigrated from Bingen on the Rhein (mainly in 1530) to Frankfurt, some of whom continued to keep the name of their original home-town. According to Dietz there are at least ten different families in the Frankfurt ghetto who are carrying the name Bing, probably not related to each other. (7).

Whereas Rav Abraham Bing is not mentioned in the book of Dietz, it is possible, owing to the name of his father and other members of his family, to find his family among those mentioned in the above book. The well known Kann family, named after their residence "Zur Kanne" (pewter), symbolizing the Leviim, used also the family name Bing. In another house of this family "Zur Fleischschirn" (shambles) lived since 1713 Beer David Bing, who died 1746. His grandchildren were court agents and ironmongers and participated also in army supplies. They took part also in the supply of "thousand eighth of grain" for the



The tombstone of Rav Abraham Bing in
Wuerzburg-Hoechberg

“Dietfurt Regiment” in Hanau (8). Beginning from 1765 until 1825 there existed a firm of iron goods, belonging to the brothers Enosh and Amshel Bing, under the name “Beer David Bing sel. Soehne”. It is, therefore, possible to trace the family of Rav Abraham Bing to his grandfather Beer David, who married probably into the Kann family.

It is apparently the tombstone of Beer Bing which is registered in Horowitz’ book about the old Frankfurt cemetery (9). The text of the tombstone is somewhat contradictory, as the deceased is first named “Beer Bing”, afterwards “Isachar Yaakov Weiler”. There is no doubt that bearers of the German Jewish name Beer (or Baer) held the name Isachar in Hebrew. (This is only one of many German Jewish names of all times, which had corresponding Hebrew names, e.g.: Gumpert – Mordechai, Anshel or Bendit – Asher) (10). Open to explanation, however, are the different patronyms used in the two names (David, resp. Yaakov). It may be assumed that the patronym used was perhaps the name of a foster parent or a maternal grandfather.

The names mentioned by Dietz are to be found in a register which survived the destruction of documents during World War II. Unfortunately this register contains no birth and death data and only about twohundred times the name of Bing or Binge from the years 1709-1802, from which some of the names of the family of Abraham Bing may be recognised. (11).

Abraham Enosh Bing Halevi was a disciple of Nathan Ben Shimon Hacoen Adler, who was one of the most prominent rabbis of his time, a very independent personality who – besides an early interest in science and Aramaeic grammar – had been much attached to the teachings of the Kabbalah and the Sohar. Nathan Adler came into conflict with his community and had to flee from Frankfurt. How far Abraham Bing identified himself with

his teacher is beyond our knowledge. Already from his 17th year Abraham Bing was an assistant Rav in Offenbach, across the river from Frankfurt, the Jewish community of this place was in those days considerably well-to-do. Later on he was a Rav and teacher at the Yeshiva of Rav Adler in Frankfurt until his 46th year. On the 25th of July 1798 he was elected land rabbi for the bishopric, later Grand Duchy, of Wuerzburg and for the adjoining and interspersed territories of independent knights. The minutes of the proceedings are signed by six representatives (Parnassim) from the bishoprics' and three from the knightships' Jewry. The territorial authorities confirmed his election on the 15th of September of the same year. The rabbinate, administered by Bing, comprises about 120 medium and small communities with a population of about 10,000 persons and extends over a territory which covers a large part of today's Bavarian province – Lower Franconia, and part of a territory which belonged later to the northern part of the Grand Duchy of Baden. His residence was in the borough of Heidingsfeld (popularly called: Hetzfeld), now a suburb of the city of Wuerzburg, which was then not open to Jewish settlement. (5).

A Rav in those days, much more so in a very large district, was first of all an administrator and a judge. The internal Jewish autonomy extended not only to family and halachic law, but also to civic law suits in which only Jews were involved. In the year 1814 the government council of Bavaria confirmed – The Grand Duchy had become meanwhile Bavarian territory by the decision of Bonaparte – the petition of "Oberrabbiner" Bing to transfer his residence to Wuerzburg. At the same time 14 other families were allowed to settle in this city, mainly through the influence of Joseph Hirsch from Gaukoenigshofen, later Baron Hirsch of Gereuth, who was the first Jewish resident in Wuerzburg and grandfather of the famous Baron Hirsch. His influence, as a court financier of the kings of Bavaria, was already in those days considerable. (12)

Abraham Bing became prominent in Wuerzburg also as a head of a Yeshiva, out of the disciples of which rose many prominent leaders of Western (mainly German) modern orthodoxy. Among them were the later Chief Rabbi of London, Nathan Adler, the Chacham Israel Bernays from Hamburg, Rav Jakob Ettlinger from Altona and Bing's famous successor, the "Wuerzburger Rav" Seligman Beer Bamberger. Wuerzburg was then, perhaps, the only Jewish community where the rare opportunity of higher Jewish learning co-existed with the possibility of university education, together with the physical possibility of individual religious observance (Monica Richards 13).

Among the principal disciples of Abraham Bing was also Elieser Bergmann from Heidenheim am Hahnenkamm. Upon the recommendation of Rav Bing he became the tutor at the estate of Mendel Rosenbaum of the latter's children, who founded a new Jewish community in Zell, just outside the gates of Wuerzburg. Bergmann later married Rosenbaum's eldest daughter. Years later, in 1832, Elieser Bergmann emigrated with his whole family, and even his mother, to Eretz Israel. His correspondence from the voyage and from Israel itself is very instructive (14, 15). It appears from his letters and those of his wife Seila that Abraham Bing was an authority of highest esteem for them. Seila Bergmann in her letters to the family sends greetings to "Madame Rebbitzen" (14). In this way we have the only knowledge of Abraham Bing's second marriage. Nothing is known about the origin, the fate and the names of his two wives.

Lately I obtained also his death certificate, issued by the Dom Pfarrei (dome vicariate) of Wuerzburg, through the courtesy of another descendant, Dr. E. Mainzer of London. Bing's family status is given as married, the cause of death as debility of age.

Up to a very old age he still had been in office, as only in 1839, when he was already high in his eighties, a successor was nominated and a pension of 300 Guilders granted to him. He died in 1841 and was buried in the old Jewish cemetery of Hoechberg, a village above Wuerzburg, which is today incorporated into the city. He was eulogized by his successor, S.B. Bamberger, and his first born son, Isachar Beer. The inscription on his tombstone is well preserved (as quoted in the footnote) (5a). The tombstone was probably renewed about 1880; it is exactly the same style as that of his successor I.B. Bamberger, who died in 1878.

Besides commentaries to the Shulchan Aruch, which are preserved in the book of Jizchak Sekel Bamberger (4), he has left almost no printed heritage. A comprehensive collection of his hand-written papers is kept, however, at the Yeshiva of Rav Kook in Jerusalem – information I owe to Abraham Bartura of Jerusalem. On Bing's initiative, and under his name, appeared the first "Israelitic" book for religious instruction. It is written in the style of the Christian catechism with its questions and replicae, and to be regarded, more or less, as an apology towards the gentile world. This booklet came out already in the early twenties, but must have been in use for almost half a century, as the edition in my possession is issued as late as 1870. (16).

Bing was among the few religious leaders who fought fiercely against the advancing reform movement. In this fight he found the full cooperation of the conservative and clerical forces within the government, who abhorred every appearance of rising liberalism. Its spokesmen expressed themselves repeatedly against neologism and refused the acceptance of religious functionaries, whose adherence to the Halachic Law was in doubt. (17). To rely on these reactionary forces was the natural approach for the leader of this still closely knit community. Revolutionary and frustrated liberal elements, mainly among citizens and students, turned repeatedly against the Jewish population, as in 1819 in Wuerzburg, and 1848 in Baden, Wuerzburg and many districts of Southern Germany.

Beer (Isachar) Abraham Bing, the early Hebrew writer

There was no continuation of the rabbinical tradition in the family of Abraham Bing, about which, indeed, very little is known. According to Sekel Bamberger (4) Abraham Bing attended the wedding of his two sons (Isachar Beer and Benedict), who married two sisters on the same day in the market town of Scheinfeld, about 40 km southeast of Wuerzburg, on the main road to Nuremberg. According to Bamberger, Bing broke his leg on this event and commented on this accident with one of his witticisms for which he had been famous. The wedding must have taken place at a date not later than 1806, when the Rav was still residing at Heidingsfeld. He was probably interested to marry off his two sons into well established families, but outside of his own domain.

In the small Jewish community of Scheinfeld (18), comprising about 20 families, the Bing brothers were probably by far the wealthiest, due to the property of their spouses.

The tax authority, represented by the County Court in Markt-Einersheim, as to be seen from documents in the State Archives of Nuremberg, mentioned Benedict's property as Fl. 25,000 for 1832 (jurisdiction as regarding civil law was after the dissolution of the Roman Empire in 1806 up to 1848 still in the hands of the politically disowned landlords).

Benedict Bing was the representative for about 50 Jewish families, who lived in the Franconian part of the Schwarzenberg principality. The imposing castle of these princes

still towers above the small town of Scheinfeld. Isachar (Beer) Bing also appears repeatedly as a consultant for other Jewish people from the neighbourhood before the local court (11, item Scheinfeld).

According to the oral tradition in the family, Beer's wife Zipora (Zippa) was the active force in the family business, whilst the husband dedicated his life to religious (so to say) studies. Still after the death of her husband she conducted the business together with her youngest son Bernhard (my great-grandfather) as retailers for grocery and dry goods, as well as wholesalers in hops and sheep wool. Their trading permit (see illustration) was still issued by the legal authority of the defunct Schwarzenberg principality and had to be renewed annually.

Beer Abraham Bing (under which name he appears generally) was dimly remembered as a type of a Jewish Melamed, unfit for business, while his wife had to provide a living for the family. In reality, however, he left remarkable traces, which were entirely unknown to his immediate family, or were at least unconsciously pushed into oblivion under the impact of the enlightenment and the growing economic prosperity.

My late mother owned a booklet dealing with Salomon's Song of Songs "translated and commented by Beer Abraham Bing, Wuerzburg 1838". (19)

Albert Baer describes this booklet as a remarkable curiosity in biblical literature (2). Only through the well known Israeli bibliographer Kressel, who read A. Baer's article, did I learn for the first time that my ancestor was one of the early Hebrew writers in Germany. Bing's first literary work appeared in 1810 under the title "Obed und Thuerza" (20), a drama written in Hebrew with juxtaposed German translation. The small booklet promised to appear in sequels, but this never came through. It was probably with an utmost reluctance that Beer Bing resolved to publish this small work. One has to see him as a rather introverted personality – not the prevalent type in the family – thrust into the shade by a prominent father and a business managing wife. Only thus it can be understood that the author tries to embellish his name by adding "son of the Grand Rabbi of the Grand Duchy of Wuerzburg"

Ch. N. Shapiro in the first book of his History of the New Hebrew Literature dedicates to Bing's work about 15 pages (21). I quote him as follows (my translation from Hebrew):

"To Bing belong some literary merits. He has introduced for the first time something not being present in Hebrew literature – the comedy. More than that, Bing produces the basis for a new style for poems – a peculiar style of language, which regards personalities realistically and produces new realistic expressions in the language. The introduction of a pastoral scenery by this Hebrew writer in Germany is followed up in Lithuania and forms in this way a historical linkage between the start and the expansion of the pastoral era."

"Obed and Thuerza", the fragment of a sentimentalizing comedy, is, of course, like most of the Hebrew literature of this period rather banal and meaningless, at least for the modern reader of Hebrew, but of importance for the resurrection of the Hebrew language, as it takes place in the heartland of Germany, far from the Jewish Pale of settlement.

The figures in Bing's play all carry biblical names and Bing identifies himself with them, not without national pride. But, like in paintings of biblical subjects from the Middle Ages, they move around in the landscape of its author, which looks exactly like the vineyards of

the Main valley and the forest of the Franconian Steigerwald. The juicy drinking song and the hefty curses of Avihud at the start of the comedy fit entirely into a German peasant pub. Franz Delitzsch, the famous protestant theologian and orientalist regards "Obed and Thuerza", together with the works of another Hebrew author, as "an impertinent comedy from the Germanic school which begins with coarse cursings... as the only Jewish drama which is not allegoric and entirely void of any biblical content". (22)

By what Delitzsch is rather disquietened is the profanization, or at least secularization, of the Hebrew language. Here Bing was obviously one of the forerunners of a development, in which he was succeeded in a later age by the new Hebrew classics.

There are inklings of social criticism in Bing's writing, including his later booklet of poetry "Dudaei Isachar" (Fruits of Isachar) (23). His wrath is directed against usury and oversmart business dealings which were, by nature, part of the livelihood for his own family circle. In "Obed and Thuerza" the usurer Puscht bursts into lamentation, being afraid of not being able to collect outstanding debts, and gets ridiculed by the author. His writings reveal a fundamental knowledge of Hebrew and the post-biblical scriptures, including Aramaic, acquired at the centres of Jewish learning, but also acquaintance with the philosophical currents of his time.

Remote from the contact with the centres of Jewish learning, amidst a society of small cattle dealers, money-lenders and shopkeepers, he dreams of the glorious past of the Jewish people by adapting his scenery to that of the surrounding gentile world. In the German written preface to "Obed and Thuerzah" he writes as follows:

"To you, dear reader, this book is dedicated. It is the work of my hours of leisure and pleasure. Darkness reigns above the dawn of history and a veil still covers the golden period, when we were existing in a state of our own and when our nation was one of the ruling ones."

The only outcome of Beer Bing's dream world was a revival of the Hebrew language for the secular sphere, at least symbolizing in this way the restitution of Jewish nationhood, in those days a very rare trend in the world of western Jewry.

Beer Bing was, of course, not entirely isolated in his ideas. From the same circle came Elieser Bergmann, whose immigration to Eretz Israel is vividly described by his descendant Abraham Bartura (14, 15). His daring adventure may easily be regarded as an act of practical Zionism, to which it was much nearer in spirit than to the alms collecting groups of the old Yishuv (Chalukah).

Beer Abraham Bing, whose approach in dealing with religious subjects seems to be rather secular, different from the pious but immensely practical Rav Elieser Bergmann and the late Kabbalist Hile Wechsler (24), came all from the same spiritual and geographical environment, influenced partly also by German romanticism of the philosophical school of Schelling, as Prof. Werner Kahnmann of New York believes.

Such a small, almost invisible, group anticipates already a development which gathers momentum only more than 50 years later, while the western Jewish world embraces enlightenment almost unconditionally or tries to live on by preserving a religious cult, devoid of all national attributes.

Contrary to "Obed and Thuerzah" Beer Bing's small booklet of poems "Dudaei Isachar" is rather meaningful, witty and sometimes even of astonishing modernity. His Hebrew, consisting mostly of biblical metaphors (Melitsoth), is not always intelligible to the modern



Gewerbs-Zeigniß

Dem hiesigen Ding, Pfarrer und Sperramt,
Wannsaunders dafina, wulfo. vief die
Leug zuu hofen und Pfaffenollen findel
besitzt, wird fiedief, beiffo faino la,
yidivatione bei dem hiesigen hie
yandie die dunnigunife faufon, König,
uniffo fuffen und der fuffiffen hie
und hiefflunguniffen in hiefflung
daffon fho fain waqued. wiffen hie
im fuffigen Lande die gefetzlich beffon,
die hieffnung zu vertuffen fet.

Dies Zeigniß ist gültig auf neu
Jahre
Lüneburg, am 22. Augt. 1845
Hiesige. Gewerkschaftsamt Schwergerberg
Hilman



Das Aufheben von hiesigen Erlässen, Verfügungen und Uebertragungen der Gewerkschaftsamt
hiesige Scheinfeld wird unternommen.
Lüneburg, am 26. September 1846.
Hiesige Gewerkschaftsamt Schwergerberg,
Hilman

Alexander.

Trade permit of Bernhard Bing

Hebrew reader. The only specimen I could get hold of is in the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Another specimen exists, as I heard later, in the library of the British Museum in London.

Bing's commentary to the Song of Songs, according to the foreword in the German edition, was originally published in Hebrew. According to Hebrew bibliographies it was printed by Zirndorfer in Fuerth 1822, but not a single specimen could be traced anywhere. (25)

Beer Bing died 1843 or 1844. The year and the place of his birth could not be accounted for. Probably he was born around 1780 in Frankfurt, where his father lived at that time. The family register (Matrikel) of Scheinfeld, contrary to the majority of the registers of most Franconian communities, could not be located, except a register of the years 1862-1875. His wife Zipora, daughter of Schlomo, died 1863 at the age of 83. There is no doubt that her family was indigenous in Scheinfeld (11).

Zipora, according to the above registration, was buried at the cemetery of Ullstadt, about 10 km southwest from Scheinfeld. In all probability Beer Bing is buried at the same place.

I visited lately this cemetery, which served, besides a small Jewish community at this place, also the communities of Sugenheim and Scheinfeld. This burial ground, on the slope of a wooded hill between Frankenhoehe and Steigerwald, offers an impressive view over the slightly undulating countryside. Unfortunately I could not trace either Beer's or Zipora's tomb. Tombstones, even from this century, have sunk into the ground, the inscriptions were eroded, and even maliciously scratched out. The only tombstone preserved from the Bing family is that of Moritz Bing, preserved because it is made of Swedish granite. He is probably one of the five sons of Beer and died in 1895, the only one who stayed on in Scheinfeld up to his death.

The Generation of Transition

The eldest son of Beer, Leopold, 1809-1891, married his twofold cousin Carolina (Kreile) (see family tree) and acted most of his life in the small town of Dettelbach on the river Main as district physician. Dr. E. Firnbacher, the widower of one of Leopold's last descendants, reports that Dr. (Leopold) Bing's fame was still alive among his patients, when he was studying medicine in Wuerzburg in the early twenties. According to the same source Bing was in his days member of a student fraternity (Korps).

Beer and Zipora Bing's first child, their daughter Therese (1807-1881), married 1825 Meir Aaron Mainzer, rabbi in Weikersheim. Knowledge about this branch of the family reached me lately through Dr. E. Mainzer of London.

Another son of Beer Bing, Salomon, fathered a numerous family in two marriages (see family tree I).

The youngest son, Bernhard (1822-1866), my great-grandfather, married 1844 Caroline Heim from Obernbreit, about 15 km north-west from Scheinfeld (see family tree II). The fact that Bernhard Bing was able to marry at this young age points to the affluency of the family. This appears also from the property evaluations of the Scheinfeld Kehilla (11). Contrary to the affluency of this family the majority of Franconian Jews lived in those days under rather constrained conditions and emigration to the New World comprised almost every family, as that from my father's side, in which emigration was considerable (26).

As mentioned before, Bernhard Bing kept, together with his widowed mother Zipora, a shop of groceries and dry goods, but he also sold the agricultural products of his neighbourhood, mainly hops and sheep wool, to neighbouring countries, such as Prussia, Thuringia and Saxony.

The family business was directed probably more and more to the hops business, in which it belonged later to the leading ones, and in which one of the descendants of the family continues up to these days in New York. Trade expanded in Germany parallel to the expansion of industry, the production of which grew during the first half of the 19th century about sixfold.

There existed a number of hop-growing centres, mainly in Bavaria, where the mostly Jewish traders used to store the product and to resell it to the breweries on liberal credits. Breweries grew in size during this period like all other industries. The relation of the hop merchant with his customer was often very personal and continuous. According to A. Mueller's *Geschichte der Juden in Nuernberg* (27), the majority of the hops business was up to 1933 in Jewish hands and concentrated itself more and more in Nuremberg. Its concentration took momentum with the opening of the hop exchange in 1860.

A large part of the product was exported to overseas, mostly to the U.S. Trade in hops gathered momentum, like other trades, with the development and extension of the railway system in the 1840's and 1850's. The first impact of railway traffic on the generation of our grandparents, who were used to travel large distances by the horse-wagon, was entirely magic.

Jews played a very important role as consumers of the new transport system, and even more so as promoters, financiers and entrepreneurs of this entirely new venture, to mention only the houses of Rothschild and Baron Hirsch, who fathered important parts of the European railway system (28).

My grandfather, Berthold Bing, about whom I shall speak later in this chapter, was for many years a member of the Railway Council of Bavaria, a consulting body which had considerable influence on the planning and construction of new railway lines. His free first-class ticket impressed us grandchildren immensely, when he took us for trips. There were, of course, only minor improvements in the almost perfect railway-net in our childhood, while he was active in this Railway Council, but in the sixties and seventies, when he had been a young man, much of the travelling still had to be done by the horse-driven stage coach.

The web of legal restrictions upon the Jewish population began to shrink with increasing mobility of men, goods and ideas. The new expansion of traffic and communication enabled also the Jewish trader and manufacturer to expand the territory of his activities and to choose more freely his place of residence.

The old imperial city of Nuremberg, closed off hermetically to Jewish settlement from the 15th century, could after 1850 no longer resist to their admission (there were smaller cities like Noerdlingen, which "succeeded" to withhold the right of residence from Jews up to 1860). (27)

Among the "Mayflower" Jews, who took up residence in Nuremberg after the early 1850's, many were hop merchants from the main hop-growing districts of Franconia, as the Aisch and Altmuehl valley. Also some of the Bing families from Scheinfeld, close to the first mentioned district, all trading in the same commodity, moved their residence to the provincial metropol.

There are lively anecdotes I remember from the tales of my grandfather referring to travelling in the post-coach and the early railway. There was the legendary uncle Moritz, who used to frighten his fellow travellers with a boxed-in rattlesnake, whose rumblings he produced by shaking an arrangement of buttons. The first railway coaches lacked still toilet facilities. They were probably not necessary, as the trains stopped quite some time at every station. While making use of the public facility of such a station, uncle Moritz quietly relaxed, reading a newspaper, when suddenly the train conductor's whistle gave the sign for boarding the train. In his terror of missing the train, he jumped in, holding the toilet seat instead of the newspaper. Inclination to absentmindedness was always rampant in the family, including the present writer.

The rise of the economy, and the extension of physical and spiritual living space, opened a golden era to the majority of Jews in Bavaria. Christian artisans and Jewish traders became gradually manufacturers. The small Jewish trader advanced often to the position of a wholesaler or a banker. Temporarily, during the fifties and sixties, there existed an almost idyllic relation between the gentile and the Jewish bourgeoisie, as long as the cake for both groups continued to be big enough.

Ignatz Bing, a cousin of my grandfather and founder of the famous Bing-Werke, and discoverer of the well-known "Bing-Hoehle", describes in his private biography (now in the hands of his grand-daughter, Miriam Moor at Kibbutz Doroth). The harmony in which Jews and Gentiles apparently lived together. His family, including his father Salomon, had also taken residence in Nuremberg (29). We learn from this biography that my great-grandfather Bernhard (1822-1866) died on the very day of the triumphant entry of the Prussian army to Nuremberg in 1866. He died at the early age of 44, according to the Jewish Community Register, from kidney stones, and his widow with three sons of 19, 17 and 15 managed to get on quite successfully. The war of 1866 was as a whole more like a happy outing, as I remember from the tales of my grandfather, who travelled during the days of war undisturbed in "enemy" territory.

Within the layer of newly "arrived" Jewish families existed considerable tensions. The newly acquired place in the sun was eagerly contested among competing firms or rivalizing families. Also some of the Bing families in Nuremberg were on not-speaking terms for a considerable part of the century — the cause, as the grapevine told, a cable order for hops was taken up wrongly by one of the sides, for which it was not designed. I remember also from the days of my childhood that my grandfather Berthold, who for many years was a member of the Nuremberg magistrate, (the upper house of city parliaments in Bavaria) did not allow that the name of another relative, who belonged to the same body, be mentioned in his presence.

More about my grandfather Berthold Bing (1847-1915)

Berthold Bing spent his apprenticeship in Strasbourg and Paris, where he acquired a good knowledge of French and a sound inclination to the French style of life. I remember his flair for the finesses of French cooking and drinking, which did contribute not a little to his success as a host.

Trading in hops required extended travelling, mostly in Belgium and Northern Germany. This activity was mainly seasonal, having its peak in the fall season, while the remainder of the year was left to other activities.



Already in the time before the foundation of the new German Empire, the rising bourgeoisie in the Franconian metropol gathered around the circle of liberalism, Jewish citizens playing a decisive role in this movement, later mostly in its left wing. In an atmosphere of such general well being Jewish functionaries were accepted without questioning into bodies of political representation.

Berthold Bing held also a leading position in the Chamber of Commerce of Central Franconia. When the Chamber of Commerce adorned the front of its building, bordering the main market square, with a large mural, they put the counterfeits of some of its outstanding members on the figures in a historical scene, among them was also the face of Berthold Bing, whose effigy survived in this way stealthily at this very place, where the "Fuehrer" used to hold every year the review of his henchmen. Even though slightly damaged, the mural survived World War II with part of the wall, while all the surroundings lay in shambles.

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce Berthold Bing was very active in the Bavarian Channel Society, founded 1892 by the then mayor of Nuremberg. This association strove for the erection of a large water-way, suitable for mass transport, connecting the tributaries of the Rhein and Danube, resp. the North Sea with the Black Sea. An old water-way, built in 1825 under the reign of Ludwig the First, had become obsolete in the era of railways, but was still in use up to World War II. There was still limited traffic in bulk goods on this water-way and, besides horse-drawn barges, a number of motorships plied on this route from Roumania to the Rhein valley. One of them, "Berthold Bing", was still afloat on the Danube during World War II, as I was told by a former captain who had plied this route

and came as a refugee to Israel. (Now these old dreams are realised, as a large modern water-way has reached Nuremberg on the north and is abuilding towards the Danube).

As a member of the magistrate Berthold Bing was responsible for the municipal gas works, and I remember that he took me and my younger brother repeatedly on his inspection tours. He was also, as mentioned before, member of the Bavarian railway council, in which capacity he was once invited to a meeting in the capital, the date of which coincided with Yom Kippur. According to the private memoirs of his son Rudolf (30) he refused to take part in this meeting out of reverence to an orthodox colleague.

So far as I remember, he never practiced our religion, neither did he take part in any religious services nor any other Jewish activities. However, relinquishing the Jewish community was never considered by him nor by the family.

Contact with the gentile world was restricted to business and politics, to a male society centering around lodges and similar institutions and to weekly meetings at local pubs ("Stammtisch"). Social life in a more intimate sense was restricted to the narrow circle of relatives and a few Jewish families of equal standing and background. Marriages were also kept within this circle.

The house of our grandparents at the Marienplatz in Nuremberg was almost our home. It was actually a large complex of buildings with apartments up to the third floor on two fronts, back-houses, two fenced-in gardens with playgrounds and large store rooms for packing, treating and storing the hops. In the fall time the whole complex was filled with the not unpleasant smell of burning sulphur, used for the preservation of the hops buds. A part of the ground floor of the main building was occupied by the flat of uncle Hermann, Berthold's younger brother, who was actually the soul of the hops business, and of whom it was said that his moods could make the hops prices rise and fall on the exchange. He was very jovial, puckish and his eyes behind their glasses were always looking for mischief. He was much less assuming than Berthold and his dedication to the hops business enabled his brother to strive for loftier goals. The whole building was in our childhood still nicknamed "Europaeischer Hof" after a large hotel which it used to be earlier. It faced a small but beautiful public garden with a monumental fountain. Now the whole complex, previously flattened out by the bombardments of World War II forms a large public parking ground almost in front of Nuremberg's Central Railway Station.

Berthold Bing and the Diesel Motor

My early childhood recollections also include a white enamelled board fixed to the sandstone walls at the entrance of my grandparents' house with the inscription "Russische Dieselmotore G.m.b.H.". There was nothing in this modest sign-board to reveal that it pointed to one of the main springs of the industrial revolution of this century. The most remarkable achievement of Berthold Bing's life was his decisive influence on the realisation of Rudolf Diesel's invention.

Where and when occurred the first contact between Rudolf Diesel and Berthold Bing I could not find out. Opportunities for such contacts were, of course, numerous. Augsburg, where Diesel was almost at home, was also the residence of our great-grandparents whom I still remember vividly. Samuel Bachmann, the father of Berthold's wife, grandmother Hermine, was a textile manufacturer and a member of Augsburg's City Parliament.

It was in the early nineties that the oil from the caucasus (Baku) appeared on the world market (31). The newly projected water-ways from the Danube to the heartland of European industry promised to open up new markets. A motor which could turn huge quantities of the higher fractions of Russian and American oil into new sources of energy was an obvious challenge, because of which Bing took an active interest in Diesel's invention.

Also in Nuremberg, an important seat of machinery industries, the replacement of the steam engine by a more efficient, more mobile and more compact power supply medium was in the foreground of discussion.

Among the most important business friends of Berthold Bing was Adolphus Busch from St. Louis, Mi., the owner of the largest brewery (Anheuser-Busch) in the United States. As a native of Germany, like many affluent German immigrants prior to World War I, he used to spend his holidays in Germany and on the Riviera. In those days the more refined luxury of the old world was still not available on the other side of the Atlantic, whatever you paid.

The friendship which bound these two men probably exceeded their common commercial interests. Certainly it was not the superior quality of the hops, supplied to Busch's brewery through which Berthold Bing attained the latter's friendship. Perhaps it was his worldly charm, inborn popularity and his gift to spin a yarn which endeared him to this German-American from the Rhineland, who had risen so high from very modest beginnings. A token of this friendship was a luxurious and gilded vase of enormous dimensions in the fin de siecle style, which adorned the drawing room of my parents' home — a wedding present from Busch to my mother Anna, Berthold Bing's only daughter, who was married in 1897, a short time before the developments to be reported here. Something similar in dimension and style I saw only lately in one of the castles of Ludwig II, king of Bavaria.

Berthold Bing had, of course, told his friend Busch about the new engine, which had been tested for some years at the Maschinenfabrik Augsburg.

Diesel's original idea had been born in the late eighties (32). Diesel was then in charge of sales and supply for the famous ice machines of Linde, first in Paris and later in Berlin. His leading position enabled him to dedicate himself extensively to theoretical studies and experimentation with new machinery. It shows the enormous energy of this genius that he conceived the basic idea of his invention, and later obtained the grant of his patents (1893) during a time in which his occupation was in quite a different field. He had succeeded in 1893 in bringing together — for the realisation of his inventions — the two leading firms in the trade: Gruson-Werke in Magdeburg, owned by Krupp in Essen, and Maschinenfabrik Augsburg. In Augsburg test machinery was running already for four years, in order to turn Diesel's blueprints into reality. These were years of perpetual ups and downs, progress and setbacks alternated continuously. Actually in 1897 only one machine was running, and even this one was far from being fit for mass production.

It was Diesel's enormous self-assurance which enabled him to win over the leading personalities of his trade. He could not, and did not want to, wait for the moment when his engine would be ready for serial production, but he always anticipated a future reality with new technical and commercial schemes.

In the summer of 1897 the hopes for the succeeding of Diesel's motor had reached an all-time low. Expenses for development and annual payments to Diesel had reached, at least with regard to the customary scale of the time, a considerable height. Diesel himself was

in a heavy crisis, which affected his mood and also his health, the more so as a second engine had turned out a failure.

Anton von Rieppel, the general manager of Maschinenfabrik Nuernberg, had – probably on the initiative of Bing – drawn Diesel's attention to Busch (33). Diesel's answer followed almost immediately.

He writes from his holiday retreat in Steinach (Tyrol) that he is ready for a meeting with Busch. On the 4th of August 1897 Rieppel transmits this information to Bing. In the same letter he informs him that his firm strives for the installation of the Diesel engine into a road vehicle. The first meeting between Busch and Diesel took place in Wiesbaden. Eugen Diesel, son and biographer of Rudolf Diesel, writes in his generally reliable biography (32, p. 287):

“The Jewish hops wholesaler (Hopfengrosshaendler) Bernhard Bing with the nice cable address “Bing-hops” had heard about the Diesel engine. Bing had a good friend in St. Louis, Mi., Adolphus Busch, the biggest brewer of America. Bing drew the attention of Busch's technical adviser, Col. F.D. Meier, to the Diesel motor...”

and further on p. 297

“Diesel's enthusiasm and suggestive power worked also on Busch. When Diesel asked for one million, Busch did not flinch and seemed to agree. So far at least he was assured by Bing, who hopped (“taenzelte”) continuously from one party to the other, informing each of the hidden intentions of the other, 50,000 Mark had been promised to him (Bing), therefore, opined Diesel, one could imagine that he would keep the heat on...”

Adolphus Busch took a trip through Essen, Augsburg and other cities and called over his technical adviser, Col. Meier, from New York to Germany. The little “Bing-hops” continued hopping between the parties and told Diesel that the Americans had described him not as an inventor, but as a terribly intelligent man”.

After a meeting in Baden-Baden Busch, Diesel and Bing concluded and signed in Munich on the 7th of September a contract, in which Diesel gave an option to Busch, open until the 15th of October, to acquire his patent rights in the U.S.A. for one million Mark and an additional royalty of 5%.

Col. Meier had made in the meantime thorough inquiries in Augsburg, Nuremberg and other places, before Busch decided finally to acquire Diesel's patents.

It can be assumed that, before their meeting in Baden-Baden, Diesel and Bing had met repeatedly. Bing has left no written records. Eugen Diesel relies either on unknown letters of his father to his wife or on the personal memories of the latter, as he was born only in 1889, he was too young to draw from his own memories.

Without the decisive role of Bing as an intermediary neither the American nor the Russian contracts would have come about. Without the help of an intelligent and tactful mediator the sale of Diesel's patents would never have been accomplished, as his demands in view of the anticipated expenses of the running in of the motor, which proved at a later stage to be even much higher, could be regarded from the beginning as excessive. To persuade the buyers of the economic future of the engine and to bring down Diesel from his exorbitant demands, was indeed a diplomatic feat of the highest degree.

This is also the opinion of the biographer of Diesel, Prof. Schnauffer, who, in a history written originally for Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nuernberg, points to the decisive role of Berthold Bing in the effectuation of the patent contracts (34).

Eugen Diesel's tendency to minimize and to mock Bing's role should not astonish us, when taking note of the year of the publication of the biography (1937), the titles of his own works and the authors advertised by the publisher, who all belong to the more respectable fellow travellers of the Nazi regime. Eugen Diesel, who generally lacks a sense of humour, tries to ridicule Bing by a harmless pun (hops – hopping). But he takes no pain to check Bing's first name, and gives erroneously the name on the letterhead of the firm. Even more grotesque sounds E. Diesel's remark that Bing informed each side of the hidden intentions of the other. Is this not the very essence of mediation? Eugen Diesel, who is not always without criticism towards his father, sneers at Bing's action. Professor Schnauffer, however, reporting on Diesel's transaction, says (34) that "Bing had, as is well known, always stuck to Diesel".

Even after the fall of the Third Reich Eugen Diesel cannot get out of his skin, now the Americans rule in Bavaria as the occupation force and one knows whence the wind blows. Together with Georg Stroessner he writes a small book on the early history of the Diesel Motor in America (33). The first page is adorned by a picture of A. Busch and the book is dedicated to the latter's daughter. Bing still continues to "hop from one party to the other and to inform each of the intentions of the other". His respectability is, somewhat, upgraded, once even his first name is given correctly – at the same time his Jewishness is now swept under the carpet spread out for the Busch family. (Just the same happens, by the way, in an article about Ignatz Bing in a memorial book about important Nuremberg personalities published by the municipality, which keeps dead silent about his Jewish origin). (29)

Only a few months after the conclusion of Diesel's patent sales to Busch, Bing brought him another important contract. The new partner was Emanuel Nobel in St. Petersburg, the owner of the machine factory Ludwig Nobel and proprietor of important oil wells in the Caucasus. Markus Wallenberg of the famous Stockholm bankers had partly been instrumental in making the contact with the head of the famous Swedish family (nephew of Alfred Nobel) and received, like Berthold Bing, a commission of 100,000 Mark in the form of stock of the new company (34). Diesel received 200,000 Mark in the same form and 600,000 Mark in cash. Emanuel Nobel invested 600,000 Mark. Bing was elected managing director of the new company "Russische Diesel-Motore G.m.b.H.", which succeeded, owing to the progress of the engine in Russia, both technically and commercially and the company was finally able to buy back the whole stock after 10 years at its nominal value (34).

The peak in the relations between Diesel and Bing is expressed in Diesel's letter, dated 8th July 1898, which is quoted fully (in translation) hereunder:

"My dear Mr. Bing,

various financial circles have asked me for a long time to turn my engineering firms into a public company. Lately other very serious firms have taken the same view, but I have always kept refusing, being unsympathetic to any financial operation.

Owing to the enormous increase in my dealings which expanded so much that they can hardly be mastered and which threaten to drown me, and especially because of my last nervous illness which caused, and still causes, the worst apprehensions, I got more and more conscious of the idea to put my beautiful and flourishing enterprise on a broader and more secure basis and to make it more independent of myself. I even regard it as my indissoluble duty towards all my esteemed associates. As, however,

cooperation with financial circles does not concur with my personal views, I have considered to return my whole enterprise into the hands of those who have brought it into life together with me, and who have assisted and furthered and guided it to its present rise.

If the present holders of my licence will form a public company, their whole investments in patent royalties etc. will flow back into their own pockets, and it may be stated that the individual firms will be able to produce my motors, therefore, without payment of royalties. The compensation I request for waiving my claims is very modest and takes only account of the present state of business, without anticipating future profits.

In short, I imagine a settlement as follows: I put my whole stock into the enterprise at nominal value — it is worth much more, additionally I shall put into the enterprise all my patents still unused together with the today's existing minimum fees guaranteed by contract, which have been exceeded already today. I should demand compensation only for this part of my business in cash and stock; the remaining income, consisting of patent fees coming in from all countries and other interests, would make a clear profit for the new company, as my minimum fees and the value of the still open patents exceed the amortisation rate of the stock.

I believe that these proposals will be regarded with sympathy by my associated firms, and they will see from them how grateful I am to all of them for their continuous assistance until this day. They will also acknowledge that my compensation is for real existing values only and the result will be exactly such as indicated before: they may build my motors with out fees, respectively collect the fees according to their share from other licencees.

Of course, in this way I am waiving my whole future profit, which I regard as rather important, but I hope to be compensated by an adequate share, as large as possible, to be fixed by the partners in the new enterprise.

The state of my health does not allow me to take part in the negotiations connected with my proposals. You, my dear Mr. Bing, have already successfully acted in some of my enterprises, you are engaged considerably in some of them, you know the whole situation as well as myself, therefore I have thought of you to take the matter into your hands.

I ask and authorize you to act in my name as representative to present my proposals to all associated firms without exception and to negotiate with them. I esteem you as a businessman and as a friend, and I know that I could not put this matter into better hands. By the way, I have already informed Kommerzienrat Buz in Augsburg of this proposal. If my proposals will meet, as I hope, with the consent of the associated groups, I shall be liberated at last from commercial activity, which is not in my line, and which unsettles my health and distracts me for already more than a year from the main aim of my life — the technical and scientific promotion of my motor. It is my only wish to dedicate all my forces undividedly to this side of my enterprise.

Cordial greetings, my dear Mr. Bing, in friendship yours."

Diesel is not the man who will find his ultimate satisfaction between lathe and laboratory only. The sudden aversion against financial operations demonstrated in the above letter exposes a lot of hypocrisy, the more so as he shows himself quite acquainted with money

operations in his private dealings. His show of retreat is not very convincing, full of contradiction and presents the writer of the letter in a very desperate mood. When he turns now to the trusted guidance of Bing, he surely has found the only way out of his dilemma. In this situation Bing is the only person able to attune Diesel's excessive demands to economic reality, represented by the owners of his patents and the new investors from the banking business. Bing was the ideal broker for both sides, representing, respectively moderating, Diesel towards licencees and investors and handling Diesel's difficult personality in the common interest for the development of the motor.

In his first contract with Busch, and to a lesser degree also later with Nobel, Diesel had succeeded to cash in heavily on prospects of the future, which were based, however, as it had already dawned on the interested circles, not on a very secure foundation.

Prior to his above letter to Bing he had been negotiating with a number of banks according to the opinion of Prof. Schnauffer (34). It seems that they had cold-shouldered him at first because of his excessive demands for advance cash payments. The letter reflects truly the quandary in which he found himself in the middle of a psychical depression.

It does, however, not distract from the spirit of sincerity of the above letter, that Diesel wrote it with the intention to be shown around his associate firms, in order to make them more inclined towards his idea to mobilize bank capital for the realisation of his patents.

Some days before its dispatch on the 30th June 1898, a preliminary contract had been concluded at the office of the notary Dr. Pemsel in Munich, in which the basic conditions for the formation of the "Allgemeine Gesellschaft fuer Diesel-Motore" had been laid down.

The main partners were Diesel, Bing and two representatives from the banking business (the bank Merck, Fink & Co. in Munich and Bank fuer Handel & Industrie, later Darmstaedter Bank). The manufacturers of the motor had first to be won over to the idea of a comprehensive holding company, the "Allgemeine". The first, whom Diesel had informed personally, was Heinrich von Buz, general manager of the Maschinenfabrik Augsburg (34).

In all these dealings Bing played a decisive role. He had to win over mainly the industrialists, among whom the house of Krupp was the most influential. Their attitude was first very reticent and Berthold Bing sent his son, Bernhard, (born 1875, who emigrated together with his wife, their daughter and her family to Lima, Ohio, and died there 1951) to Essen, in order to learn about their intentions. This report of Bernhard Bing is registered, too, in the files of M.A.N. (34).

The "Allgemeine Gesellschaft fuer Dieselmotore" was finally registered on the 1st of October 1898. Diesel received the respectable sum of four and a half million Mark, but according to the first contract with the banks he had to buy back ordinary shares for two million Mark and founder (priority) shares for 275,000 Mark, as a quid pro quo to waive his shares in all Diesel enterprises and all outstanding fees from existing and future contracts in favour of the new company.

Berthold Bing received 150,000 Mark in form of preference shares of the new company as the fee for being the main obstetrician at the birth of the new company.

A.P. Johanning was elected as general manager of the "Allgemeine", with its seat in Augsburg, his extensive correspondence with Bing is partly preserved (34).

In those formative days, amidst the tension between the spectacular success of the motor in principle and the unavoidable failures during its running in, spirits went up and down. The second machinery exhibition in Munich was opened on the 11th of July 1898. Four Diesel motors were represented by Maschinenfabrik Augsburg and Maschinenfabrik Nuernberg (both firms merged only some years later into MAN), Krupp-Gruson and Deutzer Motorenwerke. The name Diesel had won already some measure of popularity, and even enthusiasm ran high owing to the achievements which had already been shown.

Diesel, Busch and Bing were carried away by the wave of public enthusiasm. They spent pleasant hours in the famous "Hofbraeuhaus", from where they sent a postcard to Mrs. Diesel to Tyrol, where the family was holidaying. This postcard, containing a humorous rhyme in Bing's handwriting, is reproduced in the book of Diesel and Stroessner (33).

The Diesel machines did not always run smoothly at the Munich exhibition. Diesel's professional enemies, among them some venomous ones, used to exploit these interruptions in order to exaggerate the shortcomings of the machine. Not everybody took these engine troubles in such good stride as Prinz Ludwig (later King Ludwig III), who admired "the heavenly silence" in the exhibition hall (32).

Nobody could be mistaken that, in spite of outward successes and rising publicity, a long and difficult way was still ahead, until the machine might enter the stage of serial production.

Diesel had founded in Augsburg a company of his own for the manufacture of his engine, which — after a very short time — had proved a total failure. His patents were heavily jeopardized by counter-claims, but they had finally been affirmed after many difficulties. He suffered a serious breakdown and spent some time in a sanatorium in Munich's neighbourhood.

Thus he lost for some time the direct touch with the technical development. His newly acquired wealth threw him somewhat off balance. He started to operate in real estate and oil properties. For the large villa which he had ordered for his family he spent about 900,000 Mark, a considerable sum at that time (32). "When he arrived at the 5th million (half of it was on paper only), he got intoxicated with money (Goldrausch)", thus reports Eugen Diesel and he continues that the awareness of this situation haunts him, and he confesses to his wife as follows: "here you see again this abominable money Jew".

Diesel, in his own self-castigating mind, saw himself as the mirror image of this figure. He was an open-minded enlightened liberal, born in Paris and almost at home in England, probably free of conscious antisemitic feelings. The pernicious stereotype, however, was deeply imprinted in his mind, not different from the minds of his liberal and progressive circles, a stereotype which helped thirty years later to prepare the fertile ground for the holocaust.

Berthold Bing, the Jew, was worlds apart this Jewish archetype, more so than Diesel himself. The style of life, at least outwardly, was very modest. Affluency was enjoyed in the inner family circle only. The family residence was a five-room flat with one female servant only, who was almost part and parcel of the family.

Grandmother Hermine was a very cheerful and educated woman, however somewhat repressed by the strong personality of her husband. From the early days of my childhood I remember her as a somewhat fragile woman, suffering always from headaches which improved with her advancing years. She had grown up in mainly gentile surroundings,

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Von

Rudolf Diesel,

Ingenieur in München.

Herrn Bertold Bing
Freundschaftlich

R. Diesel

München, Dec. 1903

Diesel



München und Berlin.

Druck und Verlag von R. Oldenbourg.

1903.

educated like my mother in a Catholic high school of the "Englische Fraeulein" (Angelic Ladies) in Augsburg, which imparted to them good manners, handwriting and excellent French. I remember repeated visits at my great-grandparents in Augsburg. The atmosphere of Augsburg was somehow a mixture of protestant puritanic business ethics with catholic bigotry. My great-grandfather, Samuel Bachmann, was, as the saying went in the family, a very strict and miserly man, who was addressed — even by his son-in-law — in the third person (Sie). His wife Gretchen (both lived far into their eighties) is reported to have been a very pleasant woman and had probably married against her own choice. I am told that a diary from her maiden years was given to the L.B. Institute in New York. She had come from a family of well established wine merchants in the Tauber valley, not far from Wuerzburg. Her grandfather, Nathan Strauss, was Hoffaktor (court purveyor) to the Prince of Salm-Reifferscheid (35).

There exists from the Strauss family from Dittigheim near Tauberbischofs heim a very elaborate family tree (36). Their descendants are to be found now mainly in the States, but also in Israel.

We have still in our possession the hand-written cookbook of my great-grandmother from the year 1864, in which eggs are used extravagantly. Good food was in high esteem in the family and grandfather Berthold took pains in the preparation of the most sophisticated details when important guests were expected at the family table. There was served, owing to world-wide business contacts, quite exotic food. I remember chicory from Belgium and bear-ham from Russia. A quite popular dish were the young shots from hops, prepared as a salad.

Grandfather Berthold was quite an expert in table wines, but I doubt whether he was a connoisseur for his own enjoyment and believe that this was entirely for the benefit of his guests.

Jews never enjoyed alcoholic drinks like their gentile neighbours, but they almost never abstained from them. Their consumption was more a rudiment of religious service and a status symbol. At my parents' the table wine was abhorrent, as it had to be bought to favour a distant relative who was a wine merchant in the Main valley.

The huge difference between Jewish people, including those totally assimilated, and their gentile neighbours in their drinking habits was obvious. When one had to deal with the beverage industry, one had to partake in a bout of drinking with the dealers in a local pub and to keep pace with the rounds. As the story goes, there was a small device hidden in a walking stick, with the help of which one could pump out the contents of one's glass and dispose of it without anybody noticing it. I heard this story once from my grandfather, but it may be apocryphal altogether.

Bing's activity for the introduction of the Diesel motor into world economy continued after the establishment of its commercial and industrial basis in U.S.A. and Russia. The enchantment after Busch's return to the States in the autumn of 1898 subsided and disillusionment took its place. All new constructions of the motor during 1899 turned out as failures. Busch and his leading technical adviser, E.D. Meier, still had full confidence in Diesel but, except for the three leading people, Busch, Meier and Bing, a definite animosity towards the motor emerged.

Bing, fortunately not overburdened by technical knowledge, had to mediate, to soothe and to handle the very difficult personality of the main figure in the play. Bing's role in this critical state was as essential as in the beginning.

The first 14 motors built in the States ended stillborn on the scrap heap. The short-lived Diesel factory in Augsburg underwent total cataclysm.

The only bright spots during this time were some partial successes of Maschinenfabrik Augsburg (in 1898 Maschinenfabrik Augsburg and Maschinenfabrik Nuernberg amalgamated finally into M.A.N.).

Nobel in Petersburg sent an enthusiastic report on a new motor from the Augsburg Maschinenfabrik in 1899 too. Bing was coming and going perpetually in the Augsburg shop and tried to see all new machinery on test. Access was not always granted to him. In a letter to Johanning from October 1899 he asks him for a testimonial on recent achievements, to be forwarded to Busch (34). "Never mind, use some high faluting language, the Americans are accustomed to it" says Bing in this letter.

A large part of Bing's activity was still dedicated to the propagation of the Diesel engine. The trade in hops, however, as to be observed from his letters to Johanning, keeps him occupied during late summer and autumn. Afterwards he returns body and soul once more to the Diesel business.

He was decisively active in licence contracts to Sweden and the U.K. Repeatedly he met with Wallenberg through whom also the original contact with Nobel had been initiated. The first contact in England was with the Oppenheim bankers, but during the Boer War London was very reticent. Only in 1901 "The British Diesel Motor Company", mainly through Bing's initiative, was chartered. The house Rothschild was originally the main shareholder (34).

The "Allgemeine" received 400,000 Mark for the British licence. This was the largest income ever received by this company.

A pronounced tension existed at that time between the "Allgemeine" and Diesel. Differences of opinion were settled probably only by correspondence. Johanning, the managing director, directs Diesel's letters to Bing and the latter gives his opinion, even sometimes his directions, to Johanning. In one of the letters Diesel's intention to visit America is mentioned, with the demand to cover the travel expenses involved. Bing asks diplomatically for a postponement, because of the infavourable atmosphere towards the motor. The "Allgemeine", Diesel's own brainchild, was a steady source of trouble to its spiritual father. The firm was unable to collect sufficient licence fees and Diesel's shares of a nominal value of two million Mark had to be reassessed. There was steady pressure from the U.S.A. licencees, to have their fees waived because of continuous setbacks.

Only in 1903 the production of the motor comes into line everywhere. Bing follows up this development through numerous visits in the Augsburg and Nuremberg shops and sends respective reports to America. He also visited repeatedly licencees in Austria and Hungary.

The Diesel motor had its best and earliest start in Nobel's shop in St. Petersburg. Additionally to Nobel three other licencees took up production successfully in the Russian empire. The "Russische Diesel-Motoren Gesellschaft" under Bing's management could pay out its stock entirely and had currently profits (34). The "Allgemeine", however, was constantly in trouble and even had repeatedly law suits with Diesel. At its final liquidation in 1912, however, it was able to disburse the value of its stock.

In spite of opposing interests between Diesel and Bing, as the responsible figure in the "Allgemeine", personal relations between the two continued, albeit at a lower profile than

before. One of our families possesses a copy of Diesel's pamphlet of "solidarism" with a handwritten dedication to Bing (see illustration). He had occupied himself in these years with social and co-operative programs and even tried to form an organisation for the furthering of his social blueprints (37). Diesel's activity as to the technical and commercial development of his motor had come to a standstill.

A superficial glance into his unpublished diaries — in the archives of the Deutsche Museum in Munich — discloses an enormous insight into the social and economic problems of his times, much in advance of his contemporaries. His progressive social ideas seem to be contrasted — a not so rare phenomenon — to his life style. Financial entanglements, caused by his multiple transactions, together with an intrinsic inclination to psychic depression, induced him to put an end to his life by jumping at night from aboard ship while crossing the Channel in 1913. I still remember the shock which his death caused at my grandparents'.



Anna Loewengart-Bing

RUSSISCHE DIESEL MOTOR CO.

G. M. B. H.

Nürnberg, 24. April 1904.

TELEGRAMM-ADRESSE:

DIESELCO.

Depeschenschlüssel:

A B C code 4th ed.

Lieber's Standard Code.

Telephon No. 1090.

Mein lieber Herr Herrmann!

Man muss nicht gleichzeitigt sein in
seinem Leben. Die Arbeit ist die Arbeit und die
man kann nicht alle Arbeit machen, deren Inhalt
man ist interessiert. Das sagt man in einer Zeit
und Vorwort zu lesen & flüchtig die Dinge zu
beurteilen, diese oberflächliche Ansicht aber genügt
bisher - man kann nicht alle Arbeit machen
wollen. 1. 1. 1.

„Die Zeit geht“ N. N. „
die Papierung wird aufhören.“

Ob ich Ihnen heute wohl schon persönlich
sprechen & ob Ihnen diese Mitteilungen
nicht in der Cur schaden? Ich hoffe es
nicht, denn wir lieben ja auch in der
Erholungszeit - wie ich sehr sehr
gerne geschäftliche Termini.

Wohin Sie Herr Herrmann? Mein Gott
es geht?

Mit vielen Grüßen!
The
Bings

From Berthold Bings handwriting

World War I and after

Berthold Bing died in 1915 of a severe pneumonia at the age of 67, but still in the flower of his life. He had volunteered during the first year of World War I in the organisation of the food supply of the Nuremberg municipality and in other public services. His merits were expressed by a number of eulogisers (38) at his cremation (cremation was quite usual in Jewish liberal communities and the remains of the deceased were later buried in conventional tombs). Quite remarkable was the sermon of the Chief Rabbi of Nuremberg, who was, as always, overflowing with German patriotism.

There was already considerable shortage of food and fuel after the first year of the World War. Even coal was strictly rationed. Only one small room was allowed to be heated. Myself, the grandson, a fourteen year old schoolboy, and keenly interested in the military exploits of Germany and her Allies, had covered the wall with a large map, on which the front lines were marked with coloured dots fixed by pins. Grandfather Berthold was probably quite sceptical about the prospects of the war and grew impatient with the naivety of his grandson. He did not believe very much in the Germany of the Kaiser, but put his trust wholeheartedly in western civilisation, in progress and development of science and technology. An article in the *Leipziger Illustrierte Zeitung* from 1908 (39), featuring the aims of a Franco-German friendship society, brings his counterfeit, from which I copied the one in this booklet.

The chasm between Jews in Germany and their host nation had never been closed entirely, but opened up after World War I in a measure never foreseen before.

Our generation which had matured in World War I or before was confronted with a situation, for which it was entirely unprepared. For those who were able and willing to see all the forebodings, which became manifest 20 years later in the holocaust, the signs were already visible all over.

One of the ideologues of the National Youth Movement, Hans Blueher, had requested "Seccessio Judaica" (40) – total isolation of the Jews from German life and society. In reality this request began to be partly effective in the Twenties and became hard fact finally in the Third Reich. On the Jewish side there was only a very tiny minority to draw consciously the consequences, while the Jewish masses followed hesitatingly and very slowly.

The generation before, born in the seventies and eighties, was hit by this development with an utmost vehemence at a more advanced age.

My uncle, Rudolf Bing, son of Berthold, born 1876 in Nuremberg and died 1963 in Kfar Shmarjahu, by profession lawyer, deeply involved with the public and economic life of his home town, describes this development vividly in a private biography (30). He reports about his candidature for the Chamber of Lawyers in 1927, in which he succumbed to the antisemitic candidate and writes as follows:

"These days of the first imminent danger for German Jewry became a time for soul searching for them. There was an awakening from self-satisfied hedonism, which it shared with the same indolence with the German bourgeoisie. We, the older generation, have learned from our children who lived a full Jewish life in their youth movements. The emotional stress of imposed "pariah-dom", the giving-up of home, where the fathers had lived for hundreds of years, would have been intolerable without the spiritual hold of an attachment without compromise to our Jewish existence and the consequences therefrom, which Herzl had drawn politically already and his followers from the East in a more profound way".

Shortly before the Nazis came to power he joined the Zionist movement and took part in its activities on the very dangerous ground of Nuremberg. In the ominous "Kristallnacht" he and his wife luckily succeeded to escape from the rear exit, whilst the hooligans broke into their flat. Shortly afterwards they joined their two daughters married in Israel and could live happily together with their families up to their old age.

Anna Loewengart, my mother and only daughter of Berthold Bing, had joined the Zionist movement already in the beginning of the twenties, partly under the influence of myself, her eldest son, partly out of her own conviction and of a somewhat romantic strain. She came to Israel together with the family of her second son in 1934. Luckily she could identify herself entirely with the life of the country and all the hardships involved, without any retrospection to former material well-being.

The hospitable house of my parents in Fuerth had formed a center for the gathering of the Zionist youth and "Shlichim", who came to Nuremberg and Fuerth.

Unfortunately fate was not very kind to her in her last years. Prior to her death she had to face the loss of her eldest grandson in Israel, my son Shimon, who fell in the War of Liberation in 1948, and later of her second son, my brother Ernst, who died in 1953 in Haifa all of a sudden from a brain tumor.

A personal story of how I, coming from an assimilated Jewish family to the Zionist movement, together with the story of my early childhood up to my first immigration into Palestine in 1925, I have already in preparation, and I hope to be still able to tell it at a later stage. Such a story should also contain a description of life in my home town of Fuerth and of the ancestry from my father's side.

The great-great-grandson of Isachar Beer Bing, myself, did not have any knowledge whatsoever of the ideas of his forefather. He had grown up in a family tradition which had long since repressed and forgotten the ideas of its forefather. May ideas be inherited in a mere biological way?

At least a considerable part of the family followed and lives now in Israel, talks and writes, teaches and commands in the language of the rebirth of which the forefather had dreamed.



Our family house in Fuerth-Hardenbergstrasse

World War I and after

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Our family house in Fuerth-Hardenbergstrasse

Remarks and Literature

Standard books, not specially quoted:

- Germania Judaica, I and II, Tuebingen 1963 and 1968
 Dubnov, Weltgeschichte des Juedischen Volkes, Berlin 1929
 Jewish Encyclopedia, London – New-York
 Encyclopaedia Evraiska (Russian), St. Petersburg 1909
 (contains a short chapter about Abraham Bing)
 Ha'Encyclopedia Ha'Ivrith, Tel-Aviv 1950 etc.
 Encyclopaedia Judaica, Ketter Jerusalem 1971
 Pinkas Kehiloth Germania (Bavaria), Jerusalem Yad Vashem 1973 (Hebrew)

- 1) Agus I.A., The Heroic Age of Franco-Germanic Jewry, New York 1967
- 2) Baer Albert, das Lied der Lieder im Biedermeierstil
 (eine kuriose Uebertragung), Mitteilungsblatt (M.B.)
 No. 15, Tel-Aviv 1965.
- 3) Schwarz Stefan, die Juden in Bayern im Wandel der Zeiten, Muenchen 1963
- 4) Bamberger Jizchak Sekel, "Sichron Abraham"
 Pressburg במברגר יצחק זאקל, ספר זכרון אברהם, חדושים והגהות על ש"ע א"ח, הרב גאון מודר"ר בינג הלוי ז"ל
 5662
- 5) Bamberger H., Geschichte der Rabbiner der Stadt und des Bezirkes Wuerzburg, Wuerzburg 1906
- 5a) Bamberger H., p. 291, quotes the inscription of Abraham Bing's tomb:

מר קשישא חסידא ופרישא המפורסם מוהר"ר
 אברהם בינג סג"ל אב"ד דמדינת ווירצבורג יע"א נתבקש למעלה ה' אדר תר"א לפ"ק

		הארון נשבה	הוה על הוה
		מרבץ השיבה	נר אלהים כבה
שם עון גנים	בסוד העליונים	אלוף התורה	גאון ומורה
יחזה השכינה	בוא יבוא ברנה	קדוש מרחם	מלחמתה לחם
עד יבוא שילה	יגן בעד קהילו	מלאך אלקים	עלה לגבהים

תנצבה.

- 6) Dietz Alexander, Stammbuch der Frankfurter Juden, Frankfurt 1907
- 7) Among "Bing" families, by whom I was contacted, are families from Hechingen (Hohenzollern) and Ober-Seesen (Ober-Hessen); other families which are also definitely not related to our family are from: Mons, Copenhagen and, of course, from Frankfurt.
- 8) Schnee, H., Die Juden und die Hoffinanz, 2, (1954), 4, (1960)
 however mentioned only Raphael and Simon Nathan Binge from Hanau, the latter father-in-law of the well known court purveyor Wolf Kaulla in Hechingen, who were not related to our Bing family.
- 9) Horowitz M., Die Grabschriften des alten israelitischen Friedhofs zu Frankfurt, Frankfurt 1901
 The inscription on the tombstone is registered under No. 2539, p. 269
 הנעלה ר' באר בינג הלוי נפ' יום כ"ו אדר ונקבר יום א' כ"ח אדר תק"ו
 פה קבור איש ישר דלקר כ' יששכר יעקב וויילר סג"ל הנצבה.
- 10) Eshel Chaim M., Family names in Israel (Hebrew), Haifa 1967
- 11) From the files of the Jerusalem Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People, Sprinzak House, Givat Ram, University Campus, Jerusalem, (CAHJP), File No. J 997 I
- 12) Frys Joseph, Die Familie Hirsch auf Gereuth, Muenchen 1931
- 13) Richards Monica, Der Eintritt der Juden in die akademischen Berufe, Tuebingen 1974
- 14) Bartura Abraham, ברטורא אברהם, ישאו הרים שלום, מכתבי מסע ועליה, אליעזר וסילע ברגמן מירושלים

1834-36

malicious denunciation by a relative of Ullmann (Chronicle of Ber Bernhard Ullmann 1803, translated by Carly J. Ullmann, New York 1928).

- 37) Diesel Rudolf, "Solidarismus", Natuerliche wirtschaftliche Erloesung des Menschen, Muenchen 1903
- 38) Nachrufe an der Bahre des Kg. Kommerzienrates B. Bing, private printing 1915
- 39) Flinsch H., Die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und Frankreich. Eine deutsch-franzoesische Annaeherung. Illustrierte Zeitung, Leipzig, vol. 130, 1908, No. 3379 (with pictures of the representatives of the organisation, among them the picture of Berthold Bing).
- 40) Blueher H., Secessio Judaica 1922, see Bein Alex, die Judenfrage in der Literatur des modernen Antisemitismus zur Vorbereitung der Endloesung. Bulletin of the LB Institute, No. 21, 1963.

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J. 1884.

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Geburts-Zeit & Ort.	Hausvater	Copulations-Zeit & Ort.	Hausmutter	Geburts-Zeit & Ort
1. Geburt 1798.	Mainzer, Margar Avon Köhlmann † 21. August 1866.	13. W. 1825.	Therese, geb. Lammberg † 21. Juli 1881. N 1698. i. d. R.	7. Geburt 1807.
Vater Mutter.	Patetraumel		Liebetraumel	Vater. Mutter.
Im Monat August d. J. Köhlmann Schleierstein für die Köhlmannen				
Zahl der Kinder	Namen.	Geburt.	Verheirathung	Tod
1.	Joseph	23. Aug. 1827.	† 26. März 1833.	
X 2.	Baron modo August	28. Feb. 1829.	Kaufm. cop. 19. 1860. - Handelsreis. auf Görlitz	
X 3.	Luis " Ignatz	8. Febr. 1831.	† med. cop. 15. März 1859. c. Kaufm. 49. 18.	
X 4.	Wladimir modo Moritz	10. Aug. 1833.	Kaufm. in Nürnberg	
X 5.	Salomon	7. Juli 1835.	Kaufm. 18. 1. febr. 1865. i. d. R. d. R. 49. 2. 18.	
6.	Abraham modo Adolf	20. Aug. 1837.	22. Juli 1855. i. d. R. d. R. anfragen d. R. d. R. Paris i. d. R. am 12. August 1870. - 1871.	
7.	Leopold	8. Apr. 1846.	i. d. R. d. R. auf Bürger 20. Aug. 1862	
	Salomon	i. d. R. d. R.	v. kaufm. d. R. d. R. in Nürnberg	
X 9.	Ernst	15. Apr. 1844		
10.	Isidor	2. Nov. 1845.		
11.	Nathalia	10. Mai 1848.		
X 14.	Julian i. d. R. d. R.	12. Aug. 1850.	auf Kaufm. in d. R. d. R. d. R.	

Extract from the birth register of Stuttgart, received from Dr. Mainzer, London

- I. August Mainzer (zuletzt Rechtsanwalt in Heilbronn)
 Kinder: 1) Lina, verh. kleemann, verstorben, Abkoemmlinge:
 a) Grete verh. Glaeser, ohne Abkoemmlinge verstorben
 b) Hans Kleemann, verstorben. Dessen Kinder
 Fritz Kleemann, Stuttgart-Obertuerkheim, Uhlbacher Strasse 89, Dr. Margrit Jacobi, 2071 Delingsdorf, Tulpenweg 4 bei Hamburg, Christa von Bychelberg, Nuernberg, Engelthaler Strasse 5, Johannes kleemann, Stuttgart-Obertuerkheim, Asangstrasse 101.
 2) Johanna, verh. Meyer; deren Kinder
 a) Dr.jur. Emil Meyer, verstorben, dessen Kinder: Joan, verh. Sachs, 8 Locksley Ave., San Francisco, Calif. 94122 und Max Alfred Meyer, 14445 Broadmoor Street, Panorama City, Calif. 91402, USA.
 b) Else , verh. Josenhans, von der Gestapo in Stuttgart umgebracht. Deren Kinder Annemarie Hermann, Gladbachstrasse 54, 8044 Zuerich, und Liselotte, verh. Brockstedt, Stuttgart, Carlos Greithe Weg 4
- II. Dr.med. Ignatz Mainzer; dessen Kinder:
 a) Dr.jur. Robert Mainzer, verstorben in Theresienstadt; dessen Kinder: Dr.jur. Erwin Mainzer, 14 Corringham Road, London, NW11 und Gerhard Mainzer, 56 Embury Way, Stanmore, Middx., England
 b) Dr.med. Ferdinand Mainzer, verstorben; dessen Kinder Lucie John, Haus Hohenburg, Igls, Tirol und Dr.jur. Max Mainzer, 8151 Sepulveda Boulevard, Van Nuys, Calif., USA.
 c) Gertrud, verh. Netter, verstorben . Ihr einziger Sohn starb im Februar 1974 ohne Abkoemmlinge.
- III. Julius Mainzer, dessen Kinder Paul und Else, verh. Sebald ebenfalls kinderlos gestorben sind.
- IV. Bethold Mainzer; dessen Kinder:
 a) Albert Mainzer, Rechtsanwalt , umgekommen in Auschwitz, kinderlos
 b) Dr.med. Julius Mainzer, verstorben . Tochter Margarete Glueckstein, Muenchen, Pullacher Platz 7
 c) Hermann Mainzer, kinderlos verstorben
 d) Max Mainzer, verstorben; dessen Kinder Dr.med. Ernest Mainzer, 308 Glessner Ave., Mansfield, Ohio, USA. und eine Tochter (Einzelheiten unbekannt.)
 e) Luise, verh. Bernheim, die wie auch ihre Tochter Lina Wyler gestorben ist. Tochter der letzteren Anna Wyler, St. Gallen, Poststrasse 10
- V. Simon Mainzer, kinderlos gestorben
- VI. Moritz Mainzer: 2 Tochter Ida und Franziska, frueher in Nuernberg, kinderlos gestorben. Es ist anzunehmen , dass eine weitere Tochter, verh. Sommer, vorhanden war, die wie auch deren Tochter verstorben sind.

Register of descendants of the Mainzer family, recieved from Dr. Mainzer, London