

When we decided to take part in Neighbours Who Disappeared, the name of Gerhard Wanitschek, a compatriot from Vikýřovice near Šumperk, immediately came to our minds. He has been devoted to searching for Šumperk Jewish families and after many years of research in regional, municipal, national and Jewish archives, he traced the lives of nearly all the Šumperk Jews. Most of them died in concentration camps. But those of them who survived, having left for England or the US or Canada in time, still remember their home-town and take interest in it.



In the course of his research, Mr. Wanitschek went to Israel to meet Mrs. Thaler, born Bandler, the daughter of an important Šumperk Jewish businessman, now a hundred-year-old lady. One of his friends is Mr. Sonner, a descendant of the distinguished Jewish Schild family who funded the making of a memorial stone plaque with the names of the executed Šumperk citizens of Jewish origin. It was placed in the memorial hall at the Jewish cemetery in the presence of the Israeli Ambassador, representatives of the Jewish Community from Prague and Olomouc, and the representatives of the city.

Among the Jewish memorials in the region are the Jewish cemetery in Šumperk as well as the Jewish cemeteries in Úsov and in Loštice.



Questions:

- Which movie inspired the authors?
- What year of the reign of Rudolf II. have the Jews been expatriated from Šumperk?
- Explain the reason why survivors prefer not to talk about their experience?
- What were the reasons for the deportation of Jews from the country or from individual towns?

The History of the Bandler Family



On the Šumperk street of General Svoboda, there is a lofty house where used to be the shop of Mr. Brandler, a place to buy anything from threads to clothes.

The founder of the firm, Eduard Bandler, born 1859 in Heřmanův Městec near Chrudim, came to Šumperk in 1886 and he married the eighteen-year-old Camille Kern. He had nine sons and a daughter. He died in 1913. He wished to be incinerated and since there was no crematorium in Austria, his oldest son went to Germany with the coffin and returned

with an urn and ashes.

His wife Camilla Bandler took over the shop. In 1938, she passed it to her sons, Hugo and Leo, and left for Prague. In July 1942 she was deported to Terezín and in October of the same year, she was sent to Treblinka. She was seventy-four at that time.

In 1887, their son Max was born. He studied the law in Vienna and worked as a law intern. He was severely wounded in the First World War. In 1930, he married Mimi Fischer. In 1938, he successfully fled from the country with a British offer. His wife moved to Most and intended to continue with her brother to England. Unfortunately, they did not make it, they went to Prague and from here, they were deported to Terezín and in January 1942 to a ghetto in Riga. Their later fate is unknown. Max worked in London in various journals and later he left for Israel where he died in 1975, aged 88.

Their son Leo, born 1899, worked in the Union Bank. After his father fell ill, he had to take over the family business. After his father's death, Leo became co-owner. In 1913, he married Fanczi Schonfeld. They had two children, Hardy and Edith. In 1938 the whole family moved to Olomouc. In 1942, Leo with his wife were deported to Baranovice in Belarus and Edith with her husband to Malý Trostinec. Hardy fled to Palestine. In 1949, Leo left with his whole family and went to London and from here, in 1952, to Montreal. He died in 1980, aged 67. His wife still lives in Toronto.

Doctor Fritz Bandler, born 1895, stayed at the university as a professor of ancient languages after having studied philosophy there. With his wife Rosi, born Weil, they were not allowed to leave the country and were both deported to Terezín and six weeks later to Malý Trostinec where they both died.

Hugo Bandler, born 1896, was employed by a Viennese bank after having studied business. He met his future wife while founding a subsidiary in Vienna. In 1934, during the last family reunion, he insisted that they left Europe. Unfortunately, only his youngest brother Otto heeded his council. Hugo himself left for Sao Paulo. Here, he became the economic and later general manager at Singer. In 1987 he died in the age of ninety. His wife died shortly after that.

Doctor Robert Bandler, his twin, studied dental medicine. After a short interim when he

worked in Prague, he left to take up the position of assistant on the clinic in České Budějovice. He remained a bachelor and died on December 18, 1941, in Mathausen.

Marie Bandler was born on October 4, 1898. In 1919, she married Maurice Thaler. In 1938, his family went to Brno. They were lucky enough to get away from the country on an illegally organized transport (it was organized by the former owner of the Šumperk sawmill, Alfred Flesh). On Tuln, a steamship, they reached the Black Sea, where they changed ships and continued on a Greek cargo boat. At the shore of Palestine, the boat was under gunfire from the British naval forces and was forced to return. After several months spent on an island where they were taken care of by the Athenian Jewish community, the refugees navigated to Haifa in several small boats. In 1998, Ms. Marie Bandler – Thaler celebrated her hundredth birthday in Ramat Gan, Izrael. Unfortunately, she did not live to see her hundred-and- first birthday.

A son, Pavel, was born into the marriage in 1922. He went to the industrial high school in Šumperk and in 1942, he joined the British army in Palestine. After the war, he returned to Czechoslovakia, studied at the Technological College in Brno and worked as an engineer in the brown coal mines in Leopoldov. After the 1968 invasion, he escaped to Vienna. Later, he left for Koln über Rhein and worked as a patent director. He suddenly died in 1995, only a short while after visiting his mother in Israel.

The youngest son, Dr. Otto Bandler, born 1902, first studied at the Vienna Business School with a specialization in export and then medicine. He worked as a general practitioner and at the beginning of the thirties, he married Miss Gisela (we do not know her last name). In 1935, following the advice of his brother Hugo, he left Europe and moved to South America where he worked as a doctor. Later he went to New York, as a doctor of the Spanish colony. He died in 1969, his wife shortly afterwards.

Two other children of Eduard and Camille Bandler, Karl and Ernst, died in childhood.



The Bandler family. Dr. Otto Bandler (1) and his wife Gisela. Second row: Hardy Bandler (2), Edith Bandler (3), Trude Riesenfeld-Bandler (4), Dr. Paul Bandler (5), Paul Thaler (6), Moritz Thaler (7), Hugo, Therese Bandler (8), Rosi Weil-Bandler (9), Dr. Fritz Bandler (10). Sitting: Leo Bandler (11), Franzl Bandler-Schönfeld (12), Marie Thaler-Bandler (13), mother Camilla Bandler (14), Dr. Robert Bandler (15), Mimi Bandler-Fiser (16) and Max Bandler (17).

The history of the members of the Mowschenson family

The family of doctor Isidor Mowschenson, a dentist, came to Šumperk in 1914. Even though his wife and their three children were born in Jaroslav, it is not at all sure if they really came from there. Doctor Mowschenson was born in Odessa where there were approximately a million Jewish citizens and seventy synagogues at the break of the century. He studied in Russia, in Scandinavia, and in Berlin. It is certain, however, that they lived in Šumperk during the years 1914-1938.

At the end of October or the beginning November, they left Šumperk and moved to Prague. In April, they were forced to sell their house, the demesne, and the garden to the Reich for 45 000 Reich Marks. The money was deposited in a closed bank account and the family was allowed to use only a limited monthly amount to cover their basic needs.

Isidor and his wife were deported to Terezín on January 17, 1941. Josefa in transport N 868, Isidor in N 869.

Their daughter Izabella went to the high school and studied in Prague. She married Robert Fialla, a lawyer, in 1930 and living in Prague, 1145 Krátká Street. Doctor Fialla was deported in the transport B 312 to Lodge, where he died on July 24, 1942.

Izabella stayed in Prague, her last home being 3 Kociánova Street. On July 13, 1942, she was deported to Terezín in transport Aaqu 762 and from here to Baranovice in transport Aay.



Helena and Heinz Mowschenson



Dr. Henry in a British officer's uniform shortly after the war

Their daughters Helena, born 1909, died in Trawniki in 1940 and Ernestine, born 1925, died in Auschwitz.

Their only son Heinz (doctor Henry) went to a state high school in Šumperk. After he passed the baccalaureate in 1932, he studied medicine at the German university in Prague and graduated in 1938 as a doctor. Afterwards, he was drafted by the army to study at the Prague military academy.

When Czechoslovakia became a German protectorate, he left the country with his fiancée Hamma, born in Výprty, and her mother. They successfully reached Palestine. In 1942, Heinz volunteered in the British Army and he was appointed into the Royal Army Medical Corps. He served there until 1948.

He then entered the Colonial Medical Service and served in today's Malawi. When Malawi became independent, he stayed there as a practitioner and a medical counselor. He was the medical adviser at the British High Commission, Canadian High Commission in Nairobi appointed him their practitioner for Malawi, and the first ambassador of Germany named him private doctor of the German Embassy.

In 1963, the Malawi government asked him to resume service. He worked at their Healthcare ministry for ten years. In 1981, he was elected a member of the medical school at the London Royal College of Physicians. Queen Elizabeth bestowed upon him the highest honors. In 1968, he became a knight of The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Then in 1972, he was dubbed knight of the Venerable Order of St. John and received the war cross of the same order. In 1989, he returned with his wife Hamma to London. Even though his parents and his three sisters have been sent to the extermination camps, Henry (Heinz) Mowschenson insisted that the murder was not the doing of German people but of the crooked system of his era, finding ample proof in his post-war work.

He repeatedly tried to regain his parents' demesne in Šumperk. It had been appropriated by the German administration, and after the year 1945 confiscated on the basis of the decrees of Eduard Beneš as German property. He did not covet material satisfaction, he only wanted recognition for having contributed to the fall of the Hitler system. Unfortunately, he was not granted this favor. His letter to the presidential office of Václav Havel written in the hand of Gerhard Wanitschek was answered with a regretful refusal. In 1992, Henry Mowschenson's wife Hamma died. This loss affected him gravely. He died on June 23, 1994, a month before his eightieth birthday.



Dr. Henry, two years before his death.
Behind him is a portrait of his wife Hamma.