

My connection to Nuremberg

by Inge Sadan, born in Munich

My maternal grandparents

Why, when I have only been in Nuremberg three times - once with an overnight stay, and twice for just a few hours - do I have this emotional attachment to that city?

My story begins in 1906, when my grandparents Abraham and Malka Zimmerlinski arrived at the railway station, together with four children, from Warsaw. I do not know what made them choose Nuremberg as their new home, but at the station a porter advised them to find an apartment in Schweppermannstraße, which, he assured them, was a nice district. It seems they took his advice, and lived in Schweppermannstraße for quite a few years, before moving to Roonstraße 13.

It was a spacious apartment, and in the basement they had a workshop, making sand-goggles for export to Egypt.



Moses and Rosa Engelhard, ca. 1922

(photo: private)

By then they had six children, and had settled into the life of the orthodox Jewish community. In 1922 my mother Rosa married Moses Engelhard at the synagogue in Essenweinstraße and moved with him to Munich.

During the big influenza epidemic of 1917/18 my grandfather died. Three of the children had emigrated to America, and in 1928 my grandmother died too.



Wedding invitation of Rosa and Moses Engelhard, 1922
(photo: private)

The oldest son, my uncle Aaron continued to live in Nuremberg with his family of five children. When I was born in 1930, in Munich, I was given my grandmother's name, as is the custom in Jewish life.



Munich, ca. 1934: Rosa Engelhard with her children Theo, Berta and Inge
(photo: private)

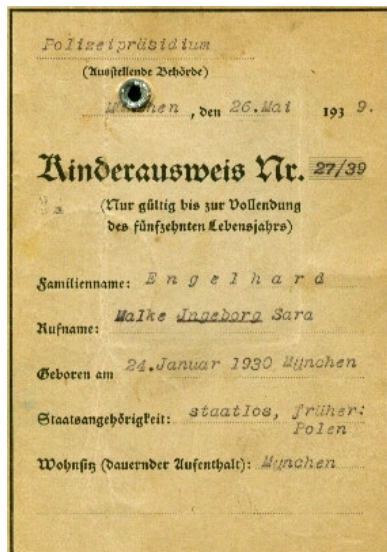
Giving refuge in Munich and fleeing ourselves

My next reminder of Nuremberg was when, after *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, my cousins came to our apartment in Munich, to find temporary refuge.



Rosa and Moses Engelhard, Munich 1938
(photo: private)

They had lived on the groundfloor of their building, and as the Nazis were banging on the frontdoor, they jumped out of the window and quickly made their way to us. My aunt was in deep shock, though we children had a great time together, with pillow-fights, skating, etc. My uncle managed to get his family to America in 1940, just in time, whilst we in Munich became a depleted family when my sister, Bertha, aged nearly 16, and my brother Theo, aged eleven, went to England on the first *Kindertransport* from Munich, in January 1939. I followed them in July 1939, whilst my parents were stuck there until they managed to flee to Yugoslavia in September 1940.



Inge's German passport, 1939
(photos: private)

There are probably not many people still alive, either in Nuremberg or Munich who can remember those terrible days. My mother applied to the “authorities” to travel to Nuremberg to visit her parents’ graves, but permission was not granted.

The first visit after the war

It was not until 1954 when I arranged to meet my mother in Munich (I was by now living in Israel), and we made our way to Nuremberg at last to go to the Jewish cemetery. It was my first visit to Nuremberg, and strangely, I immediately felt at home. We ate in a vegetarian restaurant, where the meal was so huge that I could not finish it. The waiter automatically wrapped the leftovers into a bag to take home, quite *selbstverständlich* (customary), much to my embarrassment, who had never experienced the custom (maybe a reminder of wartime shortages)! We then tried to find a small hotel, but it seemed that there was a conference taking place at the time, and all hotels were full. The manager of one, however, told my mother that if we would wait for the people to vacate the lounge, they were make us up a bed there - as long as we got up early the next morning.

Fairly desperate by now, we agreed, and waited and waited, but the guests would not go. So the manager let us stay in the servants' quarters, in the attic, behind a curtain, and we slept happily there, until a pull at the curtain early next morning woke us up. A middle-aged man was standing there, wishing us a polite good morning, and if we would excuse him, he had to enter his office, which was near our bed ...

The weather was beautiful (August), and we made our way to the cemetery, where the caretaker examined a large old book, with beautiful writing, where my grandparents' graves were. The cemetery was well-kept, with workers sweeping the paths and making sure that the graves were kept in good condition. We found my grandparents' graves, and said the prayers. There was also a large memorial for the Jewish soldiers who had died in the First World War, with one family having lost four sons! In view of the years following that war, it made me think of the waste of patriotism.

My mother then took me to see the sights of Nuremberg, which had been so much a part of her early life - the *Burg* (imperial castle), the *Hauptmarkt* (main market square), the two houses where she had lived, and so on. In both houses there were still people who had known the family, and they caught up with history of the last 30 years. (My mother was then in her mid-fifties.) We walked around this medieval town, and I felt as if I had lived there too. The Nuremberg accent, with the soft "t", the *Lebkuchen* (ginger bread), etc. etc. it was all part of me. When we returned to the brash life of Munich, I really missed Nuremberg and its quiet dignity.

Going to Nuremberg with my children

The next time I came to Nuremberg was with my two teenage daughters, in 1976, in early spring. We visited the cemetery, and they saw where their great-grandparents had lived and died. I also wanted to show them Roonstraße 13, of which they had heard so much, and we knocked on “their” door. An elderly woman, to whom I explained my wish, told me to come back in an hour, which we did, having bought some chocolate for her kindness.

However ... we knocked on the door, and no-one opened it. We knocked again - same result! It was then that the other neighbour opened her door to ask what we wanted. She was quite intrigued, and told us that her apartment was exactly the same, and we could see that. She had two lovely young sons, and told us that she was a journalist, and was interested to hear about the workshop that my grandparents had had in the 1910s and 20s in the basement. I was really grateful for her kindness, and we passed the chocolate on to the boys. So now my daughters knew some of their family history too. And I showed them the Nuremberg of my mother and her family.

A stopover and final thoughts

My third visit, a short one, was when I was in Frankfurt for a seminar on the *Kindertransports* and took the train for a quick visit. Once again, I felt the urge to visit the cemetery, and was lucky enough to have my old schoolfriend, Werner Grube, from Munich, who was visiting his sister Ruth, now living in Nuremberg. He and his wife took me in their car, quickly found the cemetery and the graves, and were also interested in the various histories of the life of Nuremberg Jewry. There was also a monument in memory of the Nuremberg Jews who had perished in the Holocaust. They had all been a part of the life of this city, yet had not been accepted as such.

I have quite a number of Nuremberg friends in Israel - they were the ones who had managed to escape. Yet I am sure that they also have that feeling of attachment to their youth, the *Burg*, the *Hauptmarkt*, the Pegnitz river, etc. etc. that I, a mere visitor from my family’s past, also feel.

Jerusalem, January 2008

Inge Sadan

[Index*](#)

[Home*](#)