# RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

## PART 1

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

Copyright © Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and later Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, distributed in printed or electronic format with the written permission of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2024

RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY ..... 1
PART 1 ..... 1
CHAPTER 1. ..... 3
PRELUDE IN TATI ..... 3
CHAPTER 11. ..... 5
PADDY COHEN AGAINST CECIL RHODES ..... 5
CHAPTER 111 ..... 18
THE JEW WHO CROSSED AFRICA ..... 18
CHAPTER IV ..... 22
THE ROTHSCHILDS AND RHODESIA ..... 22
CHAPTER V ..... 26
JEWS AND THE CHARTER ..... 26
CHAPTER VI ..... 30
ALFRED BEIT'S EARLY TREKKS ..... 30
CHAPTER VII ..... 36
CHAPTER V111. ..... 39
CHAPTER IX. ..... 45
CHAPTER X ..... 48
JEWS IN EARLY BULAWAYO ..... 48
CHAPTER X1 ..... 60
STARTING A CONGREGATION ..... 60

# CHAPTER 1.

## PRELUDE IN TATI

When, in 1868, the German explorer, Eduard Mohr, bound for the interior of Southern Africa from the Cape of Good Hope, made his way into the northern part of the territory now known as Bechuanaland, he found himself, on the morning of July 26, outside the Tati Settlement.

"This camp", he said, "has come into being g in consequence of the discoveries of gold made by the German traveler, Carl Mauch, which at the time created a stir, not only in Cape Colony and Natal, but also in England……"

and now, as Mohr looked down upon "the and huts of the miners on the left bank of the Tati, tributary of the Shashi", he noticed, immediately to the right "when one crosses the sandy river bed, a powder magazine half completed, and to the left, in a swamp, baked bone dry at this time of the year by the force of the sun's rays, numberless elephant footprints……. Only a year earlier, when the virgin peace of Nature still prevailed, herds of these mighty animals had frequented the spot, where now stand the huts and tents…….

Among the 30 or 40 whites toiling away, Herr Mohr came upon one of the most picturesque characters of Victorian South Africa, "the English nobleman, Sir John Swinburne. Enticing reports in the English newspapers had stirred in him visions of Australian and Californian treasures, until, without awaiting confirmation, he had succumbed to these Utopian temptations, bough a steam engine for rock crushing, engaged an engineer and, after purchasing a supply of foodstuffs, clothing, implements, powder, lead, arms, etc, sufficient to fill a whole magazine, trekked up to the Tati……But now the same miners, led by the speculative Baronet, were confronted with shortages of food as well as with disappointing returns from the mine"

One of the lonely little band, battling for survival, was a young Jew named Daniel Montague Kisch, to whom goes the honour of being probably the first of his community to figure in the history of Rhodesia. Born in England in 1840, he had come to the Cape, where his uncle Daniel de Pass, through his pioneering work in the guano and other trades, had achieved wealth and importance. At his suggestion Kisch in 1860 moved to Natal, where De Pass figured among the earliest sugar growers, but had been unable to settle down there. From trying to make a living as a photographer, he presently turned to prospecting, and so came to join the expedition of diggers, mainly Australian, on the wearisome trek to a golden will-o`-the-wisp on the Tati Fields.

Thomas Baines, the famous explorer, recalls in his "Gold Regions of South Eastern Africa", how "an arduous trek across the Doorstland (so spelt), crossing

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

several rivers, either quite dry or scantily supplied with water, kept cool and clear in reservoirs of rock beneath the broad, dry, sandy beds, brought us to the great Shasha (so spelt) and then to the Tati River, where we outspanned near the store of the London and Limpopo Mining Company, where we were warmly welcomed by my friend, D.M. Kisch, and by other miners.

By the time these early failures had been followed by more successful prospecting, Kisch had move to Pretoria, to become a prominent businessman under the old Republican regime, as well as Auditor-General of the Transvaal under the First British Occupation, from 1877 to 1881.

While in this narrative we are not concerned with that side of his career, Tati retains its place in what might be called the introductory phase of Rhodesian history. For Tati in due course gave birth to the Tati Concession, granted by Lobengula, and so the Tati Company was a forerunner of Rhodes's British South Africa Company.

Nor was this the only Jewish enterprise in these parts in the remote era that preceded the Pioneer Column. Writing at Pniel, on the River Diggings of the Vaal, on August 2, 1871, the German traveler, Ernst von Weber, in his excellent book, "Vier Jahre in Afrika", said: "Here I got to know a good-natured Viennese named Groeger, who had set up his tent close to the river, and was diligently digging for diamonds. Some years previously, on behalf of the large house of Lippert in Hamburg (with branches in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Port Natal and, unless I am mistaken, also in Melbourne or Sydney), he accompanied an exploring expedition as mining expert to the Zambezi River, whence, immediately after the discovery of the Diamond Fields, he had come here.

Thus the Lipperts, cousins of Alfred Beit and proprietors of one of the most famous Jewish firms in early South Africa, can claim the honour of having attempted the exploration of Rhodesia nearly 20 years before the arrival of Cecil John Rhodes.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER 11.

## PADDY COHEN AGAINST CECIL RHODES

During the year 1877, there was published by Edward Stanford of Charing Cross, London, and J.W.C. MacKay of Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony, a famous "Map of the Goldfields of South Eastern Africa". Prepared by Thomas Baines, Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, and "issued under the supervision of Henry Hall, Esq., Fellow of the Geographical Society", it showed for the first time with some degree of accuracy the features of the lands between the Limpopo River and the Zambezi.

Although the routes of travelers like Carl Mauch, Eduard Mohr and others had been carefully drawn in, the present-day student is startled by such entries as "Supposed Realm of Queen of Sheba", or "Wochua Mountain, apparently the Highest Mountain Hereabouts", or Wahta, Chief, now to the Mashonas, buys gold and sends it down to the Portuguese", or "On the Mazura River, G. Phillps found some lemon and citrus trees growing here".

On the vast emptiness such features are noted as "Jennings Camp", while across a large section of the map lie the words "Matabele – Lo Bengula". The only attempts at permanent white communities were the famous mission stations, Inyati, (founded 1859 by the Reverend Morgan Thomas), and Hope Fountain, further south, where the Reverend Helm sought to preach the gospel in close proximity to "Lobengula's Village".

Little if any changes had occurred when, early in the next decade, the first permanent Jewish settler reached these parts.

Moss Cohen, better known as Paddy Cohen, because of his alleged Irish associations, has left a personal account of his arrival. Like D.M.Kisch, he came from England. "In 1882", he said, "I went to Matabeleland, and remained 13 moths as a trader. The King Lobengula took a great fancy to me, and before I left asked me to come back. I told him I could not, unless he gave me a trading license. He agreed, so I gave him a horse for it. I wrote a document, which he signed before two white men, named Fairbairn and Phillps. Of course the concession I claimed was rather large, in fact it was the sole free trading rights in his territory. In 1884 I bothered him again, and asked for a gold concession, but he said he had no gold in his country. "White people will soon come and get the gold", I told him, "and why should I be left out"? To this he gave me a promise that, as soon as he gave anybody prospecting rights, I should be the first to get one. He would not give this to me in writing, but I was satisfied and took his promise".

Meanwhile a series of events had begun changing the entire political geography and economics of Southern Africa and, with them, the fortunes of Paddy Cohen. From his vantage point in Kimberly, Cecil John Rhodes, already the acknowledged magnate of the Diamond Fields, and about to commence his parliamentary career, urged that the authority of the Queen be extended North of the Orange River to balance that of the German Government, headed by Prince Bismarck, in South West Africa, and of President Kruger and his Boers in the South African Republic. In this famous "Scramble for Africa", touched off by the recent Berlin Congress, Downing Street suddenly woke up to the fact that, if England were not to be encircled by outside powers, she must safeguard the "Suez Canal to the Interior", the Bechuana country.

At the very moment when Paddy Cohen was renewing his representations to Lobengula in 1884, General Sir Charles Warren led his force of Cape Volunteers into Bechuanaland, so putting an end to any effort of the Germans to link up with the Transvaal, and to the establishment of any effective Boer Republics, large or small, in the area of the Kalahari Desert.

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal, particularly at Lydenburg, De Kaap and in the Lowveld, was responsible for endless stories about the alleged wealth of Matabeleland and Mashonaland. The handful of traders, of whom Paddy Cohen was one, who had settled at Gubulawayo, Lobengula's capital (some miles distant from the present city), was reinforced by a steady flow of prospectors and concession seekers, who, better endowed both with funds and diplomatic influence, found little difficulty in outwitting the earlier comers. With his immense prestige, reinforced by his amalgamation of the diamond workings at Kimberley into De Beers Consolidated Mines, and his own wealth, supplemented by that of the Rothschilds overseas, Cecil John Rhodes systematically set about staking the British claim.

Early in 1888, in conjunction with Alfred Beit, he had sent J.Fry to secure the widest possible concession from Lobengula. Unhappily Fry developed cancer and died soon after his return to Kimberley in June of the same year.

The next link in the chain was a letter received by the famous Rhodesian pioneer, Francis R Thompson, better known because of his adventures as "Matabele" Thompson.

Luipard's Vlei
7th May 1888
P.O.Box 67
Johannesburg, Z.A.R.

My Dear Thompson – What are you doing with yourself, and where are you? Your brother told me some time ago that he expected to hear, and again I heard you had gone to Kuruman. What I want to know is- are you likely to be "on" for a trip round the various Transvaal Gold Fields about August and September next? I am going in the interests of my Company, and there is no one I would sooner have with me than yourself, if you can see your way. Frank has gone off to Barberton and Zoutpansberg for a couple

of months. I expect to leave here about of June for Cape Town. Send me a line or wire here before that.
Yours very truly
(Signed) C.D.Rudd

Contacting Rhodes partner, Charles Dunell Rudd, Thompson discovered that the scheme for which his services were needed went far beyond the limits of the Transvaal, and at Cape Town a telegram from Rhodes was waiting, asking him to call that same evening at the Houses of Parliament. There he was greeted with the words "Now for our daydreams of securing the territory up to the Zambezi for the British nation".

Matabele Thompson recalled: "Then Rhodes began to give details. His plan, in brief, was that Rudd and I should go to Bulawayo, where we should try to obtain from Lobengula, King of the Matabele, the sole concession for mining in that country".

One the preliminaries had been settled, no less a person than the Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner for South Africa, issued a personal letter to ease their way.
O.H.M.S.
To King Lobengula, King of the Amandebele
I beg to introduce to you Messrs. Rudd and Thompson, two highly respectable gentlemen, who are visiting your country.
(Signed) Hercules Robinson
High Commissioner etc.

Further to safeguard the legal validity of any documents drawn up, Rhodes asked his Solicitor, Rochfort Maguire, to join the expedition, and on August 15th 1888, the party left Kimberley for the North.

Paddy Cohen, unluckily for him, had chosen that very moment to travel in the opposite direction. In 1888, he wrote "I left the country (Matabeleland) to get new goods. On the way I met Rudd, Maguire and Thompson, and conversed with them about the road and Lobengula etc. Rudd said he was going to Lobengula to obtain three or four weeks hunting, and asked me if Lobengula would grant them this. I said yes, and we parted.

After several weeks trek and repeated efforts to delay them, the negotiators reached Gubulawayo to begin that game of Patience, the prize of which was ultimate control of the land. Matabele Thompson says that, apart from a good number of undesirables, who had refuge beyond the limits of white settlement, "there were also other legitimate concession hunters, who had eventually to be bought out in the final settlement. All these influences combined at first in antagonism to our party".

By a mixture of gifts, arguments and cajoleries, Rhodes Expedition achieved their aim on October 30th 1888, when Lobengula affixed his mark to the famous contract that opened Zambesia to white settlement. Thompson said "We at once returned to our camp, and Rudd gave his opinion that he should start on the return journey that

very day, as the sooner he was out of the country with the signed Concession, the better. Not one of the white men at Bulawayo had an inkling of our success, nor did we think fit to enlighten them. With the signed Concession, £5000 in gold and the six best mules, Rudd bade us goodbye and set out at 4'0'clock that afternoon. "For ten days", wrote Thompson, "he got on well enough, but then lost his road, and for two days was without water. At the end of that time he laid himself down to die, having first written a short account of how he had suffered, and where he had hidden the Concession. This letter he fastened to as tree. The native driver went off with the mules in search of water. During the night, in a delirious state, Rudd wandered for miles until, attracted by the barking of a dog, he came to a camp of Bushmen. Fortunately these little desert hunters had their usual supply of water hidden away in ostrich-egg shells, and managed to revive the dying man. He then asked the Bushmen to take him back to where he had buried the Concession. With great difficulty they followed his tracks back to the tree to which he had tied the letter, and then he unearthed the document and the money. On the following day, again with the assistance of the Bushmen, he found two of the mules near a water-hole, 40 miles away. The other four had disappeared. He brought the two mules back to the cart, inspanned and again traveled south, picking up his native driver and one mule five days later. With these three he arrived at Shoshong, where he bought a team of horses. He completed the journey to Mafeking by way of the Western Transvaal, thence taking the coach to Kimberley, where he handed the Concession to Rhodes.

Paddy Cohen meanwhile, was even longer on the road. "I had to travel slowly on account of heavy loads and a big troop of cattle and sheep, he said, so it took me two months to get to Kimberley. Rudd, traveling with mules and no load, got there before me, and to my surprise, on arrival at Kimberley; I heard that Rudd had obtained a Concession over all the minerals in Lobengula's country. At first I did not believe it, but when I read the papers and the wording of the Concession, I had to accept the fact. After I had been in Kimberley three weeks to rest my trek oxen and sell the cattle and sheep, as well as my produce, my Port Elizabeth goods arrived. I loaded my four wagons and started the return journey. Like a fool, I mentioned to a few of my friends that I must hurry back to Matabeleland to get my previous rights from Lobengula, and that if Rudd had obtained the right I would fight it.

Yet the happy-go-lucky atmosphere of the time still prevailed. "Although I traveled more quickly than usual", said Cohen, "at Mafeking I had to rest my cattle a few days, so I had a spree and told my friends of my intentions. I then traveled well, in fact almost killed my cattle, and got to the Tati in three weeks from the day I left Mafeking".

There on the banks of the Tati River was none other than Rochfort Maguire, who shouted to me that I must not come through. I asked him who he was, and he replied that he had been sent by Lobengula to prevent me entering his territory. I asked him to show me authority in writing, but received no reply. Having my horse saddled, I told my drivers to outspan, took my gun and plunged into the big river. I managed to get through and passed Maguire without exchanging a word, rode up to old Sam Edwards of the Tati Concession, and asked him if he knew the reason Maguire was sent by

Lobengula to stop me from coming into the country, when I held a free trading right, for which I had paid a horse. Edwards knew nothing about it, and at once said "don't fear Maguire. He's a liar. Here is an induna, sent by Lobengula, awaiting your arrival for the last two days".

The induna told Paddy that he had been sent by the king to "open the road", and to see him safely to the Royal Kraal. When Cohen thanked him and remarked: "There is a white man who has also come from the king, and will not allow me to bring my wagons through the river", the old warrior laughed, and called him a liar. So Cohen returned to his wagons, which he inspanned and brought them through the stream. "Maguire and his two men did not say or do anything, but came up to the place where I stopped, and again asked me not to go. I told him to go to hell, and went on".

After seven days Cohen reached Gubulawayo, but found Lobengula had gone to the Umguzu River. A mile outside the kraal there, he found a big camp, obviously set up by Europeans. At first he did not know who they were. All at once I observed two men, Maguire and Thompson, who asked me to halt. I told them to go to hell, and remained on the wagon. Thompson then said Cohen; you've come to fight the Concessionaires. It wont help you, but stick to us and you will be alright.We have paid every old pioneer £1,000, and we shall pay you £1,500 to uphold our rights in the country in peace. I only know one King in this country, and not dogs like you, Paddy replied, and drove on.

As soon as he reached Lobengula's kraal, he recounted to the King what had happened. He replied the white men had come and told him that I had told everybody outside that he had given me a concession over all the wealth in his country, and that I was bringing in a hundred men, armed to fight him. I then told him he had given a big concession to Rudd, and he was no more King over his minerals. He called me a liar, saying he had given nothing, and had never signed anything. Then the trouble commenced. He called a meeting of all the white men in the country, and asked them if it was true that Rudd had obtained a concession over his wealth in the country. They all said no, that Cohen was a liar. I had the Kimberley papers with me, wherein the wording of the Concession spoke for itself. I handed it to the King, and asked the white men to read. They read, and still said I was a liar and could not read. The King then told me he would keep me in the country until I proved that I was right. So I asked him to send for educated natives. He did so, and they proved to him that he had granted to Rudd the whole mineral rights in his territory.

For the next episode we have Thompson's own testimony. "Maguire had been gone for four days, when I was hastily summoned by a breathless messenger from Lobengula to attend immediately. "Don't you hear that the King calls you?", said the man. "How should I be able to hear him speak from here?" I replied. "Come quickly, and don't stay talking here" he said. "I followed the man, trying to guess why I was called. I felt that I might be going to my doom. As I entered the King's Kraal, I received an angry scowl from the natives, and to my salute the King ventured no reply. He gave me no sign to approach. I seated myself in the usual fashion, and awaited in silence a signal from

Lobengula to come nearer. The situation, I now knew, was serious. It seemed to me the longest hour I had ever passed in my life. Then the stillness was broken by the King saying "Get nearer Thompson" When I did so, he said: "Is not Maguire your brother?" I hardly knew how to reply. I decided to hedge, and answered "He is not my brother in the sense that he is my mother's son. He is only my brother in the sense that he comes from the same kraal, and is of the same people. The great man frowned. After a moment's pause he burst out: You are a liar, Thompson. You have two words. Did you not tell me that Maguire and Rudd were your brothers, and that of your three brothers, the eldest was at home, in charge of the homestead? I endeavoured to explain the difference between a brother by blood, and one by friendship, but the King would not listen. Fruit, he said, does not fall far the tree, and the calves of the same bull are much alike. Know that Rudd has taken the fly-blown paper to the Queen, and has told a lot of lies to her that I have sold you the country.

Thompson spoke in as conciliatory a fashion as he could. I perceived that my words took effect and, after one or two angry remarks, he bade me be gone. I was not sorry to get away, as his rage was beyond control. I felt that I had lost all favour with the King and with his people also.

Meanwhile, Paddy Cohen was also having his troubles. "When I started fighting the Matabele Concessionaires, I had a rough passage, as every white man in the country was bought over, and had to take the part of the Concessionaires. They worried the life out of me, and prevented the whites and blacks from trading with me. This lasted eight months. Once he had satisfied Lobengula, however, that he (Lobengula) had really signed a concession for all the mineral rights, Cohen was restored to favour. A great indaba was called, and I was appointed to speak on behalf of the King, who was not present. We were 26 white men and 48 Indunas. After fighting all day, I gave judgment in favour of the King. Thompson, who was at the indaba as a Matabele Concessionaire representative, and who came in with Rudd, had to remain in the country until the concession which Maguire had drafted was returned to the King. Thompson threatened to shoot me.

On this episode, Thompson writes: As time went on, the Matabele became more and more excited. Thousands came from all directions to ask the King if it were true that the white dog, Thompson, had bought the land. Among the Matabele, I was now the most notorious person in the country, and among the section of black and white schemers, the most hated. My main difficulty arose from the false interpretation of the Concession by the white men at Bulawayo. They told the King to study the word "land". It was true that the word occurred in the Concession, but in a very different sense from that imparted to it by these men. In misrepresenting the Concession to the Matabele, they relied chiefly on the passage reading 'Whereas I have been much molested of late by diverse persons seeking and desiring to obtain grants and concessions of land and mining rights in my territory.' A copy of the document was produced in a council of 300 Indunas, and one of the whites asked me to interpret the word 'land'. He covered up the other words of the paragraph. I asked the Indunas which of them could tell me whether a beast was male or female, when only part of the hide were shown. They answered 'none,

unless he saw the remaining part of the body' 'I too', I said, 'cannot interpret that word, for you allow this man to cover up the rest of the sentence'. I stoutly refused to discuss the word out of its context.

This meeting lasted from seven in the morning until five in the afternoon. I was asked by every induna in turn from whom I had bought the country. My answer was: 'Matabele, did I not tell you, when I first came into this country about a year ago, that we were not farmers, and wanted no land, cattle or grass, but that we wanted the gold in the stone?' It had been my policy to deal only with the King himself. I took up the attitude with him that he alone was the judge of my conduct, and that I did not mind the opinion of others, as long as he approved of what I did.

Thus I sat from early morning till late in the afternoon in the broiling sun, most of the time on my haunches, not being allowed to move. I had a terrible headache, from which I was then suffering daily. It was caused by worry, anxiety and wretched food. I had covered my eyes with my soft felt hat, having determined not to answer another question, when I heard a general salute. I took no notice, thinking that from where the Indunas were sitting, they had caught sight of the King. Sure enough, it was Lobengula himself. "What are they asking you Thomoson" (so spelt), he inquired. "They asked me from whom I got the land?" "What have you told them?" "If they say I have the land, let the man stand before me and tell me from whom I got it". "Pogee" said the King, meaning "very sound answer, what more is there to say?" He was apparently satisfied, as he walked away, and I felt much relieved. Thompson then took his departure from Bulawayo as quickly as he could, leaving Lobengula and the early Concessionaires equally dissatisfied. Over the heads of Cecil Rhodes' party, Lobengula sent off the following letter through a special messenger:
"To Her Majesty Queen Victoria
From Lobengula, King of the Amandebele, Kings Kraal, Umgusa River.
April 23, 1889.
"Greeting:

Some time ago a party of men came into my country, the principal one appearing to be a man named Rudd. They asked me for a place to dig for gold, and said they would give me certain things for the right to do so. I told them to bring what they would give, and I would show them what I would give. A document was written and presented to me for signature. I asked what it contained, and was told in it were my words and the words of those men. I put my hand to it. About three months afterwards, I heard from other sources that I had given by that document the right over all the minerals in my country. I called a meeting of my Indunas, and also of the white men, and demanded a copy of the document. It was proved to me that I <u>had signed</u> away the mineral rights of my whole country to Rudd and his friends. I have since had a meeting with my Indunas, and they will not recognize the paper, as it contains neither my words nor the words of those who got it. After the meeting I demanded that the original document be returned to me. It has not come yet, although it is two months since, and they promised to bring it back soon. The men of the party who were in my country at the time were told to remain until the document was brought back. One of them, Maguire, has now left without my knowledge and against my orders.

I write to you, that you may know the truth about this thing, and may not be deceived.

With renewed and cordial greetings,

I am your friend,

Lo Bengula (his mark)

Signed as Witnesses:
G.A. Phillps
Moss Cohen
James Fairburn
Elephant Seal of Lobengula.
W.F. Usher (Interpreter)

This letter, reaching the High Commissioner in Cape Town, was forwarded to Lord Knutsford, Colonial Secretary in London, who in turn called upon Cecil Rhodes to explain what it was all about. He immediately consulted Maguire, and on June 21, 1889, in London, the latter prepared his comments.

"I have read the letter dated April 25, purporting to be written by LO Bengula, respecting our concession. It appears to be portion of the organized opposition offered by certain section of the white inhabitants of Matabeleland, to all attempts to promote the development of that country, of which opposition we have already had some experience. With reference to the specific allegations contained in that letter, I wish to observe:

1. That from the date of the signing of the Concession, Lobengula has never varied in his assurance to us that he intended to fulfill the obligations which he had undertaken towards us, nor do I gather that by his letter, even if Genuine, he expresses the intention of repudiating these obligations.
2. Statements have from time to time been made to Lobengula that the Concession signed by him was in substance different from the copy left in his custody. This is what would be meant by the statement in the letter on page 3, that neither the Chief nor the Indunas would recognize the copy of the Concession then in the country. In order to prove that the copy and the original are identical, the original was sent for by us, but Lobengula has assured Mr. Thompson, one of the Concessionaires, that if the documents are identical, he will be perfectly satisfied.
3. The Chief never ordered me to remain in the country until this document was brought back
4. When I resolved to come down-country, on the day before my departure, I obtained permission from Lobengula, in the usual course, to leave his kraal. "The statements therefore contained in the letter respecting myself are untrue, which fact, to my mind, throws grave doubt upon the credence to be attached to the document.
5. The Elephant Seal referred to is in the custody of Mr. Fairbairn, a local storekeeper, and is practically at his disposal.

6. Those acquainted with Matabeleland, as a rule attach little importance to a document stated to be signed by Lobengula, which is not witnessed by one of the missionaries, whom the Chief regards as his most independent advisers.
7. Previous statements, detrimental to our Concession, have been published, purporting to bear the Chief's signature, which have subsequently been proved not to have been signed by him.
8. The practical and, to my mind, conclusive answer to the statements contained in this letter, consists of the fact that, although the discussions based upon the representations of disappointed concession-seekers have been going on almost from the date of the signature of our Concession, still the Chief has throughout regularly continued to receive his payment of £100 per month, and that we have received a cable bringing news from Matabeleland a fortnight later than April 25, stating that the rifles, the principal remaining portion of our payments due to him, had been, by his order, brought to one of his royal kraals. This is being done, it must be remembered, after a prolonged and exhaustive series of explanations and discussions, which rendered it impossible for Lobengula to say that he is now unaware of the precise nature of the Concession which he acknowledges he has granted.

These facts afford to be the best proof possible that he intends to carry out his arrangements to us, as indeed he has always stated his intention of doing.

Yours etc.
(Signed) Rochfort Maguire.

Still not completely convinced, Sir Sydney Shippard, Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland and the nearest British diplomatic representative, asked John Smith Moffat, son of the famous missionary, the Reverend Robert Moffat and his own delegate, personally to interview Paddy Cohen, James Fairbairn and W.F.Usher (G.A.Phillips being away). On August 28, 1889, Moffat wrote to his chief: "Though in an ordinary way a man may sign as witness to another man's signature, without reference to the tenor or contents of the document, yet in the case of a letter written for an illiterate native, those who have penned their names can hardly escape a certain measure of responsibility for what is written, especially where interpretation comes into the case." Moffat further declared " As to this particular matter, without attempting to fix upon any specific charge, and without entering into any discussion of the questions raised in this letter, my advice to them would be in future to abstain from any controversy which might hereafter cause a stumbling block in the way of a fair and peaceful adjustment of relations between the Matabele and the power interests desirous of working minerals in that country. There is quite enough strong and respectable evidence that the Chief knew perfectly well what he was about when he signed that Concession to Mr. Rudd, that this repudiation of it is an afterthought, and that the assertions about Mr. Maguire having clandestinely left the country are untrue ".

At this stage Cecil John Rhodes decided to apply the technique which he had successfully used in regard to the deadlock over the birth of De Beers Consolidated

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Mines and the rivalry of Barney Barnato. If he could not beat down an opponent, he decided to make peace with him.

"Two weeks later", wrote Paddy Cohen, "Dr. Jameson and Dr. Rutherford Harris came into this country to square me. At first I would not have anything to do with them, but Jameson, being clever, got round me, and asked my grievances. I told him that I had two promises from Lobengula, one in the form of a concession for mining rights in the North, and the other a free sole trading right in his territory, the latter in writing. He asked me what I expected to get for it, and I replied: 'Doctor, before I enter into any business with you regarding my mineral rights in this country, I demand one thousand pounds damages for the injury they have done to my trading rights here, and if you grant me the thousand pounds, then I will tell you my price for my other rights". Jameson proved surprisingly accommodating and said he would consider the matter, but in the meantime he told Cohen to "write him a letter demanding the £1,000 and stating the reasons". The text of this document is still in existence and reads:

King's Kraal
26th October 1889

To Dr. Jamieson (so spelt), Matabeleland

Dear Sir, - I perceive you represent the Matabeleland Concession, so I wish to state that the Matabeleland Concession's representatives have injured part of my trading business in this country, and therefore I demand £1,000 as a recompense for the damage they have done.

Trusting you will grant me the above application before I enter into any further agreements.

I am
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) Moss Cohen

The answer came on December 8, 1889, again dated from King's Kraal, and addressed rather vaguely to M.Cohen, Matabeleland.

"Dear Sir, - Enclosed I beg to hand you draft on Dr. R. Harris, Secretary of the Chartered Company, payable at Kimberley, for the sum of £1,000 (one thousand pounds sterling) as a recompense from the Matabele Concession, for any damage that their representatives may have done to your trading business. Please return acknowledgement of full settlement in favour of the Matabele Concession.

Yours faithfully,
(Signed) L.S. Jameson.

Apart from a receipt issued at Gubulawayo on the same date, there was a note from the Empire Builder himself:

M. Cohen, Esq.

Dear Sir, - I beg to hand you the £1,000 promised to you by Dr. Jameson, as to which he informed me.

Yours truly
(Signed) C.J. Rhodes
For the Matabele Concessionaires.

The terms of the arrangement were set out in a letter to Moss Cohen from Jameson on December 10, 1889, and dispatched from the King's Kraal. "You agree", he was told, to do all in your power to uphold the interests of the Matabeleland Concession, to be guided by instructions you may receive from the representatives of the Matabeleland Concession.

"In consideration of your so doing, the Matabeleland Concessionaires promise that you shall receive a sub-concession to dig minerals under the parent concession, which will be valued and floated for not less than £10,000 (ten thousand pounds sterling), and the disposal of which shall be as follows.

"After all reasonable expenses and working capital is considered, you are to share equally with the parent Matabeleland Concession. You will be guided by all circumstances and such arrangements as the Concessionaires have to make, but it is clearly understood that you receive, equally with the Matabeleland Concession, in your sub-concession. It is further understood that, for any services rendered beyond your actual influence, you will receive remuneration. The floatation of the sub-concession so granted will be entirely in the hands of the Matabeleland Concessionaires. At the same time the Concessionaires agree that the price or sale on floatation of your half of the above concession shall not be finally closed without your consent. Should you, before the Matabeleland Concessionaires have floated the above sub-concession, prefer to receive £5,000 (five thousand pounds sterling) in lieu of your half, the Matabeleland Concessionaires agree to grant the same.
I am
Yours faithfully
(Signed) L.S. Jameson
(On behalf of the Matabeleland Concessionaires)

Although an agreement had been reached, the authority of the Matabele King remained strong, and less than a fortnight later he was moved to complete a further document.

"I Lobengula certify that the bearer of this, Moss Cohen, who has spoken on my behalf during one of the meetings held about Mr. Thompson, has been proved to have spoken well, and therefore he may tell people outside that I have not given away my country.

"And whereas Mr. Moss Cohen has been one of my principal traders for several years without molesting me, I do hereby grant him full permission to travel in and out of my country without any interference within my territories, and to continue his rights as a free trader therein.

"This is given under my hand, in the presence of Her Majesty's representative, this 23rd day of December, 1889 at Emganeni.
Lobengula X His Mark
Before me: James Moffat
Assistant Commissioner

With all these negotiations going on, the British Government had granted the Charter to the British South Africa Company, which was to give them the title to the "Vacant North", and in reply to another note from Rhodes, Moss Cohen, now returned to Kimberly, wrote on May 8, 1890:

"Acknowledging receipt of your letter of even date, I beg to answer you that in future I will cordially support your Charter. Having been present at many Indabas at the King's Kraal held to discuss the Rudd Concession, and also having had many private interviews with the King on the same subject, I am convinced that the King thoroughly understood the terms of the Rudd Concession. At one time I certainly opposed you, and did my best to damage your Concession, because I considered you were damaging my interests in the country. But now that your position in the country is firmly established by Royal Charter, and I feel sure you will recognize my rights, which I hold from Dr. Jameson on behalf of the Matabeleland Concession, you may now count on my active and cordial co-operation.
(Signed) Moss Cohen
As Witness:
(Signed) F. Rutherford Harris.

Satisfactory as this letter appeared, within two years Cohen was complaining that the terms of the settlement were not being carried out. "The sub-concession granted by Jameson", he wrote, "is at an end, although they took advantage of it. I did not get the full amount, nor at the proper time, when I demanded Charter shares".

So on March 10, 1892, in Cape Town, the matter was reopened, and a letter written:
The Hon C.J. Rhodes,
Cape Town
Dear Sir, - Referring to our conversation this morning re sub-concession, granted by Dr Jameson on behalf of he Matabeleland Concessionaires, I now beg to state that the terms under which I will sell and cede to you one half of my full right and interest therein area: I agree to take £2,000 for one half, on the following conditions: £1,000 sterling within twelve months from date, and I further agree for you to act on my behalf for my remaining half share, in the sub-concession, and to realize it to the best advantage, paying the proceeds to my self, heirs, successors or assigns.

"It is further understood that my remaining interest in your hands shall not be disposed of for less than the amount mentioned in my agreement with Dr Jameson.

"I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) Moss Cohen."

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

To this Rhodes replied on the same day:

"I beg to say that I am prepared to purchase the one half from your under these conditions, and I herewith hand you a cheque to your order for £1,000, and agree to pay the remaining £1,000 to yourself or order within twelve months"

Cohen, however, still claimed his trading rights, and continued to fight for them for many years. Jameson tried his best to win him: "Cohen you have a good thing. Only work with us and you will become a big man" But Paddy remained, like so many Rhodesians man casing rainbows. He could not resist the lure of the bundu, the chance of making a fortune and the hope that the law would one day recognize the concession granted to him by Lobengula. Rhodes himself was long dead, he himself grown old and Rhodesia a populous colony in which only a handful of veterans remembered the name of Paddy Cohen. In the end he grew tired. Poor and forgotten, during the period of World War I, he put an end to his life.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER 111

# THE JEW WHO CROSSED AFRICA

How many Jews are aware that at least one South African explorer, a pioneer in crossing the Continent from East to West, was one of their own faith? Edouard Foa has been undeservedly forgotten, although he died in our own century, and although in 1934 a member of the same distinguished family of French Jews, Mr. Raoul Foa, a director of Barclays Bank, had occasion to visit the Union.

The Foas are amongst the oldest families, Jew or Gentile, in Southern Europe. Different versions of the name, such as Foi or Foy, have come about through the mediaeval method of transliterating Hebrew. Among the explorer's ancestors are scholars, rabbis, authors and officers in the French Revolutionary armies.

Edouard Foa (His name wrongly given as Edmond in the Jewish Encyclopedia), was born in Marseilles, a member of the prosperous Victorian – or rather Third Empire – middle class. Strong, high-spirited and fond of sports, he was popular both at school and university. His father's commercial interests first turned his attention to "Greater France", that huge expanse of colonies which the ambitious policy of Napoleon 111 had succeeded in bringing under the tricolor.

In 1880, at 19 years old, he set out for the wilds of Algeria, where he spent three years mapping the unknown reaches of its rivers. When he came home in 1885, having also explored the French Congo, he found himself already a famous traveler, decorated with the highest award of the Paris Geographical Society, La Grande Medaille d'Or.

Edouard Foa's adventures in Southern Africa originated in an invitation by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and of Colonies to undertake a survey and to make a crossing, in the interests of French colonization, from the Indian to the Atlantic Ocean. Paris University and the Department of Public Instruction offered him help for this research.

Reaching the Cape in 1891, he first undertook a rather leisurely journey through South Africa, which he examined with shrewd and kindly attention, though his labours at this stage could scarcely be called those of an explorer. Amongst other places, he visited this youthfully booming Rand, concerning whose prospects he had glowing reports to send home to the Ministre d l'Instruction Publique. Later however he visited Rhodesia. Passing from Transvaal to Natal, he left by sea for the East Coast ports and began his travels into Gazaland, as yet a very little-known part of Northern Mozambique.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Here was organized the great caravan, comprising no fewer than 380 members, with which Foa began his African crossing. But he did not always journey in such state. Again and again Foa made detours on his own account, often at considerable risk to his life. Various old gold workings north of the Zambezi attracted his attention and he was able, by his thorough survey methods, to put them accurately on he map for the first time.

He explored the region between the Chote and Zambezi Rivers and the Wemba country, south of Lake Tanganyika. The actual crossing of Africa began at Chinde, on the mouth of the Zambezi, in 1894.

With the French Jews were two countrymen, Monsieur Camille Bertrand and Monsieur E. de Borely, both experienced travelers in the Equatorial wilderness. Neither of them managed to see the trip through with Foa. Borely got as far as Lake Nyassa, while Bertrand turned back near Lake Tanganyika.

For several months the expedition, which included 25 armed men, made its way slowly up the unchartered lower reaches of the Zambezi. Camps were pitched and long halts made, while the white men went off shooting big game. Foa takes rank as one of the greatest hunters that have ever lived in Africa.

A tremendous enthusiast on the subject of firearms, he carried special weapons, including specially-made rifles by a famous French gunsmith, Galand. With a single gun he managed in two years, between 1891 and 1893, to kill 30 elephants. With another one he confessed having fired 1,000 cartridges. Altogether his expedition secured for the Paris Zoological Museum several hundred specimens of African animals, including a number of extreme rarity, the Inyala antelope in particular.

Let me quote his own words in the matter: “As I wanted a few fine specimens, I set to work in the region of Lake Nyassa called the Kirk Mountain, where in 1895 I had made a first unsuccessful attempt. I took more then ten days to find where these mysterious animals drank – a small pool completely hidden in the centre of the forest. “I took up my position there and, after two days’ waiting, saw an Inyala for the first time. This strange animal’s appearance no more resembles that of other antelopes than its habits resemble theirs.

“From the time of firing the first shot at the pool, a shot that cost the life of a male Inyala, these animals no longer appeared in the daytime; but they continued to come at night. I waited for them with the electric projector (Foa was probably the first man to use an electric torch in the African Bush), just as in the case of lions, and was thus able to obtain a few specimens of the ‘Boo’, as the natives call it”.

Nevertheless the travels were attended by considerable risk, not only from wild beasts, but also from the fevers lurking in the innumerable swamps.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

More than a year was spent in big game hunting and trapping, as well as in collecting botanical and mineral specimens around the Lower Zambezi. De Borely kept the official diary of the expedition as well as its accounts, while Bertrand had charge of the stores and organized the carriers, who not only conveyed masses of arms and ammunition, medicines, etc, but also a couple of portable boats, which, in the later stages of the trek, proved exceedingly useful.

Stations were sited first at Chiromo and later in the proximity of the modern town of Blantyre. Foa, the only scientist in the expedition, showed that the existent maps, made by certain early Portuguese travelers about 1820 and 1930, were almost completely wrong.

Aboard a tiny gunboat, originally brought there in sections and bearing the name of the "Pioneer", he explored Lake Nyassa on the South and, thanks to astronomical observations, found that the great sheet of water was wrongly marked on the charts.

From the ancient town of Tete they pressed on to Mount Chunta. The entire neighborhood was in a state of revolt and near Machena, which was visited by Foa, the Chief of the Makanga had lately massacred a number of Portuguese soldiers, but Edouard all alone took occasion to visit the Chief Undi, one of the local potentates. White concession hunters, who were currying favour with the dusky ruler, made mischief, with the result that Foa narrowly escaped with his life.

The journey was much delayed by the peculiarities of African rivers. Thus Foa crossed one of them dryshod in October, but when he returned a week or two later, in November, he found it several hundred yards wide. During the period of waiting Foa was drawn into local politics, and only with the greatest difficulty avoided participation in a local war.

Trekking through the region now known as Angoniland, Edouard not only managed to fill in missing details in the chartered course of the Zambezi, but he ultimately reached its source, concerning which geographers had argued for centuries. He trekked through the highlands behind Tanganyika and surveyed a tangle of rivers previously mistaken for the sources of the Congo.

Some of Foa's trophies, more especially the shells, brought back from Lake Tanganyika, went to show that at some time in the dim past this was part of a real salt sea.

In the effort to reach the great tributary of the Congo, the Kasai, he encountered great difficulties, the bearers refusing to undergo further hardships in the mountain. Scarcely had Foa persuaded them to resume their loads, than he found himself in the thick of a tribal rebellion. Nonetheless, he decided to cross the heart of the warlike and untamed Wanyambezi country and the home of the Manyema cannibals. For no less than 20 days they trekked through the giant Congo Forest, taking a direction different

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

from the one followed a few years earlier by Henry Morton Stanley. Foa was the first white man to visit these particular regions.

Finally, after a five and a half months journey by canoe, the expedition succeeded in reaching Stanley Pool and went on to Libreville in Gabon, French Congo, where on December 12, 1897, Edouard Foa completed the first crossing of Africa by a Jew.

He was reported dead during his long absences in the bush, and the Royal Geographical Society in London announced, just before his reappearance, that it had had no news since he left Abercorn in Northern Rhodesia (then known as Zambezia) two years earlier: Meanwhile, however, they had made him first a member and in 1894 a Fellow.

Let me quote the words of an English writer, Frederic Lees, on the results of the crossing: "Eight hundred astronomical observations, with sextant, theodolite, chronometer; three years observation of magnetic declinations, meteorology and temperature; six thousand miles of mapping; the collection of many natural-history specimens, including large and small mammals, birds, fishes, insects, shells, etc., for French museums; the taking of ethnological notes on 150 different tribes; and the preparation of 40 vocabularies". No wonder that learned societies of Europe vied to do honour to Edouard Foa.

He also prepared a standard work on hunting, full of excellent yarns. The Royal Geographical Society referred to him as an "ardent and indefatigable hunter, who has much to say on the habits of his game…..extremely lively and interesting".

"Chasses aux Grands Fauves dans l'Afrique central" appeared in 1899 and was followed by "Traverse de l'Afrique, du Zambeze au Congo francais" both from the pen of Foa. Hardships, however, left their mark on Edouard Foa, as on all pioneers. He returned within a year or two to seek the sun in his old
African haunts, but his health was broken and he died at the early age of 39 on June 29, 1901.

## CHAPTER IV

## THE ROTHSCHILDS AND RHODESIA

If Paddy Cohen was the Jewish rival of Cecil Rhodes for the original Concession and Charter on which the development of Rhodesia was to be built, another Jewish group who helped and supported the Empire-builder is no less noteworthy.

Long before Rhodes appeared on the scene, the same South African Goldfields Exploration Company which had taken up Lobengula's original concession in favour of Thomas Bain in 1871, sold its rights, through Jonas Bergtheil, a well-known Jewish pioneer of Natal, to a London syndicate, among whom was the Jewish capitalist, A.L. Ochs.

Bergtheil, born in 1819 in Germany, arrived in Cape Town in 1834, and nine years later moved o to Durban, where he founded a company to establish cotton-growing and to bring out colonists. Although the settlement of New Germany, not far from Pietermaritzburg, did not prove a success, most of the immigrants remained in the country, where their descendants continue to flourish. Bergtheil himself served as a member of the original Natal Legislative Council, and as a director of the Natal Railway Company, which built the earliest line in South Africa. By 1866 he had moved to England, but he retained his business contacts with Southern Africa until his passing as recently as 1902.

As for A. L. Ochs, he was associated with the well-known Ochs Brothers, one of whose members, Siegmund, was a founder of the famous London and South African Exploration Company, which played so outstanding a part in the early days of Kimberley, as owners of the Du Toit's Pan and Bultfontein Mines, and later controlled the well-known Oceana Consolidated Group of Companies.

In due course Bain's Concession was transferred by A.L. Ochs and his associates to the Matabeleland Company, who disposed of it to the British South Africa Company. In founding this concern the most important Jewish personality was undoubtedly Alfred Beit. Descended from Isaac Beit, a Sephardie Jew, who appeared in Hamburg during the 18th Century, his family had been associated with the refining of gold and silver for generations. Marcus, Abraham and Raphael, Isaac's three sons, took up this specialty, Isaac becoming the great-grandfather of Alfred.

Strangely enough, the Beit Family established a double link with the founding of Rhodesia. Alfred's grandfather, Philip Raphael, had a second son, Siegfried Beit, (1818 – 1881), who married Laura Caroline Hahn, mother of Alfred. Laura's sister

married David Lippert, of a Jewish family from Mecklenburg, originally called Lipman, whose sons, in due course, also came to South Africa. David Lippert & Co. of Hamburg, traders in wool and other produce exported from this country, set up agencies during the 1860's in Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban and after the discovery of the first
FOOTNOTE: In England Bergtheil changed his name to Barclay.
Diamonds near the Vaal River began, on an increasing scale, also to ship this precious cargo. So it came about that young Alfred Beit, having completed his training in the diamond business in Amsterdam and elsewhere on the Continent, was sent out in 1875, first to Port Elizabeth to his cousins' business, and then as their representative to Kimberley.

Exciting though the story may be of the rise to financial greatness of Alfred Beit, its importance from a Rhodesian point of view begins bin 1879, with his meeting Cecil Rhodes and the formation of a friendship so fruitful that it led to a virtual merging of their respective assets and talents for the opening up of the North.

The partnership began in the complicated negotiations preceding the unification of the diamond producers, and further developed only a few months later, when events in Lobengula's country made British intervention there a question of "now or never". Against Rhodes stood yet another outstanding Jewish personality, Barney Barnato, whose hold on essential assets threatened to delay, if not to frustrate, the entire project.

Rhodes had in mind from the start only one purpose for the vast resources of his new diamond company, and that was as a means to "paint Africa red", - to place it under the jurisdiction of Queen Victoria. He also saw how hard it would be to convert Barnato to this point of view. The arguments were two-fold – partly verbal and partly financial. To strengthen the latter, Rhodes secured the backing of the House of Rothschild. In his private papers Sir S.F. Philpson-Stow, who was personally connected with the discussions, told how, when Rhodes arrived in London on July 27, 1887, he startled his friends with a bold scheme to capture the Compagnie Francaise des Mines de Diamant du Cap, (popularly referred to as the French Company), and by linking it with the original De Beers Company and the Kimberley Central, then in the hands of Barney Barnato, to stabilize the whole market and so control the diamond industry.

"Rhodes", says Stow, "made his proposal before Rothschild, and obtained an undertaking for the necessary assistance (£1,000,000, though only £750,000 was required), if he could arrange the purchase of the French Company in Paris. He decided to visit Paris at once, while I remained in London to act. Rhodes was able to assure the French Company that he was prepared to fulfill all obligations in every respect, immediately his shareholders had approved the contact. The financial guarantee submitted was acknowledged as sufficient. The date of the meeting of the French shareholders was fixed early in October, to confirm the agreement. Rhodes returned to London on August 4, 1887, and I think the details of the contract were subsequently elaborated by a more formal deed executed later in London. As the nature of the scheme

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

became known, the vested interests, in which Barney Barnato was powerful, were mobilized against Rhodes.

While he and his friends did battle in Kimberley, Stow waited in London. "All through the months of September to the middle of December 1887" he said, "I had been in constant communication with Messrs. N.M. Rothschild and Sons, who had taken a warm interest in the industry, and had used their influence to promote the general welfare of the mines by their advocacy of the principle of unification. Their assistance was invaluable to us".

Each side tried to buy up every share available, and with seemingly unlimited purses. It was Beit who, when Rhodes told him that control of the Central Diamond Mining Company would cost another £2,000,000, and demanded: "Where is the money to come from?" replied; "We will get the money if we can only get the shares".

Opposition then collapsed, and at the famous special meeting of De Beers shareholders in Kimberley, Rhodes declared: Mr. Barnato fought me tooth and nail. Wherever and whenever I bought shares, he bought also, until finally we bought together…Well, Mr. Barnato settled the matter at last. He yielded finally, getting the current rate of shares on the day we settled……" Rhodes added: "There is one gentleman to whom thanks are due, perhaps more than to any, for the success of the company, and that is Mr. Beit. I can assure you that I could not have succeeded so well in my undertaking if it had not been for Mr. Beit: for at the present moment we owe the firm which he represents £250,000, which sum Mr. Beit has paid out of his own pocket for Central shares, although he declined to charge either commission or interest. Mr. Beit was inspired by the same loyal feeling to the company, and I would propose a vote of thanks to him".

Now that the merger was through, everybody knew that De Beers Consolidated Mines would do many things apart from mining diamonds. On the very morning when Barnato finally yielded, he said: Some people have a fancy for this thing, and some for that thing, but you have a fancy for making an empire. You want the means to go North, if possible, so I suppose I must give it to you".

Among the original subscribers to the British South Africa Company we find B. I. Barnato taking 30,000 shares, Alfred Beit 16,000 shares, the Beit Syndicate 32,500, Lord Rothschild 10,000 and H.H. Marks 500.

From a financial point of view the earlier years of the British South Africa Company were anything but prosperous, and indeed there were moments when the whole future of the enterprise hung in the balance. One instance was recorded by the famous Jewish pioneer of Kimberley, Sir David Harris, in 1892, when John Blades Currey, private secretary to Cecil Rhodes, reached the Diamond Fields with the news that the Company was on the verge of insolvency. Sir David was Barney Barnato's alternate on the directorate of De Beers. "The object of his visit", he wrote, "was to obtain financial assistance from the De Beers Company for the British South Africa Company. But this

would not be justified without the consent of the four Life Governors (Rhodes, Beit, Barnato and Phillipson Stow), who were specially interested in De Beers profits".

Three out of the four – Rhodes, Beit and Stow – agreed to give extra facilities to the Chartered Company, but Barney Barnato could not be reached. Harris writes:

"Currey, with a solemn countenance, pondered for a moment, then dramatically explained: Mr. Mitchell, the General Manager of the Standard Bank, refuses positively to honour any more cheques of the Chartered Company, unless we can provide approved security by one o' clock today. Failing this, the Bank will refuse payment of the last cheques drawn". "How about Rhodes and Beit", asked Harris. "Cannot they assist?" Currey answered that they had already done so on a very large scale, and for the moment were unable to do more.

Taking his courage in his hands, David Harris then declared that the worst that could happen was that he himself might lose his directorship. So he committed Barnato to the guarantee, and saved Rhodesia

## CHAPTER V

## JEWS AND THE CHARTER

As early as 1888 Alfred Beit had been associated with the "Exploring Company Limited", which held a quarter interest in the Rudd-Rhodes Concession, starting with a capital of £12,000, later raised to £35,000 and then to £70,000. The Exploring Company Limited, registered in London on June 15, 1889, nearly five months before the birth of the British South Africa Company itself, had its offices with those of the Rothschilds, at No. 19, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C... In addition to Alfred Beit, the board comprised Cecil Rhodes, George Cawston, J.O.Maund and Lord Gifford. Its objects were comprehensively given as "exploring and working mines in all parts of the world".

Alfred Beit was one of those present at the historic interview with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on April, 1889, at which there were submitted "the outlines of a scheme for the formation of a Company, having for this object the development of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and the countries lying to the North".

The letter confirming the discussions, dispatched on April 30, 1889, clarified the objects of this enterprise:-

"To encourage immigration and colonization.

"To promote trade and commerce.

"To develop and work mineral and other concessions, under the management of one powerful organization, thereby obviating conflicts and complications between the various interests that have been acquired in those regions, and of securing to the native chiefs and their subjec6s the rights reserved to them under the several concessions".

Writing on behalf of the "gentlemen who are willing to form this association", (including Alfred Beit, Lord Gifford informed Lord Knutsford, Secretary of State for the Colonies: "They are prepared to proceed at once with the construction of the first section of the railway and the extension of the telegraph system from Mafeking, its present terminus, to Shoshong, and for this purpose a sum of £700,000 has already been privately subscribed."

On the same day, April 30, 1889, a letter likewise addressed to the Secretary of State, was signed by Alfred Beit, C.J. Rhodes and Thomas Rudd, Chairman of the Goldfield of South Africa Limited.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

"My Lord – Having perused the letter of this date addressed to Your Lordship by the Chairman of the Exploring Company Limited, with regard to the development of the territories to the North of the Cape Colony, we beg to state that we are prepared, as representing the Matabeleland Concession, and having a very important stake in South Africa, to co-operate cordially, with the approval of Her Majesty's Government, in carrying out the scheme proposed. Arrangements have already been made to that effect between the Exploring Company and ourselves."

This letter satisfied all the remaining doubts in the mind of Lord Knutford and, while the final discussions took place, Alfred Beit joined the board of yet another company that played its part in the launching of Rhodesia, the Central Search Association Limited, registered on May 23, 1889, with a capital of £120,000. Its aims were "to prospect and explore in any part of the world, to work mines and execute public works of all kinds", the board comprising the same members as those of the Exploring Company, with the addition of Charles Dunell Rudd, Cecil Rhodes partner.

After a very short existence, the Central Search Association was reconstructed as the United Concessions Company Limited, with the same directors, but a vastly increased capital of £4,000,000
er Ma

This was only preliminary to the most important transaction of all, recorded on October 15, 1889, ion a document which began:
"Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith.
To all whom these presence shall come, Greeting:
Whereas a Humble Petition has been presented to Us in Our Council …."
Then are set out the names of the magnates and statement before we read:
"Alfred Beit of 29 Holborn Viaduct, London, Merchant"

The 35 succeeding paragraphs specify the conditions under which the British South Africa Company was called into existence, and granted the right of occupying the country which today forms Rhodesia.

One significant item of news communicated from Downing Street on November 14, 1889, by Lord Knutford to Sir Henry Loch, Governor of Cape Colony and High Commissioner of South Africa, was that while "the Company shall be British in Character, and its directors and principal representatives shall be natural-born British subjects, an exception is made in favour of any director nominated in the Charter itself, (Mr. Alfred Beit not being a British subject), and of any alien director whose future election may be approved by the Secretary of State."

Among the members of the famous Pioneer column dispatched in 1890 to occupy Mashonaland, were several Jewish names, notably that of Conductor Solomon of Kimberley, of Trooper C.F. Mosenthal, of Trooper L.kronstein of Bulawayo and of

Trooper Leo Neumier, who was killed in action in the Orange Free State during the Boer War. [x]

[x] Footnote. As late as May 12, 1926, Conductor Solomon was still living in Rhodesia, as was Trooper Mosenthal, whose address was given as P.O. Filabusi.

The last and best-known member of the partnership was born in 1862, reached the Diamond Fields at the age of 14. His big chance arrived in 1884, when the expedition under Sir Charles Warren acquired Bechuanaland for the British Crown and founded the town of Mafeking. There Julius Weil & Co, opened up its main establishment, and from there, six years alter, when the occupation of Mashonaland was being planned, it played the largest part of any commercial house in supplying the needs of the venture. As the tide of colonization advanced, so did their activities and an advertisement from the early days carries all the flavour of frontier romance.

**"JULIUS WEIL.**

General Merchant and Government Contractor.
Receiving and Forwarding Agent,
Mafeking, British Bechuanaland
Parties for Mashonaland and the Interior fitted out
Completely, with Wagons, Oxen and Salted Horses.
Large Stock of Guns and Ammunition always on hand.
Letter of Credit can be arranged for any part of the Protectorate
or Mashonaland.
Branches at Ramoutsa, Gaberones, Sequani, Moshudi,
Notwani and Macloutsi (so spelt).
Mashonaland Branches: Tuli, Victoria and Salisbury.
"Other Offices: No. 2 Gresham Buildings, Basinghall Street,
London and Main Street, Port Elizabeth.

Consignments received and booked through from London or Port
Elizabeth Offices to any part of South Africa – a great convenience
for intending travelers to Mashonaland, who are thus saved the
trouble and loss of time of looking after heavy baggage.

Native Curious, Game Horns, Karosses and Feathers always on hand.
Cables and Telegraphic Address: 'Winstree'"

Speaking of Tuli in "How WE made Rhodesia", a Major Arthur Glynn Leonard of the 2nd East Lancashire Regiment, and later of the B.S.A. Company's Police, makes reference to the firm:

"On this side of the river, and right under the guns of the Fort, we have our own large corrugated iron stores, one for commissariat, the other for quartermasters"

stores. Between them and the river … Homan Weil's agent, has another …..” He goes on: “I know that, in spite of the contract existing between the Chartered Company and the Tuli Trading Association, Tye has ordered most of the supplies from Julius Weil, and a small portion from Isaacs, of Mafeking, and that a great deal of the transport has been obtained through the former's agencies …”

One of Weil's most important achievements was to establish the first regular postal service between Palapye and the North, preceding the activities of the Government Department in this direction by a long shot. More will be said in due course of the role which this remarkable firm played in various other episodes of Rhodesian history.

## CHAPTER VI

## ALFRED BEIT'S EARLY TREKKS

Always eager to see for himself, Alfred Beit very early decided to pay a personal visit to "Zambesia", as the territory North of the Limpopo was still called, just as Lord Randolph Churchill father of Sir Winston Churchill, on a trip to South Africa, had arranged a similar trek. For this purpose Churchill had engaged the services of a young Colonist of Irish ancestry, Percy Fitzpatrick, later famous as the author of "Jock of the Bushfeld", and some vivid pictures of those early treks were embodied in a series of articles for the "Star".

"Mr. Beit's expedition", Fitzpatrick wrote, "consists of three baggage wagons , a traveling spring wagon and a apider , all drawn by mules in the pink of condition –the pick of condition- the pick of Pretoria district…Mr. Rouilliot, formerly engineer of the Compagnie Franscaise, Kimberley, is accompanying Mr. Beit to Salisbury as his mining engineer…"

They left Pretoria in March, 1891, and on March 15 Major Leonard gave an indication of the hardships encountered. Horse-sickness had broken out, aggravated by the heavy rains.

"Nearly every transport rider" he wrote, "and everybody on the road between here, Tuli and Victoria, has found the greatest difficulty in getting to the latter place. Even Beit and Lord Randolph, whose outfits are specially well turned out, have only just managed to struggle in, the former having lost all of his horses and some mules, the latter half his horses (five or six) and a few mules, while all their oxen are frightly poor and knocked up, and quite unable to proceed beyond Victoria fro the "present".

Four months later, on July 12, when the two rival expeditions had joined forces, Major Leonard, in command at Fort Tuli, had the pleasure of entertaining both. "In the evening", he said, "Lord Randolph, Beit and party dined with us. After the dinner we adjourned to the camp fire that I had arranged on the previous day, to be held on the Parade Ground underneath the Fort".

He shows us the Alfred Beit in a human setting. "This morning, in the early hours proceeding dawn, Beit, overcome by feeling- that greatest and most irresistible of all forces- his imagination fired by the fervid sympathy of his surroundings, the fire-glow, the songs, the ardor and the animation of the men, his enthusiasm raised to such a pitch of sublime excitement, sat up in bed and declared his intention to become a

trooper. This is the conversation overheard between him and his other self (Caldecott, partner of Cecil John Rhodes).

> "What's the use of being a millionaire?"
> "None".
> "What good is money?"
> "None".
> "A trooper's life is the life for me. No care, no trouble. All the world before me. No life like a trooper's; a millionaire-all suspense all anxiety. Not worth living. I shall enlist tomorrow". That is the life for me. No care no trouble. No care, no care enlist tomorrow".
> "Caldecott was so tickled that he said: "But would you not sooner be an officer like Leonard, who commands Tuli?"
> "No. Officers have ambition. He has ambition and wants to get on. "A trooper's life is the life for me; a trooper, a trooper… "and then came sleep".

Another eye-witness of Alfred Beit's early travels, Dr. Hans Sauer, encountered him at Hartly. "We found here Lord Randolph Churchill, Alfred Beit, Percy Fitzpatrick, Frank Johnstone, Borrow and many others. On the night after our arrival Beit asked us to dine with him. We were camped about 300 yards from Beit's wagon. From the top of our tent we had a large sail pegged to the ground slantwise, and the space so protected we used as a living-room. At about 7:30 we were brushing up, preparatory to dining with Beit, when there was a tremendous roar, and our small terrier, with a terrified howl, bolted out of the darkness in to the shelter of our wagon tent. We on the other hand, bolted into the wagon itself, and seized our rifles. The terrier had clearly been chases by a lion, and we could hear the short grunts that a lion makes when he is hunting. It was so dark, however, that we could see nothing of the animal. The plucky little terrier now and then advanced a yard or two outside the tent, and every time he did this, the lion would charge, and the terrier would bolt back into the shelter …None of Beit's guests turned up that night. Later the lion's broke into a temporary stable belonging to Borrow, and killed two valuable horses. The roaring and fighting over the carcasses of the dead horses gave us a lively night"…

The Major was puzzled about Alfred Beit. "That he is a millionaire and great financier, I am informed on good authority, and take it for granted", he says. "Had I, on the other hand, been in ignorance of his identity, I should, I must honestly confess, have taken him for a nonentity, and certainly not have given him credit for being either millionaire or financier. He is a most unassuming and altogether unostentatious man of wealth, and is kindly, courteous and quiet as it is possible to be. Very ordinary and meager in his ideas, and very commonplace in his conversation, he is one of the last men that I should have picked out of a crowd as able and capable!

"But there is no accounting for the entirely baffling nature of appearance and of social intercourse! Or can it be luck, in many instances, has much to say in the making of good fortune? Or yet again, is there some special group of opportunity and

power of retention in the Jewish character that succeeds where all else fails? Whatever it is Beit must be either so deep or so shallow, that in one case it is impossible to get to the bottom of him, or in the other, although it is possible to look through him, it is quite impossible to see anything".

Rhodes had in mind from the start only one purpose for the vast resources of his new diamond company, and that was as a means to "paint Africa red", - to place it under the jurisdiction of Queen Victoria. He also saw how hard it would be to convert Barnato to this point of view. The arguments were two-fold – partly verbal and partly financial. To strengthen the latter, Rhodes secured the backing of the House of Rothschild. In his private papers Sir S.F. Philpson-Stow, who was personally connected with the discussions, told how, when Rhodes arrived in London on July 27, 1887, he startled his friends with a bold scheme to capture the Compagnie Francaise des Mines de Diamant du Cap, (popularly referred to as the French Company), and by linking it with the original De Beers Company and the Kimberley Central, then in the hands of Barney Barnato, to stabilize the whole market and so control the diamond industry.

"Rhodes", says Stow, "made his proposal before Rothschild, and obtained an undertaking for the necessary assistance (£1,000,000, though only £750,000 was required), if he could arrange the purchase of the French Company in Paris. He decided to visit Paris at once, while I remained in London to act. Rhodes was able to assure the French Company that he was prepared to fulfill all obligations in every respect, immediately his shareholders had approved the contact. The financial guarantee submitted was acknowledged as sufficient. The date of the meeting of the French shareholders was fixed early in October, to confirm the agreement. Rhodes returned to London on August 4, 1887, and I think the details of the contract were subsequently elaborated by a more formal deed executed later in London. As the nature of the scheme became known, the vested interests, in which Barney Barnato was powerful, were mobilized against Rhodes.

While he and his friends did battle in Kimberley, Stow waited in London. "All through the months of September to the middle of December 1887" he said, "I had been in constant communication with Messrs. N.M. Rothschild and Sons, who had taken a warm interest in the industry, and had used their influence to promote the general welfare of the mines by their advocacy of the principle of unification. Their assistance was invaluable to us".

Sauer met Beit again camping on the Umsimgwani River, where he was overtaken by the party. At Fort Salisbury, which only a few months old, comprised "a few wooden shanties and mud and straw huts, run up for administrative and private use… Alfred Beit and many others lived comfortably in their wagons, after the manner of the old Boer Voortrekkers. The time of the year was August and as there is practically never a rain cloud from April to October in this favoured part of the world, the life is pleasant…"

Beit's dream of being a trooper, however, were no part of his daily life. He was there to study reports by his consulting engineers and to make his own investigations on the mineral possibilities of the country.

With only a few hundred white inhabitants in the entire country, it is not surprising that a visitor of such eminence attracted notice in the local press, such as it was. The "Mashonaland Herald", forerunner of the present "Rhodesia Herald", carried a report in 1891, headed "The New Goldfields".

"Mr. Beit has announced the discovery, at Fernspruit, a short distance South of Fort Victoria, of some very find gold-bearing reefs. One of them, over 20 feet in width, has been traced a considerable distance. Every panning from it has yielded five pennyweights to seven ounces. Mr. Beit, who is no mean authority on such matter, regards the Field as a very promising one. Mr. Edward Lang has brought into camp some splendid specimens of visible….. (?) Representatives of most mining companies are on their way down to the find…"

When on September 25, 1899, at the Lanaka Pass, Major Leonard met Beit once more; the latter also mentioned a reef had been struck. "But this does not sound as hopeful as I had imagined ", Leonard confessed, "and there appears to be a false ring about it, which is unmistakable. Up to the present, not one of the reports we have had has been practical- merely expressions of opinion, based on casual, hasty and imperfect surveys of some few of the old workings, much too sanguine to be worth much. In the fact, there has not been sufficient time in which to inspect the country properly or thoroughly. From the way Beit spoke, Perkins and Rolkers have reported unfavourably upon it".

An American pioneer of Rhodesia, William Harvey Brown, nicknamed "Curio Brown", on account of his fondness for African relics, blamed the engineers. "Two American "mining experts", in company with Dr. Jameson and Mr. Beit, while on tour through the country, came one day to inspect the Eiffel Reef. The experts seemed resolved to criticize adversely everything they observed in the way of gold…"

As against this, however, W.A. Willis, another early mining expert, said of Beit "He owned an immense fortune and, what is not so common a thing, reputation for being honourable to the verge of quioxotism in all his dealings".

As an example, another pioneer told about a man who, "in the madness of a brief prosperity, had heaped insults on the ingratitude, and was met destitute in Mashonaland a few months later, an outcast from his own party, with whom he had quarreled. He had shame enough left not to ask for help, but Beit sent for one of the party and said : "Go and see So-and so, ask him if he wants aid, but don't let him think its from me. I've had a difference with him, and perhaps it would annoy him'.

Together with Randolph Churchill, Beit established a syndicate which secured claims in several part of the country. There was the Heathfield Reef, acquired

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

on January 12, 1891, the Beatrice Extension North, comprising 100 claims pegged on November 24, 1892, the Lone Star, the Tip-top, the Defiance and the Beatrice North East, all dating from 1893. These investments by the Churchill Syndicate, as it was called, continued for another year or two, long after Lord Randolph had returned to Britain, but by January 1895 the last of them had lapsed, and future investments in the country took on an entirely different form….

Sir…

Sir Charles Metcalfe, the famous railway builder and early officer of the Chartered Company, said, some years later: "One day, when Mr. Rhodes and I were in the Matopos, we were discussing what was the best thing to do with wealth, and I suggested, as one of the best purposes to which it could be put, the financing of the railway lines through new countries, that might possibly not pay for two or three years, but which were necessary for opening it up. Rhodes thereupon produced a cable, and asked me to read it. It was to Mr. Beit, personally guaranteeing the interest on money required at that time for the Mashonaland Railway. The guarantee was not required, and the money was found in other terms, but Mr. Beit in a similar manner realized how money could be utilized for the best advantage of a new country…"

Another sidelight on Alfred Beit was furnished by Dr. Hans Sauer, who had been hesitating whether to accept a post in the new colony. His wife had persuaded him to say yes. "On the following morning I told Rhodes that I had changed my mind, and was prepared to go and look at Rhodesia. Before my arrival he had opened and read several letters, which, with their envelopes, were still laying on his table. On hearing what I had to say, he picked up one of the used envelopes, tore off a large corner, and wrote on it: "Dear Beit, please from syndicate for Sauer and Robert Williams to act in Rhodesia"…"

Meeting Williams in the foyer of his London hotel, they hailed a hansom cab and drove to Alfred Beit's office. "He was much amused by the torn piece of envelope on which Rhodes had written. In a few minutes we agreed upon the size of the company and on our position and share therein. This done, Beit asked us to return the following day and sign the contract. The Zambezi Exploring Syndicate was the name selected for our new venture. This company is still in existence, and has been pretty successful. Through it, Williams acted in acquiring and developing the great Tanganyika Copper Belt, one of the most extensive deposits in the world".

Endless stories of the closeness of the friendship between Rhodes and Beit are to be found in the early record, their innate harmony being such that one very often anticipated the thoughts of the other without ever having exchange a word.

Early in his career the fact became known that Beit's health was precarious, and in 1899, seven years before it really happened, news went out from Bulawayo that he was dying.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

To the intense grief of his old crony, then in England, Cecil Rhodes passed away in March 1902, shortly before the end of the South African War, and it was not until August 18, that Beit returned on what was to prove his last visit to South Africa.

So many were the grievances among the settlers in Rhodesia that once he showed himself in that part of the world he was obliged to submit to a cascade of complaints that further affected his health. Yet he still enjoyed the freedom and the friendliness of life in the open. Already widely known for his liberality, he made gifts by the dozen. Thus in 1903 he gave to the Mayor of Fort Victoria £200 for a memorial to Queen Victoria, who had lately died, and another £100 towards one for Cecil Rhodes. Then there was £500 to the Alan Wilson Memorial Hospital, a cup for shooting for the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers in Bulawayo, a new set of ornamental gates for the Matopos Park, and many others.

Reports of Beit's illness had become constant newspaper copy. "He undertook", said the London Journal. "South Africa", "long and strenuous journey, not from any personal motives, but purely to carry out the work for which he and his dear friend, Mr. Rhodes, had so arduously toiled, and to help the Chartered Company, whose board he had so recently rejoined. It was understood that Mr. Beit would return to this country (Britain) before Christmas, 1903, but we have been aware for some time that he was remaining out in South Africa under medical advice. Mr. Beit has never been a strong man, but he has always insisted on doing work of three strong men. It would therefore not be surprising if he should occasionally break down physically. We are glad to be able to believe that the breakdown in this instance is of purely temporary character…"

The belief, however, was unfounded, and on March 26, 1905, Beit was unable to preside, as he had for years, at the Annual Meeting of the British South Africa Company. On July 16, 1906, the end came, at his famous estate, Tewin Water, in England, when at the early age of 53, and still unmarried, he joined the "Great Majority".

The will which he had made only a few months earlier was a document so remarkable that it warrants special treatment in these pages at a later stage.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER VII

## THE LIPPERTS MEET LOBENGULA.

Although Mashonaland was now safely under the authority of Queen Victoria, the rest of Rhodesia, known as Matabeleland, continued as an independent Black Kingdom, under rule of the mighty warrior chieftain, Lobengula. From his headquarters at the Gubulawayo he still exercised the power of life and death over a people trained only for conquest. Here traders and concessionaires still vied with each other to secure the favour of the King, and it was here that another Jewish pioneer helped to mould the history of the Colony.

Alfred Beit's cousin, Edward Amandus Lippert, son of the same David Lippert of whom mention has already been made, had emigrated to the Cape in the 1870's, and, after a spell in Kimberly, had made his home in the Transvaal. There he won the nickname of "Concession King", gaining from President Kruger the much-disputed privilege of the sole manufacture of dynamite.

Like others, he then turned further North, and within the realms of Lobengula performed the still more remarkable feat of outwitting Cecil John Rhodes. No sooner had C.D. Rudd and his friends gained the coveted concession for the exploitation of minerals, than Edward Lippert made his request for a similar monopoly in the disposition and sale of land! Too late Cecil John Rhodes realized that, without the necessary surface rights, his mining privileges were useless. Already he had come to know Edward Lippert's toughness. There was only one thing to do: Come to terms with him. And so, in 1891, a "Peace Treaty" was signed, under which Lippert, against adequate compensation, merged his surface concession with that already vested in the British South Africa Company. Satisfactory as was the business side, there remained the highly- important factor- Lobengula. Somebody had to explain to him that the deadly rivals of yesterday were now at peace, and that somebody could only be Lippert himself.

A short while before, the big, jovial, red-bearded giant from Hamburg had married Marie Hahn. As soon as she heard of Edward's plans to visit Gubulawayo, she decided to share the adventure, and in so doing, helped to provide a minor classic in South African travel literature. For not only was pretty Marie Lippert an exceptionally fluent letter writer, but a black and white artist of more than average ability. Years later her family had the whole series printed, albeit in a very limited edition, in German, under the title "Zur Erinnerung and Marie Lippert: Ihre Reisebriege und Skizzen aus Matabeleland, 21 September bis 23 Dezember, 1891". Marie Lippert died soon after, in 1893, and in the course of time the majority of the 50 copies were lost. Three of them, however, found their way to South Africa- one given by Edward Lippert to his relative Dr. Carl August Cohn, another to Senator Samuel Marks and a third to John X. Merriman, the last Cape Premier.

In 1960 the writer translated the German text into English, the resulting volume being published as "The Matabeleland Travel Letters of Marie Lippert", by the Friends of the South African Library in Cape Town.

Marie's first letter, dated from Johannesburg on September 22, 1891, is addressed to her mother:
“Dear Mama- Last Wednesday Edward returned from Cape Town highly satisfied- with a general signature of peace and an honourable settlement for Edward. At first he did not negotiate with Rhodes, but with another director of the Chartered Company, who said: 'Well, I suppose you will go bald-headed for the Queen next; you have gone for Rhodes and for the Chartered Company, and for the Governor, and for the whole Imperial Government; there is only the Queen left now! After making peace, he said: 'Rhodes is the most powerful man in this country, but you are certainly the most energetic'.....

Marie describes her preparations for the journey from Pretoria via Palla, Palapye, (then written Palapschwe), and Tati to Gubulawayo. The account of the trip, especially with its annotations by Mr. Douglas H. Varley, now Chief Librarian for the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, gives a fascinating picture of the wildness of conditions on the route to the North.

"We in our little wagon", says Marie, "traveling fast, do the thing in a decidedly rough style, eating off the floor, cooking queerly, baking a kind of bread in the ashes, washing ourselves when and how we can; nevertheless it is most enjoyable... In three days we shall be at Tati, where we shall meet Alfred Beit...."

As often happens between relations, the two cousins met under armed neutrality. The travelers reached Gubulawayo on October 24, 1891, making their headquarters in the camp set up by Renny Tailyour, a young man in the employ of Rhodes.

"Bulawayo", she says, "is quite different from what i expected: we were are not even allowed into the native town without solemn permission from the King, and then one just passes through and visits the chief Queen of Gubulawayo: there is no question of sketching. Lobengula himself is at present living with his court at a new kraal five miles out, which he has had built for himself because he has gout, and it is more private. The whites at Bulawayo live in three separate little camps, with a crude fence and a few huts, tents and wagons inside".

In due course the Lipperts were admitted into the Presence. "There we sat: the King began to smoke, and made a few remarks from time to time: by degrees a crowd of people came and squatted around us, and had to tell him a lot of things. Two Queens seated themselves under the ox-wagon and listened: about 50 young men marched into the courtyard, singing very nicely. Each one carried a wooden pole, and they began building a new hut. Then a large piece of cold boiled beef was brought along and placed on the ground in front of Edward. Heavens, what on earth did it look like, coming straight from the ox-wagon and lying in a wooden trough! The King however, had a proper plate brought and even had the plate washed, and the meat put on it. Now Edward had to cut it with his pocket knife, and we all sat there eating, with our fingers of course, instead of with a knife and fork. Fortunately it was very tender, and the pieces of fat, which I secretly allowed to drop, were immediately snapped up by dogs. Three pieces I manfully ate, but the King continued to insist that women who look like wasps could not eat properly: native etiquette demands that everything one is given must be eaten; fortunately, however, one is allowed to give it to one's followers, and these are always available...."

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

The discussions with Lobengula lasted far longer than was ever expected. Weeks went by, and it was not until the end of November that the return journey could be commenced.

"The King has received his £1,000 sterling, and is to get £500 a year, which the Chartered Company pays: in return he leaves the country to the Whites, and his suzerainty is acknowledged after all. For the Chartered Company this settlement of the land question is of immeasurable value: hence they have been able to pay a high price for the Concession. Thank goodness the whole question is now settled and that you have the news before Christmas...."

In a few words Marie brings alive the closing scenes: "After an endless session with the King and the Indunas, arguing the same point over and over again, everything was signed and certified and sealed at last on Tuesday afternoon, and at two on Wednesday we departed. It is unbelievable what pleasure the Matabele find in endless discussions, something after Edward's own heart. Imagine, several times they sat on the ground from eight o'clock in the morning till five in the evening! I came along once more, to say goodbye. This time Lobengula was clad in a tiger skin, a kind of knitted cap upon his head, and with dirty socks on his feel; it was cool and he suffers from gout. Despite this get-up, he looks every inch a King. A crowd of Queens sat on mats around him, and a small boy knelt in front of him with a bit dish of meat, from which he consumed his breakfast. Nowadays he mostly sits in a big, open tent which somebody sent him. It is painted inside with large elephants, but he says contemptuously that they are drawn wrongly; how could one hit an elephant behind the ear when hunting, if the ear is so queerly fitted onto it, and its eyes have quite the wrong colour.

"When we departed, all the Whites gathered once more; the last champagne was drunk. Edward made a little speech, and a very amusing episode came to a glorious conclusion...."

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER V111.

## SETTLERS IN MASHONALAND.

On the morning of September 13, 1890, Lieutenant Tyndale Biscoe, formerly of the Royal Navy, had the honour of hoisting the Union Jack, beside a koppie which had been wrongly identified as Mount Hampden, 10 miles further to the North. After three cheers had been given for Queen Victoria and a salute of 21 guns fired, work began on the construction of an emplacement to which, in honour of the British Prime Minister, was given the name of Fort Salisbury. From that moment, colonization of Rhodesia may be said to have commenced and, despite the primitive conditions, the achievements even then were impressive. Hugh Marshall Hole left an account of the town in its earliest months: "Just before leaving Cape Colony", he said, "we had seen a copy of 'South Africa", with a map, in which the name Fort Salisbury was printed in the thick type usually associated with flourishing capital cities. Nevertheless, it would have been easy, at the time of our arrival, to pass within a few hundred yards of the place itself, clothed with a dense growth of coarse grass, five feet or more in height. From this emerged a low, tree-covered hill, or 'kopje', at the foot of which were a couple score of thatched huts, hardly different from those of the native kraals. we had seen on the road. This was the business quarter of the township. A mile or so away were other groups of huts, in some of which Dr. Jameson and his new staff lived, messed and carried on the work of the 'Government'. The police headquarters looked like cowsheds, and were arranged round an earthwork - the fort - above which flew the Union Jack, charged with the Company's badge of a golden lion. Scattered here and there were canvas tents, wagons protected by bucksails, and the frameworks of more huts in the process of erection.

"The two main camps were separated by a dismal black swamp, the haunt of snipe and the noisy rendezvous of innumerable frogs. It was afterwards drained, and is now traversed by a fire broadway, on which stand the Town Hall and other substantial buildings, but in those days it was almost impassable in the rainy season, even on horseback. Four or five hundred sun burnt young men, clad, for the most part, in flannel shirts, corduroy breeches and broad - brimmed slouch hats - of the type beloved by lady novelists- constituted the population of Fort Salisbury. There was said to be a white woman somewhere in the camp, but she must have remained in Purdah, for we never saw her. The only local institutions were the English Church and the weekly newspaper".

"In that same newspaper, known as "The Mashonaland Herald and Zambesian Times". Which had been started by W.E. Fairbridge, but which had not yet attained the dignity of print, the names of Jewish settlers were already to be noticed. Speaking of the journal, Marshall Hole declared that the editor "employed some sort of cyclostyle process, which reproduced his actual handwriting, but his mechanical appliances, which included a tray of sticky jelly and an ink - roller, were not of the same high quality as his intellectual outfit. The ink, which he made himself, was generally to blame".

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

In this journal, on July 25, 1891, we read:

**"THE LION DISPENSARY.**
Lowenstein & Strachan.
Chemists and Dentists,
"The Causeway, Fort Salisbury".

Within another week Lowenstein and Strachan had expanded their activities sufficiently to add the words "wholesale Druggists", and they also featured "Special Preparations - Pick- me- up- Bitters, Fever Mixture, Dysentery Powders and Condition Powders for Preventing Horse Sickness", all of which give a useful indication of the prevailing troubles in the Camp.

On another page there is a notice:

"We, the Undersigned Stock and Sharebrokers, have agreed to charge the following brokerage from this date: Viz:

Share Transactions: 3 per cent on transactions of £100 and under.
2 per cent on Transactions over £100

Fort Salisbury,
20th July, 1891".

Five brokers signed the advertisement, among them S. Hyman.

Probably the first overseas item of Jewish interest is to be found on September 12, 1891, when a batch of miscellaneous cables mentions: “Jewish refugees from Russia are being driven back on the frontiers.

Of one early Jewish adventurer, whose name has not been preserved, Marshall Hole writes: "Jameson could rise to the occasion if necessary, and I have never forgotten the dignified way in which he conducted the trial of the first murder case heard in Rhodesia, the only one to this day which has resulted in the hanging of a European. The accused was a Jew from Holland, and the evidence against him was circumstantial, but conclusive. In sentencing the wretched man to death, Jameson, who was assisted by four assessors, spoke with great impressiveness and evident emotion and, in forwarding the record of the trial for confirmation by the High Commissioner in Cape Town, he gave a lucid and thoughtful summary of the evidence and of the reasons for his decision...."

By 1892 the Jewish community in the new territory was substantially reinforced. Of one of the newcomers, Louis Suzman, proprietor of the Masonic Hotel at Salisbury, the "Mashonaland Herald" wrote on July 2, 1892: "He may claim to be the first who has had his premises 'papered'. The Masonic Bar has now very handsome offices. There are no laggards about the Masonic Hotel. It is excellent".

An advertisement reads:

**"MASONIC HOTEL,**
Salisbury.
Good Accommodation.
Charges Moderate.

"Liquor of all kinds kept, of Best Brands only.
bottle Store on the Premises
**L.SUZMAN & CO.**
Proprietors"
This was followed by a further announcement:

**"MASONIC HOTEL.**

Dining Room is now open to Boarders, and Public
Meals are to be had at all hours.
Proprietor: L. Suzman,
to whom Personal Application for All particulars should be made
The Bottle Store is open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily".

The fact that the proprietor now found it worth while employing a manager, in the person of G. Jacobs, is brought out in an advertisement for one of the first boxing tournaments in Rhodesia. between W. Marting and D. Hamilton, which also took place at the Masonic Hotel. On July 2 1892, the "Mashonaland Herald" also drew attention to the fact that "Mr. Jacobs can claim being the first man to ride a bicycle in Salisbury". This coincided with the world - wide vogue of the new "Safety " model, which had replaced the erratic and dangerous penny-farthing

The same Louis Suzman who started the Masonic Hotel in Salisbury was responsible for the Salisbury Reef, one of the first mines in Rhodesia, operations on which were inaugurated by Cecil Rhodes in person in March, 1893. To him also goes the honour of having begun the earliest brewery in the Colony.

The uses of a famous Jewish commercial house to the new territory were announced in the following terms:

**"LANDING, SHIPPING AND FORWARDING.**

Attention is drawn to the exceptional facilities for Forwarding Goods from Algoa Bay or London through
**JULIUS WELL.**

who has added to his numerous branches, between Mafeking and Salisbury, a Forwarding Office at Port Elizabeth.
Complete command of Carriage at Lowest Rates.
Practical Attention and Supervision along the entire Route
Delays prevented and Deliveries insured".

Meanwhile E.E. Homan of Salisbury, General Merchant, made it known that he had been officially appointed agent for Julius Weil of Mafeking.

The fact that Salisbury was now becoming a town, complete with roadways, is implied in the revised notices by the Lion dispensary, wherein Messrs. Lowenstein & Strachan, (who now also emphasized that they were qualified "by Examination in London", gave their address as **"Pioneer Street"**

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

One of the earliest accounts of the Chosen People as such, though not a especially sympathetic one, is to be found in “How We Made Rhodesia". by Major Leonard, who has already been mentioned in these pages. Writing in February 1891 from Tuli, he says:

"More prospectors arriving , this time Jews, two yesterday and four today" He also mentions that they are "either Polish or Russian, judging from their crackjaw names" Puzzled why they failed to avoid a penalty of five guineas by paying a shilling for a trade license, he adds: "Of course, specimens such as these are not a fair criterion of the Jews as whole....but there are Jews and Jews, as much as there are Christians and Christians, though perhaps, in not quite the same ratio. I have always failed to understand why they should be looked down upon at all around, and treated with such undisguised contempt and con-tumely. That this is the results, partly of an old-time narrow prejudice, intensified by religious fanaticism, and partly the outcome of iron circumstance, that as scattered as a nation, far and wide over the whole world, without crushing their individuality as a race, and that it is not due simply to any singular racial characteristics, is, I think admissible. When also we take into consideration that for the last 1,800 years or s, they have practically ceased to exist as a nation and that in whatever country they have found a refuge, their treatment in some, notably Russia and Poland, even to this day, has been inhuman, if not barbarous, every man's hand being against them, it is not surprising that a race possessing such marked characteristics should resent such treatment, in strict accord with the principles of the old Mosaic Law, "an eye for and eye and a tooth for a tooth".

"Nor is it surprising that, owing to isolation and numerical inferiority, consequently unable even to offer a massive resistance, their resentment has found an outlet in undying hatred and a relentless system of revenge, which is pursued in silence, and taken advantage of at every available opportunity. And there is no one on the face of this earth who can seize an opportunity to advantage, and stick to it through grim death and beyond, like a Jew, for their tenacity of purpose is as the breath of life to them, and ceases only with it".

Major Leonard goes on: "I for one have always admired the Chosen People. First of all, because of their early history, when, after a long and grievous enthrallment by the Pharaohs, under the leadership of the great Law-Giver, they burst asunder the bonds of an iron tyranny, and warring against enemies and elements for 40 years formed a country and a kingdom of their own, showing that in these early days they were a masterful nation in every sense, cultivating the arts of peace, yet strong in war - a nation of trained warriors, in fact, quick to pursue and strong to avenge. Also strong in the faith of Jehovah, their one and only God, and no on else's

"That it was their faith, selfish and individualistic to the very core, that gave them the peculiarly distinctive idiosyncrasies which distinguish the Jew, and singles him from among all the races of the earth, there can be little or no doubt. For the Jew, no one will deny, has an individuality of his own, physical and mental, that stamps his nationality with the hallmark of an identity which cannot be mistaken.

"It is sad to draw a comparison between their past greatness and persistent conditions of weakness, and yet there are not wanting many palpable and visible indications of a growth of power that is flourishing slowly, yet surely and steadily,

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

in our midst, that is a proof, if nothing else is, of their marvelous powers of recuperation, patience and tenacity, which despite the severest conditions - conditions that would have crushed and swamped any other race ever born - have left them, scattered and disunited as they are, an element that someday, in the not very distant future will have to be taken into serious consideration, and consulted.

"And a race which so recently has produced such men as Disraeli, Montefoire and Hirsh, men whom any nation would be proud to call its own, must be a race possessing, at least, strength of character and ability of tradition ...."

Despite occasional strong remarks, Leonard was by no means indiscriminatingly anti-Semitic, as shown in a diary entry on July 25, 1981. "On my return this evening from a long ride, I found Laurie in my hut. He had just ridden in from Rhodes' Drift with a man called Hassforther, for whom we have been on the look-out during the past few months. In company with a man called Oscar Dettlebach, they were attempting to pass the post, when they were stopped and brought before Laurie....They were both Germans; but while Hassfprtjeros common, objectionable and of a decidedly low type, Dettlebach, who is a Jew, is far superior in every way, unobtrusive, and by no means offensive, True to his racial instincts, he is as sharp as a needle, under and assumption of dullness, shrewd and intelligent, and one of the quickest and smartest men at figures I have ever seen.

Dettlebach, a well - known figure in the early days of the Witwatersrand, later anglicized his name into Dereham.

Among the early Jews to hold public office was Joseph van Praagh, born in 1865, who, arriving from Beira on foot at Salisbury in 1891, successfully opened up a commercial business both there and in Mozambique. From 1899 to 1900 he was President of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce, but during the South African War returned to the Cape, becoming prominent as a diamond buyer at Kimberly. In his later years, in 1925, he was one of those who opened up the famous coastal deposits at Kleinzee in Namaqualand. Mr. Van Praagh passes away as recently as 1946, at the age of 81.

Meanwhile Jews were also establishing themselves on the Eastern frontier of Rhodesia, where the region commonly referred to as Manicaland, to which the Portuguese in Mozambique had laid claim, definitely passed under British control. Almost simultaneously with the frontier of Fort Salisbury, the new settlement at the mouth of the Pungwe River, to which the Portuguese had given the name of Beira, had been established, one of its original inhabitants in the days when it ranked with the most fever-stricken and unhealthy places in the world, being Julius Lewis Altson, among the most important, though least known, Jewish pioneers of early Rhodesia.

For the information concerning him, the author has to thank his son, Mr. R. A. Altson, of Chelsea, London. The son of Isaac Alston of Stockton-on-Tees in Durham, Julius Altson was born at Hull in Yorkshire in June 1861 and, as a young man in his twenties, came to the Diamond Fields of Kimberly, where he did well. On December 21, 1887 he married in Cape Town Isabella Frances Alexander, daughter of a well-known Jewish citizen, Lewis Alexander.

Following the foundation of Beira three years later, and the occupation by the British of the disputed border region near Macequece, Altson founded the Manica Trading Company Limited, today the oldest commercial enterprise, and incidentally the

oldest limited company, in the Federation. Like his friend Van Praagh, he walked from the coast to Salisbury on foot.

With its base at Beira, the Manica Trading Company set up trading establishments in the new village of Umtali (not the present town of that name, but its forerunner, commonly referred to as Old Umtali, since it was removed bodily to the present site when the railway was laid").

In 1892 the original Manica Trading Company was floated with a capital of £10,000, and registered offices at 20 Eastcheap, London. Julius Altson, still living at Beira, became Managing Director, while the Board had as Chairman a well-known London business man with a very similar name, but who was no relation of his at all, namely Roland Alston, along with William Briscoe and G. van Praagh. Operations were carried on as "General Merchants, Importers and Agents". In addition to the warehouses at the coast and at Umtali, another was opened at Salisbury.

Having in the meantime also moved his own place of residence to Salisbury, Julius Altson maintained his connection with the firm until the time of the South African War, at the turn of the century. Meanwhile he had developed connections in Australia and, although a prominent and respected citizen, he suddenly decided to leave Rhodesia in 1903. He never came back, but died in Melbourne at the age of 78, on August 11, 1949. The Manica Trading Company, however, through its ordinary commercial activities continues to flourish, and it toady mainly concerned with forwarding, insurance and similar activities.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER IX.

## JEWS IN THE MATABELE WAR.

While the colonization of Mashonaland forged ahead, through the taking up of farms, the cultivation of land, the erection of houses and the exploitation of mines, everybody knew that Matabeleland could not remain much longer in the grip of Lobengula.

The immediate cause of trouble was the claim of the Matabele, a proud race, directly descended from the warlike Zulus in the South, to exercise the power of life and death over their hereditary slaves, Mashonas, not only in their own territory, but across the border into the White Man's settlement. Undoubtedly the position of Lobengula, his fierce regiments straining at the leash, as the immediate neighbours of a modern commercial and industrial community, was as tragic as it was anomalous. While many people abroad saw him as the Noble Savage, steadily ringed in by the machinations of the stockbrokers and company promoters, the fact remains that, after a series of frontier raids during the years 1891 and 1892, there occurred yet another, near Fort Victoria, so ruthless that the White authorities could no long connive at it. Although he had told his braves to abstain from killing the White men, Lobengula still demanded the right to wreak his will on any Mashonas when and where he chose.

The muster-rolls of the famous British South Africa Police contain a number of Jewish names, the first being that of Trooper A. Abrams, who attested on February 11, 1890, in "D" Troop, and was discharged on July 7 of the same year, while the Pioneer Column was still at Fort Tuli.

Trooper W. Fredman was also enrolled in "D" Troop. He is believed to have been identical with one of the same name who took part in the Jameson Raid in 1895, and was captured in the action against the Boers at Doornkop. Trooper S. Marcus attested on February 21, 1890 in "A" Troop of the Pioneer Column, and gained his discharge on August 15, 1891. Trooper W. Block enrolled on the same date and served as cook in the Corporal's Mess of "E" Troop at Maclouitsie Camp. He was a German draftsman, whose sketches were sufficiently good to be reproduced from time to time in the then well-known London illustrated paper, the "Daily Graphic". He did not survive the hard life, but died on January 24, 1891.

Trooper Nathaniel Davis attested on January 27, 1891, and took his discharge at Tuli in November of the same year, Trooper A. Myers signed on in March 1891 and was discharged at the same place on December 10, 1891. Mention must also be made of Assistant Conductor J.Schlachter, attached to the B.S.A. Police transport at Salisbury.

But the one who most deserves remembrance was Trooper Frank Leon Vogel, second son of Sir Julius Vogel, the famous early Jewish Prime Minister of New Zealand. Frank was born there at Auckland, on October 21, 1870, and was sent to England for his educations at the famous public school, Charterhouse. His first contact with Rhodesia was his appointment, at the age of 20, in 1890, to the staff of the British

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

South Africa Company in London. Within a year, however, he had left his desk and having attested in the Police, on April 28, 1891, reached Fort Tuli as a recruit, and signed on there on June 15. His commanding Officer, Captain A.G. Leonard, noted his distinctly Jewish appearance and his "keen hawklike proboscis">

A few weeks after reaching Rhodesia, in August, Vogel was ordered down to Rhodes Drift on the Limpopo River where a group picture was taken. Colonel A.S. Hickman, the historian of the B.S.A, Police, says: "It portrays young fellow in his early twenties- long-faced and rather sad looking, with a thin moustache. He wears as smasher hat, dark tunic and breeches, top boots and bandolier, and holds a Martini-Henry rifle".

From the beginning of 1892 Vogel was transferred to the "Civil Department" of the Police, and operated one of the post carts on which the mails of Rhodesia still depended.

But his campaigning days still lay ahead and, as will be told later in these pages, he was destined for immortality in the gallery of Rhodesia's bravest men.

The exact number of warriors under Lobengula is difficult to determine, but certainly reached tens of thousands, while the total British force under Major P.W. Forbes, which invaded the Matabeleland in 1893, was barely 750, and even if the possession of superior weapons made good some of the discrepancy, it by no means bridged the gap. Once again enlistments included an impressive array of the Chosen People.

Among the most important units was the Salisbury Horse. under the gallant Captain Borrow, with whose volunteers was Trooper J. Behrmann, wounded in the Battle of Shangani on October 25, 1893, and Trooper Siebert wounded on November 1, 1893 in the Battle of Imbembesi, died two days later near Bulawayo. Trooper Alfred Cohen fought both at Shangani and Imbembesi and, like his comrades, gained the 1893 Campaign Medal. The same applied to Gunner Jacob Cohen, to Trooper Leonard Kronstein and to Gunner Jacob Palca.

The outbreak of war in 1893 found Trooper Frank Leon Vogel still in the Police. He immediately joined "B" Troop of the Salisbury Horse and, according to the record, "served the Maxim gun attached to his troop, under Lieutenant Llewellyn. He left Salisbury with the but returned alone two or three weeks afterwards on business. Rejoining his troop two or three days after they left Fort Charter, he marched with the column, and was in all the engagements on te way to Bulawayo, serving the Maxim gun, besides volunteering for the special scouting expeditions. He was one of the small party sent out in search of Captain C. Williams, and also one of the expedition on which Captain Campbell was killed. He served the Maxim at the engagement on the Shangani River on the 25th of October, and also at Imbembesi on the 1st of November, where he had a narrow escape, one bullet passing through his hat, He reached Bulawayo safe and sound on November 4, and on the 10th wrote his last letter to his relatives, being then evidently in high spirits and regarding the campaign as over. He left Bulawayo on the 14th and remained with Major Forbes throughout the patrol, which ended at Shiloh. Thence again, as a volunteer he accompanied the force under Major Forbes to the Shangani River, where, under Captain Borrow, he joined Major Wilson, with whom he was killed...." And that is why the name of this young Jew is on the Wilson Patrol Memorial.

The Victoria Rangers included Trooper Abe Levy, (also known as Walters), who, after being wounded in the Battle of Shangani, on October 25, died the following day. Trooper Charles Frederick Mosenthal was also in the Victoria Column, and saw action at Shangani and Imbembesi. Raaff's Column, which set out from Tuli, included Trooper Paul Weinthal, who was in action at Singwesi. In the same action were Trooper Max Cossell, Trooper Leon Gabriel, Lieutenant Harry Bernstein, Trooper William Henry and Trooper John Henry, Trooper Samuel Lipschitz and Transport Officer Isaac Sonnenberg.

The Bechuanaland Border Police had Trooper Jacob Marcus Rabi, Trooper Leon Rannson, Trooper Lewis Heilman, Trooper Edward Francis Abrahams, Trooper John Aaron of Mafeking, and Lance Corporal Maurice Trenschiner.

No less important, if less heroic, was the part played in the campaign by the firm of Julius Weil & Co., more particularly through that for the energetic Samuel, who, we note, organized the transport for the campaign and supplied no fewer than 360,000 rations, besides large numbers from Mosenthal Brothers.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## CHAPTER X

## JEWS IN EARLY BULAWAYO

An immediate sequel to the conquest of Matabeleland and the destruction of Lobengula's military apparatus was the establishment of the new town of Bulawayo, some miles distant from the original kraal of the defeated monarch. Its initial growth was so spectacular that it soon surpassed in size both Fort Salisbury and Umtali a position it maintained until a few years ago. From every part of South Africa and from many places overseas, optimistic settlers, representatives of countless professions and many nations, streamed towards the incipient city. Jews were prominent from the beginning.

Four months after the Victoria and Salisbury Columns had reached the Matabele capital, in March 1894, appeared the first newspaper, "The Matabele Times and Mining Journal", of which a Jew, William Francis Wallenstein, was the proprietor and editor. Like all the early journals of the Colony, its issues were run off on a duplicating machine and are today exceedingly rare

Wallenstein, a colourful early character, had spent some exciting years on the East Coast of Africa, and was among the earliest settlers at Beira, afterwards spending some time in Umtali.

Two names formerly well known in Kimberley were associated with "The Australian Auction Mart".

**"PAM AND JOEL"**
Auctioneers and Brokers
Dealers in Stands, Claims, etc.

They also functioned as advertising agents for the "The Matabele Times and Mining Journal". The one partner seems to have been Jules Pam, one of the earliest and most successful of the diamond buyers.

Monday, July 30 1894, saw the first great stand sale in newly-founded Bulawayo, in the newly erected Charter Hotel, belonging to Messrs. Napier and Weir.

"When we Hear", wrote the "Matabele News", another paper that had meanwhile appeared, "that the prices realized double what was expected, that competition was keen throughout the whole, and that only about one quarter were sold, our readers can imagine the successful result". The reporter continues: "Punctually at 11 o' clock Mr. Napier began from the streets running across the South side of the Market Square, and by one o'clock he had sold 55 stands for a total of £10,700. After an hour's

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

adjournment, during which sandwiches and free drinks were the order of the day, Mr. E. Slater opened the ball again, and kept hard at it until nearly five o'clock, by which time another 68 stands had been knocked down for a total of £6,400, making altogether 123 for £17,100, no bad day's work. The lower stands, to the South of the town, went for higher than the upset price, namely £40, while many of the better situated business sites fetched over £400…

A list of purchasers, unfortunately in many cases without initials or first names, shows that one of the largest buyers was the firm of Joseph Brothers, who acquired a block of six stands, Nos. 64, 65, 67, 71, 105 and 137, the prices being respectively £40, £45, £40, £52.10s, £40 and £40. Stand No. 334 went for £230. Three plots – Nos. 659, 560 and 690 went to Mr. Pawelzig for £62-10, £57-10 and £45.

Israel Brothers purchased Stand No. 585 for £40, No. 299 for £200 and another for £175. V. Wolff paid £70 for No. 302 and £40 for No. 359. J. Boam bought No. 557 for £105, No. 704 for £50, No. 126 for £230, No. 535 for £67-10, No. 164 for £82-10 and No. 403 for £115.

C. Glass was also a good customer, for he secured Stand No. 694 for£55, No. 189 for £205, No. 495 for £420, No. 543 for £250, No. 332 for £200 and No. 331 for £135, while a namesake of his, D. Glass, bought Stand No. 702 for £95.

Then there were Messrs. Jacob Brothers, who gave £102-10 for No. 437, £167-10 for No. 191, £45 for No. 712 and No. 225 for £137-10, besides No. 597 for £190 to A. Jacobs personally. F.W. Wallenstein, the newspaper editor, bought two plots, Nos. 117 and 197, each for £40, while Julius Weil became responsible for No. 153 (£45), No. 193 (£62-10) and No. 339 at £200. As for Mr. Pawelzig, he bought No.560 for £67-10 and No. 690 for £45, No.659 for £62-10.

Smaller purchases were also made, one of them being by Richard Rosenthal, father of the present writer, who paid 47-10 for Stand No. 373. Mr. Lichtenstein bought Stand No. 716 for £40, Mr. Platnauer No. 328 for £110, Mr. Labinowitz (so spelt) No. 195 for £62-10 and Mr. Staelitsk No. 404 for£ 60. There were also purchases by Mr. Baumann, No. 533 for £52-10, Mr. Levy No. 384 for £225, Mr. Nathan No. 483 for £52-10, Mr. Hoffman No. 177 for £130, Mr. Hirschler No. 706 for £90, Mr. Lieberman No. 600 for £82-10, Mr. Lesser No. 609 for £60, and Messrs. Hyman & Co No. 608 for £62-10.

Sonnenberg, who purchased Stand No. 217, was none other then the legendary Ikey Sonnenberg, of Kimberley fame, of whom so many anecdotes were told. He spent some of his later years in the wilds of Rhodesia, before retiring to the Rand. Max Sonnenberg, his nephew, well-known as founder of the Woolworths Department Stores in the Union, as a Member of Parliament and as a charity worker, was also a Bulawayo pioneer.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Although not all these purchasers were actually resident at the time in Rhodesia, (several making their investments through agents), the majority were there in person, proof of the growth of the Jewish community beyond the Limpopo.

Casual remarks show the roughness of prevailing conditions. "Mr. Ikey Sonnenberg's hut (sic) was plundered on Friday night last, and almost all of his kit stolen. He complains bitterly of the conduct of the Police in making no attempt to investigate matters, although approached time out of number on the subject".

The most unusual address in Bulawayo was that given by a member of a well-known Jewish family prominent in early Johannesburg.

**FOOTE & CO.**

Auctioneers, Accountants and Commission Agents.
Sales held every Wednesday and Saturday.
Money advanced from £5 to £500 on Security.
Gold Properties, Farms, etc, bought and sold on Commission.
Under the Big Tree near the Caledonian Hotel.

Again, on August 21 1894 we read:

**UNITED RHODESIA**

. Matabeleland and Mashonaland One Country!!!

Hyman is taking Commissions for the Sale of Stands next September at Salisbury.
Hyman is the largest Dealer in Land in the Chartered Company Territories
Hyman can be seen at any time at the Masonic Hotel and has

**FOR SALE**

Two Matabeleland Farm Rights,
Stands Nos. 390 and 240 with Buildings.
One Native Land Right,
etc,etc, etc
N.B. Hyman is leaving next Mail

And again:

Mr. C. Marks, of the' Financial News' is on a fortnight's trip to Salisbury by coach, returning here to meet Mr. C. Grain of the 'Financial Times'

There was also an important development in the realm of public health. Dr. H.E. Levy, M.D., London, arrived from the Cape and took charge of the Hospital

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

from Dr. Eaton of the Bechuanaland Border Police, who returns to his duties in Basutoland in a week or two….Within a few days came a further reference

**CONRATH AND DUNCAN**
Chemists and Druggists
Established here in 1893
Prescriptions carefully prepared
Patent Medicines and Toilet Requisites always in Stock
Dr. Levy can be consulted at 11 am daily

Soon afterwards the Doctor made a move to No. 3 Willoughby's Chambers, where we are told: "Consulting Hours: 11 to 1 and 2 to 3.

As for Julius Weil, he advertised himself as "Wholesale Merchant and Direct Importer, Bulawayo. Has on hand and to arrive, a Large Stock of Groceries, Clothing, Kaffir Truck, Mining and Building Materials, also All Kinds of Liquor and Cigars of the Best Brands. General Quotations to the Trade".

With the Town rapidly taking shape, opportunities for business proportionately grew. Typical advertisements speak for themselves.

**S. HESS**
Bulawayo Bakery
The Cheapest and Best Bread in Camp
Only the Best Materials Used

**B GOLDMAN**
New and Second-hand Furniture of Every Description.
Tools, Crockery, etc.,
Rhodes Street, (Opposite Tattersall's)

Most of the pioneers carried on more than one occupation. Thus, apart from being a journalist and proprietor of the Forest Vale Hotel outside Bulawayo, N. Platnauer was also News Agent and Stationer, from which he drifted in to sporting journalism.

Joseph Baum, besides being agent for Israel Brothers of President Street, Johannesburg, "Wholesale Outfitters and Kaffir Truck Dealers", was printer and publisher of the "Bulawayo Sketch" in Fife Street, the first illustrated journal, which began publication in 1894, and soon enjoyed a circulation through most of the Colony. He also functioned as "Claim and General Commission Agent. All business executed strictly in confidence. Address: Next to Byrne, Chemist".

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

E.S. Newman, who started up on his own stand facing Market Square, offered not only "a fine lot of Furniture Beds, Crockery and Hardware", but also "Lumber, at Prices to Suit the Times".

In addition to a newspaper proprietor and editor, F.W. Wallenstein was a director of the Bulawayo Building Society, for which he received the substantial total of 26 votes.

Tempovsky Brothers of Market Square were described as "Bakers, Grocers and General Dealers". Old Mr. Tempovsky was originally a transport driver, operating in partnership with Michael Welensky, father of the future Prime Minister, Sir Roy Welensky, of whom more will be said later.

One of the most remarkable early enterprises was recorded in the "Umtali Advertise" on December 11, 1894.

> Messrs. Frank and Jacobs have 5,000 of Electric Plant on the way to Bulawayo, and are applying for positions in which to fix their poles in the Township".

Unfortunately a 15-year concession to operate a Power Station and telephone system had already been granted by the Chartered Company to another firm, so that the importation was fruitless. Franks and Jacobs were more successful in the field of manufacture, being among the very first firms to import their own steam engine, of which a picture appeared in the press, accompanied by the announcement:

**STEAM SAW AND MEALIE MILLS.**

"Are prepared to supply Native Timber, cut to size.
Large Logs always on hand.
Address: Abercorn Street"

.

The earliest attempt at creating a heavy industry in Rhodesia is implied in a notice in the "Matabele Times" on August 31, 1894: "Mr. J.J. Jacobs, who was the Pioneer Moulder on the Rand, intends starting a Smelting Works in Bulawayo, with Native Ores"

Another branch of industry was represented by N. Rosenberg & Co.

**AMERICAN TAILORS AND HABIT MAKERS**

Abercorn Street
(Next to Dr. Sauer's Buildings)
Just Arrived – Large Stock of Tweeds, Serges, etc.

Their competitors were Samuel Shapiro & Co., also pioneer tailors and habit makers of Fife Street (opposite Dawson's) who had available a selection of tweeds, serges and trouserings.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Pioneer manufacturers, in field wherein Rhodesia later became famous, were Witt & Levin, of the Maxim Hairdressing Salon, Tobacconists and "Sole Manufacturers of Bulawayo Camp Cigarettes". Within a year their business had been taken over by S.Jacoby, who renamed the enterprise the "Maxim Cigar Divan", and moved it next to Maddocks, the auctioneers. He continued the making of "Camp Cigarettes", but presently settled at Johannesburg, where he operated for many years in the Rand Club Building.

A competitor, S. Davies, was the proprietor of the Bulawayo Cigarette Factory. "All made by Hand from pure Three Castles Tobacco".

Maddocks himself became the subject of a cartoon in the "Bulawayo Sketch", which carried a drawing of a Sale Room scene, in the front of which a gentleman, of obviously Semitic appearance, dominated the proceedings.

Organized entertainments are announced in July 1894: "The first of a series of Smoking Concerts was given at Parson's Maxim Hotel on Saturday Evening last, to a crowded room, by Messrs. Strelitzki and Levy…

The beginning of another branch of Jewish enterprise was recorded in the "Bulawayo Chronicle" in 1895.

**NOTICE.**

"J. Lenson has secured the right from the Bulawayo Turf Club
to work the Totalisator for the forthcoming Meetings. His Book
is now open on the Johannesburg and Bulawayo Handicaps".

Agencies of various kinds were popular among the early comers to Bulawayo. Thus Harry Jacobs of Fife Street described himself as the "Popular Broker".

"Deals in Claims, Prospecting Licences, Shares,
Farms, Stands, etc, etc.,
Auctioneering Department: Produce bought and sol.
Wagons and Scotch Carts for Sale.
Prompt Settlements…..
Sole Agents for Port Elizabeth Wine and Spirit Association"

J. Saber & Co., Brokers, Mining and Commission Agents, who could trace their beginnings as far back as 1871 in Kimberley, were now established in Rhodes Street, Bulawayo. Old Mr. Saber, with his short grey beard, remained a very prominent figure in Bulawayo Jewry well into the 20th Century.

Captain H. Mortimer Zeffert was in business, first on his own account, and then in association with a variety of partners. We first encounter him as "Auctioneer, Licensed Share Broker and General Agent" in Fife Street. "Sales held on the Market Square on Wednesdays and Saturdays. All Accounts most promptly settled". A few weeks later it was:

**ZEFFERT AND WATKINS**

Land and Estate Agents.
Agents for the Daydawn Reef, Coronet Reef and Sebakwe Properties.

Still later the firm appeared as "Styles & Zeffert, Brokers, Mining Agents, etc., Box 51, Abercorn Street". Zeffert afterwards went to the Rand to establish the present well-known firm of Goldberg & Zeffert, Mineral Water manufacturers. He died a few years ago at the age of well over 90.

One unusual advertisement was issued by Max Haupt, Jeweler, in 1895:

**WANTED!!!**
Lion and Tiger Claws.

As tigers are known not to occur in Africa, Mr. Haupt is thought to have succumbed to the South African custom of confusing these animals with leopards. Many of the early pioneers remember the ornaments turned out in his workshop at Bulawayo.

In a similar line of business was A. Kienzler, "Practical Watchmaker", whose address was at the back of the Bank of Africa. M. Basch & Co., "from Cheapside, London E.C." were also "Chronometer, Watch and Clockmakers, Court Jewelers and Opticians. By Appointment of the Indian Government. Market Square, near the Maxim Hotel, Bulawayo".

More will be said in due course of Maurice Basch's brother, Emanuel, who arrived a little later.

Among the notable examples of Jewish enterprise in early Bulawayo was S. Margolius, "De Boeren Vriend", Market Square, who supplied "Good Well Water at 10/- per Month. Payable in Advance".

More usual branches of catering were featured in the "Bulawayo Chronicle" in 1895.

**STANDARD GRILL ROOM.**
"Messrs. Rabinowitz & Epstein, beg to give notice that
they have taken over the Café lately carried on by Mr. Rau.
Excellent Meals at Moderate Prices.
Cleanliness and Attention Guaranteed".

Rival caterers were R. Pawelzig of the Holborn Restaurant, 400 Rhodes Street, West, and J. Rosenblatt & Co., Grill Room, Markey Buildings.

Probably the first pictorial advertisement issued was that of D. Goldman, whose offer of new and second-hand furniture, tools, crockery, etc., was decorated with a picture of a chair.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Commercial activities still preponderated, one of the oldest firms being A. and J. Pieters, General Merchants, Wholesale and Retail. "Gents Clothing equal to Tailor-Made. Ladies and Gents Outfitters. Groceries and Kaffir Truck. Miners' Outfitting".

J. Tobias was in business as a general Merchant, both wholesale and retail, as were R. Aserman of 183 Abercorn Street West; Leopold Blum of 89 Main Street West; J. Epstein of 217 Abercorn Street East; Angel Heilbuth of 231 Abercorn Street; A. Hyman of the same address; Isaac & Co., Importers, 285 Fife Street West; J. Kempinski of 120 Main Street East; A. Kirschbaum of 390 Rhodes Street West; Lichenstatter & Ressler, I.X.L. Store, 185 Abercorn Street West; J. Levy of 191 Abercorn Street West; Samuel Nathan, "Speculator", 336 Fife Street East; I. Palzerman of 346 Fife Street East; J. Flaks of 442 Market Square North; Solomon & Co., of 6th Avenue and 188 Abercorn Street West.

There were also a number of Jews of unspecified business, as for instance J. Cinamon of 386 Rhodesia Street West, S. Rabinowitz of 15 Fourth Street East, Bernard Lewis of 691 Barrow Street West and J. Lipman of 640 Wilson Street East.

In the course of this history further reference will be made to several of these personalities.

Even at this stage one famous overseas house was featured in the advertisements.

**JACOB AND JOSEPH KOHN**
of Vienna

"The world famous makers of Bentwood Furniture in the World have sent a small consignment of their noted Chairs to W.H. Haddon. Merely to look at them, compared with the ordinary chairs, is a pleasure, and to sit on them is a luxury.
W.H. Haddon
Fife Street.

While some of the early visitors stayed to short a time to be recorded in the normal directories or registers, they can be traced from the lists of unclaimed letters and telegrams advertised at the Bulawayo Post Office. Among these we find A. Hirschberg, Phil Levin, and Johann Leichterkost.

Almost from its start, Bulawayo's position as the mining centre of Rhodesia attracted a stream of eminent visitors from the more settled regions down South. A typical announcement tells us: Messrs. Barnato Brothers are intending to send up Mr. S. Joel and Mr. J. Hammond, their Chief Engineer, who leaves the Rand next week…" And again "Yesterday's coach took away Messrs. Marks and C. Cowan Junior".

A playful comment on Johannesburg opinion comes from the "Matabeleland News and Mining Record" on September 25, 1894: "Mr. C. Glass has

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

returned from the Randt (so spelt) by the last coach, looking all the better for his trip, and full of pleasant news of the skepticism and facetiousness of the Johannesburgers, men who are still of the opinion that Bulawayo contains only two classes of people, viz: born fools and clever rogues. Nevertheless, Mr. Glass was able to convince a few of the actual reality of affairs, and declined vigorously to be interviewed by any newspaper men, not wishing to be misrepresented, or to have his statements twisted and turned…"

Parisian Jewry made its debut in Rhodesia in 1892, when the French South Africa Company sent out as its representative Messieurs Amede and Mack.

A particularly active member of the Jewish mining world was I. Hirschler, who, having been on business on the Rand in the very earliest days as a Stockbroker and Company Director, made his appearance in Rhodesia immediately after the Occupation, and invested heavily on behalf of his wealthy associate, H. B. Marshall, after whom the central area Marshalltown in Johannesburg is called. Thus in 1894 it was reported: "Mr. Hirschler has visited the Bembezi, Shangani, Mavene, Sebakwe, Selukwe and Gwelo mining districts; where lots of good ground is still available, and where a large amount of individual work has been done…." When, shortly after, he left Bulawayo for the Transvaal, the 'South African Mining Journal' mentioned ho w greatly he had been regretted by his numerous friends. But he soon came back, and was again in the news, as for instance when he secured "the extension of the well-known Queen's Reef". A few months later the Press told of a strike on the Lovemore property, near Hope Fountain outside Bulawayo, where, on 40 claims, he had identified "marvelously rich rock, which may prove it one of the three best gold-producing properties in Matabeleland".

He was a Director of the Bulawayo Ice and Cold Storage Company Limited, the Bulawayo Stock Exchange, the Criterion Development Company, the Eastern Queen's Gold Mining Company Limited, the Matabele Timber Trust Limited, the Nellie Reef (Insiza) Development Company Limited, and Rhodesia Limited, and in 1897 was elected the first Mayor of Bulawayo.

Jewish Directors of the early Rhodesian gold companies are legion – Felix Bruch, who was on the Board of British West Charterland Ltd; Baron E.B. Erlanger, close associate of Cecil Rhodes, who, amongst others, was on the board of the Premier Tati Monarch Reef Company Ltd., the Rhodesian Exploration and Development Company Ltd., the Shashi and Maclouitsie Exploration and Mining Company Ltd., and sundry others; Louis Floorsheim of Tati Concessions Ltd., Carl Hanau of British West Charterland Ltd., A. Heilbronn of the French Ayrshire and Lomagundi Development Company Limited; Jules Hellman of the same concern and of the French South African Development Company Limited; Henry Hirsch of Warnford Exploration Company Limited; Anton Horkheimer of United Excelsior Mine; Gustav Imroth of Andrew's Rhodesia Syndicate; E.S. Marcus of Fleming's Matabeleland Exploration Company Limited; C. L. Marks of Matabeleland Adventurers Limited; Max Michaelis (Later Sir Max) of Tati Concessions Limited; E. C. Mocatta of Anglo-French Matabeleland Company Limited and of Penhalonga Pty. Mines Limited; Ludwig Neumann of

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Consolidated Exploration and Development (Rhodesia) Company Limited and White's Consolidated Limited; L. Ochs of Anglo-French Exploration Company Limited and Anglo-French Matabeleland Company Limited; H. Rosenheim of Anglo-French Matabeleland Company Limited; Bento Y. Viera of Colenbrander's Matabeleland Development Company Limited and Vaughan Williams Rhodesia Development Company Limited; Julius Weil and Samuel Weil of the Enterprise Gold Mining and Estate Company Limited; T. Zaffere of the Great B. Syndicate Limited; and countless others.

Most of these concerns have again lapsed into obscurity, but the attention and optimism of both Britain and of Southern Africa were focused upon them for years.

Throughout the length and breadth of Matabeleland, and in some cases even North of the Zambezi, they held claims and operated small workings and, although most of the investors lost their money, they provided the advance guard for successful concerns of our own day.

One of the most romantic stories was that of Robert Aserman, who, along with his co-religionist, Teddy Palca, was responsible for pegging the famous Lonely Mine. In its day described as "one of the most valuable and promising in Rhodesia", it turned out a steady 1,000 ounces a month, yielding a correspondingly substantial profit. The partners made over £250,000 from this venture, before selling it to the well-known Lonrho Group. Aserman, however, died penniless, and was buried at the expense of the Government.

In addition to his activities as a Stockbroker, H. Mortimer Zeffertt was one of the first Jews in Rhodesia to advertise: Every description of mining work undertaken and reported on by an efficient engineer".

Progress meanwhile was also being made in both Mashonaland and Manicaland. S. Hyman of Salisbury offered a new specialty. "Now being in Europe, he is prepared to take over Stands, Farms, Gold Properties for Floatation. All communications should be addressed to 959 Jameson Avenue, Salisbury. Cable Address: 'Lammass,' London".

At Gwelo, established only a few weeks after Bulawayo, the original stand purchasers included Julius Weil, Isidore Kempinski, Joseph Brothers, Joseph von Pragh, Leo Lehmann, S. Jacoby, P. Falk, William Sonnenberg and Richard Rosenthal (the present writer's father).

As early as August 1894 there was a notice in the "Matabeleland News and Mining Record":

**LEO LEHMANN**
General Merchant,

Gwelo

"Begs to announce that, having acquired the business lately lately carried on by Messrs. Harris & Wynstanley, operating in this new Town, he has under order large consignments of General Goods, Merchandise and Mining Tools, an early delivery of which is anticipated. The Business will henceforth be carried on in conformance with the requirements of the Mining and Agricultural Industries, rapidly assuming gigantic proportions in this District. He has therefore every confidence in soliciting a continuance of the patronage of the late firm's customers, and the support of the new community.
The Gwelo Hotel is undergoing a thorough renovation and will be restocked with the very best of Liquors, Cigars, etc. Every effort will be made to render the accommodation second to none in the country".

Even more impressive was the news from the East. The Jewish population of Umtali grew, and in 1894 a Voter's Roll for the local Sanitary Board showed the following names, each accompanied by the value of his landed property. Henry & Co. (£150), C. Golding (£300), A. L. Lazarus (£75), E. Platnauer (£100), L. Weissenborn (£200). The firm of Henry & Co. incidentally takes it place in the journalistic history of Rhodesia, being responsible for the foundation of the "Umtali Advertiser", which, despite many vicissitudes, still exists.

In other ways too Messrs. Henry & Co. dominated the picture. Besides describing themselves as the "Oldest Established Auctioneers and Valuators, Estate, Mining, Forwarding and General Commission Agents", they undertook to arrange sales "at any time, place or date". They were agents for Bratby & Hinchcliffe Ltd., Aerated Water Engineers of Manchester, London and Glasgow, also for Gordon & Gotch of London, Melbourne, Sydney and Cape Town. (Gordon & Gotch soon after became associated with the Central News Agency Limited, and are still major shareholders in this great Southern African publishing and newspaper concern).

An example of Maurice Henry's style of humour is furnished in an advertisement signed "K.H.", "Knight of the Hammer". On March 24, 1894 Henry & Co. offered for sale at Umtali, amongst other items, "a Tennis Racket and Press, a First Class Cricket Bat and a Magnificent Gasogene", the latter a forerunner of the syphon. Simultaneously appeared the item; "The order for the Piano for the Dramatic Club has been placed with Messrs. Henry & Co., who intend to import one direct from Messrs. John Broadwood & Sons of London". A few more weeks brought the tidings that, through the same channel, Umtali was also to secure its first church organ. Cattle, stationary, machinery and an endless variety of other commodities passed through the salerooms of the firm, whose versatility was again brought home on November 28, 1894.

## DISSOLUTION

> Notice is hereby given that I have this day ceased my connection with the firm of Henry & Co., Umtali. All accounts owing to the above firm up to October 31, 1894 must be paid to the undersigned to whom all accounts may be rendered.
> The businesses of Auctioneers, etc., and Mineral Water Manufacturers will be continued by M. Henry. Publication of the "Umtali Advertiser", with the Stationary and Printing Business will be continued by me as from November 1, in the offices of Messrs. G.B. Mitchell & Co.
>
> (Signed) Charles Hancock".

The establishment of the Manica Labour Bureau was accompanied by the invitation: "Applications may now be made to the undersigned for Native Servants. All information will be supplied by M. Henry, Manager". Business for this enterprise proved so satisfactory that in April 1895 the first consignment of 100 boys was already delivered.

Another Umtali Celebrity was Mr. A Lazarus, joint owner, with Messrs. Harris, Hillary and Finch, of the Albion Mine, and a leading prospector and auctioneer. Frequent items of news bring him to light as a popular fello9w, known as A.L. or (on account of his girth), as Mufuta. At a performance by the Umtali Minstrels, we read that "Mr. A. Lazarus, as Miss Betty Lind, in a skirt dance, was indescribably funny".

"Mafuta is about to leave for the North", we hear. And again, "Poor old Mar, Selous' famous and favourite hunting horse, was shot this week by his owner, Mr. Lazarus. For two days the old horse could not get up, and he was humanely put out of his misery". A fine performer on the cricket field, he was batting on one occasion when the wind carried away his wig and brought his innings to an unhappy conclusion.

A.L.'s younger brother, Kaduka Lazarus, was in the same line, and is still remembered by some of the older pioneers.

Successfully Operating at Umtali were Weissenborn and Co., Butchers and Cattle Dealers; R. Marks (generally referred to as Dicky), contractor, who put up the local public buildings, and the manager for the Manica Trading Company, E Platnauer, a leading figure in the affairs of the Township, who had come from Beira in 1891.

An instance of the hazards of contemporary travel is furnished in an item in the "Advertiser". "Mr. Wallenstein of the firm of H. Cohn of Beira, arrived by coach, having to walk in from Six Miles Spruit. The passengers, to use their own expression, had a very rough time of it".

Yet in spite of everything, there was a glorious element of the schoolboy and the picnic in the earlier days of Rhodesia, which brings a misty look to the eyes of

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

those few who can still think back, and a memory of something that has passed away, as irrevocably as the Mail Coach or the Assegaai.

## CHAPTER X1

## STARTING A CONGREGATION

Nothing shows more effectively how early and how thoroughly the Jewish Community became established in the new town of Bulawayo than the fact that the first woman and the first child both belonged to the Chosen People. In her Book "Experiences of Rhodesia's Pioneer Women", Jeannie M. Boggie wrote: "Almost at once there sprang up a small settlement of huts, wagon homes and tin shanties, about a mile a way from Lobengula's deserted Kraal, near to where the Bulawayo Cemetery stands today. It was known as the Old Camp…and it was at first an Eveless paradise. But the fair sex began to trickle in. Mrs. Bernstein is the name given as having been the historical first-comer". Of the other pioneer, information is fortunately more detailed, and Mrs. Boggie wrote: Lily Tempofsky (Mrs. Elliot) of Johannesburg has the honour to be Bulawayo's first baby. Born on April 4, 1894, this historical wee person was promised a farm, but never bothered to get it. Her mother was presented with a bit of ground in the Town. The 'Matabele Times' announced that prospectors for miles around came specially to bestow congratulations upon Mr. and Mrs. Moses Tempofsky.

"it must have been about this time that a certain Scotsman strolled into the Butcher's shop and exclaimed: "Man! D'ye ken what I saw on the road just now? A white woman carrying' a wee baby in her arms". "Most extraordinary, said the butcher, who could she be? This was probably Mrs. Tempofsky carrying little Lilly…

The 'Matabele Times and Mining Record" had further news on April 22. "Last week we referred to the arrival of two bicyclists; and now we have to record that sure proof of civilization – the perambulator – which went up Redrup Street on Monday, with one passenger…"

"Mrs. Tempofsky used to go around with little Lilly in her arms to see how Mrs. Peter' little Albert was getting on", said Mrs. Boggie. "Then a return call would be paid, and perhaps in would pop Mrs. Colenbrander to inquire about the babies. " Just look at the wee darlings" Molly Colenbrander would remark. Of course when they grow up they must marry each other" Of course they didn't.

At this stage there appeared in Bulawayo the bearer of a name destined for permanent fame in the history of Rhodesia, Michael Welensky, father of the future Prime Minister.

Coming from a part of the world which had given Southern Africa so many other immigrants, he was born in a village outside Vilna in Lithuania. According to Garry Allingham's biography of the Premier, Welensky Senior was only Jewish on his mother's side, which, however, does not seem to agree with Rhodesian tradition. Be that as it may, he had spent his youth, like countless other young Jews, as a peddler and, like so many others, left Russia to escape military service. He first moved to Sweden and then to Germany, where he developed an odd specialty, going from door to door, buying women's hair and selling it to the makers of toupees and wigs.

During the Franco-German War in 1870, he smuggled horses into France, but, following the victory of the newly-established Reich, he thought it better to sail on to the United States.

After ten years, largely passed in the West, Michael Welensky, having heard of the Diamond Fields at Kimberley, took ship for the Cape. He arrived in 1881, having lately become an American Citizen and, discovering that the diamond market had slumped, became a successful trader in ostrich feathers. He found his way to Willowmore, not far from Oudtshoorn, and there met his fate. Aletta Ferreira became his wife at the age of 17 and, since her husband regarded himself as Jewish, herself became converted and took the name of Leah.

Life was hard with a fast-growing family that ultimately numbered nine, and newly-established Johannesburg offered a sparse livelihood. In 1894 Michael Welensky, having learnt of the foundation of Bulawayo, decided to try his fortune there. Already Leah's aunt, who had married Moses Tempofsky, was living in the new town, the mother of Lily. Early in 1895, after two months trek by ox-wagon, Michael Welensky first set eyes on his future home. With him was Leah, with her first six small children. They found a tiny wooden house somewhere on the veld, and Michael began the precarious task of seeking a livelihood.

As in Kimberley and Johannesburg, it was the need for Jewish burial facilities, combined with the approach of the High Festivals that led to the establishment of the first organized Congregation, not only in Bulawayo, but in Southern Rhodesia.

Unfortunately the loss of the minute books and other records have rendered the earliest communal archives of Rhodesian Jewry incomplete, but we know that on August 12, 1894, the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation was formed, not in a house, but in a tent, belonging to Messrs. Moss and Rosenblatt. Twenty-one persons attended, J. Boam, J. Cinamon, S. Goldring, D. Goldman, E. Granger, S. Heyman, R.D. Hanson, J. Jacobson, S. Jacobs, I. Levi, J. Moss, M.S. Levin, S. Nathan, I. Rosenblatt, S. Rabinowitz, J. Saber, E. Saber, E. Tertis, V. Wolf, J. Wolffe, and H. M. Zeffert. These pioneers elected a Committee comprising J. Cinamon, M.S. Levin, S. Nathan, and J. Wolffe, with J. Boam as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer.

When, a few weeks later, the first High Holiday approached, the following notice appeared, first of its kind in Rhodesian history:

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

## JEWISH FESTIVAL.

"M.L. Levin, Jeweler, Fife Street Bulawayo
will close his establishment on Monday and
Tuesday next, October 1st and 2nd.

Those two days' services were held in Messrs. Napier and Weir's Charter Hotel, at 131 and 132 Main Street East, the incomplete dining-room of which was the first temporary Synagogue North of the Limpopo. While we are not told who actually performed the ceremonies, it is recorded that, in 1895, Meikle's Store, at the corner of 7th Avenue and Abercorn Street, served the same purpose, and in 1896 the Bulawayo Stock Exchange at 81 Main Street West.

Joseph Boam, the Honorary Secretary of the Congregation, who was also a leading stockbroker, was part owner of the "Bulawayo Sketch", edited by Alexander Davis, another co-religionist, which makes all the more surprising the fact that the first anti-Semitic attack to appear in Rhodesia should have figured in that journal.

The issue of September 15, 1894, carried an article under Davis' name, headed, "The South African Capitalist", which mentions: The religion of the common or garden Capitalist (C.Africanus), is nondescript. Some are Jews by birth, and as they prosper they generally assimilate all the vices of the Gentiles, without retaining the Orthodox Jew's virtues. Others are born Christians, but gradually become adept in all the vices and customs of low-type Judaism".

Some weeks later, on October 27, the "Bulawayo Sketch", dealing with some local amateur dramatics, adopted an equally unsympathetic tone. "The first part of the performance was varied. Singing, recitations, amateur performances by a Jew gentleman in the front row of the stalls…."

In a rough community there were also incidents which did not specially rebound to the glory of Jewry, such as the prosecution of Barnett Cohen, described as a hairdresser from London, who pleaded being drunk on being charged with assault at the local athletic sports. He was found guilty under provocation and fined £5.

The inauguration of the first local Jewish graveyard in Bulawayo was the result of an unfortunate accident. David Adler, a jockey, exercising some horses at the new race-course on December 21, 1894, was thrown by his horse as it stumbled on ground softening as the result of the rain. At first it seemed he had only broken a collar-bone, and the "Bulawayo Sketch" even reported: "He is getting on well and hopes to be able to ride in the races on Boxing Day". He did so, but the results were disastrous, for he had a relapse, and passed away on January 10, 1895.

The small Jewish Congregation had already applied for and been granted two stands for a Synagogue, as well as for a burial-ground, and now the first Jewish grave had to be dug there.

Copyright © Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies 

Moreover, on January 23, 1895, the "Rhodesia Weekly Review" mentioned: "We have been asked to state that Adler, the jockey, who died last Sunday, and was accorded a splendid funeral by the Jewish Congregation, followed very largely, leaves a widow and three children totally unprovided for. A subscription is to be got up for their benefit, Messrs. Harold C. Smith and J. Broughton kindly acting in the matter, and we have no doubt all our numerous sportsmen will contribute their mite to such a worthy object".

After this improvised step, on January 27, 1895, there is reference in the "Bulawayo Chronicle", to the holding of a gathering at which the first steps were taken to set up a Jewish charitable organization.

The first Annual Meeting of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation took place in the Boardroom of the Sanitary Board, there being as yet no municipality, and the attendance included.

"We unfortunately buried three of our co-religionists", said the report, one a pauper, the cost being defrayed by the Chartered Company. On this occasion the first Life Member was elected, in the person of Mr. C. Joseph of London. Saber also received from the Government the appointment as the first Jewish Marriage Officer in Rhodesia.

Operations were still on a very minute scale, the total donations announced by Mr. Saber, as President, being only £15.12s. besides subscriptions of £41.10.6. From the previous year there was, however, still £24.6s. so that the total revenue came to £81.8.6., and so economical were operations that a mere £62.13.9. had been spent, leaving at any rate a credit balance of £18.14.9.

Tangible additions to the Community's assets were the fence erected round the Burial Ground, and a Sepher Torah, provided by the Reverend Dr. Harris, along with a Shofar, some prayer-books and some Talisim, to a total value of £30. Plans were drawn for a temporary building as a Synagogue, but had to be held over for lack of funds.

Encouraging support, however, was later received not only from Jewish circles, but from the two leading men in the country, Cecil Rhodes and Dr. L.S. Jameson, each of whom contributed £100 towards a fund which, by the time of the High Holidays in 1895, had already passed £500.

Joseph Boam, one of the most valuable members of the Congregation, now decided to leave the country and handed in his resignation on July 21, receiving in return a letter of appreciation:

Dear Sir, - In view of your departure for England, we, the President and Committee of this Congregation, have been unanimously requested by its members to

present you with an Address recording our high appreciation of the painstaking and conscientious manner in which you have carried out the duties of the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer during the natal year of the Congregation, which you so prominently assisted in forming., We wish to assure you that the valuable support you have given to this Congregation from its earliest stages will always remain green in our memories, and will be a bright example and guide to us in furthering our desire to make this town, although far from the world's civilization, - a pride to Judaism.

In taking leave of you, we, from our hearts, wish you every happiness and prosperity in all your undertakings, and that the Almighty may, in his unbounded mercy, shower his blessings on yourself, wife, and children.

We are, dear Sir,
Your loving friends and brethren.
(Signed) Joseph Saber (President)
Emanuel Frank (Hon. Secretary & Treasurer)
Coleman Joseph
J. Cinamon
Samuel Nathan
M.S. Leven
V. Woolf
J. Tobias
S.Goldring

Festival services for 1895 were held by Samuel Margolius under Messrs. Miller, Saber and Frank, before what the "Bulawayo Sketch" described as a fair audience".

Mr. Saber, having received the necessary instruction from the distinguished Jewish Minister, the Reverend A.P. Bender of Cape Town, commenced his duties as Marriage Officer in December 1895, an account of the event appearing in the "Bulawayo Chronicle" of December 7th.

"Wednesday last was a day of events, for scarcely was the polling for the election of the candidate was over, before the first Jewish wedding in Bulawayo took place: the contracting parties being Mr. Aaron Jacobs and Miss Rose Frank, (sister of Jacob's partner). Miss Frank only arrived here a few days ago, having made the journey here to meet her future husband. At half past two a large number of guests had gathered at the residence of Mr. Frank, the bride's brother, and immediately afterwards the ceremony took place; Mr. Joseph Saber, assisted by Mr. Margolius, officiated. The bride looked exceedingly nice in a long dress of white satin, with an enormous train, and her figure suited the wedding dress admirably. As is usual on these occasions, the bride attracted all the attention, and indeed deserved it.

To anyone not accustomed to Jewish Ceremony, the Jewish wedding is a most picturesque affair. The bride and bridegroom stand under a handsome awning,

which is supported by four stalwart members of the community, and the service is recited in full-toned language, three thousand years old, which leads one back to the days when the world was young. One could not help being impressed by the fact that the service, centuries old, was being used in a town not two years old.

After the ceremony the happy pair received the congratulations of their numerous friends in the dining-room, and here their health was drunk in right good fashion, while a prettily-adorned table was covered with the good things of the confectioner's art.

The presents were next inspected, and showed an assortment of expensive and handsome items, which were difficult to believe, could have been procured in Bulawayo. At four o' clock the newly-married couple left for their honeymoon, amidst showers of rice and sundry old shoes, the time immemorial emblems of good wishes".

# RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

## PART 11

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

Copyright © Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and later Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, distributed in printed or electronic format with the written permission of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| X11 | Jews and the Matabele Rebellion | 3 |
| X111 | Birth of a Synagogue | 12 |
| X1V | The Rival Congregations | 17 |
| XV | Early Anti-Semitism | 24 |
| XV1 | Zionism Reaches Rhodesia | 29 |
| XV11 | Rhodesian Jewry in the Boer War | 34 |
| XV111 | Cecil Rhodes and a Jewish Settlement Scheme | 40 |
| X1X | Financial and Other Troubles | 42 |
| XX | Beginnings in Salisbury and Umtali | 51 |
| XX1 | Sam Goldreich and Sam Marks | 55 |

## CHAPTER XII.

## JEWS AND THE MATABELE REBELLION.

As a picture of daily life in a pioneer Jewish community, the minutes of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation are among the most valuable surviving records. Unfortunately in the course of nearly 70 years, the first of these volumes has been lost, but even the second one, both n what it says and what it omits, gives a vivid panorama of existence in old-time Matabeleland.

December 15, saw the holding of a Special General Meeting, with Joseph Saber, as President, in the Chair, and an audience of about 30, including H. M. Zeffert, Samuel Nathan, S. Goldring, I. Pieters, A. Jacobs, Saul Jacobs, E. Frank, V. Wolf, J. Tobias, J. Cinnamon. M.Basch, Albert Hillson, R.D. Hanson, C. Solomon, S. Rabinowitz, and sundry others. Among the office-bearers A. Davis, Editor of the “Bulawayo Sketch", was elected Honorary Treasurer and Secretary and C. Friedlander the first Mohel (not Honorary). With some pride, Mr. Saber informed his listeners that the official confirmation from the Government of his appointment as a Marriage Officer had at last arrived.

Concerning the immediate task of erecting a Synagogue Mr. Cinnamon came to light with a plan for a schoolhouse that could be used for this purpose during the Festivals and on the Sabbath, combined with a residence for the minister. Such a project, He explained, would save at least £100, "having one 'parting-board' (wall)".

The closing days of the year 1895 were dominated even in Rhodesia, by the general anxiety and strain that preceded the Jameson Raid. Although the actual assault on the Transvaal took place hundreds of miles to the South, it must not be forgotten that the forces used were largely derived from the British South Africa Police and similar bodies, while the leader himself was the Administrator.

According to the muster-rolls of the invading force there were a few Jewish names in the ranks, among them Trooper Weinthal, Lewis H. Simon, Harry Myer, H. G. Bernstein, Cecil Goldsmid Graves, Webber Marks and Percy Solomon.* Amid the wave of enthusiasm in Bulawayo, inspired by the personal popularity of Jameson and by the distorted rumours going around, the Jewish settlers were as eager to help as any others. Everything, however, was over too quickly; the Raid collapsed in confusion and shame, with Dr. Jim and his entire force in captivity.

Typical of the eagerness with which events on the Rand were being followed was an item in the "Bulawayo Sketch" on January 4, 1896: "At the close of Thursday's concert, Mr. Wallenstein read out a Reuter's wire to the effect that a three-day armistice had been concluded, and that the British inhabitants of the Transvaal were warned against assisting Dr. Jameson by the High Commissioner, who is himself on his way to the Randt" (so spelt).

Yet even in the middle of the excitement communal affairs still received attention. One of these involved an exchange of the site granted by the Government to the Congregation.

* Footnote: Trooper Myer was killed in action and Trooper Weinthal was reported missing.

The reasons were set out in a letter dated December 18, 1895, and addressed to Edward Ross Townwhend by Joseph Saber as President.

"Re our conversation as to exchange of Stand 201 for 216. As explained to you by the deputation, our ceremonies require that the back of the Synagogue shall be east. We therefore are reluctantly compelled to ask for this change, regretting that this point was neglected when selecting the stand graciously granted to us by the Government. In regard to Stand 202, no change is needed, since it is our intention to use same for the School-house and Minister's residence. We trust that you will speedily be able to grant our request, and that it will involve no inconvenience to the Government. We sincerely thank you in anticipation".

As a result the Civil Commissioner agreed to let the Congregation exchange Stand No. 201 for No. 216. Early in the New Year, 1896, the Johannesburg architect, Douglas Harris, was asked to prepare less amateurish designs than those of Mr. Cinnamon. Discussions raged in the Committee as to whether a Synagogue was more important that the appointment of a Minister-cum-Mohel-cum-Schochet-cum-Hebrew teacher. Since the projects ere found equally necessary, proposals were approved for holding a bazaar to raise enough cash for both.

One seemingly odd condition attached to the operations of the Bazaar Committee was that it was given power to increases its number "from among the ladies and gentlemen for the Jewish community only", This may be better understood when it is remembered that quite a few gifts - and generous ones too - were received from local Christians, including 50 from no less a person than His Honour the Administrator, Dr. L. S. Jameson.

But the Bazaar was destined never to take place and progress on the erection of the first Synagogue in Rhodesia was held up much longer than anyone foresaw. Despite collections from a variedly of sources, including one sum of £33. 3. 11. by an anonymous “Lady for the Bazaar Committee", and despite the acquisition of a "Book of Rules for the Guidance of the Congregation", the whole project was thrown into cold storage by the outbreak of the Matabele Rebellion.

Signs of trouble, beginning in February 1896, grew more ominous through the agitation against the Whites conducted by the so- called priest, Mgwati, one of Lobengula's close associates. With the defeat of the Matabele armies still a matter of recent memory, the fire spread through countless kraals, fanned by the knowledge that the Colonists possessed only a minimum of arms and food. Moreover, the recent outbreak of Rinderpest made transport much more difficult than in normal circumstances.

As March drew to a close, the first killings were reported, of a Bantu policeman at Dawson's Store at Essexvale and several white men around Filabusi and Insiza, Bulawayo itself lay only a short distance from the scene and by March 25 the town was in ferment.

Guns and ammunition were given out at the stores of the British South Africa company, a laager of ox-wagons reinforced with trenches was prepared on the Market Square and on the edges of the encampment Maxim machine guns were planted among barbed wire entanglements. From all sides stories came in about outrages by the Matabele, and urgent arrangements were made against an attack. As women and children were brought in from outside districts, the Bulawayo Club was turned into a temporary

shelter. In the daytime inhabitants were still allowed to go about their business, but all were expected to sleep in the laager. For very few remaining natives a curfew was introduced from six in the evening until six in the morning, and a numbers of Volunteer Companies were set up, among whose members were most of the able-bodied Jews in the town:

Trooper H. Abraham.
Trooper J.J.Aschman.
Gunner Oscar Marlees Behrman.(Artillery).
Sapper J. Behrman, (Engineering Corps).
Trooper F. Buirski.
Trooper S. F. Cohen.
Trooper P. Cowan.
Trooper A.A. Ehrlich.
Trooper J. Epstein.
Trooper H. Erlanger.
Trooper Horace Freeman.
Trooper W.Fredman (Giffords Horse Corps).
Trooper E. H. Friedman.
Trooper Stephen J. Goldsmith.
Trooper John Glucksman.
Trooper George Henry, (Remount Camp, Bulawayo)>
Quartermaster Adolf Hirschberg, (Afrikaner Corps).
Gunner S. Jacobs, (Artillery).
Trooper L. Kronsteing.
Gunner E. C. Levita, (Artillery).
Trooper J. Lipman.
Sub-Lieutenant M. H. Lyons, (Medical Staff Corps).
(received wound in the ankle)>
Trooper L. Levin.
Trooper H. Norden, (B.S.A. Police Corps).
Trooper D. Platz.
Trooper G. Rootman.
Sapper H. Rosenberg, (Engineering Corps).
Trooper O. Seidel.
Trooper G. J Schoen.
Trooper P. Schukewitz.
Trooper M. Spiro
Trooper F. Spanier.
Trooper Wilensky, (Afrikaner Corps).
Bugler P Weinthal, (Staff Corps).
Trooper H. Mortimer Zeffert.
From other districts:
Temporary Sergeant-Major Abner Cohen, Salisbury.
Trooper H.E. Cohen, Enkeldoorn.
Trooper Barnet Elster, (Gwelo Volunteer Corps).
Burger Peter Falk, (Gwelo Burgers, originally of Baden,

Germany).

Trooper E. Horwitz, (Belingwe Column Corps, originally of Baltimore, U.S.A)
Lieutenant Heyman, Kimberley.
Trooper S. Hyman, Salisbury.
Trooper A. Hyman, Gwelo.
Trooper J. M. Jacobson, Kimberly.
Trooper S. Lesser, Francistown.
Burger Levi Lehman, (Gwelo Burgers, originally of London).
Trooper J. Lichtheim, Salisbury.
Lieutenant Quartermaster A. Lichtenstein, (Belingwe Staff Column).
Trooper C.F. Mosenthal, London.
Trooper K. E. H. Pollack, Salisbury.
Burger Harris Rosenthal, (Gwelo Burger Corps, originally of Seattle, U.S.A.)
Trooper J. Rosenthal, Salisbury.
Trooper M.A. Shapiro, Salisbury.
Corporal Percy Solomon, Sea Point.
Trooper J. Suzman, Salisbury.
Burger Isaac Sonnenberg, (Gwelo Burger Corps).

At least one Jewish soldier, G. Jacobs, gave his life.

Since this is not the place for a detailed description of the ensuing campaign, it will be sufficient to make some reference to the part played by these men. An account of the Rebellion issued by A. Davis describes the situation in the middle of April 1896.

"Several parties of Matabele", he says, "approached the town very closely at night, murdering the boys in charge of the cattle. Thousands of rebels were camped all along the Umguzu, numbers of them being actually within three miles of the town. A large impi lay at Mr. Crewe's farm on the Khami River, 12 miles to the West. Two large impis had quartered themselves on the Elibaini Hills and the neighborhood of Intaba Unduna. Altogether, not less than 10,000 hostile natives were spread out in a semi-circle from the West to the North-East".

While attacks were made on the outskirts of the European position, the beleaguered inhabitants made repeated attempts to assail their foes. One of these dispatched on May 11 for the Shangani River, numbered 613 men and 42 officers with artillery, and 14 mule wagons carrying provisions and ammunition. "There was ", we are told, “Besides, an ambulance wagon, Dr. Levy being in charge".

By virtue of their pre-eminence in the transportation field, a special load of responsibility fell on Julius Weil & Co.* At the height of the crisis, on May 9, 1896, it was reported from Bulawayo:

"Mr. Myer Weil, of the firm of Julius Weil of Mafeking, Contractor to the Chartered Company, has been in Johannesburg since Monday last, and has got together a transport service consisting of 500 mules, 50 wagons and the requisite number of 'boys'. He has bought up 50 wagon-loads.

---

* Footnote: According to a letter from Julius Weil to the "South African News", his firm however denied supplying the Jameson Raiders.

of foodstuffs for the use of the white men who are fighting the Matabele, and also for the general population of the Bulawayo. Twenty wagons are leaving for the North this Friday afternoon. The mules are sleek, stout animals, which look as if they might be depended upon for quick work.

"Mr. Weil has arranged for the wagons to be met by patrols at the various points along the road, the supplies being thereafter escorted into Bulawayo, the townships and laagers. Before coming to the Rand, Mr.Weil visited the Karroo and there organized a service of donkey transport to the Protectorate. Mr. Weil has had previous experience of this special class of work in the Matabele and other native campaigns...."

Again, in answer to an appeal for comforts on behalf of the Reverend Mother Jacoba of the Bulawayo Memorial Hospital, we find listed on May 23, under the name of Julius Weil, one case of bottled fruits, one case of table jellies and five fowls, no inconsiderable donation at a time of great scarcity.

Another notice on June 27 reads:

"The Public is hereby cautioned against dealing with any mules or donkeys bearing the mark of J.W. Any information about the whereabouts of any such, having strayed from the wagons on the road, will be appreciated by the undersigned.

(Signed) Julius Weil".

In spite of all the upheavals, however, everyday life had to go on, and a significant item was published in the "Bulawayo Chronicle" on May 20:

"**TO LAUNDRESSES ETC.**

"The four stands below Mr. Hirschler's Stables are hereby placed at the use of the Public for washing purposes. Clean water can be obtained at the well at the Stable adjoining the stands.

(Signed) Joseph E.Verey,
Town Engineer".

**"CAUTION TO THE PUBLIC"**, was the heading of another notice:

"Persons are hereby cautioned from taking water from the Matjesmshlope Stream, as the same is unfit for human consumption.

(Signed) John E. Scott.
Town Major.

Then followed a list of wells available for the public which included those on the premises of Frank Jacobs and of Hirschler's in Market Square.

The spirits of the little town were raised on June 5, through the holding of Miss Lowenstark's concert, tribute being paid to the talent of this popular young Jewish musician in the "Chronicle" of the following day.

Some idea of the conditions during the Matabele Rebellion was given when, shortly after, J. Hirschler, in his capacity as Chairman of Rhodesia Limited, reached London and was interviewed by the journal "South Africa". This was one of the first full accounts of what had been happening. Under the heading, "What Mr. Hirschler has to say about the Matabele Revolt - Its Causes and Effects - A Strong Plea for Chartered Control", the verbatim account of the reporter's conversation is unusually vivid:

"You have come from Bulawayo direct, have you not Mr. Hirschler?"
"Yes, just arrived, and have been traveling all the time",
"When did you leave Bulawayo?"
"I left on the 31st".
"What? Of May?"
"Yes, 31st of May".
"When did you get to London?"
"On Friday, June 26. I was 27 days coming from Bulawayo".
"Surely a record journey?"
"Yes; we were eight days and eight nights on the coach, owing to the bad state of the roads and the poorness of the mules. We ought not to have been more than 51/2 days in the coach".

"Then you could get to London from Bulawayo in 24 days if you caught the "Norman" or the "Tantallon Castle?"
"Yes, if the roads were good. If it was a matter of necessity it could be done, but in traveling by coach that way you get no sleep. It is a continuous journey".
"How long have you been in Matabeleland now?"
"About two and a half years">
"You have seen a good deal of the country, have you not?"
"I have been right through it".
"Have you come home on business?"
"Well, partly on business and partly on a holiday".
"Bulawayo is hardly the place to spend a holiday now?"
"No, I should think not".
"You never anticipated there would be any attack by natives on the town?"

"We wanted an attack, but we have never anticipated that Bulawayo would be taken. There was only one thing which really did cause us some anxiety that was the hospital. It is a very exposed position, and as it stands on the brow of a hill, it was exposed to an attack at any time. Of course, there was a laager very near to it, but it was not in such a position as to cover it. If the niggers shot properly they could shoot right into the hospital"
"How many patients were there in the hospital?"

"I should say 120 to 150. Of course, we had a good many men round the hospital, and temporary fortifications were also put up in three or four places. We also had a Maxim there. Naturally, however, it gave us a great deal of anxiety".

"You had a good town laager?"

"Our laager was one of the most scientific that could have been made in any part of the world. There were barded wire fences all round it, and entanglements of all kinds, broken glass, and so on. In addition to this, there were charges of dynamite everywhere which cold be exploded by electricity at any point">

"So you would have been glad to have had a call from the Matabele?"

"It would have given us a great deal of satisfaction to blow them up, but they never gave us the opportunity. In fact, they never came as far as the outlying houses - such as Gifford's and the Government House. A few panes of glass were broken in the Government House; but latterly 100 men were sent out to protect it".

Asked whether the danger in Matabeleland was at an end, Hirschler said that the only problem now was to hunt them out of the Matopos Hills, but that serious opposition was over. On the other hand the insurrection among the Mashonas, so completely unforeseen, was still a matter of anxiety.

"I should not be surprised if the revolt spreads right throughout the East Coast. Then you see, three are but few settlers in Gazaland. Before I left on May 31st I had consultations with men in authority and in the know, and they considered that the back of the rebellion had been broken, and that all that remained to be done was police duty - patrolling the country and hunting the rebels out. This was the work to be done, and it should be carried out not by the settlers, but by a proper Police force. As a banquet given to Mr. Rhodes recently, he said that 500 men would be set aside for this purpose. When I left there was a talk about the disbandment of the Bulawayo Field Force, which is a very expensive force for the Chartered Company to keep up. It costs the authorities between £500 and £600 a day to keep up the force, so you see it is a large expense".

"What is your opinion as to the probability of local resources putting down the Mashonaland rising?"

"Oh, I believe they will have to do the same as they did in Matabeleland. They will have to hunt them down. I do not, however, think the Mashonas will fight as did the Matabele. They only take a hundred to one chance, and when it comes to a fight, they will get frightened and begin to trek northwards".

After assuring his questioner that there was no doubt that the Rhodesian colonists would ultimately cope with the trouble, Hirschler answered questions of a more personal and less warlike nature.

"You have been representing Rhodesia Limited in Matabeleland?"

"Yes, I am one of the managing Directors".

"What is your opinion generally of the assets of the Company".

"the assets of the Company are the most substantial of any held by any Rhodesian Company. Comparing the capital of the Company with that of other

companies, I should certainly say that Rhodesia Limited has the biggest assets of any Company for so small a capital. The capital of the company is only £300,000, and we have still nearly one-third of that cash in hand. We have the very best stands in Bulawayo - 62 or 63 - and we also own eight very good stands in Johannesburg. Besides that, we own very nearly 400 square miles of well-selected land, and we own firm or under option and under our control close upon 2,000 mining claims, which have been selected really with the greatest discrimination. We have pegged but very few. We have taken them after some prospecting has been done in order to show their prospective value. Very great care has been exercised by Mr. Knapp and myself in their acquisition. Mr. Knapp took over the command of Gifford's Horse on his arrival the week before I left".

"But work is not possible on any of these outlying mines at present?"

"Work has been stopped more on account of the Rinderpest than the revolt, which in my opinion, can be suppressed within a comparatively short time".

"Then work may be expected to be resumed soon?"

"Yes; you know the people there are not afraid of the Natives. Every man is more or less well able to deal with a Native. When once you know a Native is treacherous, you treat him differently. I myself, before the revolt, have ridden from one end of the country to the other, and I have never carried a revolver. I have also slept at the kraals when traveling in the midst of a dense population before the revolt. That was shortly after the first war. I never saw the slightest danger in it. The again the men who were right through the first was went out to the remotest parts of the country immediately after the country was thrown open for pegging. You remember that on December 25, 1893, the country was thrown open, and the men went to the Belingwe, the Selukwe and, indeed, all over Matabeleland and they never dreamt of taking revolvers with them. They felt absolutely safe, and I believe when they know the revolt is broken they will again feel quite as safe, because individually the Native would most likely do nothing. It is only when instigated by the witch doctors that they break out - witch doctors such a M'Limo. He is dead now, we're told. I hope it is so".

Despite the reverses inflicted upon them by the Bulawayo and other Field Forces, the suppression of the Matabele rising took longer and demanded far more effort in blood and treasure than anyone had foreseen, especially after June 1896, when the Mashonas, although traditional opponents of the warrior race, decided upon a revolt of their own. Imperial Troops under the Major-General F. Carrington, among them Colonel Robert Baden-Powel (later the famous Baden-Powell of Mafeking), had to be diverted in order to deal with them. July went by, and then August. The Matabele, driven back into the Matopos, still gave no indication of surrender. Only when Cecil John Rhodes, with his companions, Dr. Hans Sauer, Johann Colenbrander, Vere Stent and his two African servants, took their lives in their hands, and went unarmed into the enemy stronghold among the hills, did discussions begin on the grievances of the rebels.

This unsettled condition makes all the more noteworthy the holding of a general meeting of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation on August 29, in the recently-completed "Silver Grill", where Mr. Cinnamon explained his many grievances, and

where a new Committee was elected comprising Messrs. Epstein, Levin, Hanson, Granger and Jacobs, with Mr. Cinnamon himself at the bottom of the poll!

Even when the High Festivals came in September, the Matabele Rebellion was not yet over. Mr. Epstein was chosen to lead the prayers, while Mr. Aserman dealt with the Sepher Torah.

A glimpse of the inadequacy of the available equipment is furnished by the note that a joiner was to "fix up the platform of the Arch (so written), to buy a curtain, kettle, etc". On the Day of Atonement, the prayers were again said by Messrs. Epstein and Aserman, with the assistance of Mr.Lowenstark. Offerings came to 38.17s.

With the machinery of normal government functioning once again, attention could be paid to the reconditioning of the Jewish Burial Ground, damaged during the disturbances, arrangements also being made to procure, not a hearse, but a cart, for use at interments!

Meanwhile Rhodes and his friends were still sitting in the Matopos, trying to negotiate. Only on October 13 was the Empire-builder able to call upon the Matabele chiefs to lay down their assegais and finally agree to accept the Queen's authority.

Nor was the trouble entirely over even then. For many months after Matabeleland was subdued the trouble in Mashonaland continued, and not until July 1897 was the whole of Rhodesia at peace.

## CHAPTER X111

## BIRTH OF A SYNAGOGUE

By September 1896 the Congregation had reached the stage of requiring a set of bylaws from Johannesburg, and in December a wire was also dispatched to the Reverend A. P. Bender of Cape Town: "Send exact copy of Marriage, Birth and Death Certificates, also six Ketubas….." Prayer-books and other essentials to organized worship were ordered from the same source, while a renewed campaign for funds towards the building brought a response typical of those friendly days, in the form of a generous gift from Sidney Redrup, a leading non-Jewish citizen.

In token of the seriousness of its intentions, the Committee, in April 1897, offered a prize of 25 guineas for the most suitable architectural design, a fact advertised not only in the local press, but also in that of the Cape and the Transvaal. Practitioners were informed that while the site was definitely the corner of Abercorn Street and Third Avenue, a portion only of the Synagogue was to be erected as a start. "Designs must be made so that, at any future time, the building can be extended towards Abercorn Street… The amount to be spent is £2,000, which sum is to include forms with bo9okrests, fixed at the back, to seat 250 men and 50 to 75 women, also to cover the cost of the Ark and Minister's reading desk".

A ground plan was required, front and side elevations, as well as sections to show the position of the Ark. Acceptance of orthodox principles was implied in one condition: The Men's and Women's seating accommodation must be kept entirely separate, and there must be a separate approach for each. The Ark must be on the Eastern side of the building, and to be approached by four steps. The Minister's reading desk will have to be circular, with two entrances and two steps up. The walls will have to be of sufficient strength to allow of a balcony to be added in the future". Retiring rooms for both sexes were also specified. Four plans were submitted – that of a Mr. Carrick being judged the most suitable. On account of money shortages variations in the designs were asked for and then the whole plan was abandoned in favour of another submitted by A. A. Abrahams.

Although considerably less pretentious than that of Mr. Carrick, this too, at an estimate of £2,600, was more costly than the Committee could face. By substituting chairs instead of forms another cut of £400 was agreed to.

Not since its foundation had the Congregation at Bulawayo been in such a whirl of excitement as now. While tenders were called for the foundation a request sent to Dr. Herman Adler, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire in London, for the selection of the first Minister. He had to be willing to come for at least three years, at a salary of £400 for the first year, rising to £500. In addition to ecclesiastical duties, he would be Mohel and Schochet, and if his time allowed, must be willing to "act as instructor in Hebrew to any school". The first-class fare, plus £75 for traveling expenses, was payable by the

Congregation, on condition that the Minister should start not later than August 28, in time for the New Year Services.

Coinciding with the forthcoming Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, June 21st 1897 was selected for laying the foundation stone. Just under a fortnight before the date a telegram went off to Messrs. Cotton & Co. of Port Elizabeth, asking them to supply a suitable presentation silver trowel.

With all the traditional Jewish pomp of which the place was capable, the ceremony at the Bulawayo Synagogue was performed by the Administrator of Matabeleland; Captain the Honourable Arthur Lawley (later Sir Arthur Lawley and Lieutenant-Governor of the Transvaal). "The Free Masons", we read, "met at the Stock Exchange Hall, and formed the procession, headed by the Worshipful Brother Lowenstark, P.M., to the ground, in full regalia, and made a striking spectacle…."

The Jewish community of Bulawayo was supplemented by most of their Christian neighbours, including Bishop Gaul of the Anglican Church, Brothers L. Powis Jones and E. C. Baxter, likewise Brother Thompson, who performed on the organ. Practically all the members of the Zambesia and Allan Wilson Lodges attended

The procession halted at the stand and opened the ceremony with "God Save the Queen", whereupon the stone was placed in position – corn, wine and oil being poured over it, with appropriate benedictions. "Coins of the realm and local newspapers were placed in the cavity, which was tried in due and ancient Masonic form, and declared truly laid by the Grand Master. Captain Lawley then approached and with a silver trowel finished the laying. The magnificent consecration of the building to the Most High, as ordered by Masonic ritual, was given……. In an impressive manner, and was followed again by a second rendering of the National Anthem. The service was especially appropriate for the Diamond Jubilee. Mr. Lowenstark then read to an attentive audience the Hebrew Service of Dedication. The proceedings on the ground closed by the whole body singing the National Anthem for a third time, giving three cheers for the Queen and three cheers for the Administrator and Mrs.Lawley There must have been about 100 Free Masons present…".

Elsewhere we learn that the prayer had been specially prepared by Chief Rabbi Adler in England as appropriate for the rejoicings in honour of Her Majesty.

Close by, a large marquee tent had been erected, where the more mundane part of the festivities were held. The toast to the Queen was proposed by the Worshipful Brother Hovell, that of Sir Arthur Lawley by Worshipful Brother Lowenstark, and duly acknowledged, while Bishop Gaul "in a feeling manner, proposed 'Other Denominations'. Then Bishop Gaul drank to Freemasonry, being thanked by Worshipful Brother Hovell.

"This is the first Masonic laying of a foundation stone in Matabeleland", the "Bulawayo Chronicle" noted, and the second in Rhodesia. The Hebrew Congregation

may be proud that their edifice received such a good start. The plans, which have been made by Mr. A. Abrahams, show an excellent structure, worthy of the people of the town….”

After general expressions of loyalty to Her Majesty, the Bulawayo Community joined in the dispatch of an Address of Congratulations, in the form of an album from her subjects.

Work on Rhodesia’s first Synagogue was now well under way. But even while Messrs. Henderson & Swift, who had quoted £155.11.3. were busy on the foundations, the Congregation was confronted with a fresh disappointment. Five tenders were received for the building itself, the lowest one again from Henderson & Swift, for £3,800, and the highest £5,572. But even £3,800 was nearly twice as much as the Committee had been led to expect by the optimistic Mr. Abrahams. At a stormy meeting on July 7, 1897, Mr. Saber angrily asked that architect: How can you have made such a mistake in your reckonings, and at different meetings mislead the Committee by saying that the building could be completed for about £2,000?” The explanation, that materials, bricks and wages had lately risen 25 per cent, failed to assuage Abrahams’ clients, and he was asked to leave the meeting. After a long debate a compromise was arrived at: Revised tenders for the four walls and the roof alone were invited. Once more Henderson & Swift came out cheapest, at £2,286. Alas! Not only was the figure still too high, but the structure would be utterly unlike what had first been approved.

With Heavy hearts, the Committee decided to call a meeting of the Jewish Community, to place facts before them. A record attendance of over 40 crowded the Sanitary Boardroom on July 18, 1897, when Mr. Saber began: “I am sorry to tell you that, on account of the high prices ruling, it is impossible at the present time to build the Shul. We have had tenders, which prove out of all reason”.

In plain truth Bulawayo was still to small and too poor to afford anything so ambitious, and the frank acknowledgement of this was followed by a unanimous decision indefinitely to hold over the entire project. Moreover it was now realized that in asking Dr. Adler in London to send out a Minister the Committee had also been too optimistic. The existing subscription scale of two guineas a year would yield a quite inadequate emolument. On the initiative of Mr. Kirschbaum a sum of six guineas a head was voted. When this announcement brought a prompt letter from a Mr. A.B. Diamond resigning his membership, the Committee, in a conciliatory mood, offered to take him back at four guineas.

Times, however, were improving, and immigration was again on the upgrade, a fact shown by the steady rise in the enrolment of members in the Congregation and the establishment in April 1897 of the Bulawayo Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society. Its membership list – about 120 – was a fair guide to the size of the town’s Jewish Community.

To raise funds, an entertainment was held in the Caledonian Hall, of which we read in the "Chronicle": "The cause seemed so popular that it would be well if the hall could be expanded on the next occasion. The programme was a long one – a little too long, in the opinion of many – but it was excellent and varied. The audience seemed to derive a good deal of enjoyment, especially from the humorous portion. Miss Lowenstark's reappearance was hailed with applause…"

When, after the first eight months, the first annual meeting took place under the Chairmanship of Mr. A. Jacobs, the Benevolent Society had already been able to assist less fortunate members of the community with loans and gifts amounting to £127.15. besides a ten guinea subscription towards the Bulawayo Hospital Fund. Even at that early stage £12 had already been refunded, and there were good prospects of recovering the balance. Rhodesia, however, was from prosperity, and the prevailing conditions were illustrated by a transaction concerning the father of a future Rhodesian Prime Minister. On August 15, 1897, £20 was handed to the Bulawayo Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, "for the purpose of assisting to place Welensky in business, such amount to be expended by the Society to the best of their ability.* In explanation of this message the Society was informed: "It should stand in the Congregation's books as a loan, seeing that the Bulawayo Aid and Benevolent have accepted a bill, and when it receives payment the Congregation expects to receive the money back".

In 1897 the Committee of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation comprised Joseph Saber, President; M. Brown, Vice-President; A.Aserman, Treasurer; M.S.Leven, J. Epstein, M. Rabinowitz, - Tobias, Mark Joseph, Edgar Granger, - Rotshall, M. Greenberg and Coleman Joseph (Life Member). The Trustees were S. Goldring and Joseph Saber, the Auditor J. Freilich and the Acting Secretary Mark Joseph.

With its funds now placed on a more substantial basis, the Congregation felt itself to be in a position to give renewed thought to the choice of a Minister. Several applicants had come forward – The Reverend Phillp Wolfers of Swansea, Mr. B. Rittenberg and Mr. E. Friedman, but none were found suitable. Already it was too late to employ any but local talent at the forthcoming High Festivals, for which occasion the Exchange Hall in Bulawayo was engaged at a fee of 10 guineas.
*Footnote; The first documentary reference to Michael Welensky appears in a letter signed by J.H. Hirschberg, Honorary Secretary of the Bulawayo Congregation on December 7, 1895, in which he formally thanks him "for your kind services in connection with the funeral of the late Mr. B. Samuels".

One approved suggestion for raising funds which would be regarded unfavourably today was mooted on August 27, when the authorities decided that the "Sepher Torah Brought up by Mr. Natkin be raffled by the Committee, the said Committee to be responsible for the money the Sepher cost; the conditions of the raffle to be that, whoever wins the same shall present it to the Congregation, the presentee's name to be inserted on it!" Later it was felt that this action might be open to misconstruction, and other ideas were substituted.

The roll of members was increased by the addition of N. Boas, Phillp Hanson, Isaac Tannenbaum, Nathan Oppenheimer, Norman Moss, Hyman Rosenstein, Arnold Saber, Mandelson, A. Joseph, H. Goldin, I. Goldberg, I. King, Louis Cohen, Mark Pieters, A. Greenberg and Blatt. Each one meant extra revenue, and the prospect not only of an earlier completion of the much-needed place of worship, but the arrival of the first Minister. Hopes rose high in September 1897, when the Reverend Francis Cohen of London, obviously an entirely suitable candidate, was asked to take the post. At the last moment, however, Rabbi Cohen chose to accept an invitation to Australia, where he made his mark as Chief Rabbi of Sydney.

Yet interest in Jewish matters was increasing, and for the first time there are references to the public celebration of Passover, as well as of the Feast of the Tabernacles, to say nothing of the appearance, during the Festivals, of a choir, "now practicing and under the supervision of the Committee.

Hopeful of support from the orthodox, Joseph Schumackler proposed opening a Kosher Butchery, only to be told by the Synagogue Committee to hold his hand until there was a Minister available to supervise operations. As a temporary arrangement, C. Friedlander was recognized as Mohel and Schochet, at a remuneration of £4 a week. With this went the warning: "Any other person practicing as Schochet is unauthorized, and meat killed by such person is Trifa. Further, a circular to this effect is to be distributed in the community".

The beginnings of what may be regarded as social work are traceable to October 31, 1897, when E.Granger, Secretary of the Congregation, was asked to function as Prison Visitor, again until the appointment of a Minister.

## CHAPTER XIV

## THE RIVAL CONGREGATIONS.

The old adage, "Hope delayed maketh the Heart sick", was once more proved at the Bulawayo when, anxious to break the deadlock, Abner Cohen decided to set up a second congregation in the town. The doughty Jewish pioneer, born in London in 1860, educated at Newcastle-on-Tyne, had gone round the world by sailing ship and immigrated to New Zealand in 1877. Two years later he had landed in France as a student before in 1881 he reached South Africa.

Attracted to the Transvaal by the first gold discoveries on the Witwatersrand, Cohen was in more than one field to make his mark there, for to him goes the honour of being the earliest inhabitant of Krugersdorp. In 1887 close to the historic Paarderkraal Monument, where the Boers, on the anniversary of the day when their independence was restored six years earlier, used to assemble and hold religious and patriotic celebrations, Cohen opened a hotel. Some ten years later he set out for Bulawayo, having been accused of complicity in the Jameson Raid.

Few newcomers arrived with better credentials. Still in existence is a personal letter from Sir James Silverwright, Commissioner of Public Works for Cape Colony. It reads:

Commissioner's Office,
Cape Town.
20th May, 1187.

"My Dear Rhodes,

"Abner Cohen, who carries this, is a friend of mine. He is leaving the Transvaal and going to Rhodesia; he was a pioneer of Krugersdorp, and I can certify to his being a straight, honourable little chap. You will be greatly interested in having a chat with him, and I know no-one who, in my opinion, would be a more desirable acquisition to the population of a new country than Mr. Cohen. Try and see him early.

"Yours truly,

(Signed) J.Silverwright".

Always strongly interested in communal affairs, Cohen decided at once to take a hand in disentangling those in Bulawayo. In an unpublished personal letter to the Reverend M. I. Cohen written on January 12, 1934, he said:

"Promptly on my arrival in April 1897, a deputation waited upon me, asking me to address a meeting of our people, for the purpose of reaching an amicable understanding between two different sections. After listening to their grievances, I found them real, not imaginary. A Mr. Saber was the leader of one section, but it would appear that little or no attempt was made to hold the usual religious services on the Sabbath and

Holy Days, so at least I was informed, - and that a tension existed between the Home and foreign-born Jews. I promptly set to work to rectify matters, and got quite a big following, but try as I would; I failed to amalgamate them all. So I set up a new Congregation, of which I was unanimously elected President, and a commencement was made to holding the usual services, as best we could, seeing we had no Minister there at the time"

Although supporters of the existing congregations repudiated Abner Cohen's charges, the fact remains that dissension existed, and that it was useless to attempt glossing it over. First a new Jewish "Society" came into being, rivalry developed, and on December 12 it was launched as a separate body. Discussions began very soon, aimed at a reunion between this new Bulawayo Jewish Congregation and the older Hebrew Congregation. Delegates from both sides met on December 23, 1897, Abner's followers having drawn up their "preliminary conditions". Of these the first was that, once the united congregation came into existence, the office of President should never be held by anyone for two consecutive years. The first President was to be elected by the new Congregation and the Vice-President by the old one, while only the Secretary and Treasurer were to be picked from either group according to their suitability. Each Congregation was to contribute four Committeemen, and there was provision for the holding of a General Meeting to settle everything. No discrimination was to be applied to either side, and the minimum subscription was to be 10/6d. a quarter.

Three days later the Abner Cohen delegates reported back: "We much regret that the representatives of the opposite side declare themselves both unwilling and unable to discuss our conditions of union, and confine themselves to a demand.... that we should state our grievances. Seeing that we had taken part in the meeting for the purpose of avoiding a split, and not to rake up old quarrels, the conference came to an end".

On the opposing side the delegates, Salem Goldring, A. Joseph and A. Jacobs, told the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation that, when the Abner Cohenites had "commenced reading their preliminary conditions of amalgamation, we at once informed them that they were under a wrong impression. We did not meet them for that purpose. We were empowered by the terms of the resolution passed at our meeting December 18:
1, To meet the representatives of the Hebrew Society.
2. Carefully to go into the just causes of compliant, and suggest to the Congregation the best mode of meeting them, and thereby avoid a split in the community".

Referring to the conditions for the merger, the delegates complained: "Instead of coming to the point and openly stating their wants as far as religious rites are concerned, they wanted your Congregation practically to hand over to them the management of affairs. This, we informed them, we had no power to do, though at the same time we tried to get them to state their wants, or rather grievances. They stated they had absolutely none. Some time ago, they had some, but these, they were pleased to say, had disappeared.

"It was incompatible with the dignity of your Congregation to discuss the matter further, and the natural conclusion come to by your delegates is that they have to fall back on the reports freely circulated in Town, that this agitation has been got up for the purpose of hampering your Congregation in every possible way, as it was openly stated at a preliminary meeting held at Mr. Basch's store, that the greatest complaint against your Congregation were:

(a) That no provision has been made for education.
(b) That is has no Synagogue.
(c) That we have engaged a Minister without consulting the Congregation,

and further, that the funds of the Congregation have been squandered. Gentlemen, on all these points your delegates were prepared to meet them in every way".

In spite of this, everybody agreed that something ought to be done to assuage the prevailing irritation, and a request was put forward to meet complaints, to ask the Committee to devise some means of building a Synagogue at once, to make provisions for holding Divine Services as often as required, and to give religious instruction to those requiring it.

After referring to the assurance that the matter of a Minister had not yet been settled, but that the charge of squandering could be easily answered, the delegates' report concluded: "We wish to place on record our deep feeling of humiliation at the disgraceful manner in which this controversy has been placed before the public by the free circulation of printed matter, which is lowering for the dignity of Judaism, not only in Bulawayo, but in the whole of South Africa".

For the next year or two Bulawayo had to resign itself to the existence of two rival Synagogues, in a community barely large enough to maintain one. On the other hand the element of competition produced a remarkable revival in the vigor of Jewish life, from which the older body was not exempt.

No time had been lost in giving effect to the idea of the new "Ginger" group. Besides Abner Cohen, the Committee included J. Cinnamon, A. Frank, I. Pieters, F.N. Joseph and a Mr. Dribbin, who between them had already engaged the boardrooms on Saturday mornings and for classes in "Religious Judaism" on Sunday afternoons. As a start the Festival of Chanukah was to be rendered more pleasurable by a tea party, organized by Mr. Cohen, and a magic lantern show given by Mr. Freilich.

"In observing the Festival the lights will be lit according to the old custom, which would probably be the first opportunity the children resident here would have seen of having it honoured".

Mr. Joseph, as Chairman, added: "Every Jewish child in Bulawayo, with its friends, will be heartily welcome. In doing what has been done, we merely carried out work delayed for years, Hitherto the Hebrews of Bulawayo have been a Congregation only in name. No Synagogue has been theirs in which to congregate. No classes have been there which to instruct children in their faith and their traditions. There has been a

semblance without reality, a shell without a kernel. It is high time to change all that, and changed it will be. The children will be taught and services held".

After loud applause 50 members signed on, and contributions to the value of 250 were handed over to Mr. Maurice Friedman, the Honorary Secretary.

When Chanukah party took place on December 19, there was an excellent turnout of 30 youngsters, among whom it is to be suspected were some whose parents were not in agreement with the policy of the new Congregation, but who enjoyed the magic lantern show, and the good things provided by Mrs. and Miss Frank, Mr. and Miss Cinnamon, Mrs.Dribbin and Mrs.Boaz.

Some days later, the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation assembled and approved of the immediate construction of what might best be described as an "austerity Synagogue", measuring only 33 feet square, but costing a sum of about 450. This was to be suitable for transformation in due course to a residence for the Minister when he came. Before another month ended building was actually under way.

With two rival committees, the matter of access to the Jewish Cemetery became a matter of pardonable perplexity to the non-Jewish authorities, both Municipal and Government. A letter addressed to the Municipality by the Abner Cohen group reads:

"Bulawayo,
December 31, 1897.

The Town Clerk of Bulawayo.

Sir,

With much regret and reluctance, we feel constrained to call the attention of the Municipal Council to the discreditable state of neglect and disrepair into which the Jewish Burial Ground has fallen. We desire to point out that several fencing-poles are no longer standing, and two rows of wire have been removed, so as to render the ground readily accessible to stray cattle. The enclosure itself is sadly overgrown with scrub, and moreover it is polluted by the pervasive presence of dead donkeys.

On behalf of the Bulawayo Jewish Congregation we would respectfully request the Council to permit us:

1. To renovate, at our expense, the evils above referred to.
2. To place headstones on the existing graves.
3. To erect a sign-board indicating that the enclosure is the "Jewish Burial Ground".

We trust that the Council will agree with us that the reproach of neglecting God's acre is one that should be promptly be removed.

"We remain, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Abner Cohen.
F. Joseph.
Norman L. Mandelson.
L. Frank.
Isaac Pieters.
G. Freilich.

P.S. Mr. Abner Cohen, our president, will be pleased to give his co-operation to the Council, should they desire to make any investigation".

A simultaneous memorandum from the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation not unnaturally confused the Town Council somewhat about the identity of the parties with which it was dealing, although it was to be noted that a Jewish Councilor, I. H. Hirschler, presided over the next meeting, on January 4, when the matter was discussed.

"A petition was read from the new Jewish Congregation, asking for permission to carry out certain repairs to the Jewish Cemetery.

"Mr. Saber said the Cemetery had been placed under the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, which would make the repairs mentioned. An amount had been spent on the Cemetery in October, but the heavy rains had since caused fresh damage. It was decided to inform the petitioners that Mr. Saber undertook, on behalf of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, of which he was President, to put the Cemetery in the proper state".

A puzzled sanitary Board heard further rival claims, particularly in the matter of reconditioning the fences, and not knowing what to do, gave access to both.

Now a new personality made his appearance in Bulawayo and one very familiar, over a long period to all South African Jewry. Louis Lionel Goldsmid, born in England, had come to Rhodesia in order to make his fortune and decided to use his journalistic experience to publish a magazine, in stenciled form, called first "The Owl" and later the "Bulawayo Sketch". Goldsmid, who presently started the "South African Jewish Chronicle" and server other publications, devoted one of his first leading articles to a survey of the local Congregations.

"The Jews in Bulawayo", he wrote, "are a wonderful and curious people. For four years united, they have not yet been able, during that period, to erect, or even obtain for temporary purposes, a suitable building for the holding of regular Devine Services, and now, mirabile dictu, they consider that what united they were unable to attain in the past, they will, as two antagonistic sections of one community, be able to accomplish in the future. During the course of the week representative of this journal had talk with Messrs. Abner Cohen and Mendelsohn, the leaders of the seceding party. From their statements we are bound to admit that there is ground for complaint but we would remind the seceders that the community was still young at the last election and, if they

have chosen men as leaders for the future who have failed them in the past, it is a mistake which can easily be remedied. Certainly that in itself is not sufficient reason for the formation of a second Congregation. "Eondragt maakt magt", is the Transvaal motto, and what the Boers have realized, surely the Bulawayo Jews can appreciate. We would urge upon both parties the desirability of sinking their differences and fusing their members, with the view to the creation of a community which shall be a glory to the Jews themselves, and an object of respect to the non-Jewish section of the population".

Eager to put things right, the Committee of the old Congregation carefully examined its finances, but found them even worse than they had suspected and the book-keeping deplorable.
February 6 witnessed the receipt of a letter by the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation from the Bulawayo Jewish Congregation, again on the vexed question of using the burial-ground. The reply informed him that "any Jew, belonging to any Jewish Congregation in Bulawayo, will be interred on the same footing as members of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation".

Along with this went a discussion on the opening of a new set of books by a competent accountant, and on the charge to be made to a Mr. Freeman of Salisbury, who wished to engage the local Mohel, (a service which cost no less than £75 ),

Such matters, however, were comparatively routine, and there was no warning when, only two days later, Mr. Saber formally handed over His resignation as President, "for the purpose of bringing union between the two Congregations". In spite of an initial refusal to accept his resignation, he persisted in his attitude, with the result that A. Joseph was chosen in his place. For this bold and public spirited gesture his colleagues warmly thanked him, and immediately notified the rebels so that another meeting might be arranged.

From the speed with which events now developed it may be assumed that pourparlers, to use the diplomatic phrase, had already been going on behind the scenes, for within a week the details of the reconciliation had been settled. By February 14 it was possible to announce: "Claims against the two Congregations are to be handed in to the Secretary of the United Congregations on or before March 1. All movable property and assets can be handed over to the provisional Trustees, Messrs. Goldring and Mandelson. The title of the two Congregations is to be the Bulawayo Hebrew United Congregation".

On that very same evening yet another important development became known -Abner Cohen was leaving Bulawayo. At a special ceremony he was publicly thanked for the skill he had displayed in the negotiations, and for the energy he had manifested in revitalizing Jewish life.

"The object I had in view", he replied to his friends, "has been the unity of the Jewish community, to which I have devoted my time and energy. I hope that the work which has been accomplished this day will be the dawn of a better era for the Jewish inhabitants of Bulawayo. (Applause)

An illuminated address then presented to Cohen still in the possession of his family, reads:

"We the undersigned, being the Committee of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, desire to convey to you our expression of the sincere regret felt by the Community at your departure. We recognize fully the great worth and permanent advantage of the assiduous efforts you have made on our behalf and, though in those results there will be a lasting remembrance of your noble labour, we ask you further accept from us a simple tribute, which may mark our deep esteem, the accompanying present. It is with earnest emotion that we convey to you this very inadequate evidence of the respect and gratitude you have gained and our genuine hope that the future may carry many blessings for you...."

The document was signed by the Trustees, J.Cinnamon, Norman L. Mandelson, by the Honorary Secretary, Maurice Lewis Freedman and by Maurice L. Landau, Galman Jacob, A.Gytner, L. Dripner, Leon Frank, Isaac Pieter and G. Freilich.

Already the young Bulawayo Jewish Congregation had already achieved what its more staid sister body was still anticipating, its own place of worship.
On the 17th of that eventful February a brand-new iron building was handed over to the United Congregation, on the understanding that it would be extended by another 20 feet, "making some 60 feet by 35 feet, for the purpose of turning the same into a Synagogue and schoolroom". At the same time a new brick building was earmarked as the future home of the Minister, whose arrival, everyone felt, would surely not be much longer delayed.

Within another three days the first meeting under the changed regime was held, one of its earliest actions being a return to the original name, the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, omitting the word "United". Everyone had agreed that Gaber had behaved extremely well, and in his honour a suitable memorial was to be placed on the premises, with Jacobs as President, Cinnamon as Vice-President, Mandelson as Treasurer and Zeffert as Secretary, the Bulawayo Jewry now set about the restoring and expanding its communal charitable and religious activities.

## CHAPTER XV.

## EARLY ANTI-SEMITISM.

The year 1898 inaugurated a time of healthy growth for Rhodesian Jewry, more particularly in Bulawayo. Ikey Sonnenberg made his home there and enrolled in the Congregation, as did Herman Hepker, founder of a prominent local family, Maurice Solomon, S. Glass, M. Kaplan, A.K. Morrison, L. Guzman, - Kaiser and - Luntz. Even Abner Cohen, now back on the Rand, insisted on remaining on the roll as a country member. When, soon after, Mark Joseph returned to Britain, I. Cinnamon again tool the Chair until the Annual Meeting, when J. Saber was once more chosen President, with R. Aserman Vice-President, L. Kramer and Max Sonnenberg, (nephew of Ikey and future South African M.P.) as Treasurers.

One fund-raising event during the year was a "most enjoyable musical soiree which took place in the Temporary Synagogue, the performers being the committee-men of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation. There must have been an awe-inspiring number of items, for although we are assured the proceedings went off without a hitch, they were "kept until the early hours of the morning!"

Conspicuous among the vocalists were Miss Lowenstark, Mr. Taylor and Mr. L.H. Gabriel. "In addition to the poorer brethren - for whose enjoyment the evening had been arranged - some of the leading social lights of Bulawayo society were assembled.... the total number of guests being about 250. Altogether the soiree was a great success, and is worthy of repetition".

Among the newer amenities was a Matzo bakery, for which Mr. Boaz applied for the necessary license. This was duly granted, with the provision, inserted as much for hygienic as for religious reasons, that "he did not employ Kaffir labour".

"The season when the Jewish community all over the world commemorates the Passover is approaching", wrote the "Bulawayo Chronicle", “and preparations are being made for keeping it in the capital of Matabeleland. Mr. Nap Boaz with sanctioned authority of the Bulawayo United Hebrew Congregation, is busily engaged in making Passover bread, the unleavened bread is made in a circumspect and peculiar way, somewhat after the manner of pancakes, and after baking appears like a large crinkled biscuit. It tastes very similar to a water biscuit, and is quite palatable. Mr. Boaz employs eight hands, besides himself, and will later make Passover meal and cakes. This is the first time the bread has been made, we understand, on a large scale, in Bulawayo".

The general press continued to give generous space to the various Jewish festivals, explaining their nature and significance to the outside world. Thus in the "Nugget", the advent of Chanukah was duly described: "The highly enjoyable reunion took place last Tuesday evening, when the dance and celebration was held in the Jewish

schoolroom, Abercorn street. Most of the leading lights of the Bulawayo Hebrew community attended, and dancing was kept up until an early hour..."

For a long time Joseph Saber remained as the only Jewish Marriage Officer in Rhodesia. Jewish weddings were still sufficiently rare in Rhodesia to become affairs of public importance, and the second one is recorded in November 1898 in the "Nugget".

"On Tuesday afternoon Dr. Langerman and Miss Edith Spiro, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. F. Spiro of the Imperial Hotel, were united in the holy bonds of matrimony. Mr. Pidcock, Assistant Resident Magistrate, performed the civil ceremony, and Mr. J. Gaber officiated at the religious ceremony. A large number of friends the bride and bridegroom attended.... At about five o'clock the happy pair departed amid showers of rice, for their honeymoon at Eleven Mile Spruit....

In the matter of education there was likewise cause for rejoicing. Working on an entirely honorary basis Mr. Freilich gave his services as a teacher, later assisted by the versatile Mr. Diamond, who operated butchery. Rising attendance brought a demand for the services of Miss Cinnamon and Miss Frank, but by December 1898 the time was judged ripe for a full-time worker. So Miss Lowenstark was engaged at 17 a month, provided she supplied her own room and "before engagement satisfied the Committee as to her capabilities".

That the Government was also assisting in the school was shown by a letter in which Captain Lawley agreed to advance 20, a figure raised a few months later to 100.

As was to be expected with a small community, a great deal of overlapping of committee-men and members occurred among the different organizations, one of the most important being the Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, of which first A. Jacobs and then N.M. Mandelson was President.

The laying out of the burial-place had let to the founding of a Chevra Kaisha (1900), which worthily kept up its humane, if little-advertised activities. Unfortunately there are few records of its work, but we know that one of the earliest honorary secretaries was V.O Cohen.

Another new body was the Jewish Educational Society launched in 1899, and operating independently of the Congregation, although the teacher was also the ubiquitous Miss Lowenstark.

Inevitably. alas, anti-Semitism made its unwelcome appearance in Rhodesia. Back in May 1897 the Reverend Mr. Hammick, minister of St. John's Church in Bulawayo, mentioned in an article: "White slavery is carried on with great profit to the slaves and their owners, this is, I think, a measure owing to a large percentage of Jews. In my experience where there are Jews found, Morality is low. They are Jews in name only. The South African Jew is in a class apart".

Immediately a special meeting of the Congregation Committee took place, and a reply was forwarded to the press signed by Leopold Jacobs of Cape Town, who happened to be on a visit, and Edgar Granger, the Honorary Secretary. A non-Jew, Mr. F. Byrnes, observed of the reverend gentleman: "His remarks about the Jews are as absurd as they are wickedly untrue, and they show the narrowness of the man. Personally I should prefer an immoral Jew to a moral, self-satisfied bigot". A number of other letters followed, including one by an anonymous correspondent, who called himself "Chorister". He wrote: "I should like to take this opportunity of asking Mr. Hammick how he reconciles his remarks concerning the Jews with the fact that he willingly accepted valuable assistance at an organ recital in the church a few months back from one of our best lady vocalists, who herself belongs to that much-maligned race". And Aaron Jacobs wrote cuttingly: "It may be remembered that, on the occasion of the Bazaar in aid of the English Church, to which Mr. Hammick belongs, the Jews were among the principle contributors".

It would be a mistake therefore to imagine that outbursts such as these represented the true feelings of the community. Not only were two Jews, J. Saber and Isidore H. Hirschler, at the top of the poll in their respective wards at the first Municipal Elections in Bulawayo, held in November 1897, but Hirschler himself was chosen the first Mayor.

Yet another anonymous gentleman, who called himself "Scottish Rhodesian". Accused him in a letter of being a foreigner. At St. Andrew's Nicht Hirschler took up the challenge. "For argument's sake," he said. "Suppose I am a foreigner in the true sense of the word. Then let me refer you to what Colonel Napier just said about Mr. Beit, who has been described by many people in London as a foreigner, but who ha worked for this country as hard as any man (Applause). Joking apart, I will mention that, in a certain sense, I am not a foreigner. I have lived in England since 1877, and am a naturalized British subject (cheers). I might say that, in becoming a British subject , I claim more credit for myself than "Scottish Rhodesian" could, because the latter has done nothing but be born in Great Britain (Laughter), whereas I have exercised some judgment becoming a British subject (Laughter and applause), and I hope good judgment.... Furthermore, I did belong, and still belong to another nation, and that is the Hungarian...."

How keenly events overseas were followed by Jews in far-away Rhodesia was again shown on September 10, 1899, after news of the acquittal of Captain Dreyfus. The whole world resounded with the controversy as to whether this unfortunate French Jewish officer was guilty or not of selling military secrets to the Germans. After he had been degraded, deprived of his military rank and banished to Devil's Island in South America, a group of distinguished Frenchmen, headed by Emile Zola and Georges Clemenceau, gradually brought to light, before an astonished and indignant world, the fact that Dreyfus was the victim of one of the most callous and unscrupulous frame-ups in history. Jews in every land, Rhodesia not excluded, watched with breathless attention the battle for his rehabilitation. Despite the weight of the proof, the vested interests of the French Army and the French Government still did their best to hush up the facts, and to prevent justice being done.

When the "Bulawayo Chronicle" came out in support of the unfortunate officer, the local Jewry were so stirred that their representatives felt impelled to address a special letter to the editor on September 10, 1899

"On behalf of our co-religionists, we beg to express to you our warm appreciation of your eloquent leader of yesterday in vindication of the martyr, Dreyfus. We feel convinced that the advocacy of every Anglo-Saxon country will not be wanting to accomplish the ultimate redress of the almost unprecedented injustice to which our co-religionist has been subjected, Redress and not retribution, is what we Jews demand. But assuredly, if the day of redress be long delayed, the hour of retribution will swiftly ensue.

"We are, etc

(Signed) M. Immelman,
President, Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation.

Fred N. Joseph, Vice-President.

Norman L. Mandelson, President,
Hebrew Benevolent Society

D.S. Cohen, Chairman Jewish School Board.

Mark Landau, Commander of Chovevi Zion, Bulawayo Tent.

Going through the early records one is impressed by the wealth of time at the disposal of the communal leaders. On one occasion it was recorded that a speech was delivered lasting 80 minutes, while on another the Committee was entertained to an address of 48 minutes, followed by another of 20 minutes!

The arrival of Mr. Joseph in London had important effects on the Jewish community in Rhodesia for, as a man personally acquainted with the ambitions and difficulties of the Congregation, he was an effective spokesman on the subject of a Minister, and this time the negotiations proved successful.

The Reverend Moses Isaac Cohen. born in London in 1876, with a thorough education at Jews College and University College, possessed all the necessary qualifications, and was prepared to emigrate. On August 4, 1899, a cable arrived from Joseph in London, informing the Committee: "Minister will leave early October" The sudden renewal of hope spurred the men in charge to cable back: "Arrival before Holidays imperative. Community demanding it. Reply ".

But the affairs of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation had overnight become entangled in world history. Tensions building up for years between Britain and the Boer Republics had reached a culmination. On September 27, 1899, as a new committee was elected to organize the reception of Mr. Cohen, thousands of Uitlanders were streaming from Johannesburg to the coast in every train and other available

conveyance, seeking refuge on British territory. Two weeks later the letter welcoming him to South Africa was given a postscript: "As long as you are forced, failing transport, to remain in Cape Town, the congregation will defray all your reasonable expenses". On that very same day, some miles from Mafeking, the first shots of the Boer War were fired.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## ZIONISM REACHES RHODESIA.

As the 19th century drew to a close, the Jews of Bulawayo, conscious of their growing numbers, prosperity and stable environment, felt impelled considerably to widen the range of their interests. With Jewish newspapers from overseas arriving by every mail, it became possible to keep abreast of the great European problems and movements, in which at a surprisingly early stage, they had their echoes here, in Central Africa. When, therefore, in April 1898, steps were taken to found a Jewish Mutual Improvement and Debating Society, the first lecture on "Rhodesian Gold" was followed, we are told in the press, by a discussion on Zionism.

Since the original Basle Congress, called by Dr. Theodore Herzl, had only taken place a few months earlier, the keenness of the local pioneers deserves admiration. Still more remarkable was the circumstance that on September 18, 1898, according to the "Chronicle", a "meeting of gentlemen interested in the Zionist Movement" took place at the residence of C. Freedman in Abercorn Street. Morris Landau occupied the Chair and the attendance numbered 24. After considerable discussion, "the sense of the meeting was expressed contrary to the so-called National or Political Zionist Movement, and it was resolved to form a local branch of the Chovevi Zion (Friends of Zion) Society, with the view of assisting in the settlement of Palestine. It was resolved to hold a further meeting on Thursday 22nd instant, at 7.45, at the Temporary Synagogue, Abercorn Street. Mr. J Epstein was elected Treasurer and Mr. Joseph Secretary pro tem".

On September 24 there was fresh news, coupled with an explanation for outsiders. "This movement (Zionism), which in the past few months has assumed almost international importance, has awakened an echo even in far outlying Bulawayo. The Zionist idea manifests itself in two not wholly irreconcilable policies. The first tries to realize, by financial and diplomatic methods, the foundation of a Jewish nation in Palestine; the second, while opposed to the national idea, seeks to Hebraicise Palestine by the promotion of Jewish agricultural settlements within its confines, At a preliminary meeting held recently, the local Jewish community resolved to restrict itself to the support of the colonization movement...."

A substantial proportion of the local Jewry at the time attended the inaugural meeting. With Morris Landau in the chair, F.N. Joseph was at pains to emphasize that a Chovevi Zion was just a little anti-British in its spirit as was a Caledonian Society. The view was supported by Mr. Saber, who added: "What is British enough for Disraeli, Claude Montefiore and Colonel Goldsmid is British enough for me", while Mr. Mandelson declared: "The movement will have my support, because it backs a noble ideal by practical methods".

After a number of donations had been made, with at least one from the country district of Enkeldoorn, the first Zionist group in Rhodesia started its existence with Landau as President, Saber and Mandelson as Vice-Presidents, J.Epstein as

Treasurer, F.N. Joseph and A.B. Diamond as Honorary Secretaries, besides a Committee of nine and two auditors. Since the total Jewish population of Bulawayo at the time was less than 200, the enrolment of 40 could be considered good. Meetings took place in the Jewish Schoolroom.

Already the South African Jewry had rallied to the appeal of Herzl, by holding at Johannesburg, on December 11, 1898, the first Local Zionist Congress. This took place in the Jewish School and was attended by representatives from Bulawayo.

When Morris Landau paid a visit to London in 1899, he was cordially welcomed by the leaders of the Chovevi Zion movement, and authority granted tossed up what was known as a "Tent". Unlike the more familiar forms of Zionism, Chovevi avoided direct reference to the Basle programme for a "legally-secured, publicly-assured home in Palestine for the Jewish people". Instead the aims were set out as "to foster the national idea in Israel, to promote the colonization of Palestine and neighboring territories by setting Jewish agriculturists and artisans thereon and assisting those already established; to foster the knowledge of Hebrew as a living language; and to further the moral, intellectual and material status of Israel. (Here it must be remembered that the word "Israel" was used in the tribal and not in the geographical sense, as today).

The first report, submitted in 1899, and still in the possession of Mr. S.S. Grossberg of Bulawayo, contains an impressive array of achievements. From an original 40 the membership had shot up to more than 100, representing well over half the entire Jewish population of the city. "The Society has been able to grant a subscription of £50 to the Colony Machnayim in Palestine, and of 10 guineas to the School in Jaffa. They have a sum of money in hand which justifies them in hoping that they will shortly be able to make a further substantial remittance for the purpose of assisting in the settlement of the Holy Land...."

After referring to the visit of Mr. Landau to London and to the pending application for affiliation to the main Society there, the Committee said: "With a view to enhancing the position of the officers of the Society, a Commander's Gold Badge has been presented to the Society by public subscription and councilors' sashes by F.N. Joseph, Esq. These emblems will be the property of the Society, and will pass from the outgoing to the incoming officers and councilors. An agreeable element in the history of the Society in the past year has been the support received from the ladies of the community...."

The earliest cash statement, covering the period from October 1, 1898 to September 30, 1899 shows revenue from subscriptions and donations, of £112. 4. 6. and a surplus in the bank at the end of the year of £43. 3. 0. In 1901 the organization collected several hundred pounds allocated to the settlement of Bnei Yehuda in Palestine.

At the height of the South African War there was issued a document still treasured by Rhodesian Jewry, and particularly by its Zionists:

"WARRENT NO.36.

"By virtue of the Authority to me by the Headquarters Tent, in this behalf given, I, Albert Edward Goldsmid, Chief of the Chovevi Zion, do hereby constitute and approve the establishment of a Tent of the Association at Bulawayo in Rhodesia South Africa. This Tent shall be known as the Bulawayo Tent in the Camp of Chovevi Zion, and be administered in accordance with the Laws and Regulations of the Association, and all its Members are hereby directed to render lawful and cheerful obedience to its duly appointed Officers.

"Given under my Hand and Seal, and the Seal of the Headquarters Tent at London, on the 20th day of September, 1900".

The document was signed by Joseph Prag as Acting Chief, and by S.A. Hirsch as Secretary. Marcia Gitlin, in her "History of South African Zionism, "The Vision Amazing", observes: "The Bulawayo Chovevi Zion was unique, not only in that it was a Chovevi Zion Society proper. It was unique also because it met with none of the opposition which was the fate of many Zionist Societies formed about the same time. In 1901, out of Bulawayo's Jewish population of about 220 souls, 170 were members. Its founders were men of both English and European extraction, and relations between them at not time suffered on that account. Morris Landau, a man of great energy and business capacity, was of English origin, as was Joseph Joseph, who succeeded Him as President a few years later, and who maintained an active interest in the Society until his departure for Europe in 1920. Isaac Epstein, on the other hand, was a Russian Jew, a Hebrew scholar, who had served the Zionist cause; even before he arrived in Africa, he was the moving spirit in the organization and he left permanent traces of his outstanding qualities of mind and character upon its development. Others connected with the Society in its early days were Louis Landau, Joseph Beemer, Fred Joseph, Meyer Budlender, L.A. Rubinstein, Oscar Kaufman and Moshe Weiner - the last-named being the founder of the Johannesburg Chovevi Zion, who had now made his home in Bulawayo...."

Assemblies of the Bulawayo Tent were characterized amid other pomp and ceremony, by the wearing of elaborate gold-embroidered scarves by the office bearers. Though it gave particular support to the Jewish Colonial Trust, an early organization to raise funds for settlement in the Holy Land, it persisted in maintaining its independence of the general Zionist organization.

For a number of years and well into the new century, the Chovevi Zion continued to function on its own account, always stressing its close links with the United Kingdom rather than with Eastern Europe. For this reason too, it took the lead in 1903, following an outburst of pogroms in Rumania, in addressing to the new Jewish Lord Mayor of London, Sir Marcus Samuel, a message "expressing its enthusiastic admiration of the noble spirit of courage and humanity which promoted His Lordship in his refusal to invite the Rumanian Minister to the Lord Mayor's installation banquet, for the stand he has made on behalf of the Jewish cause, and therefore of Zionism".

Among what may literally be called extra-mural activities was the celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles by the Chovevi Zion. For this purpose it

erected a Succah in the grounds of the Synagogue, which once again aroused the intense curiosity and interest of the non-Jewish local press. "On Tuesday 19th, 1899, we read, occurred the Jewish Festival, held in commemoration of the epoch when the Children of Israel dwelt in booths in the wilderness. For the first time in the history of the Jewish community in Bulawayo, a Succoth or Tabernacle was erected close to the Synagogue, in accordance with the ordinances of the Mosaic Law. The Tabernacle in question was constructed under the auspices of the Chovevi Zion Society, and exhibited that morning a very beautiful appearance, with its hangings of light blue and white, profusely decorated with various texts and legends, worked thereon in white, blue, gold and silver. The roof was a thick network of green boughs and twigs, decorated with cluster of choice fruits, lanterns and other beautiful objects. After the usual morning service, a large company assembled in the Succah, and when the usual blessing had been pronounced, the goodly cheer provided was partaken of. Addresses were then delivered by Messrs. Marks, Landau, F. H... Joseph, M. Immelman, I. Epstein, D.S. Cohen and others, in the course of which they mentioned that the entire structure had been erected and provided by free labour and free of cost".

On the occasion of the Feast of Purim in the same year, the Jewish School in Abercorn Street saw the demonstration of one of the marvels of the 19th Century science. At a Children's Party which was given there, after tea, games and dancing and the distribution of gifts, a Mr. Canaris gave "feats of Legerdeain", while "Mr. Moore kindly gave the children an opportunity of hearing his wonderful phonograph....

Local activities included setting up in 1901 the first Jewish Library in Rhodesia, from which offshoots were established in Salisbury, Gwanda, Gwelo and Selukwe in Northern Rhodesia and even in the Congo.

No matter how small the community or the group if the Chovevi could see to it, there was always a gift on any suitable occasion for the rebuilding of Zion. Even when in 1901 the first service was held at Gwelo, it was possible from the 15 people to raise £1. 7. 6.

A Ladies' Sub-Committee, also set up by the Chovevi Zion, succeeded in colleting over a number of years some 2,000, and the influence of the Reverend M.I.Cohen in 1902 brought about the affiliation of the Society with the South African Zionist Federation.

A List published in 1906 gives the office-bearers as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| President: | The Rev. M.I.Cohen, B.A. |
| Vice-President: | B. Basch and S.S. Salomon. |
| Hon. Secretary: | S.S.Grossberg. |
| Assistant Hon. Secretary: | M.M. Smollan. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Treasurer: | William Hepker. |
| Committee: | L. Landau, M Smollan,<br>L.A. Rubenstein<br>S.Palmer and J. Ellenbogen. |

## CHAPTER XVII.

## RHODESIAN JEWRY IN THE BOER WAR.

From the Rhodesian point of view the outbreak of the South African War had a peculiar significance, By reason of its remoteness from most of the theatres of operation, it was spared any actual fighting, but nonetheless its participation was a direct and varied one. With the key town of Mafeking so relatively close to its Southern boundary, he strategic importance of the territory was soon made obvious, and when communication from the Cape had been cut off during the Siege, the main hopes of relief were, for a long time, centered on Matabeleland. This explains the landing at Beira of a substantial number of British troops, who were transferred overland through the Mozambique via Umtali, Salisbury and Bulawayo, and action which, not unjustifiably, stirred the Boers to complain about Portuguese breaches of neutrality.

An intense loyalty to the Mother Country aroused an immediate response from the Colonists of Rhodesia - Jews and non- Jews to volunteer as local and Imperial forces. Trooper H.J. Levy of "A" Squadron of the Rhodesia Regiment was one of the first to be killed in action, on October 21, 1899, barely 10 days after fighting began.

Among the earliest to enlist was H. Mortimer Zeffert, a founder of the Rhodesian Jewish community. Born at Devonport in 1869, he had come to the Rand aged 22, in 1891, but moved north to Bulawayo soon after the establishment of the city. In the 1896 Matabele and Mashonas campaigns he served in Dawson's Scouts, while on the eve of the Boer War, on July 28, 1899, he joined the Rhodesian Volunteers, soon being promoted to Sergeant. Within a few days of the start of hostilities, Zeffert was sent to the front, being wounded in a bayonet charge at Derdepoort, in an action wherein his unit was "represented by 25 picked men", and again at Crocodile Pool. He took part in the relief of Mafeking and in operations around Zeerust in the Western Transvaal. Sergeant Zeffert, along with Trooper Charlie Cohen, was in the well-known defense of Elands River and both of them, along with Trooper B. Basch, had the honour of being selected members of the famous Commander-in-Chief's body-guard, charged with the personal safety of Lord Roberts. In later years Zeffert continued his military career on the Rand, serving as Captain in the 1914 Rebellion, in the South West Africa Campaign and in Egypt during World War I.

The Rhodesian Regiment included Trooper Isaac Wolffe, who enlisted in February 1900. Vice President of the Bulawayo Chovevi Zion, he was a Russian Jew and took part in heavy fighting near Mafeking, for which he and his comrades received the special thanks of General Baden-Powell. He was recommended for the D.G.M. by General Paget for gallantry at Pienaars River, when, along with Trooper Carton, he rode past the Boer lines under a hail of bullets, fired at barely 200 yards.

Sergeant-Major Louis Enoch, originally from Stepney, London, was in the Rhodesian Field Force under Colonel Plumer at Marandellas.

Despite his mere 16 years, Willie Spiro of Bulawayo became "Galloper" to the redoubtable Colonel Johan Colenbrander, while only slightly older was his fellow townsman, Harry Cinamon, at age 17 in the Imperial Light Horse. M.D. Lowenstark, in peacetime secretary of the Congregation, joined Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, returning with a medal and three clasps, for service in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony, while his son was in Kitchener's Fighting Scouts. Besides Lowenstark Junior and Wille Spiro, that unit boasted of Troopers Maurice Kantor, Greenberg and Azarkin, all of Bulawayo.

According to a report in 1900 the Rhodesia Regiment included at least 11 Jews, and probably more. In "A" Squadron were Troopers Freedman, Mosenthal, (a relative of the Port Elizabeth merchants), Joseph Holt and Friend. In "B" Squadron was Trooper S.J. Daniels and in "C" Troopers J.Moss and I. Wolffe. "D" Squadron had Troopers Ginsberg and Deutsch and "E" Squadron a Sergeant Freedman. In other unites were Trooper Moss of Gwelo (B.S.A. Police), Trooper Rosalsky and Trooper Edward Francis Abrams of the Bechuanaland Border Police.

Mention must also be made of the Grangers, Alex and Louis, who fought in the Colonial Division. Alex gained particular distinction as a Scout near Bargerton on the staff of General Pole-Carew, while their brother Joe, in the Imperial Light Horse, was severely wounded in the bloody action at Haartebeestfontein.

Meanwhile the celebrated "S.O.S." Cohen, who had fought in the Matabele War in 1893, and was to live to take part in World War II, found an opportunity on his own account of contributing to the progress of the Boer War., Lionel William Frederick Cohen, to give him his correct name, had been, in the words of a contemporary writer, "at the outbreak of hostilities, asked by the Portuguese authorities to form an organization for protecting and policing the borders, to prevent the running of ammunition to the Boers. This he did, establishing about a dozen military stations, and for six months he had fiscalisation of the border under his command. The he was relieved by a force of Portuguese cavalry and artillery, but he remained for some time longer, in an advisory capacity, and was instrumental in locating several guerilla bands of Boers on the prowl for supplies from Mozambique.

From the start Julius Weil & Co., with their widespread connections and resources, were recognized as being of the utmost importance to the British side. What had been done during the Matabele War and during the Matabele Rebellion was now achieved on an even greater scale in the transport and provisioning of the forces around Mafeking. In his standard "Times History of the South African War", L.S. Amery wrote how, at this place, "owing to the foresight and business enterprise of the well-known South African contractors, Messrs. Julius Weil, large stocks of supplies accumulated, with the view to the probability of the town becoming a base of important military operations".

When headquarters of Colonel Plummer's forces were fixed at Bulawayo, "contracts for the purchase of nearly 4,000 mules, a number of Mounted Infantry cobs,

considerable quantities of supplies, and for the hire of enormous quantities of ox transport from Messrs. Weil and other contractors, were drawn up for instant completion...."

Before the investment of Mafeking began, Amery mentions: "Six weeks full rations for the men and forage for the horses of the Protectorate Regiment were in store, and large stocks of food in the possession of the important South African firm of Julius Weil & Co., who had a branch here, under the charge of Mr.B.B.Weil, one of the partners. Their stock alone was so considerable that it was valued at £30,000, and the successful defense of Mafeking is no doubt partly due to their forethought".

In building up these reserves, the ramifications of the firm on the Rhodesian side were as important as those further South. Apart from this, it was also noted that the Weils were responsible for the provisioning of the first contingent of Colonial troops commanded by General Brabant.

Even so, the situation in Bulawayo, Salisbury and other communities was by no means easy. Since no one knew how long the struggle was likely to last. Although immigration was at a standstill, at least one distinguished Jewish newcomer was trying to make his way there. The Reverend Moses Isaac Cohen had already waited for months in Cape Town for a chance to reach his new Congregation.

On November 29, 1899, Edgar Granger, the Secretary wrote to him: "In regard to the uncertainty concerning the operations of War, the Committee it advisable that you should journey to Bulawayo by the only open route via Beira, as we are not sure how soon of if the Boers will make an attack on this town. We know that a party of them has crossed the border into this territory. A large number of Rhodesian volunteers are at the front, and the remainder of Volunteer Force at present existing, some 300 are under orders to leave tonight. In the circumstances, you will no doubt agree with the Committee that it will be wiser for you to stay in Cape Town for the present.

"In accordance with the Committee's resolution of October 20th, I now enclose draft for 25 towards current expenses. We are in hopes of receiving a letter from you by the incoming mail, due here next Wednesday and hope that you have been able to make temporary arrangements for yourself".

During January 1900 the Committee plucked up heart. "In view of the delay in the restoration of communications with the South, prompt steps should be taken to bring the Minister to Bulawayo via Beira, the sum of 50 to be allocated for the purpose".

But with all available facilities under the control of the military, these prompt steps were not so easy. Mr. Cohen himself, the last man to sit about idle, during February somehow managed to send a cable, "Am asked to join Jewish Ambulance for Front. Wire if you object". Discussions raged fiercely, and an objection was finally sent, on the grounds that, with two Births awaiting attention, he must hold himself ready to set off for Rhodesia at the very earliest moment.

Mafeking was still besieged, and it was not until May 17, 1900, that the British forces managed to break through and bring relief. As Passover approached, arrangements were made for the dispatch to Jewish Rhodesians in the field of items suited to that season. Mr. Saver reported having sent "20lbs. of Matzo to members of the Jewish faith now serving at the Front", while Mr. J. Ellenbogen received letter from a Jewish trooper, J. Cripps of the British South African Police at Sebungwe Fort, asking for a supply of Kosher wine and of brandy, with three pounds of Matzos meal.

Writing to S.B. Asher, the honorary Secretary of the Fund for Rumanian and Bessarabian Jewry, Lowenstark made a passing reference to his own arm service, in explaining that a sum of 5 had been voted by the Congregation, as well as by the Benevolent Society. He added: "It was arranged that a collection be made from the community at large, and that the whole amount, when collected, should be sent on to you. I shortly after left for the Front, and understood that this amount would be sent to you during my absence. I find however, that nothing has since been done, and I am anxious to know if it is not too late to proceed with the collection. If so, would you kindly send me two or three collection books? I cannot say that we shall be very successful, but will do our best, if it is not to late".

Long before the re-establishment of direct communication between the Cape and Rhodesia, the Reverend Cohen decided to undertake the long trek by the coastal route. Leaving Cape Town in March 1900, he notified his Congregation by telegrams and, having sailed round to Beira, took the train as far inland as the railway then ran, and on from Umtali by coach.

Great excitement prevailed among the Jewish community on March 25, when it became known their first Minister would reach Bulawayo that very day. Six miles out, at the store of a Mr. Roves, the officers of the Congregation welcomed the much-traveled newcomer, and on the same evening the whole Congregation gathered for rejoicings in the local Schoolroom. Illuminated addresses were handed over by the Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, the Bulawayo Education Society and the Chovevi Zion.

Gradually the tide of was receded from the frontiers of Rhodesia, but the depth of the feeling stirred up is reflected in the reference on May 24, 1900, at a Thanksgiving Service in the Synagogue for the relief of Mafeking, when £17.13s. was collected for the Bulawayo Memorial Hospital.

Among the correspondence carefully preserved in the press copy book of the community, and addressed, on the whole, to a very humdrum collection of individuals, there appears with startling suddenness, a missive (the first and only one done on a typewriter), dated February 4, 1901.
It reads:

"To the King and Queen's Most Excellent Majesty's.(so written)

"Sire and Madam,

"May it please Your Majesties; I am instructed by my Committee of the Hebrew Congregation, to humbly offer to Your Gracious Majesties our most heartfelt sympathies on the irreparable loss, which you have sustained in the death of Her late Most Noble Majesty Queen Victoria. We trust that Your Majesties may derive some consolation from the knowledge of the sympathetic and devoted feelings the pervade all classes of your subjects the world over.

"We further humbly offer to Your Gracious Majesties the expression of our homage and most ardent loyalty on the auspicious occasion of your accession to the Throne of Britain and the Headship of the Empire. We recall with gratitude the fact that the very beginning of the reign of Her Late Lamented Majesty was signalized by the election of Moses Montefiore as Sheriff of London, and by the conferring oh Knighthood upon him. These acts were a fitting inauguration of a Reign rendered glorious for all time by its noble application of the principle of religious liberty and equality. Not only has the Victorian era seen the removal of all Jewish disabilities, but the wisdom of this tolerant policy has been abundantly demonstrated by the great and ever-growing part that British Jews are taking in the Public Service, and by the contributions they have made to the development of Commerce, Literature, Art, and Knowledge. As Pioneers and Colonizers they have contributed in no small measure to the mighty growth of the Empire. We Jews of Bulawayo share to the full the feelings of devoted loyalty so characteristic of Colonials. WE offer up our fervent prayer to the Merciful Father of the Universe that he may abundantly bless the Reign of Your Most Gracious Majesties. May He grant Your Majesties long years of peace, prosperity and happiness and may the Empire advance from strength to strength, based upon the ideals of Justice, Righteousness and Peace. We pray that as her Late Majesty's Reign conferred lasting distinction on the 19th Century, so may Your Reign be the Glory of the 20th Century.

"I have the honour to remain. With profoundest respect,

"Your Majesties' most faithful subject and dutiful Servant.
(Signed) Maurice M. Landau.
Honorary Treasurer and Acting Secretary".

Very soon after, the Committee had to deal with another aspect of the same event. On July 21, 1901, a letter went off from Mr. Lowenstark, the Secretary, to Leopold Jacobi, Secretary of the Cape Town Hebrew Congregation, acknowledging receipt of sheet of vellum "intended for the address to be presented to His Majesty King Edward VII on his accession to the Throne, by the Combined Congregations of South Africa".

Great pleasure was expressed at "the language contained in the address, also at the style of the vellum" Mr. Lowenstark added, however, a point which not infrequently cropped up in those days: "I might mention that you have spelt the Bulawayo incorrectly. You have spelt it Bulawayo. I think it is quite possible for your

engrosser to alter the O into an A to make it correct" He accordingly sent back the sheet with the signatures of the officials of the Congregation.

The last echo of wartime conditions occurred only four days before the signing of the Peace of Vereeniging in May 1902, when Lieutenant Burton, in his capacity as Controller of Civil Supplies at Bulawayo, was asked for a permit, addressed to Messrs. Philip Brothers of Port Elizabeth, to forward to the School of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation three cases of bentwood chairs, weighing altogether about 1,000 lbs., proof that the shortages resulting from the conflict were not yet at an end.

## CHAPTER XV111.

## CECIL RHODES AND A JEWISH SETTLEMENT SCHEME

One of the unproved traditions connected with Cecil John Rhodes is his allegedly Jewish ancestry. As the son of an Anglican Clergyman the story sounds more than unlikely, yet so eminent a scholar as Dr. Cecil Roth expressed the view that it may be true. Apart from the statesman's strikingly Semitic profile, about the portrayal of which he always remained sensible, there are the well-attested remarks of his sister, Edith, who sardonically remarked in connection with Cecil's benefactions to the Church, that they were odd for one of his origins. Most probably the answer will never be forthcoming – nor will we know whether the name Rhodes is derived from the island in the Eastern Mediterranean, with its ancient Jewish community. It is a fact, however, that some of Rhodes' ancestors in the 18th Century were dairymen in the London suburb of Hackney, and may have come from there.

Of the Empire-builder's admiration and respect for Jewry there can be no question. A pioneer who knew him, Mr. Norman L. Mendelson, wrote as recently as 1953: "I remember C.J.R. saying: 'In building up this country we must have a leaven of Jews; they are constructive, farseeing and persistent".

This adds significance to an unremembered episode in his career, set down in 1902 by the celebrated early Cape Minister, the Reverend Joel Rabinowitz. "Soon after Mr. Rhodes took possession of Mashonaland", he recalled, "I waited upon the Governor, the late Sir Henry Loch, making him a proposal, but he informed me that it was not in his hands and advised me to appeal to Mr. Rhodes". Mr. Rabinowitz tried several times, but found him too busy with his duties as Premier of Cape Colony and as Chairman of De Beers. So he decided instead to call on John X Merriman, Treasurer-General and a member of the Ministry.

"I suggested to him that Mr. Rhodes should grant a tract of country in the newly-acquired territory for the benefit of my persecuted co-religionists. I distinctly stated that the land should be granted to none but practical certified agriculturists, with but a few tradespeople, such as carpenters and blacksmiths, which are necessary to form a new Colony. I further stated that the fund of Baron de Hirsch would help to carry out the plan".

Merriman promised to submit Rabinowitz's plan to Rhodes, and wrote as follows:

Treasury
Cape Town
10th December 1890

"My dear Mr. Rabinowitz,

I am afraid I must have misled you if I induced you to believe that the project of the immigration of your co-religionists had developed so far as to specify where they could be located. I spoke to Mr. Rhodes generally and mentioned the purport of our conversations and he then said he would not be averse to considering a proposal if it was put before him in definite shape, but I thing you ought to do this.

Believe me,
Yours truly,
(Signed) J.X. Merrimam".

To this Rabinowitz answered that he had no power to do such a thing, but would approach the Jewish authorities.

"It so happened", he noted, "that Sir Henry Loch and Mr. Rhodes soon after left for England. I then addressed a letter to two or three parties about my doings. To one I enclosed the original letter from Mr. Merriman, and to the others copies of the same, also asking them to see Mr. Rhodes on his arrival. My letters were acknowledged..

Unfortunately the Reverend Rabinowitz failed to give the names of the persons in question, but a clue was furnished long after when the great scholar, Dr. Caster, addressing the Anglo-Jewish Association after Rhodes's death, mentioned that the statesman had been "deeply impressed with the precarious position of the Jews in Romania, and was at one time inclined to place a large tract of land at their disposal. Pourparlers were held, but they did not terminate in agreement".

On the same occasion Rabinowitz told the "Jewish Chronicle" in London: "One party wrote that Mr. Rhodes could not be seen. From the statement by the Reverend Caster in your paper, I can well see that if my advice had been taken up with energy, you might have had a Jewish Colony in Rhodesia, located in a large tract of country granted by Mr. Rhodes". That this was never carried further was described by Mr. Rabinowitz as "indeed very lamentable".

## CHAPTER XIX.

## FINANCIAL AND OTHER TROUBLES.

In the history not only of Jewry, but indeed of Southern Africa, the position occupied by the Reverend Moses Isaac Cohen stands unique. If this was in part due to the vastness of the territory and the length of time during which he was the sole spiritual guide, it was equally on account of his forceful and versatile personality, his kindliness and his learning, his dignity and his patriotism.

Moses Isaac Cohen had his faults like other men, but those who had the privilege of knowing him, and who saw him maintain his position at the helm of Jewish affairs in Rhodesia still get a catch in their voices when they think back. The hotchpotch of problems with which he had to deal neither frightened nor troubled him. From the tragic to the comic, from the sublime to the ridiculous, he too them in his stride. In a word, he **was** Rhodesian Jewry.

The letter addressed on March 16, 1900, by the Secretary to the Administrator marked the beginning of a new era in the community. "Reverend M.I.Cohen, B. A., the gentleman appointed by the Very Reverend Chief Rabbi as Minister if the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, is expected to arrive in this town in a few days. On behalf of the Congregation, and in conformity with a resolution passed by its Committee on March 14, I beg to request that the Reverend M.I. Cohen be appointed Marriage Officer to the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation and that the appointment now in favour of Mr. Joseph Saber be cancelled".

From this community of pioneers, so inadequately equipped with even necessities, were sent letters of thanks for kindness on all sides: to John Brown "for the loan of flags, used for decoration at our Minister's reception"; to Mrs. Isaacson and Miss Franks "for your kindness in making curtains for the Ark in the Synagogue and mantles for the Scroll of the Law...." and to the Town Council for lending some plants "during our Festival of Pentecost"

Stresses of existence in Bulawayo are hinted at in a note addressed, on August 5, 1901 to S. Budlender at Bulawayo, wherein he was informed: "At a Special Committee Meeting this evening, the Committee decided to erase your name as a member of the Congregation, in consequence of your having publicly and grossly insulted our Minister at yesterday's meeting in the Schoolroom".

A week later a further message however arrived: "I am requested to inform you that at the Committee Meeting of the Congregation held this evening, in view of the public apology made by you at yesterday's meeting in the Schoolroom, the Committee has great pleasure in reinstating you as a member". The sinner was evidently duly contrite, for immediately after we find Mr. Budlender hard at work again as Honorary Secretary of the Chevra Kadisha, collecting subscriptions!

Problems of a different sort were the subject of an entertaining correspondence opened on January 20, 1902, when the Reverend M.Weiner wrote about "providing a Mikva for the use of the residents of Bulawayo. This was welcomed by the Committee, and it was agreed that the President, Treasurer and Honorary Secretary should wait upon the Mayor in order to secure a suitable site, while Mr. Weiner should be informed that the responsibility for finding the money would fall upon him and his adherents. "It is absolutely impossible", the letter concluded "to erect a Mikva on the Synagogue stands, for reasons inadvisable to lay forth here". Moreover, the Committee made it clear that they were in no way bound by any promise.

The next task was for Mr. Lowenstark to explain to the Acting Town Clerk the nature of a Mikva, which he did in a note of March 30, asking for a site to erect a bath, "approximately as per plan enclosed. The bath is a necessity for the purposes of the rites of our religion, and it would be advisable that it should be erected within reasonable access of Town". Unfortunately the Council were not much impressed. However, the Committee tried again, and the campaign continued until August 21, 1902, when Mr. Cohen addressed a letter to the Chief Rabbi in London:

"The agitation for a Mikva ahs been lately renewed, and a petition is being drafted to the Congregation demanding provision of the same before Rosh Hashanah. In any event, this question is likely to lead to a lively discussion at the next General Meeting; which takes place between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. We should very much value an expression of opinion from you as to the advisability of pushing this matter in critical times such as the present, and I therefore submit the following information for your consideration.

"We have the sum of 250 laid aside as a fixed deposit, which cannot be touched for nine months. Though this sum ahs come in as revenue, I understand it includes a good deal which represents trust money, having been given before my time, especially towards a Building Fund. Apart from this, we have a certain sum in hand towards meeting current expenses, but times are unprecedentedly bad. Our monthly deficit amounts to about £20. and we shall be obliged to make an overdraft on the bank before the close of the financial year. Thus at the Annual General Meeting we shall have to face this overdraft, having only our fixed deposits as our money possession. Universal discouragement prevails in Bulawayo- no one sees any likelihood of business improving for months to come. And yet it is proposed to embark on so expensive a scheme as the projected Mikva. In the first place, it is proposed to construct it on the School stand, but there are many members, including our chief supporters, who are quite opposed to using the School stand for such a purpose. Again the estimates vary greatly as to the probably cost".

The Reverend Cohen then went into the financial aspect, and added that even when the Mikva had been provided; it would probably not be patronized. "We can well judge from our Hebrew classes. There was formerly established classes, equal, if not superior, to any in South Africa and, although expenses were heavy, charged merely a nominal fee. Yet the fees that are actually paid do not produce one-third of the

expenditure...." He closed with the remark: "I believe that it would be a disaster to the best interest of Judaism in Rhodesia to yield to this demand".

This opinion seems to have been shared by Dr. Adler and the outcome was that the project was dropped until more prosperous days.

With S. and J. Weil large creditors of the Congregation, the Committee was thrown into a panic when in October 1900. it received from them a claim for £227,1.2. against the defunct Hebrew Bazaar Fund. "A Bazaar Committee was once formed", the Secretary explained, "for the purpose of raising money, the proceeds to go towards building a Synagogue, but such a Committee no longer exists. The Rinderpest set back the country, and the principal supporters left town. Consequently the Bazaar fell to the ground. The community here at present finds it impossible, owing to circumstances, to proceed with such a large scheme, and we now must humbly suggest you drop the matter. There are at present heavy responsibilities attached to the community, and we trust that, for the sake of those who worked hard for the benefit of Judaism, who have either left or been reduced in circumstances, that you will give the necessary instructions as above suggested".

Back came the reply on November2.

"Dear Sir,-I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 24th October addressed conjointly to my brother, Major S.Weil and myself, and in reply beg to inform you that I have instructed my agents in the Bulawayo Office to withdraw all charges against your Congregation in connection with the Hebrew Bazaar Fund.

Yours faithfully.
(Signed) Julius Weil"

Later the attitude of the firm became much friendlier and Lowenstark, the Secretary, had an interview with Julius, at which he revealed the plight of the Congregation. The bank balance was down to £25.1s. "As our members are being continually reduced, owing to their leaving the country, we can foresee what shall be unable to continue our present work without outside assistance.

"Our present monthly expenditure is the sum of £67, which is made up as follows; Minister's Salary £35, Beadle and Schochet £15, Hebrew School teacher 10, Electric light £1, Commission on Collection £3, Sundry expenses £3. This does not include sanitary fees and cost of maintaining our present temporary buildings and its insurance. Our income (if all collected) , amounts to about £59.10s., made up as follows: Member's Subscriptions £30, Schochet fee from Butcher £15, offerings £15, School Fees £1.10s., showing monthly deficit of £7.10s

He added that the amount of £75 from the Government was the only one received from non- Jewish source.

Julius Weil had given £50 in December 1896, which was still held in trust for the day when it might be put to practical use. Evidently he was impressed, for he sent another cheque for £10.

The financial straits of the Congregation prompted it to appeal also to the Rhodesian Government. On June 12, 1901, the Chief Secretary of the British South African Company at Salisbury was formally asked for a grant of £100 per annum, to which the Committee of the Congregation believed, they were entitled. "As it has only come to their notice recently", said Mr. Lowenstark, "I do not know if it is possible for you to make a grant for the previous years for other churches and denominations have been receiving this.

A very non-committal reply from the Chief Secretary inquiring the reasons for such a request brought another letter from Lowenstark. "On making enquiries at the administrator's Office, Bulawayo. I was there informed that certain annual grants had been made to the Anglican, Wesleyan and other churches, and that there was an allowance of £300 for 'prospective grants....'" He submitted a Book of congregational Rules and a formal statement to the authorities by the Reverend Cohen.

"His Honour the Administrator", was the answer "is not prepared to add to the grants now made, unless it can be shown that there is a real necessity for assistance"

Indignantly Mr. Lowenstark inquired: "Why in this instance if the Chartered Company going back on its principles and refusing to grant, in the case of one denomination, while giving it in the case of others? We are as completely organized as any congregation in Rhodesia, and the increase in our burdens and responsibilities is shown by our constantly rising expenditure. Only the fact that the Government grant would be of the greatest service to us prompts us to make this application. We trust therefore, that you will see your way clear to reconsider your decision".

Without advancing a step, Andrew B. Rankin of the General Branch of the Chief Secretary's office at Salisbury replied again: "Consideration will be given to your request for a monetary grant, if you can show that there is the necessity therefore".

Recapitulating how the Congregation was conducting its work under very great difficulties, Mr. Lowenstark set out: "We have firstly no permanent structure for our Synagogue, not having funds to build the same. Secondly the income of the Congregation is derived from annual subscriptions of members, which amount to about £340 per annum. supplemented by donations, which last year amounted to £198, whereas our ordinary yearly expenditures amounts to roughly about £650 (Salaries amounting to £516). Our donations fell off last year to the extent of £90, owing to the bad state of business here, and it is a great tax upon these resources of our wealthier members, who are so few in number now, many having left Bulawayo for good".

There was also payment for religious instruction to be considered, since classes were not self-supporting, and any deficit had to be made good among the

members. The Benevolent Society was similarly supported, “to look after our poorer co-religionists, which is in a measure an extra tax upon their resources". Lowenstark closed with the words: "You will thus see that we have no possible means for the present, even to continue our work, or lay by any sum towards a permanent structure for our Synagogue, and trust you will see your way clear to make us a grant, in common with the other religious denominations who are now receiving it".

The form forwarded for completion gives an insight into the functioning of the Congregation:

"ECCLESIASTICAL RETURN.
(NO.4 RECORD STATISTICAL DEPARTMENT)
Local Revenues 1 April 1900- 31st March 1902.

Church of the Hebrew Denomination at Bulawayo.
N.B. This Account may be made out for the year ending at any date on which the Church books are balanced.

Receipts.

| | |
|---|---|
| Balance. Balance brought forward | £37.6.9. |
| Two years Subscriptions | £673.19.3. |
| Donations | £487.18.0 |
| Marriage Fees. | £ 5.15.6. |
| Burials | £30.15.0 |
| Grants, Rents, Bazaars, Interest, School fees, etc. | £245.19.5. |
| Note: of this about £150 are funds held in trust | |
| | £1,481.13.11. |

Expenses.

| | |
|---|---|
| Clergy- fixed | £660.0.0 |
| Variable | £312.0.0. |
| Buildings: Erection pf and repairs to and furniture | £116.6.8. |
| Miscellaneous | £ 63.6.5. |
| Balance in hand n August 31,1901 | £30.0.10 |
| | £1,481.1 3.11. |

N.B. This copy is made from two years' Balance sheets, from September 1, 1899 to August 31, 1901

(signed) M.D. Lowenstark
SECRETARY

The heart of the Rhodesian Government at least softened and a gift of 75, extremely welcome, though inadequate, was sent by the Chief Secretary at Salisbury. It prompted Lowenstark to forward yet another letter on December 18, 1902, asking him "kindly to increase the grant of £75 to £100 for the ensuing year. My Committee is of opinion that they are not being fairly treated in comparison with other denominations, who are receiving the £100 grant. Our Congregation is a very poor one, and our expenditures greatly exceed our revenue...." He concluded by reminding the Chief Secretary that, where as all the others had their own churches actually erected, the Jews were still in a temporary building, with little or no prospect of putting up anything better.

By way of marking time, the Government Statistician, George Duthie of Salisbury, asked further questions about the Congregation, the answer to which, given by Reverend Cohen, shows further details of communal life in those days. "We support our own poor and distressed, and every case of Jewish poverty is dealt with by this body. The officers of the Burial Society deal with the dying; these sacred duties are willingly performed by a Sub-Committee of the Synagogue". After explaining that the purpose of the School was to inculcate Jewish principles in the children, and to make them conversant in Hebrew, he said: "The Minister attends each morning during the ordinary school days, at the St.Johns and Convent Schools, and instructs Jewish pupils in the ethical and moral principles of their Faith. Each afternoon Hebrew classes are held. In addition, there are classes on Saturday and Sunday mornings. We have devised this elaborate system because we consider the proper education of the young to be our most fundamental work.. We have a library for adults, for whose benefit we have periodical lectures and debates, in addition to Synagogue services. The Congregation exercises a deep influence on Jewish social life.

"The Schoolroom forms a sort of communal centre, in which we hold all meetings and social gatherings, and in this way unity and harmony are diffused throughout the community...." Mr. Cohen explained that the Congregation gave voice to the Jewry as a whole, many of whose members come from non-British countries. "I have myself taken over the work of naturalizing many of the members of our community. Owing almost entirely to the influence of our Congregation these newcomers are rapidly Anglicized. Their children, in particular, in a year or two become indistinguishable from British and Colonial children.. We Anglicize and socialize the community, while paying faithful adherence to the tenets of Judaism. We concern ourselves in the general welfare of the Jewish community of Matabeleland, and particularly of Bulawayo, and they look to us to represent, defend and develop their interests. I trust this general statement of our work may suffice">

But with no more money forthcoming. a desperate appeal went forth to Caesar himself. On October 3, 1903, Lowenstark addressed the Private Secretary: “Will you please call the attention of His Honour the Administrator to the fact that we have not yet received the annual Government grant to the above Congregation. Mr. Wilfred Honey, the Civil Commissioner, wrote to the authorities in Salisbury in August last, recommending £100 annual grant, but no reply has yet been received. I trust that

you will kindly bring this matter to the immediate notice of Sir William Milton, and hope to receive your reply before your departure for Salisbury, with cheque.

A cheque came in December, but once more it was only £75, so that Lowenstark, in his thanks pleaded with the Chief Secretary to see his way clear to put an increase to £100 on the estimates for the next financial year, as was recommended by the Acting Civil Commissioner".

The only reply was the request from Mr.Duhie for yet more information for his statistical returns:

"We do no missionary work" Mr. Cohen explained on February 1904. "Our efforts are entirely confined to the local Jewish population of Bulawayo and, to a much less extent, to the whole Jewish population of Rhodesia who from time to time require the assistance of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation the only-properly equipped and organized Jewish Congregation. We hold regular services weekly, but our main services are held at the Jewish Festivals, and are crowded. On such occasions sermons are delivered in English, lectures at other times, by means of our Library. and by personal propaganda we carry on a steady educational work, which is having a marked influence as the years go by.

"Our children attend the ordinary day schools, but we have our own Hebrew classes. In addition, the opportunity is afforded of taking 35 to 40 Jewish children, attending the St.Johns and Convent Schools, five times a week in Jewish religion, ethics and history. Our Congregations is the only one taking advantage of these facilities, and I am pleased to report that the arrangement works very satisfactorily. We have thus far been able to care for our own poor, though we are indebted to the Government for a few free railway passes. We visit the sick and the dying, and give the dead their last rites. Indeed, we may take as our motto the words of Terence slightly amended: "Judaeus sum et nihil Judaicum alienum a me puto". We interest ourselves in everything pertaining to the welfare of the Jewish populations of this country, when ever necessary act as their representatives....

English classes for adults had just been established to facilitate and accelerate the process of “Anglicization”, the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation being responsible for the educational work which was influencing Jewish newcomers and converting them gradually into a sound and integral part of the general population.

Unfortunately the financial troubles besetting the Jewish Community were also felt by the British South Africa Company, which, illogical though its differentiation seemed, professed itself unable to produce a larger subsidy.

Another problem with which Mr. Cohen had to contend was that of defining his attitude to Michael Welensky (whose name was variously spelt as Wolenski, as well as Wilenski). He had written in from Gwelo, asking for the Minister’s services as a Mohel, to which the Committee of the Congregation replied: “Before he can do so, we

will have to be satisfied that your wife is a Jewess or, if a Gentile, has been received into Judaism by a recognized Beth Din…".

Satisfaction seems to have been given, for Mr. Welensky was informed that the charge for the Minister was six guineas, the certificates were in order and would be held for his wife when she came to Bulawayo.

But poor Michael's troubles were by no means over, for he fell into arrears with an advance made to him through the Benevolent Society. A letter was sent off on August 25, 1903, to the Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Company at Sebakwe (now known as Que Que), reminding him: "There are three payments of £5 overdue, as per your arrangement to pay off your indebtedness. I trust, therefore, that you will not fail to send me your cheque for £15…"

He evidently did fail, for a few months later G. Pilkington, a solicitor of Gwelo, was handed the account to collect. At the last minute, however, Welensky raised a few more pounds to stave off a summons. "My Committee", the Secretary told the lawyer, "wish me to inform you that you must get your cost of settlement from Mr. Welensky. He has paid no interest at all, and had the use of the money for so many years. He could have repaid the loan by installments long before this".

One record of unique value in the history of early Rhodesian Jewry has been preserved through a request from L.L. Goldsmid, now editor of the "South African Jewish Chronicle" in Cape Town. Anxious to secure subscribers for his new journal, he asked for a list of the members of the Bulawayo Congregation, which was duly furnished, and which stands as the earliest and most complete compilation of its kind.

**LIST OF MEMBERS OF BULAWAYO CONGREGATION AS ON JANUARY 23, 1902**

Aserman R. 8th Avenue
Assersohn, L., Grand Hotel
Basch, E., 7th Avenue
Beemer, J., Abercorn Street
Beemer, H., Abercorn Street
Budlender, S., 7th Avenue
Budlender, C., 7th Avenue
Bernstein, J.
Bass, H., 7th Avenue
Brayer, J., Market Square
Baron, I.
Barnet, J. 7th Avenue
Boyer, J.
Blume, A., c/o M.S.Leven
Basch, B.V., Market Square
Braimer, S, Market Square
Hepker, W., Abercorn Street
Immerman, J., Matopos
Jacobs, A.
Jacobs, S., 7th Avenue
Gilman, J., Brickfields
Joseph, J., Abercorn Street
Kaufman, A., Brickfields
Kaufman, O.
Josephson, J., Brickfields
Koren, A.
Klempton, J., Fife Street
Leven, M.S. 7th Avenue
Landau, D. , Abercorn Street
Landau, H., Abercorn Street
Leven, P., c/o Landau Bros.
Lipset, B., Fife Street

Bagg, W.
Cohen, I, Rhodes Street
Coleman, I.
Davis, E., Avenue Hotel
Epstein, I., c/o J. Joseph
Ellenbogen, Jack, 7th Avenue
Ellenbogen, Joseph, 7th Avenue
Ellenbogen, H. B.
Falk, J., Grey Street
Friedman, Enkeldoorn
Frankel, J., Abercorn Street
Faiga, L., Abercorn Street
Frank, L., Landau Bros.
Fedderman, L., Abercorn Street
Goldberg, A., Brickfields
Goldberg, I., Abercorn Street
Goldberg, J., Abercorn Street
Goldberg, S., c/o E. Basch
Gordon, H.
Grossberg, A., Fife Street
Granger, E., c/o M.S.Leven
Grill, M., Station Stores
Grauberg, M.S.
Gollan, D., Abercorn Street
Hoffman, L., Market Square
Hoffman, J., Market Square
Horwich, M., Bauer's Township
Hirschberg, A., c/o M.S.Leven
Hepker, H., Abercorn Street

Liptz, J.
Lassman, A., Fife Street
Lowenstark, M.D.
Moss, Jack, Market Square
Moss, Mrs ., c/o Lock Bros.
Moss, J.
Morrison, J.
Mangelsdorff, J., 6th Avenue
Natkin, L., Main Street
Nurick, M.
Nathanson, A.
Palca, T., Main Street
Pevsner, M., Abercorn Street
Pevsner, F., c/o J. Falk
Pieters, I., Market Square
Pieters, M., c/o J. Falk
Rotovski, N. c/o J. Falk
Rubenstein, M. c/o J. Falk
Rubenstein, H.L. c/o Landau Bros.
Rubenstein, L. c/o Landau Bros.
Rabinowitz, A. Abercorn Street
Solomon, B., Fife Street
Solomon, S. Fife Street
Solomon M. Fife Street
Steinman, O., Fife Street
Salant, M., Abercorn Street
Shawzin, J.
Sussman, E.
Spiro, R., Imperial Hotel
Snapper, c/o S. Jacoby
Scheiner, B., Abercorn Street
Thal, M. c/o H. Hepker
Schulman, J.R.
Schulman, S., Abercorn Street

## CHAPTER XX

## BEGINNINGS IN SALISBURY AND UMTALI

Although the focal point of Rhodesian Jewry was Bulawayo, progress was also recorded in other parts of the Colony. Salisbury, for example, was advancing, even if the days were still distant when it would outstrip its rival in total population. As early as June 2, 1895, the Masonic Hotel there witnessed an assembly of 20 men and two women to form a new Congregation. With £399 subscribed, this tiny group chose Samuel Hyman as President, and asked the British South Africa Company for a Synagogue site. Within two days the authorities agreed to make over three stands.

In his memoirs, "Great Days", Colonel Frank Johnson, the famous leader of the Pioneer Column, quoted Rhodes as making a significant comment on the news. The statesman, always a friend of Israel, "Became very cheerful and quite excited, exclaiming: 'my country is alright if the Jews come. My country is all right!' For he knew", added the Colonel, "the presence of Jews meant that they had faith in the commercial prospects of the new country…. How different from the Hitler theory 50 years later!"

As there was no suitable building during the High Festivals of 1895, a Minyan gathered in the store of Julius Altman. About 20 Jews attended the reading of the Musaph by a shop owner called Kaplan. The following year there was still no Minister available, and the High Festival Services were taken by A. Rosenthal, Mr. Freeman and Mack. Within a few years Sam Hyman had been succeeded as President by Van Praagh, who also achieved the honour, during his term of office, of being elected Mayor of Salisbury. In that capacity, on July 14, 1901, (the Jewish Year 5661), he laid the foundation stone, with a specially-inscribed silver trowel, for the first Synagogue in the capital.

Assisting in the communal work as Honorary Secretary of the Congregation was Moss Harris, followed first by Monty Jacobs and then by Morris Freeman.

One of the earliest surviving letters, addressed to the President of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, dated July 4, 1897, was signed by Edgar Granger, Honorary Secretary of the Bulawayo Congregation. It is with the greatest pleasure that I have the honour to thank your Congregation on behalf of my Committee, for the kind wishes expressed in your wire of congratulation, which was read at the laying of the foundation stone of the Synagogue, and was greatly appreciated by all present".

As yet there was no question of Salisbury having a Minister of its own, but very occasionally the Reverend M.I. Cohen made the 300-mile trip by Mail-coach from Bulawayo to hold a service

On August 16, 1901, a letter went off to R. Bernstein, the new Honorary Secretary and Treasurer at Salisbury. "I have much pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your favour of the 11th instant, enclosing cheque for £31.5.6., being refund of £25 on account of the Reverend Cohen's fare, £6.6 Congregational Fee for Minister's service and 2/6. for Exchange…."

Early Jewish names of those living in Salisbury in 1895 include A. Cohen of Edwards & Co., General Merchants; L. Hyman, General Dealer; S. Hyman, Commission Agent; I. Kirschbaum, Watchmaker and Jeweler; H. Lichtheim, General Dealer; L. Marcovitch, General Dealer; H. Myers, Painter and Glazier and E. Myers, General Dealer; L. Suzman, Managing Director of the Salisbury Reef Gold Mining Company Ltd,; D. M. Jacobs, Secretary of the Salisbury Stock and Share Exchange Company Ltd. and S. Hyman, Managing Director of the Salisbury Central Estate Company Ltd.

To this were added the following year, E. Levy, Manager of the Avenue Hotel; M. Benjamin, Cigar Divan and Toilet Club; J.H. Lazarus, Proprietor of the Cecil Hotel; B. Myers & Co., French Bakery, Outfitters and Storekeepers, along with B. Rothstein, Proprietor of the Salisbury Toilet Saloon.

Among the newer businesses, set up at the end of the nineties, was the Salisbury Cycle Depot of Pioneer Street, Proprietor L. Bernstein, P.O.Box 225; likewise Cohen & Co., Pioneer Street, Auctioneers, Brokers and Commission Agents. (Produce and Cattle Sales held every Saturday. Consignments Stored and Disposed of by Auction or Private Treaty to the Best Advantage. Prompt Settlement"). The Salisbury Lager Brewery and Ice Factory, backed by the famous Rhodesian pioneer magnate, Tom Meikle and conducted by A. Rosenthall & Co., produced, we are told, "First Class Lager Beer, Fully Equal to the Imported Article, in Casks and Bottles. Ice Supplied Daily in any Quantity".

Before long, however, the firm encountered difficulties, and was ultimately disposed of to the South African Breweries. Rosenthall incidentally was Manager of the Masonic Hotel on behalf of the Proprietor, J. Susman. Then there was Mayer Bronse, Cycle Depot, P. Kriesman of the Imperial Hotel, H. Isaacs, Tobacconist and Cigar Merchant and Posner & Co., Storekeepers.

Meanwhile at Umtali the Manica Board of Executors had been established, with L. Weissenborn among its directors. Julius Altson had settled there as Managing Director of the Manica Trading Company, as had Hyman Marks, barkeeper of Third Street.

Upon his arrival in England, Abner Cohen in May 1898 was interviewed by the "South African Globe", under the heading of "The Real Rhodesia – Plain Truths about its Men and Mines". The article opened with an onslaught upon the unfriendly elements of those days, who bear a remarkable likeness to their counterparts of the present time.

"The Rhodesia and the Rhodesians of Little Englanders' imaginations and Laboucherian misstatement (a reference to continual attacks by Henry Labouchere in parliament and in his weekly, "Truth"), are a very different matter indeed from the country as it is, and the people as they are. This can be readily ascertained at any time, if people and the press in England will only take the trouble to go to representative settlers themselves, men who have borne the brunt of the early later hardships, and glean from their own lips the plain truth as to the present position of Matabeleland and Mashonaland and the future outlook. Mr. Abner Cohen is just one of those settlers. He is an old hand at getting at the true inwardness of new mining countries….

After describing his earlier career, "South African Globe" mentions that Abner Cohen had taken back with him his black servant, Tim, "an excellent specimen of the natives of the country…. And a testimony in himself of the splendid treatment which natives receive from Rhodesian settlers"

Asked to give his general impressions, Mr. Cohen said: "Rhodesia is a White man's country in every sense of the word. Commercially there was great room for improvement before the Railway was opened, but already there has been a rapid change for the better".

To the question, "What about the gold? " Abner replied: "I have found the country a great network of reefs of the most variable quality. Very many are good; some are bad and others again of a very indifferent type. In testing these and arriving at my conclusions, I brought to bear comparisons which my knowledge of Johannesburg, from the earliest days, enabled me to apply, and I do not hesitate to say that there must be a very bright prospect, also a brilliant future, before Rhodesia. As an agricultural country, I consider it will grow almost anything and, as to the numerous rumours about the water difficulties, all I have to say is that there is unlimited water at a slight depth from the surface. If only the excellent example that Mr. Rhodes has set up in respect of the conservation of water is generally followed, Rhodesia might well become as successful a country as any part of South Africa".

"What about the better class mines?"

"I have already expressed" was the reply, "the opinion that numbers of these have actually been working for some time past, with great success, and that the merits of Rhodesia thoroughly warrant capitalists sending their own money there for investment. If you take my own case, I have already such confidence in the future of Rhodesia that I have established a big business stake in the country. There is no prospect of my severing my connection with Rhodesia. I continue absolutely convinced of the future of the country, and that given good men and good money, it is assured. No one need or should expect a rush, after the manner of the booms which have occurred in connection with the Rand, but on the other hand, you may look for permanent improvements, which, after all, is much more satisfactory than a series of financial booms and slumps, such as have occurred in connection with the Transvaal. There is only one

word of warning. For some time to come, Bulawayo will be no place for a man without capital, but with capital I should judge he could employ it there with as much advantage to himself as anywhere else in the world".

## CHAPTER XX1

## SAM GOLDRICH AND SAM MARKS.

Although early Rhodesia, with its aura of gold reefs and other underground treasure, inevitably drew a mass of get-rich-quickly fortune-seekers, a number of Jews among them, it is remarkable to find at what an early stage important South African Jewish industrialists were already concerned with the possibilities offered in other realms.

Sam Goldreich, mainly remembered today as a pioneer of Zionism, offers one of the most striking examples of an effort to exploit the less obvious resources of Rhodesia. Born in East Prussia in 1862, son of a Rabbi, he reached England as a boy and attended to the Transvaal at the age of 18. In early Johannesburg he soon became known as a successful operator, both in the property and mining markets, being responsible for the erection of Goldreich Buildings in Joubert Street, which housed the original Post Office. He also opened up the area now known as Hillbrow, which in his honour still boasts of Goldreich Street.

Along with his brother, J. H. (Jim) Goldreich, he pioneered many new ideas, amongst them exploitation of cinnabar, the ore of mercury, which he succeeded in locating in the Western Transvaal, though without much profit to himself.

In the Jewish community, Samuel Goldreich played a leading role, and was responsible, as Chairman for the establishment of the original Transvaal Zionist Association, one of the major interests of his life. He was personally known to Theodore Herzl and enjoyed his respect. His Rhodesian associates, with which we are concerned, date back to 1897.

The earlier stages of the episode are difficult to trace, but, following the opening up by the Moodie Trekkers and others of the sub-tropical Eastern Districts, particularly Manicaland and the Gaza country, a proposition was examined by Harry Lichtheim of the firm of Lichtheim & Wilk, Brokers and Commission Agents of Salisbury. When samples of a creeper containing the latex of India-rubber were brought into their offices, the partners, in view of the prevailing world-wide demand for that commodity, immediately had report prepared on its commercial possibilities. Dated November 16, 1897, it claimed that the rubber trees growing near Melsetter were comparatively easy to exploit. The Goldreich brothers, contacted by Lichtheim and Wilk, were even more enthusiastic and were instructed on December 21 to make formal application for exploitation rights. After the lapse of the year-end holidays, on January 14, 1898, the authorities at Salisbury cabled to the head office of the British South African Company in London:

"Lichtheim, for the Goldreich Brothers of London and Johannesburg, proposes to form a company for growing rubber in South Melsetter, with a working capital of £50,000. He asked the grant of 16 farms along the Sabi River, South of

Swanepoel's concession, the British South Africa Company to have two representatives on the Board. We recommend the grant of eight farms at once, at the usual quitrent, provided development at once commences and £20,000 spent thereon within five years, also the right to use a further eight farms as required. The title to be given when the satisfactory development carried out. Natives not to be disturbed. All mineral rights reserved. Farms to be forfeited. With compensation if conditions not fully complied with. Do you confirm?'

On the draft of the cable, still preserved in the Central African Archives, the additional words "Lands reported valueless for ordinary European farming", are crossed out.

Subject to the approval of the London Board, the proposition was accepted and on January 27, the investors applied for 100,000 acres in the Melsetter district. In addition to the india-rubber producing trees, they were to cultivate olives, cocoa, sunflowers and other crops. Steps were already under way to define the area, near Chickere, the American mission station on the Sabi River. Quitrent was fixed at £ 2 per 1,000 morgen, each farm averaging about 3,000 morgen. The survey, which occupied months, resulted in the demarcation of 50,493 acres, of which the fees payable to the Government were £618.48.

Sam Goldreich announced on April 26, 1899 that he was leaving for Europe in a few days to float the new company there, a fact confirmed in a letter from Lichtheim to the British South Africa Company as Salisbury.

But the new Company took longer to launch than at first hoped. Only a few days before the outbreak of the Boer War, on October 7. 1899, John Mahon, originally employed at the famous Botanic Gardens at Kew, near London, described as the "botanical expert and a high authority on rubber Trees", was instructed to report. On October 20, 1899, he expressed his willingness to undertake the task

Lichtheim, who agreed to accompany him, engaged no fewer than 100 carriers and arranged to pay Mahon £1,000 a year. One complication, revealed at the last minute, was set out in a letter from L.C. Meredith, Native Commissioner at Melsetter. The area is question include a "place looked on as sacred by all the tribes, including those in Lichtheim block". Meredith complained that the arrangement had been made without the approval of the local chief, Muskavanu, who ought not to be antagonized. To his suggestion that the trouble might be overcome by an exchange of land, the Goldreich Brothers promptly agreed.

The course of the expedition itself is vividly set out in a memorandum, headed, "Report of the Trip to Gazaland" by Mr. Mahon.

"Arrived at Melsetter on October 15, and presented my letter of introduction to Mr. Longden, Civil Commissioner", said Mahon. "I remained there a day, gaining all possible information from him as to the best route to take; I received

from the letters to Mr. Meredith, Native Commissioner at Gewndingwe, also to Mr. Bates, in charge of the American Mission Station at Mount Selinda. On October 16 I proceeded to Gewndingwe, where I handed my letter to Mr. Meredith, from whom I received every assistance in securing boy to carry my things. He also gave me a Police boy to act as guide around various places. I got him to question the natives as to whether rubber trees were in existence in the Southern parts of Melsetter and the Sabi Valley. They said that to their knowledge there were none and that the rubber in the district came from the creeper. Both the natives and Civil Commissioner, however, were agreed in stating that rubber trees could be most successfully grown in the Southern part of the district.

"I questioned Mr. Meredith on the native position as to whether a grant of land would in any way affect the natives of the district. He emphatically stated that, provided the natives were treated fairly, it would be to their advantage to have work on the land whereon they were living, and that they (the natives) would benefit by it".

On leaving Gewndingwe on October 18 for the American Mission Station, Mr. Mahon stopped a night at Kenilworth Police Camp, where he met A.L. Renwick, a particularly valuable encounter, since that settler had spent a number of years in India, and actually had practical experience of rubber cultivation. With him he discussed the whole project, and was reassured to find "the district adapted".

Moving on next day to Mount Selinda Mission, he introduced himself to the Superintendent, Mr. Bates, who gave him a cordial welcome and the offer of any help that lay in his power. During his three days there Mahon gathered as much information as he could. Unfortunately Wilder, who was considered the best-informed man on the subject, happened to be away for some weeks. "I found the rubber creepers plentiful and tapped one myself. The results were the sample now before you".

Analysis of a similar piece sent by him to Johannesburg showed 91 per cent rubber, 5.4 percent resin and moisture and 3.6 percent fibre. The creepers grew to any height, some reaching 70 feet, twisting round the trees until the top was reached, when they spread out and burst into fruit and leaf. Foliage very small and the fruit round and fairly soft, about the size of a peach, brownish in colour and tart to the taste, even when ripe,

One of the American missionaries, Dr. Thompson, told Mahon that, about three years previously, another kind of tree had been pointed out to him by a native, which the latter claimed also contained rubber.

From Mount Selinda, on October 23, the expedition struck out South West, reaching a kraal on the same night. There he headman Ziti, said that rubber was secured from the creepers in the Sabi Valley. After trekking West then North to the junction of the Tanganda and Sabi Rivers, Mahon next tried an eastward move before turning back to Melsetter, where he gave Mr. Longden a short account of his travels.

"The opinions of the most reliable people in the district", he said, "are undoubtedly favourable to the success of rubber-growing. I found the climate and the condition of soil, from the American Mission Station; well adapted for the object I have in view- cocoa, olives and sunflowers… The Valley undoubtedly has a splendid climate and soul for the growth of rubber trees, and with irrigation, which I think can be managed from the Sabi River, and other sources, the rubber plantations should prove a great success…"

Today more that 60 years later, an enormous irrigation and general development scheme is in progress in that very same Sabi Valley and, although the circumstances have not yet justified the laying out of rubber plantations, is it regarded as one of the most promising economic frontiers of Rhodesia.

With the outbreak of the Boer War Sam Goldreich himself had to leave his headquarters on the Witwatersrand as refugee for Cape Town. Only in March 1900 was he able to take up the thread, when from his new office at 21 and 22 Mansion House Chamber in Adderley Street, he addressed a letter to J.M. Orpen, Surveyor- General at Salisbury, under the heading, "Melsetter Agricultural Grant".

"Adequate commercial utilization of the above ground has engaged our unremitting attention, and has necessitated voluminous correspondence with experts in many parts of the world. At the expense of a great deal of money, labour and times, we have accumulated a quantity of valuable opinions relative to this project.

"All authorities agree that the failure of similar schemes in other parts of the world has been due to lack of transport and the employment of incompetent amateurs. They have advised me, before commencing work, to obtain information as to the capacities of the ground, the value of the local markets, the best means of transport, etc., to place a properly qualified man in charge, no matter how high the remuneration demanded may be; to give him competent assistants, together with the best agricultural and engineering consultative facilities, and then substantial profits should result".

Goldreich recounted how, on the recommendation of Sir Thistleton Dyer, head of Kew Gardens, he had secured the services of John Mahon, and the results of his three months research.

"This report, in our opinion, is a document of exceptional values, and is, we believe, the first authoritative statement as to the cultural potentialities of that district. We have great pleasure in presenting same to you, and hope it will be of practical utility to the inhabitants of Rhodesia, and to the British South African Company. Should you desire it, you are at liberty to publish the same".

In order that the technical staff might be thoroughly competent, Goldreich proposed to appoint it on the nomination of some person of undoubted authority, such as the Imperial Commissioner for Agriculture, West Indies, the President of the Planter's Association, Ceylon, or the Chief of the Department of Agriculture at Washington. His firm was also negotiating for the services, as Consulting Agriculturist, of Professor

Hedger Wallace, who had recently lectured at the Imperial Institute, whilst, as their own Consulting Engineer, Mr. S.B. Asher would advise on irrigation, power canals and machinery. A tobacco curer from Cuba, a California fruit grower and accountant and assistants would live on the estate.

"Mr. Mahon, we think rightly, attaches great value to the opportunities for transport, irrigation and power afforded by the rivers intersection the ground, and therefore we desire that facilities in these respects be granted us; although it is not al all certain that the Sabi would be available the whole year round. Still, we think if of sufficient importance to endeavor to avail ourselves of this means of effectually competing in the European market…"

Mining probabilities, he thought, were remote. This ground is to be utilized for agricultural purposes, and the geological formation renders the existence of gold-bearing reefs highly improbable. Hence we think that the intrusion of the mineral prospector would be a great disadvantage to us, especially in view of the possibility that reckless and unscrupulous men may, under cover of their prospecting licenses, destroy timber, or blackmail us, and we therefore desire you to reserve this ground from prospecting operations".

To British South Africa Company, in return for their providing one half of the working capital, Goldreich offered the right of appointing half the directors and nomination 10 free planter pupils. The latter would be of a class similar to those found in India, who would be instructed and boarded without charge and at the end of their apprenticeship would be provide by their guardians with sufficient funds to allow them to become independent planters themselves. He hoped later to persuade the Surveyor-General to provide those who had earned Certificates of Competence from Goldreich Brothers with land at cheap rates. It would be obvious to the authorities how useful such a new class of settlers would be to Rhodesia.

A cheques for £ 719.4 8. Goldreich concluded, had been forwarded to the Government for survey fees and quitrent. "We have spent upwards of £4,000 in preparatory measures, reports, etc., in order that operations, when begun, may be conducted on an assured basis, and it will be a source of gratification to us all preliminaries be completed with the least possible delay, especially as we only await the confirmation o the suggested modified contract, to begin operations. We shall be pleased to hear from you as soon as possible.

Fresh delays, characteristic of State departments, occurred before the documents were dispatched by the Surveyor-General for comment to the office of the Civil Commissioner at Melsetter, W.M. Longden. The latter, while agreeing that the conclusions were on the whole fairly correct, made a number of comments on Mr. Mahon's "exceptionally roseate view of the prospects of the proposed industry", and failure to mention "the many and serious drawback which would have to be contended with".

He agreed, for example, that the area covered by the grant, which included a very large section of the South Melsetter plateau, enjoyed a climate and rainfall practically identical with that of Mount Selinda, and was therefore eminently suitable for cattle-raising and agriculture. "The greater portion of the block may fairly be said to be healthy and suitable for European occupation, but there is no doubt that the low-lying parts are quite unsuitable and very deadly at certain periods of the year. Mr. Mahon, however, saw this Low Country at the end of the dry season and consequently at the healthiest time of the year, though admittedly when the pasturage would be at its worst. It is generally acknowledged that the portion of the Sabi River which forms the Western boundary of this estate flows through very rich country, vastly superior to any found in the neighbourhood of that river further north. The rainfall in the Sabi Valley is, however, very small, some parts of it having none for practically eight months in the year. Still, I believe that irrigation works could be constructed, though they would probably be costly, and that water could be obtained by the sinking of wells at no great depth".

About timber resources of the area Longden considered Mr. Mahon was right. With trees averaging 20 or 30 yards apart, they represent an enormous amount of heavy growth, which might well support an industry.

Mr. Goldreich's proposals the Civil Commissioner declared to be "generally fair, with the exception of his suggestion with regard to minerals. I would on no account advise the Government to accede to his request to reserve this ground from prospecting operations. The country has never been prospected, and therefore it is uncertain if valuable minerals exist. Ancient copper workings are found at no very great distance from their Northern boundary, and it is very probable that coal beds will eventually be discovered upon this ground".

On the whole Longden thought the new agreement "reasonable", and that it would be inadvisable to insist on the normal condition under which farms were granted in Rhodesia, namely that each individual property must be beneficially occupied and worked. "The industry should not be handicapped by the distribution of operations would make working more economical and conduce to the success of the understanding".

With the Boer War still dragging on and no immediate prospects of peace, Sam Goldreich found the raising of capital in London more difficult than he had foreseen, and before the year 1900 was forced to make a radical change in his agreement with Chartered Company. Instead of a renewed concession, a lease was now granted, which he endeavoured to turn to account.

Two years went by and in 1902; at long last, the fighting in South Africa was over. But now troubles of a new kind began, for, with the cessation of military expenditure came a depression that grew only blacker as time passed. By February 25, 1903, Goldreich, now himself in financial trouble, had to ask for a cancellation and for a refund of certain payments already made by him to the Government, amounting to £769.7.2.

So ended a project entirely to the honour of the Jewish pioneers of old-time Rhodesia.

° ° ° ° ° °

This was by no means the only industrial enterprise then planned by Jewish interests. Richard Rothkugel, that well-known Capetonian mainly responsible for growth and prosperity of the famous furniture manufacturers, D. Isaacs &Co., took the initiative in one of these.

David Isaacs, who had started in 1875, withdrew from the scene fairly early, but the workshops which he fathered expanded until they employed a staff of over 300, the largest in Cape Colony. During 1898 the firm sent a personal letter to the Right Honourable C. J. Rhodes, M.L.A. Rondebosch.
"Dear Sir, - When our Mr. Rothkugel spoke to you some time since, with reference to the stands in Bulawayo for business purposes, you promised to use your influence to procure us an eligible site at the upset price. Our reason for not having written you upon the subject before is that we have only now decided to open a branch of our business in Bulawayo. This decision has been influenced by the fact that, with our extensive machinery, we can produce more furniture that there is at present demand for, and therefore it has become necessary that we should open up other markets for our manufactures, in order that constant work may be found for our plant. We feel sure that your recommendation is all that is necessary……

"(Signed) D. ISAACS & Co."

The letter bore fruit, and on February 26, 1898, Rhodes' private secretary, Gordon Le Suer, wrote to the Administrator of Matabeleland:
"Dear Captain Lawley, a promise, Mr. Rhodes bids me say, was made to Messrs. Isaacs &Co. that, when they were in a position to open a branch business in Bulawayo, they should be granted a stand upon the above terms.

"Mr. Rhodes thinks that if you do no see your way to meeting Messrs. I sacs & Co. wishes you might select a stand and let them have at it what you consider an average price…"

A few weeks later, on March 30, 1898, Lawley addressed a note to Rothkugel. "A large number of stands were offered by public auction as recently as November last. In spite of many applications, the Government have regularly declined, since that date, to sell any by private agreement. Under a resolution recently passed by the Legislative Council, no land or stands are in future to be disposed of except by public auction, and I regret, under the circumstances, that I cannot grant you a stand at the upset price…"

Unwilling to accept defeat, Rothkugel submitted the papers once again to the authorities, with the result that on June 15, 1898 , J. A. Stevens, the Acting Secretary of the British South African Company, informed E. Ross Townsend, Civil Commissioner of Bulawayo: "Mr. Rhodes thinks the promise should be carried out, and before the commonage is handed over to the Municipality, he wishes you to reserve a stand for Messrs. Isaacs & Co. there at the upset price of the stands, say at the last sale…"

A precedent had already been established, through the grant to Captain Lindell of two other plots on the Commonage.

Faced with this instruction, the Administrator duly sanctioned the deal on July 6. 1898. D. Isaacs & Co. made their preparations to start up as the first furniture manufacturers in Rhodesia, but the outbreak of the Boer War soon after and the subsequent Depression, also put an end to this venture.

* * * * * *

In view of the proverbial enterprise and farsightedness of the celebrated Sammy Marks, it is not surprising to find that this famous Transvaal industrialist and agricultural pioneer also turned his eyes to the lands beyond Limpopo. Discussions, began in 1897, were conducted through his brother, Eli Marks, who so closely collaborated with him in the foundling of the town of Vereeninging, and in the beginnings of the famous Vereeniging Estates, for many years the biggest agricultural enterprise in South Africa.

Having revolutionized farming in the old Boer Republic by demonstration the first mechanized ploughs, harvesters and the like, having set up herds of cattle and sheep running into five figures and planted hundreds of thousands of trees and vast areas of grain and vegetables, Sammy Marks hoped to do something similar up North. Well acquainted with Cecil John Rhodes, with whom he had participated in founding the Imperial Cold Storage and Supply Company and other ventures, he was referred to the Administrator, Sir William Milton to settle details.

When no answer had come from him, he sent a wire on January 16, 1898 to Salisbury. "I learn from Mr. Rhodes that I should have heard from you. No letter reached me. Wire me here if you have written and when"

Percy Inskipp, Resident Secretary of the British South Africa Company at Salisbury, wired back: "Agree to sell 100,000 morgen, to be selected by you, partly in Mashonaland and partly in Matabeleland, at 3/- per morgen. Payment is to be deferred and remitted if you should show, within three years that you have invested on the property not less than the amount of the purchase price, in agricultural implements, livestock, fruit orchard, substantial buildings, permanent dams and irrigation works. If these conditions are not fulfilled, the land is to revert to us, without payment by you or compensation to you. For the purpose of expenditure, the land may be concentrated in the blocks of 6,000 morgen, instead of spending the necessary amount on each individual

farm of 3,000 or 1,500 morgen, which are the usual extents in Mashonaland and Matabeleland respectively. The quitrent will be payable at the usual rate of £2 per 1,000 morgen per annum".

Once again the Boer War brought matters to a halt, but not as completely as in the cases of Goldreich and Rothkugel. Ten years later, on November 11, 1908, a letter was dispatched by J.A. Stevens, of the Chief Secretary's Department, to W. Olive of the Chartered Company at Cape Town.

"When in Cape Town, Dr. Jameson (then Prime Minister of the Cape) spoke to me with reference to the conversation he had with Mr. S. Marks, who subsequently saw me' and upon my arriving here, I made enquiries as to available land. Although the Company has certain available areas, it seems to me that the block, the Rhodesdale Estate, belonging to the French South Africa Development Company, now in liquidation, would be as suitable as any.

"Mr. Marks told me that, if he could secure a suitable block of ground, his idea was to settle poor Dutch upon it, and farm the half-share principle with them. Please ask Dr. Jameson if he has any objection to a scheme of this sort. If not, then write a letter for Dr. Jameson to sign, sending the report for Mr. Marks' private information.

"The suggestion might be made that Mr. Marks should send someone to inspect the land, and the he might deal directly with the Secretary in London through his agent".

Rhodesdale Estate, even now one of the best known properties in Rhodesia, though no longer in its original form, at the time covered no less than 150,00 morgen, over 500 square miles, fronting on four river- the Ngoezi, the Umniati, the Sebakwe and the Bebezaan. The report Mr. Stevens attached had been prepared by a famous old-time official in the B.S. A. Company service, Harold Henry Abrahamson de Laessoe, then Acting Manager in the Chartered Company's Estate office, later head of the great cattle –breeding enterprise of the Liebig Company, De Laessoe referred to Rhodesdale as "good grassing country, with a fair proportion of agricultural land" The proposed Gwelo-Blinkwater railway would run within eight miles of the Southern part, while the line from Gwelo to Salisbury was 35 miles from the Northern end. It was held under a pioneer title, and the value was estimated at 4/- per morgen.

A letter marked "Confidential" went off on November 21, 1908.

"Dear Mr. Marks, - Dr. Jameson, who is now on a visit to Rhodesia, had gone into the question of land, which you spoke to him about, and desires me to suggest that you should inspect the block known as Rhodesdale.
Dr. Jameson has caused the block to be reported upon by one of the Company's officials and thinks, if you could secure it, it might suit you better than the British South Africa land". Mr. Stevens added that the Secretary of the Owners, the French South Africa Development Company was C.R. Saunders of Copthall Buildings, London E.C.

Sammy Marks was interested, and from Pretoria promptly wired back: "Can you tell me where the local representative of the Company is to be found? I would like to communicate with him'.

That official turned out to be another Rhodesian Jewish pioneer, H.S. Gupertz of Willoughby's Buildings, Bulawayo. Discussions went on until, on March19, 1909, it seemed as if business was almost certain. A cable reached the London office of the B.S. A. Company: "Think can purchase 112, 000 acres of Rhodesdale", the conditions being the cancellation of the £5,600 debt due by the French South Africa Development Company, the expenditure by the Chartered Company of another £8,000 on the 5,000 acres central farm, as well as the cost of cattle fencing. The remaining 107,000 acres would be applied by Sammy Marks for settlement.

Typical of Marks' scientific approach, notwithstanding his own rudimentary education was the request, on April 23, 1909 to C. A. Pingstone, the well known chemist at Bulawayo, for a soil analysis of the area concerned. Probably the first ever made in Rhodesia.

The agreement was approved by British South Africa Company on July 8, a fact conveyed to Sammy Marks by Sir Edward Dunning two days later. Then, alas, something went radically wrong and the proposed partners at the last moment failed to agree. On July 21 Sammy Marks wrote: "After considering, have decided not to purchase any part of the Rhodesdale Estate". So ended one of the great might-have-been in the history of the Colony. The property remained with the British South Africa Company and instead of being devoted to the intensive settlement, became a huge cattle-breeding enterprise.

# RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

## PART 111

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

Copyright © Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and later Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, distributed in printed or electronic format with the written permission of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 22. | Anti-Semitism in the Earlies | 3 |
| 23. | After Rhodes' Death | 7 |
| 24. | Kishinev and Zionism | 12 |
| 25. | The New Synagogue | 15 |
| 26. | Rhodesia's First Jewish Paper | 19 |
| 27. | North of the Zambezi | 26 |
| 28. | Rhodesian Jews in World War 1 | 32 |
| 29. | Gold and Other Miners | 35 |
| 30. | Natie Arnold and His Story | |

## CHAPTER 22

## ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE EARLIES

Save for an occasional injudicious remark Anti-Semites had been gratifyingly absent in early Rhodesia, but there was something of an upheaval when on May 7, 1902, one of the leading newspapers in the country became guilty of an unjustified and unforeseen attack on Jewry. The "Bulawayo Chronicle" published a leading article, based on an incident in Cape Colony, where D. N. de Wet, Mayor of Aliwal North and a former member of the Legislative Assembly, had been acquitted by a Special Court of a charge of treason. This aroused the indignation of J. W. Howard, the editor, who in a lengthy leader, headed "Treason and its Penalty", saw fit to say: "If Kruger and his satellites had not imagined they fill their pockets at the expense of the British capitalists, it is questionable whether they would have gone to the extremes they did. The Hollanders (in the Transvaal), it is a matter of common knowledge, bagged all the gold they could lay their hands upon, and sneaked off to Europe with it, leaving their deluded followers to make the best of a bad case on the veld. Scratch a Dutchman and you find a Jew. Many a Dutchman, who imagined that the problematic driving of the British into the sea was a short cut to wealth, is now mourning his vanished shekels…."

This far-fetched argument roused the entire Bulawayo community, and on the same evening, the Reverend M.I. Cohen dispatched a letter to the editor: "in your leading article today,……..you made use of an expression which has aroused the bitterest resentment of the Jewish public in this city, and in their name I demand that you should give space in your paper to the following reply.

"In spite of your sneers at the Dutch, they have shown themselves eminently capable of taking care of themselves, and they will no doubt value your diatribes at their true worth. You have apparently made it the established policy of your paper to take every opportunity of throwing an evil light upon the character and ideals of the Jew, and we have been forced before now to express our resentment at this attempt to incite prejudice and ill-will against a not insignificant proportion of the population of South Africa.

"In comparing us to the rebels, who 'masquerade as British subjects', and to the Hollanders, who 'bagged all the gold they could lay their hand upon and sneaked off to Europe with it', you display a contempt of facts worthy of those Continental papers

which only cease flinging mud upon the Jew when they wish to perform a similarly genial function for the British Army and the British people…"

Mr. Cohen referred to a meeting of protest lately held at Bulawayo against Continental slanders, at which a well-known non-Jew, Mr. W.M. Frames, had declared that it was significant how often anti-British feelings and anti-Semitism marched hand in hand. He quoted the "Jewish Year Book" as showing what part the Jews were taking in the War then in progress. "You could see therein", he said, "that we have contributed more than our just proportion of fighting men to the British Army – aye, and of casualties also – and it is significant that a large proportion of these men are just those Russian Jews at whom you are always sneering, who have taken this method of proving their appreciation of the freedom they enjoy under the British flag. And it is a well-known fact that they have done their duty as men.

"You deny to the Dutch the credit of an intense patriotic feeling, and profess to think that they would have fought far less tenaciously had they contemplated a 'loss of shekels', but I, sir, am proud that Jewish burgers have given up their all, and fought their best for their adopted country, just as British Jews have done on the other side. These facts are convincing proofs to any fair-minded man that the Jew, in loyalty to his country, is second to none of his fellows…."

Simultaneously with this communication appeared a further letter from William Moss – "I take exception to your remark that 'if you scratch a Dutchman, you'll find a Jew' – I defy you to find a Dutchman equal to a Jew. You may find one equal to a Christian, but never will you find one equal to a Jew. You come and scratch me (I am a Jew), and see how we'll get on. I will bet that there will be more Dutchman in your character than in mine".

At three o' clock a meeting the following afternoon took place in the store of Mr. Basch, in 7th Avenue, at which it was agreed to ask Jewish advertisers to withdraw their announcements in the "Bulawayo Chronicle", "until such time as an ample apology was made" and that same evening, at 7.30, at a further gathering, he announced that all the firms concerned had already signed. A further leader, headed: A Slight Misconception" appeared in the "Chronicle". "Let us clear the air at once", the editor declared, "by stating that never for a moment did we seek to cast aspersions upon a Jew with regard to treason. Our contention from beginning to end of the article in question was that Dutchmen – whether Boers, Hollanders or Cape rebels – had been actuated in their attitude towards the British Government mainly by considerations of self-interest. A particular phase of this self-interest, in the most notable cases, was the desire to acquire power and to enrich themselves at the expense of the hated Uitlander and Rooinek. That desire spread into Cape Colony, and there were many – even amongst those who had taken the oath of allegiance as State Officials and Members of the Legislative Assembly, eager to take a hand in Kruger's game, for what they could gain in a pecuniary and personal sense. Now it cannot be denied that the Jew is known the world over for his appreciation of money, and his keenness in getting it. This remark carries with it no reflection whatsoever. 'Commercial genius', to quote the phrase of Mr. Cohen, tells

equally well in the second generation as in the first. In this age of Mammon, all will acknowledge it".

"Things had come to a strange pass when racial resentment was so easily aroused", Mr. Howard added: "If one cannot refer to the character most typical of money-getting in the world's history. Literature is full of examples of license in this respect, and we presume that even Mr. Cohen and the refreshingly original Mr. Moss would not think it worth while, at this date, to blackguard Shakespeare for having delineated Shylock". He drew a comparison with the proverbial references to the Scot's parsimony. "We have erred on the score of local susceptibility, but that is to be excused when we declare, in all sincerity, that not the remotest idea of associating the Jew with the Dutchman ever entered our minds. We were discussing the treason of Dutchmen and the treason of Dutchmen alone….Mr. Cohen goes much further then we did, when he admits in his letter Jews have actually fought for the Boers. He refers to this as an example of 'loyalty' Against the Jews as a class we have nothing to say; for eminent individuals, such as the late Lord Beaconsfield, we have unbounded admiration. But for Jews who have fought for the Boers – well, Mr. Cohen, why did they fight for the Boers?"

Mr. Cohen was back in print next day: "As I and many impartial readers understand your cynical leader, it conveyed the idea that the term 'Jew' denotes the new plus ultra of sordid Materialism. The juxtaposition of the words 'Jew', 'Rebel' and 'Traitor' is (pace your 'explanation') a most sinister one, and as for Shylock, we are not going to allow ourselves to be victims of a medieval caricature. Every right-thinking man who has had any dealings with the Jewish inhabitants of Bulawayo will bear me out in the contention that you have cast a most uncalled-for slur upon the whole race. Since you see no virtue in any but British Jingo patriotism, you naturally cannot solve that difficult puzzle – why long-established Jewish burgers of the Transvaal should fight for that country. I leave your readers to smile at your naïve inability".

Next in the assault came another non-Jew, Fred Eyles. "I think it is well", he told the "Chronicle", "you should understand that the ill-judged reference to Jews in your leader is displeasing to fair-minded men of all persuasions; and the more obnoxious innuendo contained in your leader of today provokes even stronger feelings….It cannot be said that all Jews are noble, nor can it be said that all Gentiles are wise; and I wish to enter my protest against thoughtless and unfair generalizations".

Taken aback by the uproar, Mr. Howard now resumed the process of climbing down, and in a footnote declared afresh: "A single remark – a single sentence – in an article applicable entirely and solely to treason amongst the Dutch in the Cape Colony, as illustrated by the treason trials at Aliwal North, has been made the cause of complaints amongst some of our Jewish Friends. The article was in no sense applicable to the Jews, either as a race or as a class; and we repudiate, fully and finally, any construction of this nature placed upon it. Nothing was further from our thoughts, intention or desire, then to irritate or offend the Jewish Community, and it is only necessary for us to say that we have neither sympathy nor tolerance for anti-Semitism in any shape or form. We have published in fairness, letters we have received upon the

subject. At the same time, without being hyper-sensitive, we feel that the matter has been carried far beyond an ordinary interpretation of a chance and isolated phrase. Having said this, we assure the Jews, through their spokesman, Mr. Cohen, that we deeply regret having unwittingly wounded their feelings in any degree".

As a further precaution, Mr. Lowenstark forwarded copies of the correspondence to Thomas Sheffield at Johannesburg, Managing Director of the Argus Printing and Publishing Company, proprietors of the newspaper. Mr. Sheffield's reply arrived by return of post: "I was exceedingly annoyed when the articles in the "Chronicle" came under my notice, and I at once wired to Howard that the offensive sentence in it should be withdrawn and apologized for. I am sure that it was not inserted with the intention of giving offence, and the fact that the editor's explanation and apology have ended the incident has pleased me very much. . The Argus Company holds no Anti-Semitic views. Your people, at any rate in larger centers than Bulawayo, have had no reason to complain. We count them amongst our best friends, and here they swear by their "Star", as they do by their "Jewish Chronicle", and support it, I am sure, more generously. I am sorry to see by the correspondence that there have been previous grounds for complaint, but I think they must refer to thoughtless expressions, never intended as an insult or disparagement of your race generally.

"I hope that the unpleasant incident will be forgotten now that it has been atoned for and that the "Chronicle" and its editor will be on the best of terms with your Congregation in the future".

This message was submitted to the Committee of the Congregation, who agreed to regard the affair as closed.

## CHAPTER 23.

## AFTER RHODES' DEATH

The wave of sorrow at the death of Cecil Rhodes in March 1902 expressed the feelings of Rhodesian Jewry as much as those of other sections of the populace.

One among the guard at the lying-in-state at Government House, Cape Town, was Private Dan Levy; a soldier in Nesbitt's Horse during the Boer War and lately transferred to the Cape Mounted Police.

Fifteen hundred miles away from all sections of the community the famous grave on the Matopos was strewn with wreaths, one from the Hebrew Congregation of Bulawayo, another from I. H. Hirschler, another from Susman, Jacobs & Co. another from Charles Sonnenberg, another from Solomon & Montague and no fewer than five from members of the Weil Family, Julius and his wife, Samuel, Ben and Maurice. From the small group of Jews in the Colony, scores joined in the last procession, and were present when the final benediction was spoken.

Everyone felt that another age had begun, nor were they wrong in this expectation. As Rudyard Kipling had put it in his inscription for the Monument overlooking Groote Schuur:

> "The immense and brooding spirit still shall quicken and control.
> Living, he was the land,
> And dead his soul shall be her soul".

At the meeting of the Congregation Committee at Bulawayo on April 14, 1902, a letter was read from Colonel Frank Rhodes, brother of the dead statesman, "thanking the Jewish community for their wire of condolence"

As in the rest of Southern Africa, the close of the Boer War set off a wave of optimism, based on the expectation that there would now be a grand spurt in prosperity and general development. While most of the 400,000 troops, who had found their way to the fighting zones from every corner of the British Empire, had either returned home or were preparing to do so, numbers succumbed to the lure of the veld, and resolved to stay. In this fashion the Cape, the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State all gained

substantial groups of go-ahead immigrants, and Rhodesia hoped that a certain number would also find their way to those parts.

For a while indeed the impetus of Rhodes' stupendous vigour carried along Rhodesia in its wake, work he had begun on the railway line to the Victoria Falls and on the famous bridge, bathed in the spray of the cataract, being continued according to his plan.

But there was little to renew the great man's enterprise, and Mrs. Ethel Tawse Jollie recalls how, after the Boer War, "for the next five years Rhodesia was almost lost sight of in England. Her young men went to fight, and many never came back…" Down South too, the withdrawal of the British forces and the cessation of the huge military expenditure, which, over three years, had totaled £300,000,000, set off the opening phases of a correspondingly great depression. The disposal, by the Quartermaster-General's Department, under the instructions of the London War Office, of £10,000,000 worth of unwanted Army stores, ruined almost every wholesale and retail merchant in South Africa, with inevitable effects and repercussions in Rhodesia.

"By 1904", Mrs. Tawse Jollie added, "financially and in many other ways, the settles seemed to have touched bottom once more….."

An official statement published about this time says bleakly: "With the exception of gold….There are no exports of importance".

The entire revenue of the Colony in 1901 came to only £435,255, against an expenditure of £710,563, and every year this unsatisfactory ratio tended to grow worse £477,200 in 1902 against £779,887, £434,550 in 1903 against £738,632, and so on. "The deficit", it was explained, "is largely due to the heavy outlay on Police, occasioned by the requirements of the Imperial authorities". Owing to the bad times the ambitious scheme for the Trans-Continental African Telegraph also fell into abeyance and was never resumed again. Land prices, both in the towns and in the country, slumped heavily.

Yet life went on, and somehow the Jewish community too battled through the barren years. Economic difficulties even initiated a move for the amalgamation of the three principal Jewish bodies – the Bulawayo Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, The Chevra Kadisha and the Chovevi Zion Bulawayo Tent. Such a union had been mooted during the wartime period, when Isaac Pieters "expressed his urgent desire for peace among the Jewish community, and his willingness to assist in that purpose". To drive home the point reference was made to the mystification of the Bulawayo Municipality, at the existence of rival bodies engaged in similar charitable work. All, however, was to no purpose for in the end the wish to retain their identity proved too strong.

A small but welcome concession was also given by the Town Clerk, J. Macdonald. "I have pleasure in advising you that Stand 216 will in future be exempt from the payment of Municipal Owner Rates, in consideration of the same having been dedicated and intended to be used solely for religious purposes and work connected with your Church. This exemption is in addition to Stand No. 202… I regret not being able to

make any refund for rates paid in the past, but trust that the arrangement regarding the future will be satisfactory to your Committee.

Religious activities, on the other hand, were extended by the starting of classes for Jewish children at the very modest tariff of 4/- a month for the first pupil and 2/- for each extra member of a family. Not surprisingly, the remuneration of the teacher, (who doubled in the role of Schochet), was correspondingly modest – £5 per month. Mr. M. Hurwitz became the first instructor and received his 29 pupils a three o' clock in the afternoon, while the rest were still at their secular studies. School books in Hebrew were imported from Jaffa, and a remittance of £3.1.6. sent there to a Mr. Joseph Sucholusky

Footnote: The Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society did indeed reduce its costs by appointing in 1903 a committee of the Congregation to take over its management.

.With the increasing Depression, it was decided in September 1903 to dispense with the paid teacher and to place his duties on the heavily-laden shoulders of the Reverend Cohen, who also accepted the appointment of Acting Treasurer, pending the choice of a new incumbent at the Annual Meeting.

One welcome windfall from his Honour the Administrator was a yearly grant of £50 to the Jewish Congregation as to other denominations, but it did not last long. At the beginning of the year 1905 the Chief Secretary wrote from Salisbury that: "In view of the falling-off in revenue, the Government is compelled to reserve for future consideration the continuance of the grant to the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation".

Contrary to the immediate fears, the £50 from the Treasury was repeated once more in 1906. But a fresh warning arrived from Salisbury on July 11: "I am directed to inform you that the Grant provided on the current Estimates for the Hebrew Congregation at Bulawayo, will be paid at the end of the present month on application. I am, however, to state that the Administrator has decided that, in view of the altered conditions of the Country since these grants were originally instituted for the purpose of assisting religious bodies to start their work, the reason for their continuance no longer exists, and that the time has arrived when the funds provided may be devoted to other objects, nearly connected, however, with the work of these bodies.

"The Administration therefore intends, in the Estimates for next financial year, to transfer to the Education Department the sum now voted for these grants, to be utilized, with such other funds as it may be able to provide, in giving further assistance to Mission Schools and other institutions engaged in the training of natives.

The conditions upon which such assistance will be given will be formulated and published in due course".

Pleas for reconsideration brought only a further refusal. "With reference to your letter….. in regard to the withdrawal by the Government of the Annual Grant-in-Aid hitherto accorded to the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, I have the honour to inform you that his Honour the Administrator regrets that he is unable to accede to your request for the continuance of the grant for a further period of two years".

The general slump made it extremely difficult to gather subscriptions, which meant an incessant stream of reminders from the harassed Secretary. One defaulter, who owed four guineas, was only allowed the services of a Mohel, on condition that he paid off his arrears at the rate of £1 a month! A mysterious reference, reminiscent of "The Hunting of the Snark", and never further explained, appears to an allegation that "the Beadle had failed in his duties".

Out of the blue came a donation of 50 from Mr. H Mosenthal towards the Building Fund and, although there was no immediate use for it, it was certainly not refused.

So thankless was the fund-raising task that in May 1902, Emanuel Basch, as the new President, suggested that the Honorary Secretary, M. D. Lowenstark be appointed Official Collector, on a commission of five per cent". The idea was warmly approved.

Several new ideas for increasing revenue were put forward, including a standard tariff of 6d. a time for the killing of fowls, a doubled marriage fee of eight guineas, and the enrolment of so-called three-guinea and six-guinea members.

When Mr. Greenspan, to whom were now allocated the duties of the Schochet, drew a fire of criticism upon himself by making a charge to congregation members for killing poultry, he resigned and joined the Rhodesian Cold Storage Company.

One important event of the year 1903 was the establishment of a Shechita Board, which took the majority decision to accept the tender for Kosher meat from the Rhodesian Cold Storage and Supply Company in preference to that of the Congregation member, H Hepker. Undeterred by the setback, the latter promptly offered at his own expense to engage a Schochet to carry out the killings of the animals as prescribed by Jewish Law, by which he so impressed the Council of the Congregation that they rescinded their acceptance of the rival firm's offer!

Piquancy was lent to the situation by the fact that the only qualified Schochet in the country was still Mr. Greenspan, for whom the Rhodesian Cold Storage Company had no further use. He therefore took his discharge and immediately joined Mr. Hepker!

As for the duties of a Mohel, these were still carried out by the Reverend Cohen, who in May 1903 even undertook the long journey to Salisbury to officiate at the ceremony for the son of Mr. and Mrs. Canaric. When another impecunious citizen there advised that all he could afford was £10, the Congregation devoted the whole of that sum to traveling expenses and reimbursed the normal fee from its own funds.

After three years of exceptionally hard work of every kind, Mr. Cohen was granted six weeks holiday, though only on condition that if any "important matter" required his return before the expiration of the time, he must duly comply. He was, however, meanwhile handed a £25 bonus towards his expenses.

So well appreciated were the services of Mr. Basch as President that it was also decided to give him a "picnic basket, beautifully fitted for four persons". Imported from England at a cost of £16, it was presented to him at a social evening.

Emanuel Basch had the pleasant experience in 1908 of being elected for the second time as Mayor of Bulawayo, which brought him a host of congratulations, both from his own community and from his non-Jewish fellow-citizens.

A contemporary character sketch by Fergus W Ferguson describes him as "one of the principal commercial men in Bulawayo, a native of Plymouth, Devon, born in 1888. He is a son of the late Mr. Edward Basch. Upon the completion of his education in Brussels, he returned to England, where he continued to follow his trade of jeweler for several years. Proceeding to Rhodesia in 1897, he took over the well-known business of M Basch & Co. from his brother. Well-known and highly respected in the district, and of a kindly and upright disposition, he receives the full support and confidence of his fellow-townsmen. He has occupied the position of President of the Hebrew Congregation and the Hebrew Benevolent Society for the past five years; he is a member of the Chamber of Mines and the Chamber of Commerce, and has recently been elected to a seat in the Town Council. He is an enthusiastic member of the Devonian Society and frequents the Rhodesia Club.

The general atmosphere of tolerance in the community was strikingly shown by the substantial attendance of Jewish children at schools of other denominations. When the Catholics held their sports day on Rosh Hashanah, Mr. Aserman proposed the Fathers be asked to alter the date!

## CHAPTER 24

## KISHINEV AND ZIONISM

The dominating event for world Jewry in 1903 was the outbreak of pogroms at Kishinev in Romania. It is a measure of the extent to which Mankind has been inured to horrors that this affair, in which 45 Jews were killed and some 600 shops burnt, excited more international protest than did the extermination, barely 40 years later, of over 6,000,000 in the Nazi Gas Chambers. Even from its modest resources the Bulawayo Congregation contributed an immediate sum of £16 and a later £50, to the Relief Fund Committee in London. There were public meetings and celebrations of mourning in Central Africa as there were in Europe, America, Asia and Australia.

Shortly after, Mr. Basch proceeded overseas on a visit and, learning in greater detail about the sufferings of the Kishinev victims, insisted on another £100 which the Congregation promptly cabled.

Fresh massacres, this time in Bialystock, led to a further appeal for funds towards the end of the year and on November 17, 1905 the "Bulawayo Chronicle" announced: The Committee of the Hebrew Congregation have held a meeting regarding the recent Jewish massacres in Russia, and the following resolutions were passed:

(a) That the Jewish community of Bulawayo deeply deplore and protest against the atrocities committed against their co-religionists in Russia.
(b) That a Relief Fund be started on behalf of distressed and persecuted persons in Russia

"The Subscription List is lying at Mr. E. Basch's establishment, Seventh Avenue".

Within a few days a sum of £210 0. 6. had been collected, including several outside gifts, £11. 11/- from S. Robinson in Gwelo, £7.12.6. from Que Que, collected by H. M. Liptz, and a third from far-away Kalomo, Northern Rhodesia, where Mr. Rollnick raised ten guineas.

Gifts from several well-known non-Jewish firms, including 3 guineas from E. W. Tarry & Co. Ltd., plus a guinea each from C. Duly, already in the motor and

cycle trade, Lennon's Ltd., the chemists, the Bechuanaland Trading Company and a subscriber who signed himself mysteriously "David Copperfield".

Outside contacts of a happier kind involved the dispatch of a 10 guinea contribution in 1903 to the South African Jewish Orphanage at Johannesburg, which established a link that still exists, and that has given many Rhodesian Jewish children both a home and the training for a career. On the other hand, when the Talmud Torah School asked for support for a bazaar, they were informed: "Owing to the increasing local calls on the benevolence of our members, we are unable to raise funds in support".

Mainly owing to the bad times, several old Stalwarts now left Rhodesia, including A. Jacobs, S. Goldring, and A. Epstein, their places being taken by others hoping to escape the slump down South. Among the new recruits were L. Lazarus and Isaac Wolfe of Gwelo, H. Blumenthal of Selukwe and A. D. Marks.

* * * * * * *

From the earliest stage the Reverend Cohen had worked for Zionism and already in 1901, when he held the first service at Gwelo, with a total population of 15 Jews, the amount of £1. 7. 6. from the Congregation was dispatched to Palestine. At the Zionist Conference in Johannesburg, Mr. Cohen attended as the delegate from Rhodesia, making as great an impression upon that gathering as had on his own Congregation. Cohen had brought about the affiliation of the Chovevi Zion Association in Bulawayo to the South African Zionist Federation during 1902, but even then the organization maintained its strong trend to individuality, and by 1905, despite the fact that the total Jewish population of Rhodesia was less than 300, it had managed to raise, as contributions towards the rehabilitation of Israel, the sum of £2,000. Moreover, its influence socially was considerable, even in the outer centers like Salisbury, Gwanda, Selukwe and Gwelo. In due course, indeed it even extended its ramifications to the isolated Jewish outposts in the Belgian Congo.

After his strenuous years in Rhodesia, Mr. Cohen was in 1906 given leave to revisit England, on which occasion he was presented with that tribute than much more popular than it is today – an illuminated address.

New members of the Jewish community were again finding their way to Rhodesia, including A. Margolius, D. Gollan, M. Nurick, E. Davis, L. Simmons, B. Lifset, H. B. Ellenbogen, Joseph Ellenbogen, J. Frankel, L. Shapiro, L. Rubenstein, A. Nathanson, J. Boyer and sundry others, all of whom were enrolled as members of the Congregation. Friendly relations also developed with other communities, Rosh Hashanah greetings being exchanged with the Synagogue Committees at Salisbury, Kimberley, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, Johannesburg, Oudtshoorn and Mafeking.

Fortunately slumps do not last for ever and in the words of Mrs. Tawse Jollie: The turn of the tide came about 1907. There was not a boom, just a steady growth of general well-being and prosperity". This was apparent by the increased contributions to local and overseas appeals, including an amount of £146 dispatched to help Russian Jewish orphans.

Greater dignity in the services was to be stimulated by the offer of a new Ark, costing £28 from, Ellenbogen & Co. When it came to discussing its acceptance, it was unanimously agreed, if the finances of the Congregation remained buoyant, to erect the Ark before the Feast of Pentecost. A further improvement in the Synagogue was the erection of a cupboard for keeping Talisim in, for which 23 subscribers were immediately secured.

From the educational point of view, an important development occurred in October 1906, when a request was received for the use of the schoolroom "for the purpose of studying the Talmud", plus a grant to buy suitable books. This was gladly acceded to, and the sum of £10 handed over, on condition that the volumes themselves should remain the property of the Congregation. It marked the beginning of more advanced Jewish studies in Rhodesia.

The vexed question of Saturday closing for religious reasons came up sharply in March 1907, when a letter was received from Mr. A. Rosenthal (no relation of the present writer's), "condemning the action of Mr. E Basch at a meeting of the local Town Council, regarding Jews being allowed to trade on Saturday nights". After a great deal of discussion Mr. L Landau proposed that the Committee approve of Mr. Basch's attitude, adding that the time was premature for any other action to be taken, and that there could be no question of enforcing a compulsory ban on the Sabbath.

Indicative of the revived inflow of Jewish immigrants to Rhodesia were the substantial numbers of new members, including H Berg, I Kollenberg, A Hirschorn, E Cohen, H Susman, Aaron Faiga, Sam Bass, Meyer Bass, H Gordon, N Shetkober, H Landau, S Shapiro, M Rappaport, L Lowenberg, H Liptz, G Pichanick, M Hochschild, B Goldberg, Monty Smollan, M Slanzer, L Lavenberg and others. With this went the reappearance of a number of persons in default with their subscriptions during the bad years.

A difficult subject for discussion was submitted in 1908, "regarding the circumcision of sons born to those who marry out of their religion". While a number of the Congregation suggested that a circular be sent to similar bodies through Southern Africa, requesting their views, the Committee preferred to begin by asking the Chief Rabbi overseas, Dr. Adler, for his views.

A real loss, recorded at Bulawayo on February 20, 1908, was that of M.V. Lowenstark, who had so faithfully performed the duties of Secretary through the difficult bygone years. His successor, Mr. Cohen, resigned from the Secretaryship soon after.

## CHAPTER 25

## THE NEW SYNAGOGUE

Not only were the next few years relatively peaceful, but they were sufficiently prosperous to warrant discussion, towards the end of 1909, of a scheme to erect a new Synagogue. This was approved on October 12, the capacity to be 500 – 300 men and 200 women – at a cost not to exceed £5,000. Scott & McGillivary, the Architects, set about preparing sketches, while further discussions proceeded on the wisdom of buying new ground.

January 9, 1910, saw a record turnout of members to examine the plans and empower the Committee to proceed with the construction, "providing the deficit in collections does not exceed £1,500".

Two suitable plots were found by Mr. Jacobs, available at £200 each, and, as an alternative, a plot directly adjoining the existing Synagogue offered at the reasonable sum of £130, but only under a fortnight's option. To meet the situation, an ingenious plan was devised – a syndicate of several members of the Congregation to purchase and hold the ground until a final decision was reached. If the Congregation did not need it, the property would be dealt with as the owners saw fit. Ultimately this was the winning choice, plus another plot opposite.

The new Building Committee, beside the Reverend Cohen, comprised Messrs. C. Salomon, D. Landau, I. Pieters, R. Aserman, J. Palca, M. Immermam, J. Joseph, M. Budlender and Jack Ellenbogen, who vigorously set about organizing collections and taking all other necessary preliminary steps. The days when Bulawayo Jewry had struggled and argued whether to put up was little more than a shanty seemed indeed far away.

"Results so far are very satisfactory", reported Louis Landau within a few weeks. By April 1910 about £2,200 had been collected in this town alone, no trifling sum for those times, and again there were contributions from non-Jews, including five guineas from the Castle Brewery, while important houses outside Rhodesia, including D. Isaacs & Co. at Port Elizabeth, likewise rose to the occasion. Sellick & Co., builders of Rhodes Street, whose tender was accepted, contributed £50 of their own towards the Fund. There

was a feeling of real achievement and pride in the community as the foundations went down, and one of the finest buildings in the country took shape. When, on May 17, 1910, Emanuel Basch laid the foundation-stone, the ceremony was attended by all the notability of Bulawayo.

Another year had begun, when on April 9, 1911, the formal consecration was carried out by Mr. Cohen, in the presence of a great number of prominent Rhodesians, Jews and non-Jews.

Neither in the finish nor the materials of the building was there any skimping this time, though a reasonable degree of economy was observed. Indeed, certain improvements were effected. "The seats will be Oak instead of pitch-pine, as originally intended, as it had been found that Oak will be as cheap, and far superior". Mr. Berlin, all the way from Johannesburg, undertook their installations. For these reasons, the original estimate was somewhat exceeded and, to meet the shortfall, £1,500 was borrowed from the Rhodesian Government, besides another £500 from private supporters. Improvements were also carried out in the Old Synagogue, henceforth to be used as a school room. The commencement of regular services in the new Synagogue also drew attention to the inadequacies of the religious teaching for the young people, and Mr. Cohen undertook to give this his special attention.

Typically Rhodesian was an incident reported about this time, when Mr. Goldberg reported that "Ants had penetrated the walls of the new Synagogue. Prompt notification to the contractors led to sufficiently drastic treatment to prevent any serious damage. Ants in the Synagogue however continued to be a plague, and for years a number of different remedies were tried, none of them with any great success.

The building of the new Synagogue and the increased interest in religious matters brought an application from the Reverend M.L. Lipschitz in Johannesburg, offering his services as Chazan. Dearly though the community would have welcomed such a functionary, they had to reply that none was needed at present. They did enquire, however, what his fee would be for taking the services during the forthcoming High Holidays, and carry out a check-up on his references from the well-known cantor, the Reverend Manne down-country. Obviously the reply must have been satisfactory, for his quoted charge of £40 plus expenses were immediately accepted.

Two resignations, which gave rise to a great deal of heart-searching, were handed in during 1911, the one by L.A. Rubenstein, as Honorary Secretary of the Congregation, and the other from no less a person than the Reverend Cohen himself, who wished to take up a less strenuous post. While Mr. Rubenstein's resignation was regretfully accepted, the idea of doing without the "King of Rhodesia", as he was playfully called, was so inconceivable that he was persuaded to change his mind.

Certain embellishments were then made to the Synagogue, including the purchase of two Shofars, while, at the request of Mr. J. Myers of Gatooma, a Sepher Torah was lent out more or less indefinitely.

(It may be mentioned that this was by no means the only occasion when Mr. Cohen issued a threat to resign, but remained faithfully in harness in his beloved Colony until the end of his days).

Mr. Lipschitz's performances as Chazan having stirred up a demand for the engagement of a permanent functionary, who would combine his religious duties with those of a Hebrew tutor, enquiries were sent to Johannesburg and Cape Town. Of the many applicants, the Reverend Weinberg of Cape Town, invited to come up on a year's trial, set off in January 1912 on the long journey to Bulawayo.

The difficult position of the servant of a small community still short of funds was emphasized afresh when he found his original salary of £30 a month inadequate. Frequent discussions took place as to the possibility of raising this figure, but without much success, until the unfortunate Chazan put in an amended request for a loan of £50. It was then brought to the notice of the Committee that he was taking part in business concerns; the loan was approved and he was asked to refrain from any commercial undertakings in the future.

New duties for these unfortunate spiritual leaders were constantly being devised, one bright idea involving a Music class, at which Mr. Weinberg was to give instruction in the Tonic Solfa notation. On the other hand, Mr. Weinberg himself proposed that, owing to the very small attendances at the Synagogue on Saturdays, the ordinary service should be replaced by one to encourage and educate the young generation. This idea was approved.

Complaints were also expressed by parents as to the efficiency of the Hebrew teaching at the old Synagogue, Mr. Cohen being asked to undertake the teaching of Scripture History in secular day schools at Bulawayo, and the Reverend Weinberg to give Jewish youngsters instruction in reading Hebrew and in the customary prayers.

Yet a healthy sign of the increased interest in the services was the need to purchase an extra 100 copies of Singer's Prayer Book and the decision, during 1912, to hold special services on Saturday afternoons. Musical facilities were also improved – and we hope their quality – by the purchase of an organ at the surprisingly reasonable price of £11. On the strength of this, Mr. H.J.Sonnenberg soon after suggested a mixed choir. Despite the initial rejection of the idea, the subject was revived in 1913, by which time the arguments of the progressives were accepted, D. Landau and H. B. Ellenbogen taking the lead in the new arrangements.

The struggle against orthodoxy came to light when in October 1913 Messrs. A. Moses and Rabinowitz declined to accept the duties allotted to them for the High Festivals "on account of the choir, which included ladies taking part in the services". Somewhat bewildered as to the wisest policy to adopt when a matter of Jewish practice and tradition were involved, the seniors of the Congregation decided to submit the query to the Chief Rabbi of the British Empire in England, the Reverend Dr. J. H. Hertz. The latter replied: "It is permissible that a mixed choir take part at a religious

service, but if an overwhelming majority objects to this procedure, then it would be desirable to discontinue it". After this tactful message had been discussed at great length, it finally emerged that most members approved of the policy, and that the mixed choir should continue.

Complaints as to the inadequacy of arrangements to supply Kosher meat remained a hardy annual and there was an unexpected tribute to orthodoxy when, to allow them to attend Synagogue services the Jewish storekeepers of Bulawayo agreed to close their premises at 6 p. m. on Friday, then regarded as unusually early.

The progress of the mining industry gave birth to another new community in the little village of Hartley, Bulawayo once again acting as "Big Brother" by lending a Sepher Torah, until it was required. Another to the new Jewish Congregation at Elizabethville in the Belgian Congo.

One of the rare excursions of the Jewish community into public prominence was on May 30, 1914, when an elaborate Ball took place in aid of the Bulawayo Benevolent Society. In the light of after events, there is something ominous in the fact that the date was put forward into August 1914.

The first World War had already been raging for sixteen days, when on August 20, R. Aserman as President announced that the members of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation had to cancel the forthcoming Ball in aid of the School funds, and to give the net proceeds of tickets sold to the Matabele Red Cross Fund. A few weeks later it was decided to temporarily to reduce the salaries of the officials, namely the Reverend M. I. Cohen and the Reverend A. Weinberg by £10 and £5 respectively, and to dispense wholly with the services of the Beadle. Truly an era had ended, and the Jews of Rhodesia, like most other people, were dimly aware of the fact.

----------o0o----------

## CHAPTER 26

## RHODESIA'S FIRST JEWISH PAPER.

Difficult as it is to trace the early days of the Jewish community in Rhodesia, even on the official side, the task is infinitely more so when it comes to the chronicling of daily life. Hence there is special reason to be thankful for the survival of at least one precious file, issued in typewritten form and known as the "Idler's Gazette," the first Jewish paper in the Colony. Officially the mouthpiece for a group of young people at Bulawayo, it was at the start edited by Jack Moss, but soon drew items of news from a wider field and dealt with many matters beyond the ordinary routine of their Club. (Idlers Club formed 1901 under Presidency of Jack Moss).

The Idler's wide range of activities, included English classes for foreign-born newcomers to Rhodesia, the conduction of a Service on the Sabbath, a dancing class, football practice and such events as a Shekel Evening, designed to raise funds for the Zionist movement.

On the occasion of a census, a notice appeared, appealing to all readers to complete their forms promptly. "It will greatly interest us", said the editor "to know the Jewish population of Southern Africa, which has probably doubled itself during the last ten years.. As far as Rhodesia is concerned, we shall not, we fancy, be very far out in estimating its total Jewish population - men, women and children - at 450, or slightly under. Would that the list of their occupations were as comprehensive as that of the general population! It cannot be expected that a community composed entirely of shop-keepers will gain much dignity in the eyes of the authorities. But here comes an interesting point. How many Jews are there in Rhodesia who do not profess or confess their Jewishness? (I will not say Judaism). That there are men of this type is proved by the fact that an individual was buried the other day in a Jewish cemetery at Gwanda, who was never known in his lifetime as a Jew. It is said that a certain member of the Municipal Police of Bulawayo spent his Seder at a Jewish home. We know that at Home many fellows in the Army and Navy do not own up that they are Jews, fearing the chaff or brutality of their companions. Now fellows of this type are the very men who are engaged in the general industries of the country. It is very probable indeed that there are quite a number of unprofessing Jews in the Military and Municipal Police, and in the mining industrial and other occupations of Rhodesia. It is just these we want enumerated, who only too often have not the pluck to own up.. We would point out that to such that they are doing the Jewish community of this country the greatest disservice and we

sincerely trust that only very few will be found so chicken-hearted as to hide their faith and nationality....."

This attack drew a reply from another Jewish resident who declared: "In many cases such degeneration is brought about by mere force of circumstances, and not, as you say, by lack of pluck to own up. Imagine yourself a Jew, born of Anglicized Jewish parents in, let me say, a small village, where his family are the only Jews in the place. He received perhaps a smattering of Jewish learning and folklore, and a fair education in English. His whole younger life is led among Christians, never knowing or fully understanding the true meaning of being a Jew, save that he has to go to School on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This man goes out into the world, bearing perhaps the name of Jones or Brown, mixes with Christians, works with them and spends his whole life with them, in time being assimilated to such a degree that he loses all identity, and in some cases forgets that he has been at one time or another a Jew. Whose fault it that? It is the fault of the Anglicized Jew, who, surrounded by Christians endeavour's to forget their trials of the past in a vain attempt to surmount the difficulties of public life. Thus he neglects his duty to his children and to God, by not teaching them their first and foremost duty is Judaism. Were our Jews of the present era to try and effect a more patient teaching and impress on the future generation that the term Jew is not synonymous with "all the is bad", to the Christian ears, we should in time no longer hear anything about the degeneration of the Jews".

Warmly supporting these arguments, the editor of the "Idlers Gazette" added: We cannot wonder if a vast number of Jews believe there are only two alternatives open to us - either the creation of a Jewish national state and country, or the absorption into our surroundings. The attempt to sit on two stools at once is fraught with enormous and apparently endless suffering".

These considerations however did not interfere with vigorous pleas to accommodate themselves as quickly as possible to Rhodesian life. Under the heading, "Learn English", we read: "In New York, the first thing done is to Americanize the Greeners and teach them the language of the country. In Southern Africa nothing of this kind is even attempted, and the prevalence of Yiddish in the biggest communities is a public scandal. It certainly increases the ill will against us, because the general public are necessarily ignorant of us and our ways, habits and characters..... It cannot be said that the community here have not been sufficiently exhorted as to the necessity of familiarizing themselves with the language of the country..... We suffer from lack of ambition and of desire for improvement. Learn English thoroughly. This applies not only to those who need a Vocabulary for daily use, but to those who have already acquired certain knowledge. Let them read and seek to attain what may be called a literary command of the language, and try to also wipe out all traces of a foreign pronunciation, so that they may be able to use English as it should be by the citizens of any British Colony".

Conflicting views about the communal criticisms were again expressed in the "Idlers Gazette". "The large number of naturalizations", declared another contributor

"shows a true appreciation of this privilege of British citizenship. The community is steadily improving its knowledge of the language and customs of the country, and it is to be hoped that its members will no longer cut themselves adrift from the society of the town. The ideal for us to pursue is progress in general culture, combined with faithful adherence to Jewish principles. The two are thoroughly compatible.... We Jews of Bulawayo have developed a very commendable Jewish spirit and communal activity, but we have tended to an undue and rather dangerous extent in the direction of forming a moral, intellectual and social Ghetto. Thereby we have lost far more than we have gained. The mischief of this course is very apparent in larger centers, but is also obvious enough in this outpost of a new country. A Ghetto is created sometimes by external compulsion, and this external force is almost always existent in some form or other. 'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis true. Ghettos are also self-made - Why should be so foolish intellectually speaking, as to cut our own throats? ....."

The dominant new subject of the day was the war between Russia and Japan, wherein, rather surprisingly, in the light of the prevailing anti-Semitism under the Czar, the sympathy of Rhodesian Jewry, unlike that of most other westerners, was by no means all on the side of the Little Yellow Men. Thus we find in the "Idlers Gazette" a protest about an article headed, "Jap the Giant Killer", reading: "I must say, as a Russian and a subscriber, I thoroughly object to the way in which you side with the Japanese. You say our password is 'Concentrate Now'. How can we do otherwise, away from the field of action as we are? ....."

While many allusions in the columns of this homely little production have long lost their significance, yet in between it gives a vivid glimpses of the way in which Jewry took part in building up Rhodesia. Thus we not on February 24, 1904, that B.L. King, son of N.I. King, had qualified with honours the first professional examination of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and that several Jews had lately joined "E" Troop in the Volunteers at Bulawayo.

Maurice H. Smollan, Principal of the Premier School of Shorthand, was congratulated on securing his qualifications as a teacher, while Eva Marks led the way among the girls by passing the Cambridge Senior Examination. The Rev. M.I.Cohen and Mr. E. Basch were due in Gwanda to consecrate the Jewish cemetery there.

While on the occasion of Passover most Jewish shops in Bulawayo had been closed, one or tow had decided to risk their religious status and capture the trade of their competitors. Complaints were voiced about visitors from Jerusalem (then still under the Turks), who considered that they had a claim on the generosity of the Rhodesian Jewish settles, exciting the wrath of those who preferred making their living by work.

Despite occasional criticisms, there were plenty of contacts between the Idlers and all other Jewish organizations as well as the general public, particularly in the field of sport. Amongst others, there is a reference to a football match against a team from Haddon & Sly's department store. Instructions were given to Jewish players to wear white shirts and knickers of any colour, and the reporter grew lyrical about the "very

brilliant play" by S. Grossberg, adding: "A more plucky and daring performer it would be hard to find".

Harry Stodel, after a long stay in Cape Colony, was back again, and everybody looking forward to the "pleasure of hearing him in his inimitable “coster songs". This famous pioneer of the cinema in South Africa, passed away at Cape Town fairly recently.

Again there was always Miss Ethel Lowenstark, who won golden opinions at the orchestral concert of the Bulawayo Musical Society, with her song "Pansies", followed by "If No One Ever Marries Me."

Entertaining glimpses of the good old days are also furnished in the account of the monthly cycle run of the Idlers, their destination being the Umbusa Hotel. It took place in the evening, the participants leaving Bulawayo at 8 p.m. We are told that the ride was "cool and exhilarating", but two of the adventurers lost their way and arrived rather late, having had a glorious walk across the veld.

"There being just enough ladies for a square dance, the lancers opened the dancing programme, after which a few songs were indulged in, and then came the very necessary supper. Though impromptu, it was well received, fowl being the chief article of consumption. After a few toasts, an adjournment was again made for dancing, which was kept up till late. The party arrived in town at about 12 p.m., as a few new members remarked, 'having spent one of the most enjoyable evenings we have had for a long while.'"

Efforts to preserve the records of the community are set down as early as May 1904, when the journal observed: "The ranks of the pioneers of the School have sadly thinned out of late.. Messrs M. S. Leven and A. Jacobs have left the country. Mr. Saber has joined the Majority, and we fear that Mr. S. Goldring may also be leaving the country at no distant date. Thus of the real founders of the Congregation there will soon be no remnant in our midst. Steps therefore have to be taken in the near future to ascertain and to place on record the true facts as to the early history of the Community. Most unfortunately the most precious and irreplaceable of the old records, namely the first Minute Book of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, has been lost, and there seems no chance of recovering it. The early history will therefore have to be complied and placed together from the recollections of such of the pioneers as may be found willing to tax their memories of the true facts to be placed on record. We hope very shortly to institute an inquiry into this most interesting subject, and shall then publish the results week by week....."

Mr. Moss adds: "Books of all other Jewish Societies are intact, and their history therefore presents no difficulties. The necessity of writing the communal story without delay is evident, and is in itself sufficient justification for the existence of this paper. The credit due to workers will be recognized, and we shall be in a position to know who are the men who made the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation. In the meantime

we shall be very much obliged if the early-stagers will furnish up their recollections, for the Reverend Cohen will be thankful for any information as to the early days".

A general stirring of the political consciousness of the community was stimulated by the introduction of two important measures, one to restrict the immigration of aliens, and the other to change the Licensing Laws in a fashion felt to involve discrimination against Jewry. The main criticisms were concentrated on the setting up of a Board, with arbitrary powers to refuse licences without explanation or appeal. On this issue the Administrator finally decided to withdraw the measure. Despite the success, the "Idlers Gazette" urged all Rhodesian Jews to qualify as voters. "No action", it said, "is to petty or insignificant for us, and it is the solemn duty of every Jew to se the he is entered on the roll, and to exercise his franchise on every occasion. The community agrees with us, and do nothing. If every Jew in South Africa had voted, the Alien Immigration Bill might never have been passed. It is not desirable to go into details in this matter, but the moral of the affair seems to be an old one - that Jews can only be driven, but will not listen to reason and act with promptitude and foresight". The article added: "The reappearance of the Licensing Bill in a different form has revived the whole menace".

Mr. Moss, the Editor, visited the office of the Town Clerk, where he examined the Municipal Voters roll. "There are ", he said, "only about 80 Jewish names on the list. We may safely reckon that the local Jewish adult male population at 200. Everybody above the age of 21, if only he has got a room, shop or office, is entitled to a vote. Where are the other 120? It is not too much to say that the fate of this country and all of us will be decided during the next few months. No doubt the election of the representatives to go to England (to secure extra representation for Rhodesian settlers) will be decided by the People. Every vote will count. We want the right men, the honest men, the best men, in our own interests, as well as the country's. Very soon a Municipal election will take place. We want the right man here too. Every non-registered Jew is guilty against the city, the community and himself. Go up and see that your name is on the list....."

In conclusion Moss declared: "There is no Jewish vote, but we want every Jew to have his vote for all that and to exercise it too".

Effects of the great slump were noticed with disturbing clarity. "Depressions are no respecters of persons", said the "Gazette". "They depress everybody. Blue individuals make up a blue community, and social and congregational activities languish with commerce".

A plea for a Government loan of £5,000,000 is submitted: "What a fillip this would be for Rhodesia; winter would pass like a dream, and the spring of renewed life shine in every heart, reviving every drooping spirit. With fresh prosperity, the Shul would be relieved of all anxiety. As things are, the financial outlook is none too bright. The Depression hits us particularly hard, in that it deprives the Community of invaluable workers, like Mr. Goldring, who cannot be replaced. Good men leaving us, while such newcomers as may arrive are as a rule far from desirable additions to our ranks. We

stand and fall with the general population of the country. Our interests are common, and everyone will cordially hope that the efforts of the authorities may result before long in dissipating the nightmare in which the country is labouring at present".

Similar references appear in other places, amongst others the remark: "The Chartered Company can't raise a blue cent. If you want to meet Bulawayo, go to Johannesburg.

Zionist politics also became a subject of frequent argument, and on March 9. 1904, a resolution was passed, proposed by the Reverend Cohen and seconded by H.B Ellenbogen: "We, the Zionists of Bulawayo, South Africa, assembled en masse this day of Purim, 5664, desires most emphatically to stigmatize the action of those Russian members of the Great Actions Committee who were responsible for the Charkow Conference, as utterly unconstitutional, and as deliberately calculated to wreck the unity and efficiency of the Zionist organization. We therefore exhort our leaders to regard such actions as proceeding from the worst enemies of Zionism, and beg them to continue in their great labours in the full assurance that we, together with all true Zionists, place in them the most implicit reliance, and we shall redouble our efforts to afford the means necessary to develop the efficiency of our organization".

Then there was an argument foreshadowing the political divisions of Israel today, heralded by Mr. Miller who, “although a fluent speaker, did not succeed in impressing upon those present his socialistic ideas about Zionism".

Despite the strong words used concerning the Charkow Conference, which hinged on the offer by the British Colonial Office to make available for Zionist settlement a large part of the Uasin Gishu Plateau in what is now Kenya, the furor quickly died down, and only a few weeks later the "Idlers Gazette" reported that the split had now been healed. "The East African Commission is to go, and its report is a foregone conclusion, for all evidence goes to show that the land offered us is magnificent. The next Congress will decide that the colonization of this country should be proceeded with. A number of Zionists may leave our ranks, but more will join us. It should be possible to enlist the non-Zionist Jewish bodies, for this work". It is a matter of history how, on this issue, the Territorialists, including the famous writer, Israel Zangwill, and others seceded from the main body of the movement, which in the end decided that the future home of Jewry must be in the Land of Israel, and whatever may have been the arguments in those days, one can but wonder what the situation would have been in the East Africa of today, had a Jewish Commonwealth arisen in those parts!

Rhodesia's only Jewish library that of the Chovevi Zion Society, was open every Sunday from three to five. It took eight Jewish papers from South Africa, Britain, Russia, and the United States.

Jewish members of the Southern Rhodesia Volunteers were well represented at the parade on July 1904, when the famous Memorial to the Wilson Patrol and to Cecil John Rhodes was unveiled at World's View in the Matopos.

From the Jewish point of view, the most memorable event of the year was the news, on July 3, 1904, that the founder of the Zionist Movement, Dr. Theodore Herzl, was dead. On the following Sunday evening a Memorial Service took place at the Bulawayo Synagogue, attended by almost every member of the community. "Well may we exclaim in this sad hour with Jeremiah, the Prophet of Sorrow", said the "Idler's Gazette", ' great as the ocean is thy calamity, who can heal thee'. We cannot and will not despair, for our faith in Providence and in the justness of our sacred cause is invincible, but we may well be forgiven if for the moment we are overwhelmed at out national misfortune'. ....."

Shortly after the "Idler's Gazette" came to an end, but it did not do so on an unworthy note.

## CHAPTER 27

## NORTH OF THE ZAMBEZI

The development of the Jewish Community in Southern Rhodesia had its counterpart further north. Inevitably, with their eternal quest for far places, some of the Jewish pioneers were drawn, both by opportunities for adventure and for profit, to try their luck in this almost completely undeveloped territory.

Even in the days of Cecil John Rhodes, a certain number became interested in the investment possibilities there, notably Baron E.B. Erlanger, the famous London banker and Alfred Beit. In Germany the great industrialists, Emil Rathanau, founder of the great electrical combine, the A.E.G. (Allegemeine Eliktrizitacts Gesellschaft), had taken a major participation in the famous African Concessions Syndicate that fathered the scheme to use power from the Victoria Falls.

Adventurous Jews occasionally made their way during the 1890's beyond the Northern bank of the Zambezi, though few left details of their deeds. As mentioned earlier, the French explorer Edmond Foa, who trekked here in 1894, already drew attention to the mining possibilities of the land. On the scientific side, it is also worth mentioning that the first two White Rhinoceroses, shot there by Robert T Coryndon in 1892, were secured for the Rothschild collection at Tring in England.

Quite apart from the adventurers, however, appeared traders and hunters. Sir Harry Johnston mentions in 1897 the firm of Kahn & Co. as one of the principal commercial houses both in what is now Nyasaland, and in Northern Rhodesia.

About the same time arrived two young men who may be regarded as Jewish "Voortrekkers". Born in Lithuania 1n 1880, Eli Susman landed in Southern Africa in 1896 at the age of 16, and, with hardly a penny to his name, managed to reach the Frontier settlement of Francistown in the Tati territory. There, soon after, he was joined by his elder brother Harry, who had been born on February 1, 1876, at Ritteva in Russia. At Bulawayo they were to meet Cecil Rhodes for the first time and thanks to new contracts during the Boer War period, in 1901, they found a chance to join an historic trek to Barotseland, then an almost unknown territory. On foot, by ox-wagon and canoe, they passed through a country riddled with fever and menaced by wild animals. Fully half the 800 miles they traveled in primitive tribal dugouts, only eight of the 28 whites who formed the party succeeding, after three months, in reaching Mongu, capital of King Lewanika. Nearly all the others died of Blackwater Fever. The Susmans were among

those who won through and they succeeded in gaining the confidence of Lewanika himself, who so trusted Harry as his adviser, that he declared on one occasion "The man who does not know Susman is not a Barotse".

Having made their homes in the territory, they set off on a two-year trading journey, specializing in the sale of blankets and coloured materials. Cattle were cheap, but had to be driven nearly 1,000 miles to the South. It speaks well for their skill and care that, of the vast herds handled; only 21/2 per cent were lost.

Putting to use his unique knowledge of the countryside, Harry Susman in 1906 joined another expedition, formed to recover "Lobengula's Millions", believed to have been buried near the Portuguese border. While great dangers were overcome, including an onslaught by a local group of cannibals, the treasure alas was never located.

When in 1908 the town of Livingstone was founded, the original inhabitants included Eli and Harry who, in partnership with a Mr. Davis, set up as "Susman Brothers & Davis", the first butchers beyond the Zambezi. The venture was a success, and led not only to the expansion of the export business in cattle, but to the gradual building up of a chain of shops, mills and other businesses extending right across Northern Rhodesia. The first Jewish wedding in the territory was that of Harry Susman to Miss Grill in 1910.

Twenty years later Eli moved to the Union, where he and Max Sonnenberg started the South African Woolworths organization. Harry passed away at the age of 76 in 1952, followed in 1958 by his brother, at the age of 78. Both left considerable amounts to public purposes, Jewish and non-Jewish.

More or less simultaneously with the advent of the Susmans another young Jew named Joseph Beemer settled at Livingstone. The fairly substantial influx which followed is reflected in the original issue of the local "Pioneer and Advertise" dated January 13, 1906:-

**BLOCH BROTHERS**

"Beg to announce that they have
Opened Business
At the corner of Main and Sackville Streets
With a Large, New and Well-Assorted Stock of
Gents Outfitting Goods.
A Call Invited
Postal Address: G.P.O. Livingstone".

Then there were Berger & Cohen, "Wholesale and Retail Merchants" (Late of the Bechuanaland Trading Association Buildings.")

Produce and Livestock Dealers.

A choice selection of Fresh Groceries
And Provisions
Quality and Weight guaranteed.
Clothing Department – Finest Selection of
Ladies and Gents Outfitting Goods North of the Zambezi.

Boots and Shoes a Specialty
A Splendid Stock of Waterproofs
Bortsi (so spelt) Curios always on hand.
Country Orders Promptly Executed.
Telegrams: 'Burger', Livingstone

In another line of trade was R .J .Bernstein, "Building Contractor, (late of Bulawayo), Plans and Estimates Free". (One pioneer recalls rather unkindly the crooked shelving which Bernstein once erected in a shop). Leopold (afterwards Sir Leopold) Moore, by occupation a pharmacist, was responsible for the publication of the "Livingstone Advertiser" itself, which before long became a well-accepted and reasonably profitable organ of public opinion.

The first train to Livingstone arrived on the occasion of the famous Regatta held on the Zambezi for the world championship, and included at least two Jewish passengers, C. Harris and M. Isaacs.

Meanwhile the line from Cape Town, which it was hoped ultimately to continue across the African Continent to Cairo, reached the Zambezi, and was being pushed forward towards the border of the Congo, largely with the financial help of Alfred Beit. When in 1906 Beit passed away, the "Cape Times" devoted a leader to this aspect of his work, in which it said, inter alia: "When the British Government declined to guarantee a loan to push on the railway to the Zambezi, Beit immediately came to the rescue…. When we remember that Rhodesia was but newly won from barbarism, we can realize that the man who thus backed the moves of the great "Dreamer in Continents", had all the nerve of the giants of the Stock Exchange speculation, plus a mind and a quality of heart and intellect to which they are usually strangers…."

Gradually the number of Jewish colonists rose, one of the early comers being the legendary Barnett Smith, whom everybody knew under his nickname of "Bongola" Smith. Born in Russia in 1871, he reached Northern Rhodesia in the early 1900's, and was soon recognized, in the words of a contemporary, as "the pioneer of organized ranching and cattle trading." Unwilling merely to operate among the native breeders of this area, he crossed into Katanga, where he was promptly accepted as leader in this branch of business. From his headquarters in the newly-founded town of Elizabethville, he dominated the meat industry of the Belgian Con go, and founded the Comagnie d'Elevage et d'Alimentation du Katanga.

Referred to in the London press as "most enterprising and far-seeing, Smith also launched the Congo-Rhodesian Company, to import cattle for the copper

mines of the Union Miniere, and was later Managing Director of the Union Cold Storage and other large concerns. When he passed away in 1944, "Bongola", with seven children and 13 grandchildren, was one of the Rhodesian Jewish Patriarchs, enjoying a reputation for shrewdness, humour and kindliness that won him respect and admiration from the entire population of the two neighbouring countries.

Max Ruda, another early settler, was born at Warsaw on May 17, 1887. In 1902 he made his headquarters in Bechuanaland, moved to Bulawayo as manager of the firm of Joseph & Rabinowitz, and then trekked into Northern Rhodesia. Likewise attracted by the possibilities of Katanga, he set up as M. Ruda & Co. at Elizabethville. His branch at Bulawayo was in 1913 taken over by his partner, Joseph Joseph.

Then there was Marcus Pieters, born in Russia on November 9, 1869, who came to Bulawayo in 1897 to start S. Pieters & Co., (later renamed I. Pieters & Co.), a firm that also operated with great success at Elizabethville and Salisbury.

The fate of J.L. Rollnick is typical of the ups and downs of the pioneer settlers. Coming to Northern Rhodesia in the early 1900's he entered into a trading partnership with Charles Solomon, but was almost ruined when his premises burnt down uninsured. However, he recovered and, moving over to the Congo, became associated with Lever Brothers, for whom he built up a business in vegetable oil and similar products, that helped to make him one of the wealthiest, if not the wealthiest man in Central Africa. At one time he was credited with owning over 1,000,000 and, even if this were an exaggeration, there was no question of his ability and enterprise as a business man.

Of enormous physical strength, one of his favourite tricks was to tear in half a whole pack of playing cards. With his newly-won fortune he went overseas, to tour the most spectacular gambling spots in Europe, actually achieving the proverbial feat of breaking the bank at Monte Carlo! But alas, his fortune changed and, at that same resort, he ultimately speculated away every penny he possessed.

Confronted with the prospect of complete ruin, poor Rollnick committed suicide. It is a tribute to his personality that Lever Brothers both paid for his funeral and put up a memorial stone in his honour.

Among Jews appearing in Northern Rhodesia was a Mr. Franks at N'Dola, then a wayside halt on the British side of the Congo frontier, long before the Copper Belt. On the border itself two other Jews operated a hotel at Sakania, while the storekeepers at Livingstone had been reinforced by the arrival of Max Shapiro. At the Bwana Mkubwa Copper Mine, Hyman Beemer established himself as a general dealer.

Mrs. G.H. Epstein, now living in retirement at Salisbury, is one of the few survivors from that era. Born in Sheffield in 1891 as Olga Hilda Crowngold, she was brought to Cape Town as a child, but at 20 went to Bulawayo, where in September 1911 she married George Gabriel Epstein. Epstein, born in Ireland in 1883 and brought to

Rhodesia by his father, Isaac Epstein, had as a youngster of 14 met Cecil John Rhodes, had fought in the Boer War with Kitchener's Fighting Scouts, and then had gone prospecting until in 1908 he secured his first post with Susman Brothers at Livingstone. That firm sent him to one of their out-stations at Nalolo up the Zambezi. Yet despite the 411 miles separating them from the nearest village, he already found several other Jewish traders there, including Jacob Finkelstein, Abe Diamond and his brother Louis.

It was to Nalolo that young Olga Epstein was brought as a bride in 1912. "How well", she said, "I can still remember the journey in the dug-out canoe, and seeing lions and crocodiles on the river bank. Once at least we were capsized by hippos and all my wedding presents lost. Every day at four in the afternoon we would pull into the bank and camp out overnight. Altogether it took us 20 days to get there. Our house was constructed of pole and dagga, with a grass roof and there we stayed until 1913". An outstandingly good hunter, her husband so impressed the visiting Duke of Westminster that he gave him a fine rifle as a souvenir.

Jewish customs were maintained at Nalolo, more particularly the lighting of candles and saying of prayers every Sabbath evening. The birth of their first son, David, in this lonely spot was the signal for a crude practical joke. Outside the primitive hut gathered the eight other traders of the district and broke into song: "I'm a daddy today". Great was their distress when they discovered that the young mother had burst into tears. Thanks to the nurse from the near-by French Mission station, and a medical man, Dr. Collier, the health of the baby was safeguarded, and the crowning compliment came when the Royal Barge arrived from the Paramount Chief, accompanied by attendants ringing bells and hauled along the shore by oxen. By this time Mrs. Epstein had acquired the tribal nickname of "Morena Maquai", which playfully meant "Queen of Barotseland". King Lewanika, looking at the infant, asked her: "Do you know ho w to bath a baby?" and, before she could reply, said "I will show you how to bath the petutu (little buck)". What is more, he called for water and a basin, and to the young mother's horrified amusement, proceeded to do so!

Because of the prevailing fever, the parents were in constant anxiety as to the health of the small boy and, after six months; Mrs. Epstein undertook the long trek to Bulawayo, returning 14 months later. Soon after World War 1 began, she was still in Northern Rhodesia, at Lealui, when her first daughter was born.

During the rainy season of 1916, with a large part of Barotseland under water, Dr. Collier advised the Epsteins if they wanted healthy children to leave the country permanently. With a heavy heart they said goodbye, for, in spite of the primitive conditions, they loved the life. Susman Brothers granted a substantial bonus, and for a while they lived at Livingstone and then moved to the coast. But the spell of Rhodesia had seized them, and they came back, this time to Fort Victoria. Until 1923 when Joe Gruber and his wife arrived, the Epstein family were the only Jews in the district. Mr. Epstein passed away on May 24, 1956, but his widow still revels in her imperishable memories.

During World War 1 there was a slow increase in the Jewish population of Northern Rhodesia, the newcomers including Max Emanuel King, who settled at Lusaka in 1915, and of whom more will be said in another part of this book. There he ran the hotel, a brick and corrugated iron structure and, for the convenience of the handful of farmers in the neighbourhood, also operated a mill, butchery, a mineral water factory and a store.

When from Bwana Mkubwa and one or two other producers, the first small amounts of copper were forthcoming, Max King became forwarding agent. “I can still see the natives arriving”, he said, “with the metal bars, on their heads. Most of them came from the Old Sable Antelope Mine and the Prince Edward Mine in the Mumba district, concerns now long forgotten. It was my job to see that they were safely consigned to Beira by rail”.

A few other Jews were now also at Lusaka, including M. Bloch, who ran a store, the Granger Brothers, Abraham Glasser and E. Kollenberg, a wholesale merchant. When the High Festivals came, the Sepher Torah was sent up by rail from Bulawayo, and Mr. King himself generally held a service at the hotel.

## CHAPTER 28

## RHODESIAN JEWS IN WORD WAR 1

One of the glories of Rhodesian history is that during both World Wars she contributed a higher percentage of her white manhood to the British forces than did any other part of the Commonwealth. From the moment when hostilities against Germany began in 1914, until the time of the Armistice, it is estimated that close on 80 per cent attested, and, in keeping with a tradition that went back to the days of Lobengula, local Jewry did its full and loyal share.

From a statistical point of view, however, the facts are hard to determine, since records were incomplete, and even those prepared have, in many instances, not survived. One of the significant items dates from August 31, 1914, only a few days after the outbreak of hostilities, when, at a meeting of the Bulawayo Jewish Guild, a donation of five guineas was voted towards Red Cross Funds. Mr. A Jacobs, who presided, pointed out: "As the Jewish ladies of Bulawayo have formed a Committee for the purpose of raising funds for the South African and Imperial Troops, it would be advisable to leave the matter of the Society's donation in abeyance for the present. At a later stage the Society will be in a better position to judge which of the various funds now being started, most particularly needs support…."

On the same day a telegram was dispatched to General Louis Botha, the South African Prime Minister, addressed to Pretoria: "Bulawayo Jewish Guild and Rhodesia Junior Political Association at a public debate, resolved to congratulate you on and express admiration for the statesmanlike and patriotic manner in which you have answered the call of the Empire. We are proud of you". Shortly after, a substantial sum was handed over to the Red Cross and, more significant still, a meeting took place on December 16, 1914, "to recommend the suspension of the activities of the Guild, until say, March, 1915, owing to the normally heavy calls made upon the community since the outbreak of hostilities…." Amplifying this, Mr. Jacobs told a meeting: "The Guild exists essentially for the provision of entertainments for its members, and it is thought that, under the present war conditions, these would be out of place. Further, the calls upon the community have been somewhat heavy of late". The establishment of a Russo-Jewish War Fund was referred to in December 1915, when a function was held in support of it at Bulawayo.

In a half-hearted way operations were, however, for a while allowed to continue, though the dominating fact of the struggle was increasingly reflected in such items as an "organized discussion of the War in relation to the Jewish people". In August 1915 a Social was given to the Jewish members of the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers and the First Rhodesian Regiment, "as well as their lady friends". The Simchas Torah Social took the form of "toast to the King, Country, Army, Navy and the Bulawayo Jewish Community".

From 1916 onwards until the end of the war, the Bulawayo Jewish Guild went into recess, and did not recommence operations again until well into 1919.

Meanwhile the enlistment of Jews in the Colony's forces proceeded vigorously, a unique incident being recorded in 1914, when a group of young volunteers belonging to the community, met at Bulawayo and choosing their own officers, were duly embodied in the Rhodesian Reserve Volunteers. This unit, numbering about 40, became a section of B Company, and hopes were expressed that they might take the field as a single body. Military authorities still controlled by the British South African Company, however, disapproved of the principle and despite the precedent of the famous "Judeans" overseas, insisted on appointing officers of their own. Nonetheless, there is a photograph extant of this Jewish group, before it was dispersed. Among the names that can still be identified are Lieutenant Louis Landau, Sergeant R. Aserman, Sergeant S. Grossberg, Private David Landau, Private Abe Fingelson, Private Meyer Cohen, Private Joe Budlender, Private R. Feigenbaum, Private L. Solo, Private Oscar Kaufman, Private Adolph Hepker and Private Jacob Hoffman.

Considering that the entire Jewish population of Rhodesia only numbered a few hundred, the frequency with which Jewish names occur in the military lists is noteworthy. Thus we find Lieutenant Byron Jacobs, son of a Bulawayo stockbroker, serving with the buffs in France, where he won the Military Cross, while carrying ammunition to a front line trench under heavy fire. Seeing another soldier fall, Lieutenant Jacobs stopped to pick him up and brought him to safety. Private H.M. Jacobs from the Wanderers' Rest Gold Mine in Rhodesia, serving with the Third South African Infantry, was killed in action in 1917. Private P. Wisener of the Southern Rhodesia Column was decorated "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty". Lieutenant Solly King, born in Ireland, came to Bulawayo in 1902, finished his schooling at St. George's, and was working with the well-known chemists, Lennon's, when war broke out. He not only volunteered, but paid his own passage back to the Old Country. There he joined the Officers' Training Corps and attracted the favourable notice of Colonel Davidson, through whom he received his commission as Lieutenant in the First Northumberland Fusiliers. In the slaughter on the Somme, Lieutenant King was killed on October 12, 1916. His brother, Sergeant Isidore King, also born in Ireland, had come with him at the same time to Rhodesia. Leaving his work with the Bulawayo firm of Charelick Salomon, he enlisted in the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers and then transferred to the British South Africa Police Regiment, with which he went to German East Africa. Seriously wounded up North, he was invalided out of the army, but never fully recovered, and died

of the effects in London. His son, Edwin King, became a well-known Cape Town advocate.

Then there was Lieutenant Julius Hermann, an attorney from Fort Victoria, who, making his way over to England, like so many others, joined the 9th London Regiment in 1916, and was killed in action within 14 days of his arrival in France.

Private P.L. Barnett of Bulawayo, was first reported missing, and later died in action in France, on February 28, 1918. Private A.J. Ackerman from Salisbury, originally in the Second Rhodesian Regiment, was transferred to the Second South African Infantry. After being reported missing, he too was found killed in action.

Several sons of Eli Susman enlisted in Northern Rhodesia, - Oscar Susman distinguishing himself in the Second Rhodesia Regiment during the East African Campaign. In appreciation of what he had done, his name was formally inscribed in the Golden Book, on behalf of the Livingstone Herzl Zionist Society.

Captain H.H. Baron transferred from the Rhodesian Regiment to the Royal Air Force. During the campaign in South West Africa, he contracted a disease, from the effects of which he ultimately died, immediately after the Armistice in February 1919.

And so the story might be continued. The list of those killed between 1914 and 1918, appearing in a Memorial Tablet in Bulawayo, is unfortunately very incomplete, but it gives H Chitrin, D Cohen, J Hermann, S King, A.G. Lazar, and B Rabinson.

When the Bulawayo Jewish Guild met again for the first time on August 21, 1919, Mr. Louis Landau began by welcoming the returned soldiers, and expressed the sympathy of all to the relatives of those who had made the supreme sacrifice. “I will ask all present”, he said, “to rise in honour of those who have not returned”.

## CHAPTER 29.

## GOLD AND OTHER MINERS.

No story of Rhodesia can be told without taking account of those men who helped to build up its mining industry, more particularly the production of gold in the earlier days. Here as everywhere else, Jewry played its part to the full. Reference has been made to some of the pioneers who helped to open up the underground treasures, first of Mashonaland and later of Matabeleland, before the end of the 18th Century. But the time seems ripe to take account of those who continued the trail into the 20th Century. Many of these ventures - in fact, the majority - ended in disappointment, but optimism and courage are not to be calculated in pounds, shillings and pence. Those who risked their money, their health and their time in questing after minerals in the bundu, helped to build a tradition which continues to aid the Colony in coping with its problems.

Several of the early Jewish pioneers were specially attracted by the technical aspect of mining. Thus on October 5, 1895, it was reported that "Messrs. Henri Knoertzer and Leopold Weil, engineers of the French South Africa Company, have arrived at Salisbury with Mr. Am Ende from Bulawayo". One November 3, 1899, there was an item:

"J.D. JACOBSON.

P.O. BOX 579, Bulawayo. (Later of Bargerton and Johannesburg).

Having had 14 years experience in the Erection of Batteries, Concentrators, Compressors, Hauling Engines, Headgears, Cyanide Plants and Dams, Cornish Pumps, Offices and Whole Surface Plants, is now prepared to undertake similar works in Rhodesia".

And again a notice appeared:

"CONCENTRATION OF ORES BY OIL

Elmore Process.

Samples Tested Free Of Charge.

Full Particulars on Application to :

EUGEN BLUME
P.O. Box 77, Bulawayo.
Testing Works: Albany House".

In the columns of "The Idler" are recounted the adventures of an anonymous Jewish pioneer, who took up a five-stamp gold proposition. After describing how he had battled to get the primitive machinery into operation, he tells how he and his partners decided to scrape the amalgamating plates to see if there was any gold. "We all worked very hard", he said, "lifting and hanging the stamps, and then came the scraping. After some hours, I saw a few ounces of amalgam, about sufficient, I should say, to pay for fuel for the boiler. Then cattle disease broke out and the rain set in and stopped our traction engine. Now a drought has set in, and there will probably be a scarcity of water". He adds that at the moment when other operations came to a standstill, he had, after a long lull, plenty of labour, but was unable to use it. "The woes of a manager of a mining syndicate are many he said, "but the experience he gains is in proportion".

Something of the quality of the original comes out in the obituary of Barney Barnett, an early Jewish prospector. He had begun as one of the Diamond Fields pioneers at Kimberly long before, and was later active in the back blocks of Rhodesia. When he passed away in his 99th year on July 24, 1926, the press described him as "the oldest European in the Colony. "At one time ", commented the "African World", "he was in affluent circumstances, but in later years found it difficult to make ends meet. A man of sturdy independence, he declined to accept charity in any form, and was working until within a week of his passing". That proud quality might have been found in many of those fine old Jews.

Emanuel Basch, besides becoming Mayor of Bulawayo, was one of the first Rhodesians to erect a five-stamp battery on his own property, the Mohem Mine in the Bembezi district. In connection with his work there he made a classic remark. "A mine", said Basch "is a big hole. You put in sovereigns and take out stones.
In spite of this, he persisted and belonged tot he Rhodesian Chamber of Mines for a number of years, even sitting on the Committee, along with his co-religionist, W.L. Simon of the Bechuanaland Exploration Company, which operated the Bernheim (Mazoe) Gold Mines Ltd.,

That very famous early mining engineer, E.H.A. Cohen, nicknamed "Alphabetical" Cohen, on account of the numerous letters both in front and behind his name, gained a number of his laurels in Rhodesia.

No mention has yet been made of Abner Cohen's mining ventures, or those of his partner, Norman Levy Mandelson, of Joseph Saber, of Leonard & Lezard of Gatooma and Gwelo, of Jacob Goldberg, and of N. Platnauer.

The number of Jews associated with the Rhodesian mining companies was so considerable that it is difficult to pick out names. Among the most versatile was Isidore Hirschler, to whom reference was made in connection with the Matabele Rebellion, who for many years was Resident Director of the group known as Rhodesia Ltd. To his earlier directorships he added those of the Rice-Hamilton Syndicate, Sneddon Concessions, the Austro-Rhodesian Development Co. Ltd., the Empress Rhodesia Mines Ltd., the Rhodesian Mining and Development Company Ltd., the Tuli Consolidated Coalfields Ltd., the Urangwe Main Reef Syndicate Ltd., the South African Gold Dredging Company Ltd., the Sabina Proprietary Mines Ltd., the Wearleigh Rhodesian Development Company Ltd., and others.

Charterland Goldfields Ltd., one of his earlier directorships, was to be followed at the time of the Boer War by the Wanderer (Selukwe) Goldmines Ltd., by the Rhodesia Investment Company Ltd., which, started in 1899, was reconstructed the Wankie Colliery Company, on August 23, 1909. Similarly the Rhodesia Copper Company Ltd., registered on January 31, 1902, was ancestor of the giant undertakings which make the present Copper Belt famous. Many other Jewish names appear in the old records - M. Goldstein of the Ophir Concessions and Exploration Co. Ltd., Bruno Weiser of the French South African Development Company Ltd., the French Ayrshire and Lo Magondi District Development Co. Ltd. A. Spitzer along with Charles Sidney Goldman, had a number of Rhodesian interests, including the famous syndicate started by Lord Randolph Churchill, father of the celebrated Winston.

Similarly E.G. Mocatta was an early director of the Penhalonga Proprietary Mines Ltd., near Umtali, one of the first opened up after the Occupation. The Salisbury Reef Mine occupied Louis Susman at the turn of the century (he later ran the Dwarf Mine near Gadzema); the Monomotapa Development Company Ltd., W.H. Cohen; the Africa Trust Consolidated and General exploration Company, H. Feldman; the St. Gerera Development Company Ltd., E.H. Joseph; and the Etna Mine at Hartley, Max Grossberg and George Thal, while Isaac Lasovsky was to be found at the Sabiwa Mine near Banket, and later at the Shamva. A.Hess, director of the Consolidated Exploration and Development (Rhodesia) Co. Ltd figures, along with E.Hess, in the British Lomagundi Development Co. Ltd. Then there was Fleming's Matabeleland Exploration Company Ltd., of which E.S. Marcus was the Chairman; A.G. Freeman was on the board of the Rhodesia Transvaal Syndicate Ltd., while John I. M. Ornstein was a director, both of the Makaha Goldfields Ltd., and of the Matoko Goldfields Ltd.

B.Y, Vioira was on the board of the J.G, Development Syndicate and Falcon Mines Ltd., a reconstruction in 1910 of the earlier Falcon (Rhodesia) Development Company Ltd., later merged with the Athens Mine in 1911, as well as of the Glen May (Rhodesia) Mines Ltd., established in 1914, which also had on its board A.W. Cohen and Dr. M. Thalmessinger.

The famous Globe and Phoenix Gold Mining Company Ltd., included in its directorate H.H. Haldenstein, member of the prominent shoe manufacturing family in Norwich, while the North Charterland Exploration Company Ltd. (1910), had, amongst others, E. Turk.

Partner of the legendary Sammy Marks in Lewis & Marks, Isaac Lewis, was director of the Rhodesia Gold Mining and Investment Company Ltd., as was his son, G. Roy Lewis, A. Horkheimer held a similar position on the United Excelsior Mines Ltd., and E. Friedlander on Viking Gold Mines Ltd.

Perhaps the most prominent personalities in the realm of Rhodesian mining were the members of the Weil family of Mafeking and Bulawayo. Thus when in 1910 the famous Cam and Motor Gold Mining Company was registered in London, the Chairman was Julius Weil, with his brother, Sam, on the directorate. Sam in his turn was Chairman of the Enterprise Gold Mining and Estates Co. Ltd., with Julius an ordinary member of the Board. Another, Maurice Weil, was on the board of Farmlands of Rhodesia Ltd., registered in 1912. Sam Weil was likewise Chairman of the Giant Mines of Rhodesia Ltd., and Ben Weil a director. Both Joe and Sam Weil were on the London board of the Imperial Gold Mines and estates Company of Rhodesia Ltd. Julius was Chairman of the Linchwe Concession Company Ltd., also Chairman of the New Found out Mines Ltd., again with Sam as an ordinary member of the Board. Julius was also a director of Rhodesia Ltd., already mentioned in connection with I.S. Hirschler.

Almost inevitably Julius Weil was made Chairman of the famous "Lonrho". officially the London & Rhodesian Mining and Land Company Ltd., established on May 30, 1909, to take over a very large number of important ventures in the Colony, again with Sam one of the directors. This does not by any means exhaust the Jewish contribution to mining.

The firm of Hepker, Blumenthal and Thal, also has its place in the story of the industry. It was founded by the well-known Hermann Hepker, one of the memorable personalities of the earlies. Born in Goldingon in Latvia in 1870, he came to German South West Africa as a boy of 17, making his home in the new settlement of Luderitzbucht. There he remained some years, engaged in smousing and cattle training, until about 1891, when he moved over to Kimberly. Inherent restlessness sent him trekking round Bechuanaland, where he gained approval of the famous Chief Khama. With his partner, a Frenchman, he secured land concessions on 10,000 morgen at the not unreasonable figure of 3d. a morgen! Soon after the Matabele Rebellion, Hermann Hepker in 1896 moved to Bulawayo, where he combined business as a cattle trader with that of produce merchant. His "Chartered Butchery", adjoining the Palace Hotel, one of the landmarks of the town, remained in business until shortly after World War 1!

During the period following the Boer War, Hepker became interested in mining and, along with Blumenthal and Thal, succeeded in acquiring a number of small properties including the Authentic Gold Mine, the Reliable Gold Mine, the Highland Chief Gold Mine and the Lowland Chief gold Mine, all of which were merged into the West Mazoe Mines Ltd., to which was added later the Hermit Mine. Unfortunately none

of these were successful, but Hepker, undeterred, took advantage of the knowledge he had gained in developing sources of local mining timber.

Douglas Abrahamson, born in the Eastern Cape in 1877, first reached Rhodesia soon after the Boer War and became an active prospector, as well as miner. A nephew of Sir David Harris, the famous Kimberly pioneer, he was the son of Louis Abrahamson, a well- known member of the old Cape Parliament. Though his mother was not Jewish, he always considered himself a member of a community and married into the faith. Abrahamson was associated with the successful development of the mines in the Shamva District, particularly the Ilex property, from which at one time he was recovering gold at the rate of £1,000 a month. It was a sign of his popularity that upon its establishment in 1907, he became the representative on the Executive of the Rhodesian Small-Workers and Tributors Association, representing the Abercorn Goldfields.

Quite apart from his link with the Lonely Mine, R. Aserman was active in the Gwanda district in 1910, where his representative was Maurice Kanter. He pegged over a mile and a half of claims in one section, and another eight miles near the Susanna Mine. So promising were the results that there was a rush of other diggers and prospectors. In all Aserman was associated with well over 20 gold-producing properties, most of them short-lived.

The membership list for the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines for 1919 includes R. Aserman, now an independent operator, his former partner J. Palca, also on his own, Emanuel Basch, representing the Lonely Reef Gold Mining Company Ltd., Louis Landau, representing the Durban Syndicate, S. Levin, representing his own interests, S. Charelick, as also Charelick Salomon, another claim-holder, a not inconsiderable proportion of six out of 34.

In more recent years membership of the Rhodesian Chamber of Mines has included O. Kaufman of C. Salomon & Kaufman Ltd., (1938); N. Landau of the Rezende Mines Ltd.; M.L. van Bliljdenstein of the Cambray Mining Company (1944) Ltd., A.M. Bensusan and H. Levy, who for many years was Secretary for the Goldfields group in the Colony.

The list of small gold workings in later times is a long one, with many picturesque names - the Brilliant New Hartley operated by V.J Shapiro; the Camstick by L.U Hepker; the Commoner, near Hartley, by A.M. Bensusan; the Dreamy Daniel, near Bulawayo, by N. Turk; the Earl, near Salisbury, by N.B. Galante; the Frank, the Commonwealth and the W. & B. near Bulawayo, but Burwitz Brothers; the Pluvius, near Bulawayo, by I. Burwitz; the King's Daughter, near Umtali, by D. Cinamon and A.G.F. Alexander; the Marvel, near Bulawayo, by Ralstein's Mining Syndicate; the Negus, near Bulawayo, by F.R. Berman; the Dew Day and the Scoveni, near Bulawayo, by D.B. Pieters; the Tatagura II near Salisbury and the Sunrise by N.B. Benatar; the Teddy near Bulawayo, by M. Sher; the Teviot near Salisbury, by Douglas Abrahamson; the Yellow Vlei by M. Nowak; the Kambanye by O. Lieberman; the King's Daughter by Mrs. B.

Cinamon; the Mona near Salisbury by D.S. Leon; the Morven, near Belingwe, by N. Levin and the Promoter near Bindura, by B.S. Leon.

Nor are the Jews to be forgotten in exploiting Southern Rhodesia's deposits of base minerals. Hyman Benjamin helped to open up the Mashaba Asbestos Mine in 1915 and the name of George Gabriel Epstein, mentioned in connection with Barotseland, figures in the beginning of the same great industry when he settled on the fields on 1918 and discovered the highly profitable Shashi Mine.

The year 1905 saw the arrival in South Africa of James Frederick Kapnek, who, born in Bessarabia in 1891, had been brought up and educated in Philadelphia, U.S.A. Mining propositions became his particular interest and remained so for most of his life. After World War I Mr. Kapnek tried very hard to find oil at Inyaminga, in the Northern part of Mozambique.

Amblygonite and Beryl were produced by B. Kaplan at the Benson Four Mine near Umtoko, as they were at God's Gift, belonging to J.A. Moss, also near that village. Mr. Kaplan was also responsible for the production of Columbite and of tantalum at the Benson Mine. We find D. P Pieters recovering Tungsten at the Beth Mine near Bulawayo, and B.S. Leon at the Topsman, while Magnetite was produced from the Krantz Mine near Bulawayo by M. Yodaiken.

Northern Rhodesia developed along an entirely different road, owing to the Mining laws, which made impossible the existence of small propositions. In consequence two great rival combines of the Anglo-American, headed by Sir Ernest Oppenheimer, as well as the Rhodesian Selection Trust, took a leading part, continuing the pioneer work of Edmund Davis.

The distinction of holding the first mining license for the great Rhokana property of the Copper Belt went to Eli Susman, who disposed of it for the sum of £500.

Edmund Davis, born in 1862 was of Australian origin, the son of S. Davis of Melbourne. He was sent to England and France for his education and reached South Africa as a lad of 17 in 1879. His connection with Rhodesia began early and he became one of the original directors of the Northern Copper Company Ltd., registered in London on February 16, 1895, with a capital of £250,000. Established under the auspices of the British South African Company, it had the right to take over 510 square miles vaguely described as "North of the Zambezi". Within a short while it disposed of 400 square miles and a block of farms to the Rhodesia Copper Company, "retaining the right to locate within this area five blocks of ten square miles each, round the Ancient Mines, which are being opened up by its engineer".

As the new century developed, Edmund Davis - later to become Sir Edmund - became one of the dominant financial figures of England as well as Southern Africa, with interest in West Africa, East Africa, Australia and other parts of the World. In Rhodesia he was associated, inter alia, with the Bechuanaland Exploration Co., the

Charterland and General Exploration and Finance Company, Rhodesia Copper and General Exploration and Finance Company Ltd., Rhodesia Chrome Mines Ltd., the Wanderer (Selukwe) Gold Mines Ltd., the Wankie Colliery Co. Ltd., and many more. He passed away in 1939.

Even more spectacular was the rise of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer who, 18 years younger than Sir Edmund Davis, was born in Friedberg in Hesse, Germany. Coming to Kimberly in 1902, to look after the diamond interests with which his family was linked, he laid the foundations there for his future financial empire. Having become Mayor of Kimberly and a leading exert on the fields, he moved to the Rand in 1915, and in 1916 established the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, today one of the greatest mining and industrial enterprises in the World. Oppenheimer's activities in Rhodesia began in 1924, on his own testimony:

"..... The Corporation's original incursion into Northern Rhodesian mining was really the result of our diamond activities. After negotiations with the Belgian and Angola diamond companies, through the intermediary of Sir Edmund Davis, for the purchase of their diamonds had been successfully completed, Sir Edmund asked me as a favour to assist with Bwana (M'Kubwa) finance and I agreed to participate in a small way, on condition that we were appointed consulting engineers. We looked upon the deal as a share transaction; it was liquidated fairly promptly, actually with the assistance of Sir Edmund.

"Later on, after negotiations with Mr. Chester Beatty concerning West African diamonds had brought us into closer relations with him, he asked the Corporation to help in Rhodesian Congo Border Concession finance, which it did, again stipulating for the consulting engineership, which was readily granted. It must be recorded that at this time Bwana was in a state of continuous reconstruction, and nothing of any value had been found in the Rhodesian Congo Border Concession territory.

"In due course the Corporation became interested in other enterprises in Northern Rhodesia".

Space is lacking to do justice to the enormous and essential role which Sir Ernest Oppenheimer played in creating the Copperbelt, the interests acquired by him in the Chartered Company and other enterprises and the establishment, in 1928, of Rhodesian Anglo-American. It may safely be claimed that, however great was the contribution of others, in establishing the vast Mineral industry of Northern Industry including the production of Zinc, vanadium and other minerals at Broken Hill, the building of a vast power network, culminating in the construction of Kariba, the advance of the Wankie coal-fields and countless other achievements would have been unthinkable without the presence of Sir Ernest Oppenheimer.

In this context it migh however perhaps be justified also to mention the name of the great Rio Tinto group. Originally connected with the famous Spanish copper mine from which it took its name, it has for generations enjoyed the powerful support of

the Rothschild family in London, with its international connections, and in recent years has become prominent in the same industry in Rhodesia and elsewhere in Southern Africa. Thus a link formed in the days of Cecil John Rhodes has been expanded in our own time. From the giant corporations, with their expenditure of millions, down to the little two and three-stamp batteries standing in the bush, Jewry has played a worthy part in opening up the mineral endowments of the Rhodesias.

## CHAPTER 30.

## NATIE ARNOLD AND HIS STORY.

For sheer picturesqueness probably the most interesting figure among the Jewish mining fraternity, was the legendary Nat Arnold. Born as Nathaniel Arnold Aaron in London in 1878, he changed the order of his names into Nathaniel Aaron Arnold. So eventful was his career that it is hard to believe that he died at the age of barely 40, we are fortunate in having still with us one of his lifelong friends. Alfred Glover, now living in retirement in Cape Town. Mr. Glover is only slightly younger, having also been born in London, on February 7, 1879. The two families were neighbours, and the boys themselves met first at the famous Jewish Free School, where they shared as a teacher in the evening classes, the later great novelist, Israel Zangwill.

"Natie" Arnold's father, Isaac Aaron, was a woodcarver, permanently hard up, and living in small house in Frying Pan Alley, one side of which abutted on the school. The boy found his first job with the Jewish Board of Guardians, who sent him round on Thursday the shopping day before the Sabbath, to distribute up to 4, in small sums of cash, to deserving Jewish poor. "Walking round with him", said Mr. Glover, "between five and eight o'clock in the evening, we usually were rewarded with half a crown each for ourselves".

Alfred left school at 15 years old, in 1894, in order to become apprenticed to a shoemaker named Flatow. The prevailing standards wealth could hardly be shown better than by an excited conversation that took place one day.
Natie Arnold: "I met a man who's back from South Africa with <u>three</u> suits of clothes!"
Alfred Glover incredulously: "Who's got three suits?"
"<u>He</u> has. He's from Johannesburg. He says it's a lovely country, and he wants me to go there".

The outcome was that the two boys obtained leave from their parents to emigrate. "We sailed", said Mr. Glover, "on the ill-fated "Drummond Castle " in March 1896, on her last outward voyage before she went to the bottom near Cape Ushant, with the loss of almost every soul on board".

Landed at Cape Town, the pair of young immigrants spent a short while there, before they moved to the Rand, where they shared a room at Heights Hotel, living as economically as they could. Arnold was the first to find a job, in the capacity of a waiter at the then fashionable North Western Hotel. As such, his first need was to borrow, as he could not afford to buy, a dress suit. Three sizes to large, with the cuffs coming over his fingertips and the trousers falling over his shoes, it was strange attire in which he had to be firmly pinned. But at least he had made a start.

Thus encouraged, Alfred hunted round for a similar appointment, which he obtained in the less aristocratic Simmer and Jack Mine Boarding House. Despite his lack of experience, he was within three months made head waiter! Natie's ignorance of his duties soon cost him his post at the North Western Hotel, so he tried again as a waiter on the Geldenhuis Mine Boarding house, was soon promoted to barman a the Geldenhuis Deep Hotel and then found a post at the Native Canteen, where liquor was sold to the black workers. There he was joined by his head waiter friend, each earning 5 a month, plus board. "We were supplied", said Mr. Glover, "with a barrel of fiery Nellmapius brandy from Lewis & Mark's Distillery at Hatherly, near Pretoria. After water and mentholated spirits were added the mixture was retailed at 2/6d. a bottle, or nine bottles for 1. As a rule, the natives would club together to buy the nine bottles, and the sit down in a circle while they drank the contents. Before they went home everything was empty. It this way, the canteen would take anything up to £100 a day in golden sovereigns". Though fights were numerous and often bloody, the two newcomers hung on and succeeded in saving a good deal more than their pay, so that, by the time they decided on a move, they had about £500 between them.

One of the Basuto canteen workers having suggested that they should try his homeland, they duly set off from Johannesburg to Bloemfontein, where they acquired two Basuto ponies and continued towards the border on the first ride of their lives. At Thaba'Nchu, however, they were so exhausted that they spent three days in bed recovering! In the village they encountered a famous character, D.J. van Riet, once President of the long-defunct Stellaland Republic on the borders of Bechuanaland. He had become a lawyer and was now living in retirement at an advanced age. He noticed the two greenhorns chaffering for horses and stopped to ask what they were up to.

"Buying ponies for Johannesburg", Arnold replied. "You're paying too much", the veteran observed, and agreed to help in the deal.

"In the course of conversation", said Mr. Glover, "Mr. van Riet mentioned that he had two sons, - Gielie, on the offices with his father, - and Johnnie, who lived in a place called Rhodesia. Since neither of us had ever heard of this country we didn't take much notice. Instead we spent four or five months buying ponies and sending them to the Rand, where they were sold by auction, giving us a useful profit. We also bought forage, which we dispatched to the Johannesburg market".

One day van Riet told them that his son was coming down from Umtali, intending to also buy Basuto ponies. When the young man made his appearance, he was

not particularly pleased to find that the two young Jewish fellows were also talking of going up there on a similar quest. Both sensed his attitude, but this did not deter them and after careful consideration, they decided that they would risk too much if they traveled together. Instead one should make the long trek by himself, with say 20 ponies, which would not cost more than £5 each. If they got through to Umtali, they could easily realize £75 apiece, in that land of horse-sickness. "If you get there with five", a young van Riet warned them, "you will do well", but he spoke of such obstacles as lions, crocodiles and tsetse fly, to say nothing of the risk of the horses running away.

It was agreed that Natie, stocky in build and a good boxer, should make the trip overland, some 1,500 miles over a country with no roads. So he set off from Thaba N'chu with his cavalcade of ponies and one or two Africans to look after them, while Glover by arrangement waited another three months before setting off on the coastal route.

No news of any kind came through before his departure for Delagoa Bay, where he caught the German East African liner "Burgermeister". His trip up the Mozambique shore was uneventful, but Beira was a pest-hole, even thought the railway to the Rhodesian border was already under construction. At the railhead, Fontesvilla, even the imported Indian coolies, supposed to be inured to fever, were dying like flies, and it took a day and a half to cover even this short distance of 35 miles.

"Next", said Mr. Glover, "I had to walk 100 miles through blazing heat to Massekessi on the frontier. It took four days and one had to carry one's own pack. As we followed what was later the railway route we got a close-up of wildest Africa, its insects, wild animals, snakes and steamy heat". Massekessi, a few years earlier the scene of a border fight between British and Portuguese forces, had grown into a small settlement with an apology for a hotel. Into this tin and mud building he went in search of a beer, only to find there Nat Arnold full of beans and energy. Exactly as van Riet had foreseen, he arrived with five of his 20 horses. "Instead of the £75 on which we had reckoned, they had only fetched £50 each, so that on making up our accounts, we found we had slightly. But he had got through safely himself from the Orange Free State to Umtali!"

The partners now made their headquarters in that newly-established village, where Natie found a post as a clerk with Douglas Hudson & Co., auctioneers, and Alfred a similar job with a rival firm conducted by the famous Sandy Tulloch. Nat had already made a name for himself in Umtali by a successful two hour fight with a formidable bruiser named Tongler, who had assaulted him in the main street, and despite the rough conditions both young Jews felt very much at home.

One day Alfred Glover met and engineer named Montagu Groves, working for Cecil John Rhodes, who was connected with the Quagga Mine, a new proposition near Odzi Siding, about 20 miles away. "Through him", said Mr. Glover, "I made the acquaintance of Mr. Rhodes himself. He was sitting with his secretaries, Jack Grimmer and Gordon Le Sueur on the verandah of the Cecil Hotel, Umtali, the small tin

building quite unlike the present palatial establishment. We had a most friendly talk. "You're the young man", Rhodes said to me, "who wants to take over the store? Do you know anything about the work?"

"No, sir".

You'll find it tough going", he said, "but you can have it". Although the whole discussion only lasted about five minutes, it was sufficient. Without any capital the two adventurers arranged a partnership - Alfred to run the shop and Natie to attend to mattes in town. "Having reached Odzi by train", said Mr. Glover, "I found myself faced with another trek of some 20 miles by ox-wagon. The Quagga Mine, when we found it, was nothing but empty veld, without even a building. So I spent the first three weeks in putting up a shack for myself, together with a store and other essentials".

Digging operations began underground, but soon showed to little gold. Four months later Alfred developed Blackwater fever, and though he gradually recovered in the local hospital it was the end of the mining adventure. He then took a post as barman at the Masonic Hotel, belonging to a Jewish settler named Schwaebe, son of Lt.-Col. Schwaebe. One of the few regular Jewish officers in the British army.

Meanwhile Nat, apart from representing the firm at Umtali, continued his duties as auctioneer's clerk for the Douglas Hudson. The latter sold out to D'urban Barry who say the young Cockney's unusual gifts and gave him an interest in the firm.

A year having passed since their arrival in Rhodesia, Arnold and Glover decided to try their fortune further inland. On the coach to Salisbury, the met Bob Bernsteubm a traveling photographer, now engaged in property and mining business. While Glover found another post as a barman at the Albion Hotel, in Salisbury, Bernstein and Arnold set up as auctioneers.

Within a short time Natie had acquired from the Africans the nickname by which he became known through a great part of the Colony, namely" One-One", en echo of his rapid- fire acceptance of bids. Specializing in mining properties, claims, machinery and the like, they were soon on the road to prosperity and within barely four months invited Alfred Glover to join them

A write-up at the turn of the century says: "A firm which may be justly assigned a dominant position in this important department for commercial activity is the well-known house of Messrs. Arnold & Co., Auctioneers, Valuers and Commission Agents. Founded in 1897, they are one of the oldest firms of auctioneers in Rhodesia. From the commencement, the concern has been conducted in a spirit of progressive enterprise, until it is now second to none in the town. The firm's mart, which covers a large area of ground, is well appointed, and within it are stocks of goods, both utilitarian and ornamental.

"Messrs. Arnold & Co. have several stores for grain, in which commodity they do a very large business in various parts of the town. The conduct sales of live-stock and general sales of household furniture and other goods are also frequently held. In brief, Messrs Arnold & Co.'s reputation in all matters relating to their business is of the highest character, as the phenomenal development of their business testifies.

"As gentlemen equal to every responsibility of the important and representative concern with which their names are identified, Messrs. N. Arnold and R. Bernstein, the principals, gain the esteem of their numerous constituents by integrity, enterprise and tact which are displayed.

"The firm is the sole auctioneers - by appointment - to the Mozambique Company at Beira, the British South Africa Company, the Beira and Mashonaland Railways etc. They are also sworn Appraisers to the High Court of Southern Rhodesia and the Municipal Market Masters".

After about three years Bernstein withdrew from the partnership and the new merger was known for a short while as Thompson, Arnold & Co. But Natie preferred his independence and started up once more on his own.

His first local branch was established at Beira about 1903, by which time his agencies included the Lake of the Woods Milling Company in Canada, producers of the celebrated Five Roses Flour, also the kaffir truck imported by the Oost-Africakaanshce Compagnie in Holland, Demuth;s Triumph Antiseptic and Odenaal's "celebrated Melsetter Gazaland Tobacco". He also held the appointment of Lloyd's agent.

After six years Glover ceased to be an employee and also became a partner, allowing Arnold time for a certain amount of communal work on the Committee of the Salisbury Congregation. He made frequent visits to Johannesburg, in connection with the disposal of blocks of claims and mining properties, in which he often took a personal share. This fondness for investment was to cost him dear.

On September 24, 1910, the "South African Journal" reported: "The purchase of the Colossus Mine in the Kimberly Reef District was concluded this week... the purchaser being Mr. N.A. Arnold. The price was reported to be between £30,000 and £40,000 cash. The purchase was concluded after six days of option. The Colossus has hitherto been a ten-stamp proposition, and entered the producing list a few months ago. Wonderful values are reported to have been attained".

Mr. Glover can well recall how doubts gradually arose in their minds, until they decided to inspect the property itself - something which should have been done before the deal was ever closed! On reaching the Colossus, the gathering suspicions grew deeper> Not only was the ore completely devoid of gold or any other metal, but at the bottom of one of the excavations were found portions of a golden sovereign from which filings had been taken and then fired with a shot gun onto the surface of the rock! A criminal charge for salting was laid, but the sellers were equal to the occasion. They

retained the services of the famous South African criminal lawyer, the late Dr. F.E.T. Krause, afterwards Mr. Justice Krause, who came up specifically from Johannesburg to fight the action. Playing on the emotions of the jury and describing the accused as "poor ignorant foreigners," Krause achieved the impossible, and secured their acquittal!

Poor Arnold, left with the doubtful chance of bringing a civil action, decided to risk it. Even if it was a bad blow, his irrepressible spirits could not long be kept down. He was soon hard at work again and able to make good much of his loss.

In 1911 Natie brought his Jewish sense of humour to bear, by christening a property of the Mozzle claims.

"Golden Gatooma", issued in 1912, carries a reference to another mine, with the quaint name of The Second Event, also belonging to Arnold, and located Umsweswe River near the town. "There is as yet no plant", said the publication "on this property, which has only been in the present owner's hands for a few months, but during that time a large quartz reef, measuring up to 15 feet in places, has been opened up, whilst lying on the surface, covered only by a very slight overburden, are hundreds of thousands of tons of pay-rock. The average assay values of the reef are given at 9 dwts. and the overthrow has been variously given as 4 to 6 dwts. per ton".

Amongst other things, Arnold set up a branch of his business in the Old Country, which he advertised in 1912.

"OLDEST ESTABLISHED AUCTIONEERS IN RHODESIA.

N.A. Arnold & Co,

Salisbury- P.O. Box 315
Telegrams: "Arnoldco",
and
London - 831 Salisbury House, London Wall.

Telegrams "Arnoldator".

"Largest Importer and Salesmen of Livestock in Salisbury.
Donkeys, Mules, Horses, Wagons, always on hand.

Mining Department.
We are in touch with every Mining Cam in Mashonaland and Matabeleland, and are recognized as the leading Mining Agents in the Territory. We are prepared to deal with Properties in any District.
Correspondence invited.
N.A.ARNOLD & CO.
London and Salisbury".

In 1913 Arnold was responsible for the floatation of the Seigneury Gold Mining and Development Company, which operated a property 16 miles east of Hartley. Its output in 1913 came to £9,042, but the high hopes expressed in its prospectus were unfortunately not destined to be fulfilled. Better luck attended him with the Cheshire Cat, located some 30 miles South of Gatooma, which he owned in partnership with a Mr. Taverner. With a shaft down to 250 feet, it was able in 1913 to produce gold to the value of £12,407.

As he extended his interests in new directions and attained increasing popularity, Nat Arnold was acknowledged to be one of the coming men of the Colony. He and Alfred Glover remained good friends but parted company in 1913, owing to a disagreement between their wives.

One day in 1918 Arnold sold an important block of claims in the Midlands for the sum of £20,000. Pleased with his feat, he came into the village of Gatooma in the evening and asked for a meal at the local hotel. Presented with a dish of tinned salmon, he smothered it in Worcester sauce and detected nothing until it was too late. Within a few hours he was in the agonies of ptomaine poisoning and passed away in the local hospital on December 15, 1918. As with so many pioneers, his speculations had failed in the end to leave him even a competence, for, despite the fact that his assets reached £16,015.12. 6, the estate account showed that he was insolvent. He remains a prototype of the happy-go-lucky Rhodesian of an earlier day.

.

# RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

## PART 1V

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

Copyright © Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and later Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, distributed in printed or electronic format with the written permission of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

**CONTENTS**


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 31 | Goodwill and Anti-Semitism | 3 |
| 32 | Launching the Land of Israel | 7 |
| 33 | Early Congo Jewry | 13 |
| 34 | Two Rhodesian Patriots | 15 |
| 35 | The Bulawayo Guild | 20 |
| 36 | Jewish Schoolroom Problems | 23 |
| 37 | On the Racecourse | 29 |
| 38 | Kosher Butcher Comedy | 31 |
| 39 | Parliament and Public Service | 36 |
| 40 | Old-Timers in Salisbury | 40 |
| 41 | The Nazi Shadow | 44 |
| 42 | Rhodesia's Sephardi | 47 |

## C H A P T E R 31.

## GOOD WILL AND ANTI-SEMITISM.

Long before the end of the First World War, Jewry in Rhodesia, like the rest of the populace, were aware that they stood on the edge of a new era. It was not merely that men were fighting in lands of whose existence may had previously been scarcely aware, but that the very horror of the struggle helped to stimulate efforts at creating new ideals - including inter-racial goodwill.

That these were not confined to public events was shown in May 1915, when, following the news that Mr. Justice Hopley of the Rhodesian Bench had lost his son on Active Service, a message of condolence was sent on behalf of the Bulawayo Jewish Congregation. The Judge's reply to Mr. R. Aserman, as President, indicates how unexpected and how welcome had been the thought:

"I have received", he wrote, "and been profoundly touched by the sympathetic and very kind telegram received from you on behalf of the Hebrew Community of your Town, and I thank you, and beg you to thank your people, for this expression of feeling for me and my family. There is a community of all Mankind in human suffering and human woe, which, thank God, draws man together, in spite of differences of creed and dogmas, and churches. When that which is in the heart speaks, all schisms and arguments are forgotten. This is an instance, and for your charity and kindly thought I thank you all".

In response to an appeal by the Chief Rabbi, Dr. J.H. Hertz, in London, a remittance of £30 was sent towards the provision of Jewish literature for Jewish soldiers. "It is with extreme regret", came the reply, "that we are unable to send you a larger contribution for this very deserving cause, as so many calls have been made upon us for different War purposes. In addition to this, we have just had a call made upon us as a Jewish community, for the Palestine Restoration Fund, to which the Jews of Bulawayo alone have contributed over £1,000. Hence you can quite understand that a general appeal for this fund would be inadvisable at this stage". He mentioned, however, that other Congregations had been circularized and that there would probably be further contributions forthcoming from them.

An act of unusual generosity by Rhodesian Jewry was carried out in connection with the work of the famous Jews College in London. Its continental investments had heavily declined through the War, and it faced a serious likelihood of closing down, when a free gift from Bulawayo helped to save the day.

Even now it is hard to read without a catch in the voice the text of a telegram dispatched on behalf of the Jewish community of Rhodesia, on April 3, 1917, to "President, Duma. Petrograd". This was on the occasion when the Czar Nicholas the Second, as yet still on his throne, had at last agreed to grant a real Parliament, under the name of the Duma, to his people. Most of those for who Landau spoke had been born in Russia, and still had relations and friends there.

"Your great deed has won universal gratitude and admiration. Heartiest congratulations. Sympathy of whole civilized world with great Free Russia".

Within a few more months came the October Revolution, the end of the old Czarist Empire and the accession to power of the Bolshevik Party.

An accompanying wave of pogroms throughout Eastern Europe caused a wave of deep distress, and the telegram received from Bulawayo by the President of the Salisbury Congregation on July 15, 1918, speaks for itself:

"Owing to position in Russia, we are using Tisha Boy Service this Wednesday evening, to mark a special appeal to continue support and strengthen Jewish War Fund. Suggest you do the same".

Unfortunately Wartime conditions also brought back to Rhodesia a revival of Anti-Semitism, which, taking the form of contributions to the local "Chronicle", aroused a great deal of annoyance.

Faced with this challenge, the leaders of Jewry held a gathering in Bulawayo, which resulted in the dispatch of a letter by the President of the Congregation to Mr. (afterwards Sir Harry) Graumann, Member of Parliament at Johannesburg and the first Jewish Mayor of that city.

"At a representative meeting of our community held yesterday it was unanimously decided to approach the directors of the Argus Company with reference to a series of anonymous letters and articles published in the local paper. Our community regards these articles as extremely pernicious, most detrimental to our interests and contrary to the general public welfare. Our policy has always been to ignore anonymous scurrilities, and we have thought it wise to ignore these malicious scribblers, but unfortunately the local editor does not appear cognizant of the tendency of these articles and welcomes them without even a protest; hence we have adopted this resolution and are sending our Reverend Mr. Cohen with the necessary data to interview the directors.

"We felt unanimously that Rhodesian Jewry could rely upon your co-operation and assistance, and in their name I venture to appeal to you to give Mr. Cohen your help in introducing him to the proper authorities, etc., and have no doubt that our object will be thus attained.

"Thanking you in anticipation and trusting you will forgive the liberty we are taking".

The following day a further letter was dispatched to the Chairman of the Board of the Argus Printing and Publishing Company.

"A series of articles has appeared in the Bulawayo Chronicle, anonymous screeds full of venom and ignorance combined, which we regard as highly injurious to our community, as well as detrimental to the public interests in general. While we refuse to reply to such communications, our community is much incensed at the attitude of the Editor in freely admitting such inflammatory scurrilities to his columns. We protested after the first article, but his attitude has not changed".

The letter went on to refer to the meeting and to the visit which the Reverend M.I.Cohen would be paying to the Rand. He leaves on Wednesday and will call on you probably on Friday morning. It is the earnest wish and hope of the entire community in Rhodesia that you will help us to a satisfactory settlement".

After an attempt to pooh-pooh the affairs as manifesting"super-sensitivity" on the part of the Jews to matters of common interests, the "Argus" authorities admitted that the whole publication had not been in the best of taste and a suitable apology was drafted. It is good to know that for many years after no similar episode was reported. Great pleasure was felt in October 1918, at the award of an M.B.E. to Mrs. E. Basch, and in a message of congratulation at the honour done to her by King George V., Mr. H. J. B. Ellender spoke on behalf of the Congregation: "Your efforts in the cause of charity, together with the merit and distinction that has been conferred upon you, reflect great credit on the whole of the Jewish community, of which your husband, Mr.E.Basch, is the distinguished head. We feel very proud of you, and hope you will be able to continue the good work you have done for so many years".

The Peace of Versailles presented Rhodesian Jewry with a mixture of problems and of opportunities. On the one hand there was the need for the community, disorganized by the recent conflict, to revert to normal conditions, while on the other hand there was the prospect of growth and progress, stimulated by a rise in the rate of immigration.

A small but steady increase was to be noted in the enrolment of new member of the Congregation, including N. Rotstein, L. Zworestine, Sam Chitrin, L. Osrin, S. Skok, A. Salis, Charlie Levy, A.S. Rappaport, A. Landau, F. Raphaely, H. Rubenstein, Cecil Landau, Ben Goldstein, Sam Cohen, H. Levy, Dr. Bergson, N. Rabinowitz, all of Bulawayo within the space of a few months, besides Henry Gordon of Wankie and A. Margolis of Umvuma, settled in the outside districts. On the other hand,

as the number of pioneers appreciably dwindled with the passing of time, well-known names, like those of R. Chitrin, E. Kollenberg, J. Palca, S. Blumenthal, J. Falk and many others had to be removed from the roll.

In proportion to its then minute size, there were a fair number of Jewish inhabitants in Umtali, among the earliest being Alfred "Mafuta" Lazarus, the auctioneer, and his brother Phil; the Daniels brothers, Kaffir truck merchants ; Pollack & Helwig, hardware merchants; Maurice Singer, storekeeper; a competitor by the name of Canaric, as well as Jacob and Isaac Comaroff. Later came J.Cohen, H. A. Pechner, H. Pollack and the Goldberg family from Dublin, who contributed a Cabinet Minister to Rhodesia and of whom more will be said in due course.

Few were the places too remote to provide a foothold for some enterprising Jew. One of the most remarkable instances was furnished by the Hepkers, who started one of the earliest butcheries in the Colony. These Hepkers were reinforced by other relatives, including William Hepker, younger brother of Herman, who arrived about 1896, followed in 1898 but Julius and in 1906 by Adolf, all of whom were associated with the business. William moved to Johannesburg about 1910 and Julius in 1929.

Among the scarcest and most important commodities in old-time Bulawayo was lumber and it was through a customer that Herman's attention was first drawn to the existence of unsuspected sources within the Colony itself. Some 60 miles from the town he found a very suitable site in the bush where he erected an ancient sawmill and began exploiting the natural growth near by. With a single white man and about 30 Africans, Hepker started a concern destined to become famous, Rhodesian Native Timbers.

Combining these operations with that of his butchery, he went out regularly to the settlement, now appropriately called Sawmills. Beginning with transport by ox-wagons, the firm presently introduced wooden rails, on which cocopans, drawn by these patient animals, were hauled. Tsetse fly compelled donkeys to be substituted for oxen, until as traffic increased, steel rails were laid and a small locomotive introduced. Ultimately a full-fledged branch railway was laid, 75 miles long. Shortly after World War II this no longer proved economic and the system was replaced by the fleets of Lorries used today.

Rhodesian Timbers grew into a very important concern, with branches in several parts of South Africa, as well as in the Colony.

## C H A P T E R 32.

## LAUNCHING THE LAND OF ISRAEL.

With incredulous delight, the supporters of the Rhodesian Chovevi Zion Society, like every other Jewish body all over the world, heard the news in 1917 that the dreams of countless generations were at last to come true, and that the British Government, by approving the historic Balfour Declaration, had set aside the Land of Israel as a home for their people. One can sense the excitement in a letter from B. Sarif, Honorary Secretary of the Chovevi Zion on November 18, to the President of the Congregation, informing him that a meeting was about to take place "to pass certain important resolutions with reference to the new situation in Palestine. All Jewish Societies were invited to attend and send two representatives to the gathering on Monday, November 26".

The decisions gave vent to an overwhelming emotion of happiness. Never had Zionism enjoyed such a vogue; every item of news from the Land of Israel was eagerly discussed and, when the overseas fund campaigners, like Dr. Immanuel Olswanger, reached South Africa, they invariably received an urgent invitation to extend their journey beyond the Limpopo.

With some pride Bulawayo recalled that, in the years preceding the War, when Zionism had been in the doldrums, they had aligned themselves with Cape Town Dorshei Zion to keep alive the cause.

Apart from normal contributions to Zionist and local charities, a special appeal from Dr. J.H. Hertz for the persecuted Jews of Eastern Europe, and more particularly Poland, drew a sum of 200 from Bulawayo, a forerunner of many further sums. Regular contributions were henceforth also made to the Cape Jewish Orphanage.

Fund-raising methods of a former day are typified by the action of Jack Moss on June 25, 1917, when he asked permission for the use of the Bulawayo schoolroom every Monday and Thursday, for rehearsing a Pierrot Troop, in aid of the Palestine Emergency Fund.

Throughout these days, no one played a more impressive role anywhere in Southern Africa, that the Reverend M. I. Cohen. Carrying on a tradition which went back to the date of his arrival in the country, at the turn of the century, he laboured unceasingly till even in the smallest villages there was at least one local Jew prepared literally to gather in the shekels. In this connection special mention must be made of the late William Hepker at Selukwe.

Mr. Cohen had been responsible for organizing the Zionist Conference at Johannesburg in July 1905, at which it had been hoped to have as a guest the great Jewish writer, Israel Zangwill, (unfortunately unable to come); he had also been a member on January 17, 1917, of the deputation to the Rt. Hon. F. S. Malan, South African Minister of Education, requesting the Government to give its support to what shortly after formulated as the Balfour Declaration.

Repercussions were not slow in coming to Rhodesia, and on December 15, 1917, the Zionist Federation in Johannesburg wired to the President of the Hebrew Congregation at Bulawayo: "The Executive earnestly appeals to your placing the Reverend Cohen's services at the disposal of National Movement at this crucial period for purpose of extremely important mission. Certain that consistently with your honourable reputation, you will respond favorably to this appeal. Would provide teacher for period incurred".

This was followed up by a more detailed letter:

"I have to confirm the wire from this office, appealing to you to release the services of your esteemed Minister, the Reverend M.I.Cohen, that he may make a tour throughout South Africa on behalf of an extremely important mission".

The letter mentioned that arrangements had already been made for his proposed four months absence.

"The Reverend Cohen's arrival here on the 27th is now eagerly looked forward to.....Evidently Mr. Cohen has himself given you particulars of the mission he is required to undertake - to raise funds for a Palestine National Restoration Fund, founded at the urgent appeal of the Zionist leaders in Europe. The matter is looked upon as of extreme urgency, and it is considered that Mr. Cohen's tour would immensely facilitate its success....."

So with the War at an end, the Reverend Cohen in 1918 began with the earliest drive in aid of the Palestine National Restoration Fund, forerunner of the Keren Hayesod. Fortunately he left an account of the portion of this tour, which affords an idea of the strain it entailed.

"I left Salisbury last Tuesday, and was very unwell in the train..... At Gatooma it was raining 'cats and dogs'. The roads were impassable, and most of our small community were away. Mr. and Mr.'s H. Lenson soon made me comfortable with

their generous hospitality, and an ardent Zionist, Mr. M. Joffe, assisted me. I collected about 25 and left letters for the absentees. I expect from £25 to £50 more from that place.

"I left in the goods train last Thursday, and arrived at Que Que at 11.30 p.m. Besides myself, the can contained only some natives. The inky darkness was only pierced at intervals by the most extraordinarily vivid lightning, which lit up the whole Universe - and the staring faces of the boys. One of these, however, turned out a 'Good Samaritan', shouldered my bag and guided me to the Que Que Hotel, where I was provided with ' a little room in the upper storey'".

Mr. Cohen then went out to a meeting in the local cinema, most of which was occupied by samples left by commercial travelers. "The weather was by no means favourable, and the outside people could not come in, owing to the rain. Nevertheless, I collected some £26..... On Sunday morning I left by the goods train. The whole veld was swimming, and the waters covered even the rails. Some overturned trucks witnessed the fate of another train, a few days previously, and we moved slowly and cautiously over the sodden track. We fortunately reached Gwelo about 5.30, where I arranged for a meeting on Tuesday evening, and left the next morning for Umvuma. Here the little community assembled on Monday evening..... Next morning we collected about £26.....

"I left on Tuesday afternoon for Gwelo, and held a meeting the same evening, when £20 was promised. We were supposed to leave Gwelo at 11.30 p.m. The times are out of joint on our railway system today and we did not leave until 6 a.m., and then ran off the line, fortunately without damage....."

Laughably small as the sums contributed may sound to the present generation, by the standards of that time they involved real sacrifice, and the portion given by Rhodesian Jewry to the £45,000 realized in South Africa, was by no means contemptible.

A vivid account of Cohen's views on the Jewish National Home has survived from one who knew him very well. "His Zionism also arose from the urge to put into practice the principles in which he believed. He said many times that he was not interested in the creation of "another Balkan State". but he was tired of the "Freedom in Bondage", which characterizes the Galuth. His nature demanded space for free expression and creation, and the Galuth has for centuries conditioned our lives and thought, so that we have lived in a precarious equilibrium of compromise. He hoped very much that the Jewish religious genius would rekindle in Eretz Yisrael, and he was sure that there were ways to be found for the expression in modern terms of the prophetic ideals of justice and righteousness. He believed in political Zionism, but he said to a Youth Meeting: "I do not tell you to be Zionists. Be anything you like, but be something. Be a Mehsch". Zionism was for him the expression of the Jewish will to be human again....."

At the end of the campaign a further delighted letter was received from Johannesburg.

"The high opinion which this Federation has always held of the Reverend Mr. Cohen has if anything, been further enhanced during the course of our closer association with him. Although an unkind fate interfered with the progress of his work on behalf of the Fund at the beginning of his journeys, there can be no doubt of the good he has done, not only for the Restoration Fund, but to Zionist propaganda generally. Wherever he has been, Mr. Cohen has left behind a highly favourable impression having throughout exhibited a spirit of lofty idealism and high eloquence, which could not but inspire those who came into contact with him...."

From a Zionist point of view, one of the most unusual functions organized by the Chovevi Society took place on August 22, 1918, when the speaker, the Reverend F. Hadfield, discussed the "Restoration of the Jews from a Christian Standpoint". His discourse drew a large crowd, and contributed considerably to the building up of inter-communal goodwill.

On the eve of the first gathering of workers after the establishment of the Jewish National Home, the Chovevi Zion Society addressed the Committee of the Bulawayo Congregation on December 24, 1918, requesting authority for the Reverend Cohen to attend the forthcoming Zionist Conference at Cape Town on January 12, 1919.

"It is a well-known fact", they added, "that Mr. Cohen is at once one of the most ardent, as well as one of the most versatile Zionists we have in South Africa, and his presence at the South African Zionist Conference is therefore not only very desirable, but most important. Furthermore, as this Conference promises to be one of great consequence in view of political contingencies, it would indeed be very disappointing if Rhodesia were to be deprived of Mr. Cohen's services as a delegate on this auspicious occasion.... We know that Mr. Cohen cannot easily be spared from his duties here, but we feel that the special circumstances and the pressing wish of all Zionists to see him take part should call for every effort to arrange matters....."

With the keenest enthusiasm the delegates from up North took part in the memorable conference in January 1919, when a message was dispatched to General Botha and General Smuts, at the Peace Conference at Versailles. This urged the delegates to "recognize the national aspirations and historic claims of the Jewish people to Palestine, and to declare that Palestine shall be placed under such political, administrative and economic conditions as will assure the development of Palestine, under the trusteeship of Great Britain, acting on behalf of the Powers of a League of Nations, into a Jewish Commonwealth....."

Something prophetic attaches to the closing paragraph of the resolution: "This Conference further asserts that the aspirations of the Jewish people will not be satisfied with anything less than an undivided Palestine, coincident in area with its fullest historical extent".

By virtue of their seniority as an organization the Chovevi Zion Tent at Bulawayo even submitted a number of resolutions on the actual methods by which the

future Jewish National Home was to be administered, covering such subjects as schools, civil service and industries. Morris Alexander, the Cape Town M.P., declared, however, that such matters were only fit to be discussed when the first Jewish Parliament assembled, and in the end he was successful in persuading the Rhodesian Zionists to give up their proposal.

At lest one Bulawayo representative, Joseph Joseph, attended the inaugural meeting of the Actions Committee of the World Zionist Organization in February 1920, while in 1923 Rhodesian Jewry undertook to be responsible for the immigration and maintenance of the 35 War orphans from the Ukraine, brought to Palestine through the efforts of Reconstruction Fund. Of these 25 were paid for by Matabeleland and Northern Rhodesia, while Mashonaland, more particularly Salisbury, undertook the responsibility for another 10. These boys and girls were housed in a settlement called Kfar Yeladim, with which a connection was maintained for many years.

Further gifts were forthcoming in 1925, when the Zionist women of Bulawayo and Salisbury handed over 1,000 towards the New Hebrew University, the result of a campaign started back in 1920, at the suggestion of the Reverend Cohen. With the money the magnificent 6,000-volume library of Judaica belonging to Professor Ignaz Goldziher was secured, now the pride of the School of Oriental Studies at Jerusalem. All this was achieved by a community of fewer than 1,000 souls

The progress recorded North of the Zambezi was specially noteworthy. With a total Jewish population at Livingstone of under 50, a Zionist Society was set up in 1913, led, amongst others by O. Zwick, Harry Susman, I. Kopelowitz and M. Aukstolker, while even in the wilds of Barotseland, the Chovevi Zion at Bulawayo had a lone member, in the person of a Mr. Finkelstein.

Wolf Rybko, who has a special place of honour in the story of South African Zionism on account of his collecting campaigns in remote corners, particularly distinguished himself in Northern Rhodesia and the Congo. In 1928 he launched successful appeals, first at Lusaka and Broken Hill, and then on the recently-established Copper Belt at N'Dola and Rhokana.

One major handicap which Rybko encountered when he crossed the border of Northern Rhodesia was that, since they had made their way there from the Eastern Mediterranean, more particularly from the Island of Rhodes, most of the Jews there understand neither English nor Yiddish. Rybko's knowledge of Hebrew saved the situation, and his addresses in that beautiful tongue were particularly graceful and effective.

The opening of the first Synagogue North of the Zambezi, took place in October 1928, when a special delegation, comprising the Reverend Cohen and the Reverend Weinberg, was present.

Samuel Rabinowitz is remembered as one of the driving forces of Rhodesian Zionism. Born in Lithuania in 1886, he arrived in 1904, and had already in 1913, set up a well-known firm, the Union Agencies, in Bulawayo, which was soon a leader it its field. Active from an early age in communal affairs, he was elected in 1924 to the Chairmanship of the Chovevi Zion and afterwards of the Bulawayo Zionist Organization. For over 20 years he remained the acknowledged head of this organization.

Another important Zionist personality was Louis, or, to give him his correct name. Eliezer Landau. From his home town of Manchester, where he was born in 1881, he came to Rhodesia in 1897 and immediately made his mark.

Landau's communal activities were so multifarious that it is not easy to list them. At this stage it suffices to mention that from the time when he became an active member of Chovevi Zion as a youngster to the day of his death when he left £7,500 to the cause, he never faltered in his support of the Palestine ideal.

Often big gifts were made by Charelick Salamon, who came from Rumania to Bulawayo in 1893 and built up one of the largest commercial houses there. Under his will,. sums running into six figures were bequeathed to various public purposes, including and amount of £25,000 "for the purpose of erecting and maintaining in perpetuity a hostel for immigrants to Eretz Israel", with impressive sums for scholarships, to be bestowed irrespective of race and colour.

## CHAPTER 33

## EARLY CONGO JEWRY

Deep in Central Africa, in the Belgian Congo, Jewry was also gaining a foothold. One forgotten saga which deserves to be recounted to this generation was the famous trek in 1905 by A.B. Diamond from Rhodesia across the Zambezi to Lealui and thence through a realm of howling savagery to Lobito Bay. This journey of 1200 miles across Barotseland, Katanga and Angola was never accomplished before by anyone and five years later Diamond, together with an American Jew named Stirling, made history by discovering the first route across Barotseland, to what was still called the "Congo Free State", free of Sleeping Sickness. In that same year, 1909, two Jewish traders, the brothers Uhlmann, not only reached Katanga from Rhodesia, but one of them left his bones there. Soon after came Joseph Dubbin and a co-religionist named Esterman who settled here.

Diamond himself was one of the founders of Elizabethville and in 1911 helped to organize the first Minyan there, as well as the original Chevra Kadisha. Inevitably he was also the President of the first Jewish Congregation in the Congo. Even Zionism took root and in 1912 a certain O. Goldberg was busy selling shekels, while by 1913 a Zionist Association of Katanga was launched. Efforts to secure a Minister failed however to achieve success for many years and not till 1925 was it possible to import the Reverend Louis Wolk, previously of King William's Town. Upon his arrival he held an inaugural meeting for the Congregation, followed by the foundation of the Mount Scopus Association of Katanga, aimed at helping the new University in Jerusalem. The latter met with such a response that within a short while it had a membership of some 160! Three-week journeys were taken far into the remotest corners of the Belgian Colony by Native runners carrying J.N.F. collection boxes in aid of Zionist funds.

Despite, or perhaps because of its very smallness, Elizabethville was the scene of a violent communal upheaval in April, 1917, when Nicklas D. Kaplan, Honorary Secretary of the Katanga Hebrew Congregation, submitted the bylaws and certain facts to his colleagues in Bulawayo.

"On February 3 a Bris Mila had to take place at the residence of Mr. Benatar. He, not being a member, as prescribed in Article 9 of our bylaws, the Mohel refused his professional services, until we paid in advance".

From the incoherent account it emerges that a group of local Jews, Messrs. Ruda, Meratchi, Benatar and Pieters, "decided to break into the Shul, which they did on a Sabbath, assisted by a Christian carpenter. We have done all in our power to prevent the scandal becoming public, but we did not succeed. The Criminal authorities refused to take charge against the committers of sacrilege, as the Belgian laws do not interfere with religion. We are writing to the Reverend Dr. Hertz in London, and, pending his reply, request your Congregation not to allow your Mohel to come to the Congo".

Mr. Kaplan concluded by declaring that the interests of religion would best be served if the functionary, who ought to be a Jew, gave his services without conditions.

In a cautious reply, Bulawayo said: "We deeply regret to hear of the occurrences you mention, and we hope that your differences will be speedily settled and your community united harmoniously in the furtherance in the cause of Judaism.

"As regard the services of a Mohel, we could not in any event send our official so great a distance: we trust, however, that the necessity of such a procedure will not arise, and that, as stated above, your differences will be amicably settled and the damage so unfortunately caused will be made good by those responsible".

A silence followed, but during December 1921 a Mr. Gordon of Elizabethville, asked for information about the nature and operation of the Bulawayo Jewish Guild, as inhabitants of his own town were planning to set up something similar.

A subject of deep satisfaction to all concerned was the visit of Reverend Cohen in October 1930 to consecrate the first Synagogue in Elizabethville.

In 1934 in answer to a request for a Jewish minister to visit the Congo in order to carry out essential ceremonies in their centers, the Reverend Weinberg undertook this welcome and much appreciated mission.

## C H A P T E R 34.

## TWO JEWISH RHODESIAN PATRIOTS.

Although the issues involved have long been superseded by others, early disputes on political questions drew their supporters and antagonists from various sections of Jewry. Thus in 1913 M.J. Shapiro was responsible for the issue on Salisbury of a pamphlet entitled: "The Burning Question of Rhodesia - Whose Is the Land, and "Whose Should It Be?" Printed by the Argus Company, it dealt with the still undecided question as to the powers of the British South Africa Company and the future rights of the settlers themselves. This Moses Jacob Shapiro was a man of high education, born in 1870 in Tauroggen in Lithuania, where he had enjoyed the privilege, extremely rare for Russian Jews, of an education at the Moscow Gymnasium and the Moscow University. Now in far-off Africa he was helping to give vent to the feelings of discontent felt by his fellow-Rhodesians.

Deeply interested in politics ever since coming to South Africa as a young man in 1894, where he was a prominent merchant on the Executive of the Chamber of Commerce in Salisbury and one of its most influential men, he had a straightforward and downright style of writing, with a surprising command of English.

"It is wonderful", Shapiro began, "how often the Rhodesian Land Question is referred to as the crux of the situation, as the foundation of the future, as the be-all and panacea for all economic and political ills, and how seldom the question was described fully or defined properly, and the arguments for the Chartered Company or the people's ownership rights traversed with any semblance of searching inquiry. The majority of Rhodesians have a hazy and subconscious conviction that the land belongs to the people, and are loud in proclaiming it, without bothering about proofs one way or the other".

Shapiro felt that the whole attitude had been too casual, and that it was not sufficient merely to continue saying "No" and repudiating claims put forward by the authorities in London. Going back to the very beginning of colonization, to the days when Lobengula, as King of the Matabele, gave the first grant to the concessionaires in respect of his territory, he analyzed the legal position at considerable length. With great acumen, he joined issue with the arguments put forward on behalf of the Chartered Company by H. Bertin, a prominent lawyer and their main spokesman. Even if this

particular quarrel has long been settled in favour of the Rhodesian Government, there is still something of interest about the familiar ambiguous pose maintained by Downing Street.

"The attitude", said Shapiro, "of the British Government towards land ownership is neutral. But although only a short time ago, in reply to a question, they stated that they did not admit the B.S.A. Company's claim, I am of the opinion that the question has to be decided in the Courts. The majority of Rhodesians are against the Chartered Company owning the land - only on the method of recovery do opinions diverge. The Rhodesian League holds that abrogation of the Charter and substitution of a representative Crown Government will be the only solution of the Land question, as the British Government on taking over the country will have to send out a Royal Commission to adjust these questions. The Constitutional League, whose aim is the retention of the Charter and its renewal after 1914, subject to certain conditions and concessions to the People by the Chartered Company, expressly demands that the Land Question should be settled before renewal of the Charter and, if the land is found to belong to the Company, the right of Pre-emption should be granted to the people. Should these conditions not be fulfilled by the Chartered Company before April 1914 (when the original Charter is due to expire), the Constitutional League is prepared to join the agitation for the revocation of the Charter. Many Independent Rhodesians, between the two Leagues, hold opinions varying from the total denial of any rights to the Charter Company after the expiration of the Charter, to admitting that a fair compensation is due for tending the country so long...."

Shapiro briskly summarized the situation as it was in 1913. The Chartered Company holds the land; the Rhodesians want the land; the British Government is not anxious to interfere; but how are we to reach the desideratum? Instead of being repudiators of the Company's claim, how are we to become active claimants, since we are not mentioned in any document as an interested party and, having no status, cannot initiate any actions of the Courts?"

In Shapiro's view there was only one way of breaking out of the vicious circle, namely to ask the B.S.A. Company, through the settlers' representatives in the Legislative Council, voluntarily to submit the matter to the Courts or to arbitration.

Concerning development of the ground, Shapiro emphasized what an enormous task was waiting. However excellent the work already done with a minimum of resources, no real advance could be expected until the huge areas lying fallow were available for grant to farmers by the state.

He already foresaw problems destined to become acute in years to come. "If we assert that land has already been partly nationalized in Rhodesia, with excellent results, it will come as a surprise even to most Rhodesians. We refer to the Native reserves. The 750,000 Natives of Rhodesia have enough land to live on free, to support themselves and to supply half of the total staple food of the unskilled labour of the country - maize and rapoko for the mine and town Kaffirs. Even if the land does not

belong to them individually, they have enough of it jointly, and are living rent-free. They contribute to the State in a direct hut tax, £212,000, and largely in the indirect taxes of Customs. Take away the land from them, and you transform them into the helots, and you create the question of unemployment, poverty and misery. The same will happen if you give them, instead of an inalienable reserve, a piece of ground as private property, because the disintegrating process of the individualism would, in the course of 20 to 30 years, make the majority landless and concentrate the land in a few hands. At present the economic position of the Natives on the land is far superior to the position of the proletariat at Home. They very seldom know what actual hunger means. Only in exceptionally dry seasons do they experience any shortage of food, as happened this year in the Southern parts of Rhodesia. Nearly all have livestock to fall back upon. Moreover they can always find work, for in Rhodesia there is no such thing as unemployment among Natives, even if the white population, in the town, small as it is, already suffers from it actually, especially in times of trade depression....."

Immigrant Bantu labourers were carried vast distances to their jobs, with free food on the way and free transport at the cost of the employer, although there were hundreds of thousands of Mashona available on the spot.

"Why is it so"? asked Shapiro, "Simply because the Mashonas have land reserves, and while one has land inalienable, he does not want masters; neither does he look for them. We do not want to discuss the Native Question - a very difficult one - but we only brought in the subject of the Native Reserves to illustrate forcibly the value of communal land to the community".

One learns from the pamphlet that at the time, when the white population was about 25,000, there was enough unoccupied land in Rhodesia to give the head of every family at least 4,000 acres! He urged that the 100,000,000 acres available should once and for all be left in the possession of the Government, which could grant it on lease or under other title to suitable applicants.

"The State", he said, "must remain the real owner, or the ground landlord. Land should be granted to individuals and co-operatives societies, to be held in perpetuity, the only conditions being beneficial occupation, with certain restrictions on timber and water rights, and revaluation, every seven years; according to the revaluation, the quitrent should be raised. The conditions of occupation, the restrictions of the valuation should not be arbitrary, but subject to whatever general laws and conditions the Government may make from time to time, as may be found needful for the public good. The valuations of the improvements, such as buildings, fences, dams, irrigations (Private), etc., must not influence the quitrent, which will be increased only if the inherent value of land increases, owning to such general facts and conditions as density of population, vicinity of towns, railways or public highways, or public schemes of irrigation, none of which were created or capable of being much altered by the individual action of the land-holder".

In Shapiro's view, all the improvements should be the property of the occupant, who would be allowed freely to sell or transfer them, their successors in their turn becoming tenants of the State. At all times, by Act of Parliament, the authorities should also have the right of reoccupying the ground against fair payment of compensation. A particularly farsighted suggestion was made the Government should leave large reserves for future townships, for parks and for experimental farms.

As to the urban areas, he declared: "The nationalization of land would be most beneficial to the future townships, with which Rhodesia is pregnant. The municipalities should be granted large areas for town sites and commonages, not to be alienated but to be leased, on certain conditions, conducive to checking the land and building speculations, which have been the bane of most South Africa towns, and the aggravating factor, if not the chief cause of all general crises".

Emphasizing that it was absurd that in a young and spacious country like Rhodesia the average man had to pay away a third of his earnings in rent, although most of the towns and villages had endless vacant sites, he continued: "If all the properties were owned by municipalities, half the rents would not only pay the interest of the investments, but would provide a sinking fund to pay off the capital in about 20 years, and afterwards enable the municipality to provide all the services tax-free to all the residents. We do not advocate that future municipalities should start right away building model cities, but that they should not part with any ground in and around the cities, unless on such leases and on such conditions that the community should have a moderating influence on the rents, and have the option, at a convenient time, to become also the proprietor of the buildings".

Lest the investor might become alarmed at the thought of being expropriated, Shapiro stressed that, only unoccupied ground and townships yet to be established should come into his scheme, those already in occupation being left unmolested.

"The peculiar position of the Rhodesians", he concluded, "in regard to the land question, makes them look to the Home Government and Home people for a helping hand across the sea, to establish the right to the land and to make proper use of it. And help is doubly welcome when it comes quickly".

Although so much has happened in the half century or more which has passed since M.J. Shapiro issued his pamphlet, he still stands out as the true Rhodesian patriot and as evidence that, even in the earliest years, there were men who glimpsed the birth of cities and big industries.

Many years later another Jewish Rhodesian had another important vision of the future. This was Douglas Abrahamson, of the Shamva Ilex Mine, who apart from his role in the Gold industry, to which reference has been made, took the lead in starting the Greater Central African League, to establish some kind of federation between Southern Rhodesia and the Union.

According to its constitution the League aimed at promoting "the gradual incorporation of all the different States of Southern Africa into a United Dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations". Specific objects of the movement were set out:

"To promote such a United Dominion as shall best serve the common interests of all.

"To prepares the ground by working for the elimination of all racial animosities and prompting friendly feeling and co-operation between the different States of Southern Africa.

"To inspire a South African National spirit in "place of Provincial National spirit.

"To collect and study and to aid in the collection and study of information bearing directly and indirectly on the problems involved, so as to obtain an accurate, comprehensive and connected view of the common good of British Southern Africa.

"To publish and disseminate such information by means of lectures, broadcast talks, monographs on particular topics and such other means as may be expedient.”to form a League with the same objects throughout Southern Africa and to encourage the co-operation with and affiliation of similar bodies working for the same object...."

Subscriptions were fixed at one shilling a year and provision was made for the establishment of and Executive Council and subsidiary bodies.

It was a time when such ideas were very much out of favour, and although Abrahamson made a certain amount of progress during the 1930's. his success was temporary. Ultimately, however, many of his ideas were approved and accepted. He passed away on October 1, 1953

## C H A P T E R 35.

## THE BULAWAYO GUILD.

In keeping with the end of the War, the Bulawayo Jewish Guild in 1919 resumed its programmes of entertainment and relaxation. Games evenings, dances, whist drives, tennis tournaments, were once again provided, and Sir Charles Coghlan, already the political leader and soon to be the first Prime Minister of the Colony, agreed to deliver a lecture. It was decided, however, not to let a certain Mr. Hudfield speak, seeing that he was a candidate in a pending election to the Legislative Council!

The Guild was by this time the proud possessor of its own hall, which was also available at times for outside gatherings. During the 1920 a Dramatic Section came into existence, which was given enthusiastive support by the whole of Bulawayo. The old "Idler's Gazette" had been succeeded meanwhile by a new "Jewish Guild Journal", edited by the Reverend Cohen.

One practice on which the authorities frowned was that of collectors going out to gather contributions for Jewish societies on the Sabbath. There were also vigorous discussions on "our boys attending Christian affairs and neglecting ours", and enrolling "the non-Jewish wife of one of the members", a matter that was left over until a ruling could be obtained from Dr.J.L. Hertz, Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, who was due shortly to visit Rhodesia. How he solved the problem has not been recorded.

Rather a surprising concession on the part of the authorities was noted in January 1921, when a policeman in plain clothes was hired from the Government as a doorkeeper for Guild Parties. For some months this arrangement continued, until the significant entry was recorded: "No policeman henceforth".

The happy co-operation between groups was shown by the continued inclusion of Non-Jews as speakers at Guild affairs. One such example was the celebrated William Matthias Longden, a prominent Rhodesian pioneer, who, as the first Magistrate at Melsetter and a veteran of most of the early campaigns, had a remarkable story to tell.

Failing, however, to secure a suitable performer on one occasion, the Committee, rather than allow the standards to deteriorate, preferred to hire a good gramophone with records to fill up an evening's entertainment.

As a tribute to the Fallen the Bulawayo War Memorial Hall was begun in 1922. When the new building replacing the original Guild Hall came into use it was a focal centre for most of the social activities of the community. A Pierrot Troupe show was mooted to mark its inauguration, but before long the producer, Mr. Moss, confessed that "it was impossible to organize the same with Jewish talent alone", hence outsiders were also mobilized, and the affair seems to have gone off most successfully. Two years later, the full-fledged Jewish Club, complete with Reading Room and other amenities, was formally opened on Lag Bomer. The start was promising, but vigorous discussion arose on the proposal for a Guest Night, on which Gentiles might be brought in as guests. Finally the concession asked for was approved, and non-Jewish guests were permitted once a week.

Pleasing concessions to an impecunious part of the community were recorded in April 1923, when the Committee received power, in return for a purely nominal subscription of 12/- a year, to "allow any elderly person (of the Jewish persuasion), other than a member of the Guild, to enjoy benefits of the Guild Club". Under this provision, several pioneers who might otherwise never have been able to enroll, received a highly- appreciated privilege in the evening of their days.

The advent of jazz in Bulawayo is implied in the hire, from Mr. Wells, of the " Syncopated Orchestra" in March 1923 at a fee of three guineas, the instruments mentioned being "piano, banjo, jazz and violin".

Other outside talent was mobilized for the benefit of the Gymnasium Class, for which "they had, as their instructor, a Gentile, in the person of Mr. Ward, "a gentleman", we are told, "who took a great interest in the section", and was warmly thanked for his services. In spite of this, however, it was realistically decided that a wholly Gymnasium evening was not sufficiently exciting, and that other forms of entertainment must be included. This popularity of the Gymnastic section waned, until it faded out altogether.

A picnic, reminiscent of the good old days, was tried out in May 1924, though the venue was not recorded. Motor care were in short supply so the transport was by horse-trolley - members traveling free, non-members and children paying 5/- and 1/- respectively.

Lest there should be any misunderstanding about Kashrus, the catering was left in hands of the Reverend Weinberg: "the sandwiches to be half meat, the other half egg, cheese and fish". A comprehensive sport programme included no fewer than 17 items, ranging from a "Cigarette Race" and a "Whistling Race", to a "skipping Race for Ladies" and a somewhat mysterious "Battle of Blazers" for men.

Characteristically Rhodesian was a complaint about ants in 1924, raised not for the first time in connection with the new War Memorial Hall, when the equally typical instructions was given to the caretaker, Mr. Green, "to pour petrol in the holes".

A request was received in 1926 from the Sons of England Society in Bulawayo, asking the Jewish Congregation to participate in the annual Trafalgar Day celebrations. Louis Landau, as Chairman, replied that "as a religious body, the Congregation could not do so, but their members, as individual citizens, are welcome to go". He therefore passed on the invitation to the Jewish Guild, with the recommendation that they might more appropriately accept it.

Meanwhile the Memorial Hall was more than justifying itself. The Government, still in the hands of the British South Africa Company, asked permission to hire two rooms as an overflow school to be used daily from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A proper theatre licence was then taken out for the stage and four years later African Theatres hired the Hall as a place of public entertainment, supplying useful additional revenue and a much needed amenity for the whole city.

Very welcome support from official quarters arrived in October 1929, when no less than £2,500 was given by the Beit Trustees, through Sir Henry Birchenough, the Chairman, towards liquidating the debt on the Jewish Guild Hall, a real godsend to the community, which cold turn towards a future programme of expansion.

After a long lapse, just as a Jewish Literary Circle was formed, the Jewish Guild decided in 1930 to re-establish its journal. The first Chairman was D. Goldstein, with J. Cohen as Honorary Secretary and a Committee comprising the inevitable Reverend M. I. Cohen, as well as C. Gershater, (then a school teacher and later the editor of the "Zionist Record" in Johannesburg), B. Baron, Dr. Sandler, Miss A. Baron, Mrs. Kaplan and Messrs Newman and Lieberman.

The same year also witnessed the passing of the founder of the Guild, Jack Moss, whose memory was honoured by a plaque placed in the lobby of the building. Meanwhile Salisbury, encouraged by the achievements of Bulawayo, was now able to boast of a Jewish Guild of its own.

Ambitious plans for the erection of a Club building, to replace the Hall for the Jewish Guild at Bulawayo, were vigorously debated in 1933. Against the estimated cost of £8,000, a gift of £2,500 had come from Louis Landau, but even this seemed risky and in the end the project was postponed.

## CHAPTER 36.

## JEWISH SCHOOLROOM PROBLEMS.

At all times and in all places the Reverend Cohen remained the magnificent standby. He it was who supervised the school and the Hebrew classes, he who drew up the new syllabus. And whatever he and his colleagues did was with the knowledge that the Community was closely watching every detail.

Thus on June 26, 1916, a letter was addressed to the Chairman of the Education Committee at Bulawayo by the Secretary of the Congregation:

"It has been brought before the notice of my Committee that corporal punishment has taken place in the Hebrew schools, and complaints been made by parents to this effect, I am instructed to inform you that my Committee is opposed to corporal punishment in the Hebrew schools under any circumstances, and ask you kindly instruct the teachers that this form of punishment is abolished in the future".

Who it was who used the stick is not recorded and the matter is not referred to again.

Fresh trouble arose however in September 1916, when a letter went to the Reverend Weinberg, complaining about his irregular attendances at classes. "I might just mention", said Mr. Landau as Chairman of the Education Committee, "that Mr. Jacobs and I paid a visit to the school on Monday at 3.30 p.m., and remained there until 4 p.m., but you had not put in an appearance, and the children were simply idling in the streets. Now you must recognize that this state of affairs is bound to be prejudicial to the interests of the school. The teacher should very zealously guard against such happenings".

Mr. Weinberg replied sharply: "I may at once state that the children attending the classes are fully aware that the hour of starting on week days is 4 o'clock and not 3.30, and the principal of the classes is also aware of it..... Those who have watched my career since my arrival will bear out that my enthusiasm for the youngsters of our Jewish community in connection with Hebrew education has not diminished, and the good results will also bear me out. I do not require inspectors to watch me, and count the minutes of my starting and finishing, for my work is done conscientiously and I am proud of the results".

A letter by Mr. Cohen shows how greatly his movements were determined by his tutorial duties.

"I beg herewith to apply for leave of absence, as I should like to take advantage of the school vacation to go to the Coast. The schools break up tomorrow, and I could go by the first train after Shabos, and return when school resumes. I feel very much run down, and need a change.

Thanking you in anticipation".

Strongly alive to the value of the Community's historic tradition, a delegation called on Sir Drummond Chaplin, the Administrator, in Bulawayo, on December 13, 1917: "We would like to remind you ", pointed out the confirmatory letter, "that we have a large number of Jewish children in Bulawayo, for whom we have to provide Hebrew and religious education. This is done in special classes, out of school hours. We badly need another teacher, and this could be managed if we had a Jewish teacher on the staff of one of the day schools, who would help us after his ordinary duties were over. We have plenty of teachers in the Union, and no doubt we could secure the services of a competent man. AS men teachers are very scarce at the present time, this would no doubt serve the purpose of the Education Department, as well as our own needs.

"If we knew that the Department would be willing to engage a thoroughly qualified Jewish teacher when the next vacancy occurs at the Milton School, we would be on the look-out in the meanwhile for a good man".

The Government raised no objection, but the vacancy was not so easily filled as had been hoped. In the end Mr. Heymann was taken on, and after six months furnished an illuminating summary of the scope of the work. Besides his own 26 pupils, there was a class of 19 run by a Mrs. Weinberg, and another of 32 by Mrs. Kaplan. "The above number", he added, "attend only on Saturdays and Sundays. During week days only from six to ten pupils attend Mrs. Kaplan's classes, eight to Mrs. Weinberg's and 16 to 21 to my own".

He added that, considering the irregular attendances, the general progress was very satisfactory, though if they had been able to give their more undivided attention, their progress would have been five times as rapid. He suggested a number of cash prizes for pupils whose attendance was most regular, and who did their homework most satisfactorily; that Thursday Evening classes attended by barely a dozen children should be abolished and the usual times substituted, "as the children have no inclination for Mr. Weinberg's music".

"Instead of Bible reading on Saturdays, it is better to h old afternoon services, where the Minister can deliver services, as they do in Cape Town and Johannesburg".

Contrary to the views of modern protagonists of Nursery schools, he thought the activities of Mrs. Kaplan in devoting "40 or 50 minutes to playing with a few

babies" was quite superfluous, and he quoted the remark of Mr. Jacobs that "The school needs a teacher, not a nurse".

Mr. Heymann was succeeded by a Miss Levin, who in the circumstances did as much as could be expected, but the bulk of the responsibility for Jewish education remained were it had already been for a generation and was long to continue - upon the shoulders of the Reverend M.I.Cohen.

Partly because of old Jewish tradition, the services of amateur scholars were not despised. This appears from a note sent on February 8, 1918, by a country trader named Z. Weiselberg, who was also a scholar of note. Addressing the Secretary of the Congregation, he expressed his thanks and added: "Provided it does not rain on Sunday next, and I am able to come to town, I will be very glad to attend at the Hebrew Examination and to act as one of the examiners".

Shortage of suitable literature is implied in a reference by the Reverend Weinberg to the need for having new copies of devotional music written for the High Holidays. "Hence I asked Miss Ray Figov, and she was good enough to provide us with 14 complete copies, as it was impossible to use the old ones. I recommend that the sum of five guineas should be given to her, with compliments of the Committee for the valuable service she has rendered to them".

On the communal side, complaints were heard afresh at the failure of parents to send their children to the Hebrew classes, still maintained by the inevitable Reverend M.I.Cohen. With the question of converts cropping up at intervals, including that of two children in 1923, it was laid down that each case must henceforth be brought before a Special General Meeting of the whole congregation.

Much satisfaction was felt throughout the community when in 1925 and, and again at the instance of Mr. Cohen, the Government Education authorities agreed to allow Hebrew to be taught as one of the classics, alternate to Greek or Latin, in Government High Schools. Altogether relations with the authorities were extremely friendly and at the Annual Meeting, Mr. H.P. Ellenbogen as Chairman noted: "We had the pleasure of receiving the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, who is interested n our community".

In this year the Reverend Cohen circularized Jewish parents for the purpose of securing enough pupils to warrant the engagement of a Hebrew teacher at Milton and Evelyn High Schools.

Demands for increased specialization brought a special committee into existence, when the activities of the Talmud Torah were separated out from those dealing with Hebrew education generally. Mr. Cohen, at a meeting, dealt with the matter or religious education on a commonsense basis. "Conditions", he said, "in this country are vastly different from those obtaining in Eastern European centers, where the atmosphere is entirely Jewish, and where educational is also entirely Jewish, as exemplified by the

Yeshivas. Here children have their education in non-Jewish schools, and what little time is left, after football or sport generally, drawing or music lessons, makes it difficult to achieve better results. Nevertheless our pupils know more, age for age, than others in any part of South Africa. An important achievement here is that our pupils in later years, are with the community and take their part prominently in every aspect of Jewish communal endeavour. This is due to the training they receive at the Hebrew classes. In the limited time at their disposal, it is impossible to turn out good Talmudists, but pupils do receive a sound foundation in Jewish history and Hebrew reading". He added that in many instances the sheer apathy of parents made the task of teachers doubly difficult.

To obtain further concessions, a deputation waited on the Prime Minister of the Colony, the Hon. H.U. Moffat, in February 1928. It comprised A. Jacobs, S. Rabinowitz and the Reverend Cohen, who were introduced by Mr. A.R. Welsh, Member of the Legislative Council for Bulawayo North, and Chairman of the local School Board, acting as spokesman, pointed out: "No facilities are at present afforded at our schools for the tuition of Hebrew, and consequently Jewish pupils are handicapped in taking that subject for the Junior Certificate and Matriculation examination. On the other hand, such facilities are accorded in other schools in South Africa, and indeed in Rhodesia itself there is a Dutch master on the teaching staff of some of the schools, to give tuition in that language. Only two years ago the late Sir Charles Coghlan assured this congregation that a request for Hebrew teaching facilities, and in particular for the inclusion of a Hebrew teacher on the staff of Milton High School, would receive the Government's favourable consideration".

Mr. Moffat, expressing every sympathy in reply, promised the matter would come before the Cabinet at an early date.

As a result of this stir, an extra teacher was appointed soon after with the correspondingly better results in the classroom.

The school took noticeable strides during 1931, when an official examination was carried out by the Director of Education for the colony. For all that, the effects of the Depression were so obvious that a special appeal went out: "The crisis now prevailing is bound seriously to affect our Congregation, unless all our members continues the generous support which they have hitherto accorded us..... Many parents are not fairly compensating the School for its educational work, and there are a good many in all parts of the country who are taking advantage of the existence and activity of our communal organization without recognizing the duty of giving us their support in any way. Every Jew in the country benefits directly or indirectly from out work....."

Paralleling the long-established link between Rhodesian Jewry and the South African Jewish Board of Deputies was their subsequent affiliation with the South African Board of Jewish Education, which made accessible considerably greater resources in the recruiting of teachers and the procurement of classroom equipment, as well as in the organizing of Hebrew examinations.

The whole situation of the Jewish schools in Rhodesia was surveyed by a distinguished authority from South Africa, David Mierowsky, whose name is still remembered as an outstanding scholar and writer. His independent report in 1933 proved however less discouraging than had been feared. Criticism centered on three points - unsatisfactory attendances at classes, the need to influence parents to supervise the school-going of their boys and girls, and the need for a special test for Barmitzvah boys.

A welcome addition to the facilities was also the commencement of a Kindergarten, which was well patronized.

Shortage of qualified staff remained a perennial difficulty, for which reason the Bulawayo Congregation in April 1935 agreed to make a contribution to the campaign for funds for the training of teachers started by the South African Jewish Board of Education. Following a visit to Rhodesia by Alexander Lewin, a nominal but significant gift of £25 a year was approved. Then, to the astonishment of nearly all concerned, Mr. Lewin refused to accept this and, "Although I had intended to carry out a campaign in Rhodesia", he explained to the Committee of the Congregation, "I feel, after considering the position, the time is not ripe for such an action in the Colony. When the campaign in the Union of South Africa has reached a successful stage, I will again come to this country for the purpose of raising funds".

This stage was apparently reached the following year, but this time the Rhodesians were so averse to the appeal that the whole scheme was called off!

Another project which unfortunately fell flat was a proposal by the Reverend M.I.Cohen in connection with a "History of the Jews in Rhodesia", on which he was then working, that a suitable person should be engaged to find references in the files of the London "Jewish Chronicle". Though a sum of £20 was actually allocated to this task, there is no indication that it brought any results.

Rarely has Rhodesia witnessed a more enthusiastic social event that in March 1935, when about 400 people gathered to do honour to the Reverend Cohen on his 35th anniversary with the Congregation and the School.

Such was the growth in the congregation that it was agreed to enter on a major project, including a new Synagogue and a Talmud Torah and Communal Hall. The realization of these plans was largely the achievement of two men.

Always a friend of the community, Charelick Solomon gave £500 towards the Congregation on condition that the other members raised £1,000.

The passing of Louis Landau brought a benefaction of £2,000. In his will Mr. Landau declared: "It is my desire that the Reverend M.I.Cohen shall be consulted by the Congregation as to the manner in which the income from this fund is to be dealt with. The very widest powers of discretion may be exercised with regard to the income accruing from the above amount, which may be used for the purposes of a Bursary, the

subsidizing of a school or classes, or any similar or other purpose which may be calculated to assist in the development of Hebrew education and the fostering of Judaism generally".

A further £2,000 Louis Landau left toward the reconstruction and improvement of the War Memorial Hall in Bulawayo, £2,500 to build a new house for the Minister, and £250 to the Jewish Benevolent Society. The new Louis Landau Hebrew School was formally opened on August 11, 1935 and was visited on the following January 5, 1936 by the Governor of Southern Rhodesia, Sir Herbert Stanley, K.C.M.G. At the same time he inspected the Synagogue and the Guild Hall, in all of which, we are told, "he displayed a great deal of interest". The fact that Sir Herbert was of Jewish origin undoubtedly had a bearing on this attitude.

As a sequel to his visit a set of the Zohar in five volumes, and costing 30 was received by His Excellency nine months later with great pleasure.

As on numberless occasions in the past, the growing ill will in the outer world during the 1930's led to a stronger feeling of solidarity and loyalty in the Jewish community itself, also reflected in the issue of a special Appeal to Parents in July 1937: "In view of the fact that there are a large number of girls in this town who receive no Jewish education, we should like to draw attention to the 'Girls' Education week', held in London recently, during which a strong campaign was conducted to give children a good Jewish education".

Professor Selig Brodetsky was quoted: "Never in Jewish history has the younger generation been so conscious of the hatred surrounding them as today. And not only in Germany and Poland, but in the very districts in which our meetings are being held. When children ask questions on how to face Anti-Semitism, the only answer is to provide them with knowledge of their heritage. If you do not give this education to your younger generation, you are condemning them to suffer without knowing why they are suffering, and you are exposing them to all the winds that might take them away to other doctrines. The Jewish mother should be the educator of the next generation (for it is in the first years of a child's life that pride in his faith and people are implanted in him), and that is only possible if the girls are brought up to be Jewish mothers in that sense".

Further reference was made to the remarks of the Rt. Hon. Oliver Stanley, the British Minister of Education, who declared: "All will agree that the ultimate test of a school education is not what a child learns, but of what sort of child goes out of the doors of that school..... Your faith is not my faith, but just as I want an opportunity of handing on to my children the Faith of my Fathers, so I want the Jews to have an opportunity of handing on to their children the Faith of their Fathers".

The appeal ended with details of the times when Hebrew classes were held in the city.

## CHAPTER 37.

## ON THE RACECOURSE

No record of the Jewish contribution to the making of Rhodesia can be complete without at least some mention of their association with the Turf. This old established link, occurring all over the world, was in evidence at a very early stage, though written records are not easy to find.

Race courses, indeed, were among the earliest amenities provided for the settlers. Lord Randolph Churchill already described a meeting at Fort Salisbury during his visit there in 1891, barely a year after the Occupation, and among three-quarters of the population attending the event; the Jews did not lag behind.

In terms of seniority, Umtali ranks second only to Salisbury, the sport having being launched there in 1893. One of the first winners of the Umtali Plate was "Inyama", property of the famous "Mafuta" Lazarus.

The first race meeting at Bulawayo took place on November 8, 1894, only a few months after the founding of the town, and here the Jewish participation was possibly even larger. J.H. Hirschler incidentally being one of the starters. Operations, however, were conducted on a very informal basis, more akin to that of the Gymkhana.

The first Jewish owner to operate successfully was M. Platnauer, owner of an agency business, whose horse "Holbooi", on September 19, 1895, won the Bulawayo Spring Handicap. We are told it was "a well-contested event, with a large amount of money passing hands, and each owner heavily backing his stables".

What might be described as part-time bookmakers operated on the course, until the following year when the delights of the Totalisator were first revealed to Rhodesians by Joe Strauss from London, who made history by riding up from Pietersburg on a 10-day journey to Bulawayo on horseback. His enterprise, we are assured, was rewarded by substantial returns in the Silver and other Rings.

But Strauss returned to settle at the Cape, and the profession of Turf Accountancy was somewhat neglected until after the Boer War, when a beginning was made by Gabriel (Gaby) Hart, in association with Jack Brown (also Jewish). This

arrangement came to and end at the end of 1902, when they set up separately at Bulawayo.

Two other young men engaged in the catering business, were already investigating the possibilities of the race course. On January 3, 1903 a notice appeared in the "Bulawayo Chronicle".

**"SIMMONS AND FINGELSRON.**

Late of the Mikado Restaurant,
Beg to inform Customers that they have taken
Over the spacious Dining Room of the Avenue Hotel
Single Meals 2/6d. each"

The following year Abe Fingelson opened up as a Turf Accountant at Charter Chambers in Bulawayo. His chief competitors were Stodel and Climer, who were at Exchange Buildings in 7th Avenue. Climer presently retired, leaving Charles Stodel to carry on. Not long after, Willie Cohen, who described himself as "King of the Ring", opened up at Salisbury.

In 1916 Fingelson was referred to as "Rhodesia's Biggest Turf Operator", and an interview with him appeared in the "British South Africa Annual".

Thus challenged, Willie Cohen took a similar step, and was featured in the same publication in 1 921.

But by this time other Bookmakers operating in the Colony were challenging their pre-eminence. Fingelson moved to the Rand, where he continued to flourish. Among the early stalwarts of the Bulawayo Turf Club were also Henry Burns Ellenbogen and P.E. Landau.

Some of the sporty, free and easy flavour of the Good Old Days is reflected even in the sober proceedings of the Bulawayo Hebrew Benevolent Society. On November 30, 1918, the Treasurers reported the receipt of a note from a man in London formerly resident in Matabeleland!

"About 20 years ago, your Society lent me £5. I forget the circumstances, but on going through some old papers recently I came across a note I had made at the time in Bulawayo. I now have pleasure in sending a cheque for the value of £10, with interest at 5 per cent added for 20 years".

An equally unusual monetary transaction was on one occasion reported by the Treasurer of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, who had purchased a number of lottery tickets on behalf of the Congregation. The truth of this statement was confirmed, but history is silent as to whether the Congregation drew any prizes.

## C H A P T E R 38.

## KOSHER BUTCHERY COMEDY.

What was playfully called the "Great Kosher Butchery War" was one of the more entertaining episodes in Rhodesian Jewry during the nineteen twenties. It began with renewed effort to popularize the use of the ritually-killed meat in 1925, when an arrangement was reached with an approved butcher, followed by discussions on the need for a Shechita Board. Details having been secured from that institution in London, operations were begun in 1926, the first members being Moses Rabinowitz, the Reverend A. Weinberg and the Reverend Cohen.

But the real excitement did not start till February 1928, when it was touched off by the arrival from Bloemfontein of a stranger, who advertised in the "Bulawayo Chronicle" on March 21, 1928:

"RHODESIAN KOSHER MEAT SUPPLY COMPANY.
Abercorn Street and 10th Avenue,
P.O.Box 285, Bulawayo.

"The Rhodesian Kosher Meat Supply Company respectfully informs the Jewish people of Rhodesia and the Congo, that they are opening up the above premises as from Thursday next, 22 instant, under the personal supervision of the Reverend Mr. A. Miller.

"In addition to the usual supply of Kosher Beef, Mutton and Poultry, many varieties of specially-prepared meats, such as Kosher Polonies, Sour Sausages, real Warshawe Worst (so written), Pickled or Smoked Tongues, Poultry, etc., are being manufactured on our premises.

"Sheep-tail fat, raw or ready for use (in airtight glass jars) always available. Particularly important is this point for the ensuing Pesach Holidays, when also all our Meats will be strictly Kosher L'Pesach.

"Special attention given to orders by train anywhere in Rhodesia and the Congo.

"We are convinced that all we need is your trial order; the rest is bound to come automatically.

"Our Motto - Kashrus, Quality, Civility".

Greatly alarmed by this invasion, Mr. Kaufmann called a meeting of the Shechita Board on the very next day and complained that Mr. Miller had received no permission from the congregation. Negotiations had proceeded on the assumption that he would be prepared to take over the Congregation's Schochet, Mr. Weiner, and draw his meat from one of the local Jewish butcheries, preferably the Charter Butchery, but the matter had not been concluded before Mr. Miller started up on his own, buying from Jewish dealers, Berwitz and & Salis, who were killing the animals themselves.

"Mr. Miller", said Mr. Kaufmann angrily, "therefore defies the authority of the Congregation and, by his action in offering meat for sale that is not killed by the Congregation's Schochet, sets himself up in opposition to them....."

Speaking as a member of the Committee, Mr. C. Friedman then declared that it was he who had told Mr. Miller to go ahead, after hearing that he had been treated discourteously at the Charter Butchery and that the meat there cost too much - 2 1/2 d. a pound!

The outcome was the dispatch of a telegram to Chief Rabbi Dr.J.L. Landau at the Womarans Street Synagogue in Johannesburg, reading: "Community has only one Kosher Butchery and one communal Schochet. A stranger, Miller, from Bloemfontein has come and opened a Kosher Butchery. Unity of the committee threatened. Miller buys from butchers and kills himself. No credentials submitted shul Committee entirely opposed to second butchery and Schochet determined to declare second butchery and Schochet unauthorized and illegal. Reverend Cohen advises this is the law. Confirm by wire immediately".

By return came a telegram from the Chief Rabbi: "Miller may not sell Kosher without authority".

But even this ecclesiastical dictum failed to bring the refractory slaughter to heel. So a circular letter was sent out to every member of the Bulawayo Congregation, setting out their version of the story and adding an appeal for them to use the services of the "Only Recognized and Authorized Communal Purveyors of Kosher Meat. Only by such support of out authorized suppliers can we ensure permanent arrangements for Kashrus on proper lines. No Butchery other than the Charter Butchery has received the sanction of the Congregation to supply kosher meat".

Further meetings followed, at which the supporters of Mr. Miller loudly heckled the indignant Mr. Kaufmann and his friends. To satisfy complaints, the Charter Butchery decided to rebuild their premises.

For several more months the battle raged, until, in February 1929, a letter arrived from the Rhodesia and Rand Livestock Company, "giving notice of their intention to discontinue the Kosher Butchery". Rather paradoxically, the sheer suddenness of this decision led the Shechita authorities to ask them to continue for another month, and even to propose that another concern, the Dundee Butchery, take over the enterprise!

At this point arose further trouble, for the Charter Butchery, on which the Congregation had pinned its hopes, also grew tired of this department of its activities and proposed closing down. In desperation, the anxious Shechita experts addressed several independent firms, including the Central Meat Supply, asking them to tender for the supply of kosher meat.

Faced with the prospect of having none at all, the authorities even offered to pay the full salary of the Schochet. Finally a ballot took place, at which the tender of the Independent Butchery was accepted by a majority of 20 votes to four. This failed to mark the end of the excitement, for now the Schochet himself, Mr. Weiner, decided to go on pension, and asked that his duties be taken over by the Reverend Weinberg!

The harassed committee allowed him an honorarium of £7.10s. a month, to be cut to £5 if he left Bulawayo. As long as he remained in the city, he must however, be ready to perform occasional duties as Schochet if so required, while Weinberg accepted the appointment at the very low figure of £3.102. a month.

By November 1929 the Independent Butchery complained that they were receiving so little support from the community that it was not even covering the wages of the men employed. Next year, with the added pressure of the World slump. The firm finally threw in its hand. This meant the end of any kosher facilities for the Congregation.

A new demand then arose by the Congregation itself for the appointment of another Schochet, and a petition was sent in carrying several dozen signatures. Troubled at the prevailing confusion a fresh circular went out on June 4, 1931, headed:

"KOSHER MEAT.
TO ALL our Members.

"We desire to remind you that our congregations have for the past two years arranged with the Independent Butchery to provide the community with kosher meat. This is the only Butchery which is recognized and authorized by us, your representatives to provide kosher meat. The Schochet, the Reverend Weinberg, is similarly our only recognize and authorized communal Schochet. We therefore appeal to all our members, desirous of obtaining kosher meat, to avail themselves exclusively of the services of the only recognize and authorized communal purveyors of such kosher meat. Only by such support of our authorize suppliers can we ensure permanent arrangements for Kashrus on proper lines. No butchery other than the Independent Butchery has received the sanction of the Congregation to supply kosher meat.

O.Kaufmann, President.
C.M. Harris, Hon. Sec."

Mollified by this appeal, the Independent decided to try once more, and on August 27, 1931, another meeting took place, at which the various butcheries in the town were invited to compete. It was in vain. The only interest in the enterprise was shown by the Charter Butchery, which had once before resigned the appointment.

Following complaints from the authorities about the “inconvenience of killing poultry over the week-ends", a special building was erected, adjoining the Memorial Hall, to be used as a miniature abattoir.

With Rhodesia still ploughing her way through the World Depression, another request went out in 1931: "The crisis now prevailing is bound seriously to affect our Congregation", said the Chairman, unless all our members continue the generous support which they have hitherto accorded us, but we feel our communal activities are of such a vital nature as to demand the loyal assistance of new supporters".

As the Charter Butchery again abandoned their position as official purveryors of kosher meat a return submitted showing that their total sales were barely 60 a month. The crestfallen Committee decided to let the Schochet operate on his own account and so matters remained until that functionary too complained of a lack of support. So a circular went out:

"At a meeting of the Committee of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation, on November 20, 1934, it was unanimously decided that, in order to assist the Schochet, Mr. Kuva Lovitz, he will be entitled to charge as from 1st December, 1934, for his own benefit, the following fees for poultry killed by him, viz: 11/d. for each fowl, 3 d. for each duck, 6 d. for each turkey. Books of coupons will be obtainable from the Schochet and members desiring his services will have to purchase such coupons from him, and present them with the value of 1 1/2d., 3d. or 6d. as the case may be, for each fowl, duck or turkey to be killed by the Schochet".

This announcement drew immediate objections from certain people to the tariff scales.

However the general public was now tired of the subject, which seemed gradually to have died away.

One unforeseen side-effect of the Great Kosher Butchery Dispute was the creation of a Pension fund for Communal workers. The first efforts went back to 1925 when it was decided to mark the Reverend Cohen's 25th Anniversary in the Congregation by arranging benefits for the time when he would retire. In the absence of sufficient resources the Committee took out and Endowment Policy for the Minister, payable when he reached the age of 60.

But it was Mr. Weiner, the Schochet, for whose benefit the first attempt at a Pension Fund was made. "Owing to my feet and legs giving in", he wrote in 1925, "I cannot carry out my duties to the Congregation. May I ask to be supplied with a cheap car for a conveyance to be placed at my disposal when needed". Accordingly, at the Reverend Weinberg's instigation, an amount of 100 was voted to finance the purchase of an old Tin Lizzie.

The precedent set in connection with the motor car for the Reverend Weinberg was followed in 1929 with a similar action on behalf of the Reverend Cohen, for whom another was bought, costing 275. It was not, however, until the retirement of the Reverend M.I.Cohen and the Reverend A. Weinberg, six years later that a fully organized Pension Fund came into being.

## C H A P T E R 39.

## PARLIAMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE.

In keeping with the Jewish tradition of public service, numbers of those in Rhodesia followed the example first set in early Bulawayo, by Isidore Hirschler. Elected to the Town Council there, Emanuel Basch, like him, became Mayor four times in succession, while there were few good causes - even outside the community - on which he or his wife was not to the fore. Louis Landau too was on the Town Council and acknowledged to be one of the ablest of its members. From the Local Government point of view the year 1927 is remarkable as having seen, among the five full-fledged municipalities then existent in Rhodesia, two with Jewish Mayors - Bulawayo with Henry Burns Ellenbogen, and Gwelo with M. Jacobson. The Reverend M.I Cohen was chosen as Chairman of the Bulawayo School Board - largely in recognition, by the non-Jewish public, of the outstanding "Report on Undenominational Education" which he drew up in 19 and which had a great influence on the drafting of Rhodesian legislation. Even after the new system had been established on the lines recommended by him, Mr. Cohen twice gave evidence by special request to a Select Committee of the Legislative Council.

In another field of public service there was G. Sessel, the founder and first Honorary Secretary of the Rhodesian Eisteddfod at Bulawayo, vigorously supported - need it be mentioned? - by the Reverend Cohen in the Literary Section and by H. Charles in the Musical one.

Similarly in the smaller centers Jews took their place in the local politics and administration - H. Shapiro of the Gatooma, H. J. Sonnenberg at Gwelo, S. Baldachin and J.Zankstein at Queque, K. Blackman, J. H. Krikler and W. H. Rosenthal as Shabani and N. Wolffe at Umvuma.

Despite the outcome of the 1923 referendum that Rhodesia should not join South Africa as an extra province, in which incidentally I.W. Schlesinger gave vigorous support to the cause of Union, through his chain of cinemas, the Bulawayo Congregation decided to maintain its membership of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies at Johannesburg, thought the letter sent on January 10, 1924, made it plain that the five guineas subscribed was "more in the way of a donation".

Among the personalities who helped to build the community of today, the name of Max Danziger deserves greater prominence than it usually receives. Not alone as a legislator, but as the first Jewish faith to hold a Cabinet post in the Colony, he occupies a position of importance.

The son of Bernard Danziger, a pioneer jeweler, he was born on March 1, 1886 at Worcester, Cape Colony, but grew up in Johannesburg, where his family had settled, and where he attended the Marist Brothers School. Sent for his further education to the South African College at Cape Town, he qualified as an attorney and, made his home at Gwelo. He was elected to the Rhodesian Parliament, first for Gwelo District, afterwards for Selukwe, and in 1942 he became Minister of Finance, Commerce and Supplies, in the Cabinet of Sir Godfrey Huggins, the present Lord Malvern.

Through his long tenure in the Rhodesian Legislature, he enjoyed the reputation of a man who proudly upheld his Jewish identity, careful and level-headed and not given to wild of fantastic theories.

Early in his political career, events in the neighbouring Union of South Africa had their repercussions in the Colony, where they prompted the careful review of the entire position of the Jewish newcomer. This arose from the decision of Parliament at Cape Town to adopt the Immigration Quota Act, under which the inflow of newcomers from the Eastern part of Europe was so drastically curtailed that it virtually put a stop to the entry of people from that area. On February 10, 1930, Mr. Kaufmann, as Chairman of the Bulawayo Congregation, mentioned that Max Danziger would be visiting Bulawayo shortly, and that he and his colleagues proposed to have discussions with him on this theme. When the meeting took place on the following Sunday morning, it was noted that "several important matters" had been dealt with, but that it had been decided to abstain from any active measures for the moment. Not until May 12 did Danziger disclose what had really been under consideration, and then only as a result of a press announcement that "Rhodesians, whether naturalized or otherwise, will now be brought under the Quota Act in South Africa".

Such concern did this stir up among the congregation that a deputation comprising Messrs.Kaufmann, A. Jacobs, C. M. Harris as Secretary, and the Reverend M.I. Cohen, left within a few days to interview the Premier, H.U. Moffat. A copy of the proposals submitted is still in existence and sets out:

1. "All bona fide inhabitants of Rhodesia desiring to go to the Union for temporary purposes, or to pass straight through, should be exempt from the Quota Act.

2. "In any event, any Rhodesian holding a Certificate of Naturalization should be exempt from the Quota Deposit.

3. "In the event of the Union Government not agreeing to these proposals regarding un-naturalized bona fide Rhodesian inhabitants, the Deposit should be waived

on the production of an Identification Certificate to be issued by the Rhodesian Government.

4. "All naturalized British Subjects resident in Rhodesia, who may wish to take up residence in the Union, should be allowed to do so without restriction".

Upon their return from Salisbury, Kaufman and Jacobs reported on their interview, which had yielded the comforting reassurances that Mr. Moffat also realized "the seriousness of the position, and was himself personally taking up the matter direct with the Union Government". The Colonial Secretary, Mr. Leggate and the Attorney-General, Mr. Hudson, who had also been in attendance, gave their approval. For the benefit of Jewry in Northern Rhodesia, Jacobs undertook a trip to Livingstone, the removal of the capital to Lusaka not yet having occurred. He discussed the matter with the local M.L.A., Mr. (afterwards Sir) Leopold Moore, who himself was Jewish, and who introduced him to the Government. Here too a pledge was received that Northern Rhodesia would take up the position with South Africa.

When, some months later, the Prime Minister sent to Mr. Jacobs a copy of the Union Government's reply to his representations on the Quota Bill, the Jewish reaction was that it was very unsatisfactory. So a fresh plea went forward to Salisbury, which stirred up the authorities into dispatching to Pretoria the Chief Immigration Officer, Major J.C. Brundell, to discuss the whole affair at firsthand with General J.B.M Hertzog, and this time the outcome represented a distinct advance.

"Everything possible", H. B. Ellenbogen acknowledged, "has been done in the interests of Rhodesian Jewry. It is now possible to obtain a certificate from the local authorities, which will permit one to travel to and from the Union for a period of 12 months. This is considered very satisfactory".

At his suggestion Ellenbogen on August 13, 1930, led a deputation to Salisbury consisting of himself, A. Jacobs and C.M.Harris, to "convey the thanks of the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation to the Premier and his Cabinet for the assistance rendered to the whole of Rhodesian Jewry during the recent trouble with the Union of South Africa in connection with the Quote Act". It was noted that their reception was extremely cordial and that Mr. Moffat expressed his pleasure at the message received.

In pleasant contrast with the harshness then manifested in many other countries, the behaviour of Major Brundell prompted the dispatch to him of a further formal letter from the Bulawayo Congregation in 1932, "thanking him for his kind assistance to all members of our fraternity on all matters relating to immigration".

After the lapse of years, anti-Semitic references in the press recurred in February 1927, the offender once again being the "Bulawayo Chronicle". Although in a much more veiled form than on the previous occasion during the Boer War, two leaders dealt with the question of immigration to Rhodesia, and were described as "containing references of an anti-Jewish character". An Action Committee, immediately formed,

comprised O.Kaufmann as Chairman of the Congregation, the Reverend Cohen and Messrs. E.Basch, J.Hepker and the Honorary Secretary, Samuel Rabinowitz. Fortunately both the editor and the publishers of the newspaper, when made aware of the implications of the attack, proved so co-operative that the matter was allowed to drop.

The general atmosphere remained as in the past, tolerant and friendly, and it is typical to find that, as invited delegates of Rhodesian Jewry, the two Susman brothers laid a wreath on the newly-unveiled memorial to David Livingstone, at the edge of the Victoria Falls.

Once again a Jewish Mayor was appointed at Bulawayo in 1934, in the person of Councilor Cessey. Morris Harris. Still a comparatively young man, he was born in London in 1893 and educated at Tottenham. At the age of 14 he came to Rhodesia, and soon achieved prominence as an industrialist - flour miller and produce merchant - as well as a sportsman, in which last capacity he was amongst other things elected President of the Matabeleland Cricket Board. At other times he was President of the Rhodesian Society for the Civilian Blind and Physically Defective, and of the Bulawayo Chamber of industries.

Two Jewish names included in the list of New Year Honours in 1936 were those of the Reverend M. I. Cohen and Mrs. Tilly Jacobson, both of whom received the M.B.E.

In his capacity as the Mayor's chaplain, the Reverend Weinberg was responsible in Bulawayo for the proclamation of the accession of the new King, Edward VIII, in 1936, while on the occasion of the coronation of King George VI in 1937, medals in appreciation of their public services were awarded to O. Kaufman, J. Ralstein, and Mrs. D.A. Blumberg.

## C H A P T E R 40.

## OLD TIMERS IN SALISBURY.

As the second largest Jewish community in Rhodesia, Salisbury occupies a position of special importance in these chronicles. Overshadowed though it might be by the more prominent and dramatic events in Bulawayo, the older town maintained a steady record of progress.

That fine old pioneer, Mr. E. Lover, of whom there has already been mention, recalls many Jews in Salisbury at the turn of the century, headed by the celebrated Joseph van Praagh, the outfitter, Lippy Altson, also with the Manica Trading Company. The two Susmans, Lew and Ike, were connected with the Salisbury Brewery and the Masonic Hotel. So was a Jewish citizen named Diamond, and so were Maurice Freeman (who also manufactured mineral waters) and Ted Levy. The auctioneers were Bob Cohen, Moss Harris and the photographer, Bob Bernstein. Another cameraman was a Mr. Myers. The storekeepers were "Foona Tenga" Edwards, Mo and Issy Price and yet another Myers. The wholesale merchants included Harris and Friedman, the Soref brothers and M. Stein. Geoff Jacobs was mining at the Salisbury Reef, Monty Jacobs was the Secretary of the Salisbury Stock Exchange, Lewis Bernstein operated a transport business, Ben Rothstein was a barber, Mr. Langerman ran the Langham Hotel. P. S. Leon was a clerk and a Mr. Arwa edited a local weekly paper. Mr. Lover can also remember a Jewish Police Inspector by the name of Fridjohn, and sundry other worthies.

In the field of public affairs, particular honour must be paid to Herbert Lewis Lezard. A Londoner by birth, born in 1874, he went to school there, before deciding to continue at the Royal School of Mines. At the age of 18, he emigrated to South Africa and, before the turn of the century, had made his home in Rhodesia. Settling at Salisbury as a partner in the well-known auctioneering firm of Lezard & Co., he took up both communal and civic affairs, becoming Treasurer of the local Hebrew Congregation and being in 1912 elected to the Salisbury Town Council.

Such was his popularity and influence that the following year, 1913 and again in 1915, he was elected Mayor, in which capacity he proved an unqualified success, his services to the whole of Rhodesia being honoured after World War 1 by the award of

an M.B.E. In his later years H.L. Lezard made his home in Johannesburg, where he repeated his municipal achievements by being elected to the City Council.

Louis Landau too, as a member of the well-known commercial house, was elected Town Councilor in two cities - at Salisbury as early as 1902, and again in Bulawayo in a similar capacity from 1922 to 1927. He was also responsible for founding the Chevra Kadisha and was Chairman of the United Talmud Torahs and President of the Bulawayo Congregation.

Louis Braude also belongs to the group of pioneer Councilors. Born in Russia in 1878, he reached the Cape at the age of 18 and soon established himself as a merchant in Salisbury, where he was a pioneer of Zionism, President of the Zionist Association and of the Hebrew Congregation. For many years Braude served on the Salisbury City Council, becoming Deputy Mayor.

Harry Shapiro, a livestock dealer, born in Lithuania in 1880 and in South Africa since 1886, was a Committee Member of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, of the Zionist Society and a City Councilor.

Both I Kirschbaum, the jeweler, and H. Harris were Councilors in their day.

The first Salisbury Synagogue, erected in 1901, was gradually outgrown, and by 1912 had become so inadequate that the premises were disposed of, leaving the Congregation in the position of having no place of worship of their own. For a considerable time they made shift with the Masonic Hall, the Drill Hall and even the premises of the old Bank of Africa!

Under conditions of great difficulty Shlomo Myers served as honorary Reader, as well as Schochet, and only in 1909 did the Reverend L, Rubin take office as the first ordained minister, with A. Cohen as his lay Reader. Mr. Rubin lasted for three years, being then succeeded by the well-known Rand and Kimberley pioneer, the Reverend Mark L. Harris. In this period, from 1913 to 1915, the Synagogue was housed in the Cathedral Hall, an arrangement unique in the world!

May 1917 saw a stimulating discussion between the President of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, Robert Bernstein and his opposite number, Louis Landau in Bulawayo, on the plan to demarcate the various provinces of Rhodesia to the separate Congregations. "My Committee", said Bernstein, "have now discussed this matter and suggest that, so long as your Congregation and ours remain the only fully constituted ones, you should confine your operations to Matabeleland, and we ours to Mashonaland. When an instance occurs of a party in Mashonaland requiring the services of any of the Bulawayo Congregation's officials, it is not to be given without the written consent of the Salisbury Committee first being obtained by the party desirous of this service, and vice versa. At present persons not members of either Congregation may demand the service of the officials of both. Even though a higher charge is made, this

does not compensate either for the loss of what would have been paid to their funds in the way of subscriptions and donations".

Bulawayo replied appreciatively:- "We are only too happy to co-operate with your Congregation in anything that will result in a harmonious relationship and mutual advantage. Any suggestions from you will always receive our sympathetic consideration.... Your suggestion as to boundary limitations and the sphere of influence of our respective Congregations is already being acted upon by us, and will continue to be implemented as long as circumstances will warrant this procedure".

In proof of the genuineness of the settlement a cheques was forwarded for fees paid at a Bris Melah in the Salisbury area, at which the Reverend Cohen had officiated. Salisbury in return replied: "We would not permit our Minister to act in any capacity in Matabeleland without first approaching your Congregation".

Upon the resignation of the Reverend Harris in 1918 the Reverend Joseph Julius Rosin was appointed minister of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation. Rosin, born in Courland in 1879, had studied first at the local Yeshiva and later at a Rabbinical College. As a young man of 23 he landed in South Africa and plunged into the Rhodesian field of work, one of his first efforts being to deal with the anomaly of using a Christian building as a Jewish place of worship. The erection of the long overdue new Synagogue, for which he campaigned steadily over the years, was finally completed in 1920 and a handsome structure in Salisbury Street consecrated.

Apart from his work for Jewry, Rosin was an active Freemason, a member of the Executive of the Rhodesian Children's Home and, during the economic crisis of the 1920's, a Committee member of the Salisbury Unemployed Society, which did a great deal for those in distress, irrespective of creed. For 17 years, until 1935, he faithfully served his steadily-growing congregation, responsible both for much of its spiritual and its social advance.

During the first decade of the 20th century, the ranks of Salisbury Jewry were reinforced by a number of well-known names, including M.H. Aschman, A. Cohen, J.Isakson, the furniture dealer, S. Kofman, Tobacconist, C.M. Levien, storekeeper, Myers Brothers, the bankers, and H. Shalovsky. All these had settled in the city by 1908. By 1910 there was also J. Baldachin, J.Berman, A. Blumenthal, I Cohen, carpenter, L.N. Cohen, solicitor, H. S. Cohen, "Kaffir truck merchant", J. Frankel, L.E.D. Friedlander, milliner and draper, D. Goldberg, H. Goldblatt, F. Gottlieb, P. Jacobson, D. Montagu Jacobs, W. Kirschner, J.H. Levy, E. L. Levy, J. Levy, H.O. Leewenseing, S.J. Ornstein, I Pieters, W. A. Rezin, B. Rothstein, J. Swelig, M. Sklar and D. Welensky of the Salisbury Brewery.

New names in 1919 included J. Bernstein, J.A.Bernstein, and S. Bernstein, the latter of the Commercial Hotel. There was now the firm of Bloom, Braude & Co., Auctioneers and Cattle Salesmen, House Agents and Complete Furnishers. The ranks of the Cohens had been enriched by the advent of A. Cohen, Miss Ada Cohen, Miss

F. Cohen, Joe Cohen, L. Cohen, Max Cohen, Maurice Cohen, buyer of scrap metal, Willie Cohen, bookmaker, and others. The Comaroff family was also well represented, including S. Comaroff, accountant and auditor, S. Comaroff & Co., manufacturers and general agents, as well as M.K. J. and Alex Comaroff. Julius Frankel, general merchant, H.G.Freeman, manager of the livestock department of Lezard & Co., L. Goldschmidt, M. Grushko of the Commercial Hotel, four different Hoffmans - Bernard, C.J., A.M. and Miss H.B.Israel, Ted Levy, proprietor of the Castle Hotel, E.Lloyd Levy of the Mascot Ranch, P. Lazarus the auctioneer, the famous "Mafuta" transplanted, S.S.G. Lissack of the Beira and Mashonaland Railways, Advocate W. Lieberman, Lazarus Rabinowitz, C.Swartz, M. Stein, Torf, Shapiro & Co. Ltd. merchants, are a few of the newer names that helped to diversify the community in Salisbury.

James Kapnek built up a large farming proposition at Frogmore, near Mazoe, which was considered one of the most successful food producers in the Colony. Later he helped to establish a large brewery and was responsible for the gift of £25,000 to the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Salisbury witnessed an important development in 1935 when the Reverend Maurice Konviser was appointed minister of the Congregation. Born in Russia he had studied at Jews College and University College in London and at the Sorbonne in Paris. His first post was in London before taking up residence in Kimberly in 1927 with the Griqualand West Congregation. Apart from his pastoral duties he was a writer and became a Committee Member of the Rhodesia Children's Home, the South Rhodesia Social Hygiene Council and other bodies prominent in the Colony

## CHAPTER 41

## THE NAZI SHADOW

The year 1933 marks the beginning of an epoch in the history of World Jewry, with the rise to power of Adolph Hitler and his Nazi Party, first in Germany, and then throughout Central Europe. With the growing up of a new generation in the ensuing 30 years, the full horror of the impact made by these latter-day barbarians is a little blunted, but a glimpse of the reaction may be gained from a wording of a telegram received on May 5, 1933 by D. A. Blumberg, as Chairman of the Congregation, from the South African Jewish Board of Deputies: "In response to extensively signed memorial by leaders of non-Jewish and Jewish public opinion, the Mayor of Johannesburg is convening a Citizens' Public Meeting of Protest against the persecution of Jews in Germany at the City Hall on Monday the 8th. The chief speakers are leaders of Churches, University Professors, representatives of the Bar, also Jewish representatives. Writing fully and posting copies of resolutions".

This message was accompanied by the suggestion that something similar be done up North, but the communal leaders there preferred to begin with representations to the Colonial Secretary, with whom an appointment on the subject of naturalization had already been arranged. In conjunction with the Salisbury Congregation a resolution was drafted by Bulawayo to be handed over: "That this Meeting of the representatives of Rhodesian Jewry associates itself with the world-wide protest against the barbarous treatment of the Jews in Germany.

"That the Government of Southern Rhodesia be asked to cable this resolution to the Imperial Government, together with the expression of our hopes that the doors of Palestine be opened wide to Jewish refugees from Germany".

The delegation which called on the Colonial Secretary comprising D. A. Blumberg, Emanuel Basch, P. D. Landau and C. I. Jacobs, were received in a friendly fashion and asked to submit a formal petition, which Sir Godfrey Huggins promised to send on to London. Simultaneous representations were made overseas through the Honourable H.J. Downie, Rhodesian High Commissioner in Britain, where the authorities likewise showed sympathy, though in the long run very little more.

At Salisbury where discussions went ahead on the idea of permitting refugees to enter the country, Major Brundell once again showed himself a friend of Jewry. No serious objection was raised and even if difficulties of finance and transportation, coupled with legal technicalities kept the inflow on an agonizingly low level, some kind of precedent was established.

Worse and worse news arrived, not only from Germany, but from Poland and neighbouring countries, where the evil example of Hitlerdom was by no means overlooked. In consequence of a letter from Rabbi Jonah B. Wise in New York, a new committee was formed – O. Kaufman, S. Rabinowitz, C. I .Jacobs and H. B. Ellenbogen – to deal with all matters concerning German Jews and the possibility of bringing them to Rhodesia. Collaboration was also set up with the South African Fund for the Relief of German Jewry at Johannesburg, and on February 4, 1936, the matter of boycotting German goods, as well as finding employment for refugees was thoroughly examined. The outcome was an inquiry to the Board of Deputies in Johannesburg for information on the policy followed there, and a request to local merchants that Jewish customers should tale account of the overseas origins of commodities supplied. While a certain amount of support was secured the whole subject of a boycott proved much more difficult than foreseen, a fact again emphasized in more recent times, during overseas campaigns against South Africa.

Two distinguished overseas figures visited Rhodesia in 1934, namely Sir Edmund Davis, the mining magnate, and Dr. Sokolov, the Zionist leader, with both of whom the local Jewish leaders had some practical discussions on the matter of Jewish Refugees. Encouragement was also gained from the announcement by the Minister of Internal Affairs at Salisbury that, where possible, the restrictions on naturalization would be eased for newcomers. One result was the establishment of a legal Committee, comprising C.I. Jacobs, B. Baron and H. E. Lazarus.

Conscious that events overseas were moving to a crisis, Mr. Blumberg, as President, made an urgent appeal “to sink all differences, to set aside all merely personal considerations, and to unite the whole of our forces in the one solemn effort to protect and to further the interests of Jewry. We cannot allow mere local considerations to govern our policy, and we therefore make the most earnest appeal to all our brethren in this country to give their loyal support and active co-operation, that we may be adequately to discharge our duties in this, the most critical period in our history”.

One practical result was the action of the South African Government in allowing Jewish children to travel to schools in the Union without special permit under the Quota Act, and in granting permits to adults valid for seven years instead of renewable annually.

During 1936 special efforts were made to persuade country storekeepers to create posts, even if poorly paid, to refugees trickling into the Colony. Mr. Roland Kaufman undertook the task of Secretary and Organizer of this movement, which led to

the issue of a letter addressed to the Jewish press throughout the sub-continent, by the Reverend M.I. Cohen.

With so much at stake overseas, the Zionist cause became a matter of everyday discussion in most homes, with occasional conflicts of views and of interests, so serious that in July 1937 P. Landau, as Chairman of the Congregation, made a special reference to them. “I note with regret”, he said, “certain political unrest in the local Jewish Community in regard to Zionist activities. Please remember that the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation is a religious body, and that the political views held by members of our Congregation should in no way make for discord. I appeal to all to co-operate and work harmoniously for the general good”.

In the desperate struggle for survival in which Central European Jewry found itself as the Nazi nightmare spread across the Continent, Rhodesia had a special place, and not merely in the matter of making gifts. Already at the Evian Conference in 1938, the Intergovernmental Refugee Committee examined the possibility of bringing some of the fugitives to Northern Rhodesia. Alas, the efforts came too late.

## C H A P T E R 42.

## RHODESIA'S SEPHARDI.

A remarkable feature of the general Jewish scene in Rhodesia, more particularly in and around Salisbury, was the development of the Sephardic community, of which the first pioneers were already to be encountered soon after the Occupation. In 1891 there were in Mashonaland Moussa Benatar and C. Solomon, both emigrants from Rhodes, off Asia Minor, though there seems to have been no significance in the similarity of the name of that island and that of C.J.R.

After leaving Rhodes, Benatar and Solomon spent some time in Egypt , until, through their friendship with Maurice Daniels of the firm of Daniels Brothers, already operating at Umtali and Penhalonga, they found employment in the new Colony. Both young newcomers remained with Daniels Brothers until the turn of the century, before proceeding to the Belgian Congo, where they established themselves in Elizabethville when that town was founded in 1910. Solomon, Benatar & Sons, - and their trade mark "Solbena" - soon became household words throughout the vast territories in the North.

Despite the departure of these two from Rhodesia, the link of that colony with the Sephardi grew increasingly strong. By 1908 the residents of Salisbury included D.C. Benatar, storekeeper of Salisbury Street and B.S.Leon, likewise a native of Rhodes, who had spent a while in Cairo and Alexandria before becoming a trader at Penhalonga.

Then there was Isaac Simon Benveniste, who arrived in 1908, spent a while in Rhodesia, returned to Rhodes and then came back again in 1913. Benveniste, who built up a successful furniture trade, was friendly with another prominent Sephardic family from the Island, the Alhadeffs, and in 1913 on a visit home to Rhodes offered Jacques Nissim Alhadeff a post in his business at Chakari, near Gatooma. Only 18 years old and working in the family bank, Solomon, Alhadeff et Fils (where the old Ladino idiom, based on medieval Spanish, was still in use), Alhadeff gladly accepted, as did his friend, H. Galante.

Meanwhile B.S. Leon, partner of Benveniste, had also struck out on his own as a trader at Marandellas. Alhadeff and Galante followed him there and then on to

Gatooma. Galante later started on his own account, but after spending the years from 1924 to 1930 running his trading station, Alhadeff moved to Salisbury. There in October 1930 he, as one of the 14 original members, helped to set up the first Sephardi Congregation in the Colony.

Lack of a recognized Marriage Officer remained a cause of trouble, and for many years those following Jewish rites had to travel all the way to Bulawayo, where the Reverend M.I.Cohen still survived in solitary state as the only such functionary in the whole of Rhodesia.

From the start Rabbi Rosin showed a deep interest in the scattered Sephardi co-religionists and made it his business to visit them as often as he could. Pending the organizing of their own group, he persuaded the majority to become country members of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation.

The Hebrew Sephardic Society of Rhodesia was established mainly at the instigation of J.C. Benatar, with H.S. Court as President. Services were inaugurated immediately, though for a long time, because of the limited members, they were held at private houses, with B.D. Almeleh the original Chazan and Reader. Almeleh, who had been in the country since 1908, possessed a particularly fine voice and was excellent at these duties, while H. S. Court (who is still alive), ultimately became the first Sephardi Marriage Officer.

At first the Congregation operated under great difficulties, being obliged to move from one house to another and then from hall to hall. Finally, on the initiative of Samuel Leon, a fund was started to secure a more suitable place of worship.

Leon, also from Rhodes, was born on November 2, 1889, and had been in Southern Rhodesia sine 1908. Despite large operations in the farming industry, particularly with maize, tobacco, cattle, as well as in mining, he devoted endless time to communal affairs, and had the satisfaction, within a year or two, of securing two excellent plots in Jameson Avenue, where it was intended to erect a Sephardi Synagogue.

Despite his efforts, a period of relative stagnation then set in, and the construction project hung fire until 1935, when Dr. I.R. Rosin joined the Congregation. Dr. Rosin was no newcomer to Rhodesia

Born in Wolverhampton, England, in 1903, he had studied at Dublin, London, Edinburgh, Paris, Berlin and Vienna before settling in Salisbury in 1928. One of the most prominent medical men in the Colony, he was Consultant Surgeon to Government Hospitals and Medical Director of the Red Cross, as well as Consulting Surgeon to the Rhodesian Army.

To him also goes the credit of having made clear to his fellow-members their failure to retain the interest of the young people, especially those still of school age. In Dr. Rosin's own flat, on Sunday mornings, the first Sephardic School in the country was opened, with the assistance of S.M Alhadeff. A substantial rise followed in gifts

towards a new Synagogue, and there was every chance that this would have been erected, had not the Second World War broken out.

Even in these circumstances, a modest beginning was at last made when a former garage in Jameson Avenue, adjoining the plots already owned by the Congregation, was bought and converted into a handsome communal hall and schoolroom. Services were also held, but the development of the city of Salisbury itself now proceeded at such a rate that the doubts arose as to whether the area was suitable. When the spectacular growth in traffic along Jameson put an end to the peaceful atmosphere which had originally attracted the Committee, a complete change was decided upon.

Some way off, in Montagu Avenue, was a piece of ground up for sale by the Anglican Church. It was exactly what was needed, and here the Sephardic Congregation set about preparing a new House of God, to which was given the beautiful Hebrew name of Shaare Shalom, "Gates of Peace", taken from an ancient Synagogue on the Island of Rhodes itself.

With the coming of Hitler, there was an impressive accession of new Sephardi immigrants, the majority of whom settled in outside districts, where work was available, including Gatooma, Shabani, Que Que, Gwelo and Bindura.

Appalling tragedy had meanwhile befallen that far-away home community in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Nazis had not merely captured almost the entire Balkans, including Greece and the Greek Archipelago, but had gained control of the territory of their quondam ally, Italy, under whose jurisdiction Rhodes had fallen. From the moment of Mussolini's capitulation, the Nazis seized control of the government and applied the satanic doctrines of Adolph Hitler. The manner in which the Jews of Rhodes were exterminated by deportation to the Death Chambers of Poland and in other ways, is not the theme of this history, but insofar as the Sephardic Jews of Rhodesia were concerned, its repercussions were manifold.

On the one side there was the knowledge that one was powerless to prevent the kith and kin of many Rhodesian Jews being exterminated, and on the other the inborn urge to give help in some way or other. The problem proved too great to be solved, and the majority of those who stayed behind on Rhodes were caught in the German trap, ended at Auschwitz and its rival hells.

But at any rate, association with a common tragedy helped to strengthen the sense of brotherhood in the Sephardi community, to stimulate its pride in Judaism, its urge to give generously and to help in works of education and of charity.

Another worker who deserves special mention is Saul Habid, born as a Turkish subject in 1910 and educated in Italy, who settled in Southern Rhodesia in 1939, becoming the head of the important commercial house, the Overseas Sales Corporation,

and others, Mr. Habid, indefatigable on behalf of the Congregation over many years, ultimately became its President.

In the scope and thoroughness of its Judaic activities, Shaare Shalom became a model to the congregations of Rhodesia. With its Synagogue Ladies's Committee, its Chevra Kadisha, its religious classes and other activities, it stimulated loyalty and served as an example to others.

A most important change occurred in 1944, with the arrival of the first full-time Rabbi for the Rhodesian Sephardi, the Reverend Dr. Manfred Papo, born on October 10, 1896. Descended from a famous old rabbinical family, Dr. Papo's ancestors came from the provinces of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had close links with Turkey. He, however, was born and grew up in Vienna where he attended the University and Rabbinical College. Only Hitlerism forced him and his dependants to leave that part of the world, and sent him on an Odyssey to many strange places. Landed on the shores of South Africa, he very nearly had to continue his trek to the Far East through failure to receive the necessary permission to land. Fortunately the error was put right betimes, and since his arrival in Salisbury, the Sephardic Hebrew Congregation has developed in many new and impressive ways. His Rabbinical tasks, notwithstanding, Dr. Papo undertook the headmastership of the new Sephardi Hebrew School.

Dr. Papo in more recent years secured the assistance of the Reverend S. Rodriguez-Pereira, a Cambridge man who, apart from his other duties, raised the standard of Hebrew studies in the Sephardi School in Salisbury to a height unrivalled in the Colony. Another valuable collaborator was the late Reverend J.J. Rosin, who, despite deteriorating health, after retiring from the ministry of the Salisbury Hebrew Congregation, worked gallantly to supplement Dr. Papo's efforts. Further encouragement came from across the Northern border, where the Reverend Joseph Menashe served as a link with the Sephardi communities of the Belgian Congo. The solidarity on the religious side of the communities in both countries was emphasized by the setting up of a special Beth Din, in which their respective Rabbis and ministers were all represented.

One memorable occasion was the consecration of the new and very beautiful Sephardic Synagogue in Montagu Road in 1958, on the 25th anniversary of its foundation.

It has two Scrolls of the Law, during the many years of its homelessness, had been carried about as required, neatly fitted into suitcases! Yet, in spite of this the group enjoyed the respect of the whole Jewish community and had the most friendly relations with the older and larger Salisbury Hebrew Congregation. Largely owing to the efforts of the late Marco Alhadeff (a well-known Mashonaland merchant and not related to the family already mentioned), the first Gabbai, the group suffered from no shortage of money.

Today the Sephardi number about 250 families, representing over 1,000 souls.

Significant of the change in their occupation and economic strength is the fact that of the entire group, barely half-a-dozen are today country members, the remainder being all city dwellers.

# RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

## PART V

BY

ERIC ROSENTHAL

Copyright © Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies and later Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

No part of the contents of this book may be reproduced, distributed in printed or electronic format with the written permission of the Zimbabwe Jewish Board of Deputies.

CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 43. | In Hitler's Clutches | 3 |
| 44. | Dr. Goebbels and Rhodesia | 8 |
| 45. | The Passing of the Rev. M.K. Cohen | 17 |
| 46. | Rhodesian Jews in World War II. | 19 |
| 47. | On the Battle Fronts. | 24 |
| 48. | Attack and Defence | 26 |
| 49 | Some Jewish Gifts | 32 |
| 50 | Sir Roy Welensky's Story | 34 |
| 51 | Federation and After | 38 |

## CHAPTER 43.

## IN HITLER'S CLUTCHES.

Although each step by the Nazis, in their Satanic programme for the annihilation of the Jews in Germany, provided yet another shock for the outside world, their very frequency and scale of the attacks began to blunt the feelings of many people who had been outraged by the earlier news. By the cunning application of psychology to their own purposes, the major collaborators of Hitler realized that consistent ruthlessness was likely to induce a mixture of disbelief and boredom in those not directly concerned. For the moment, the process of rendering life intolerable to the Jews in Germany sounded unspectacular to the outsider - a series of malicious pinpricks rather than preparations for a holocaust. Orders to boycott businesses, expulsions from Universities, dismissals from employment, confiscations of property, prohibitions on the use of telephones, of public transport, and of benches in parks: all seemed disgraceful manifestations of stupidity and hate, but unless people had lived through such things, they found it hard to get the events into focus. Every now and then the papers published nightmare narratives about Dachau, Buchenwald or some other concentration camp, but they were not yet synonyms in every country for torture and death, while Auschwitz and other centers for the future Gas Chambers were still secrets buried in the distorted minds of the Nazi Mandarins. Indeed by 1937 the German refugee, although he had already become a type, seemed part of the international scenery, much as was the Armenian victim of the Turk in Victorian days or the exile from Czarist Russia - very sad and regrettable, but something about which nothing particular could be done. Such at any rate was the outlook of the ordinary non-Jewish Man in the Street and the further removed he was from the scene of the outrages the more widely this viewpoint was maintained. Even among Jewry in Rhodesia, although there were hundreds to whom words of Heinrich Heine applied: "Denk ich and Deutschland in der Nacht, so bin ich um den Schlaf gebracht" (If I think of Germany at night, I cannot sleep well again), the slumbers of far too many remained undisturbed.

All this, however, underwent a radical change between 1937 and 1938. By this time Hitler's frank declaration of intentions towards the Chosen People were no longer clothed in phrases, and the stream of men, women and children who found existence in the Reich unbearable swelled from thousands to tens-of-thousands. In

addition the tension over German territorial ambitions on the Rhine and even more in Czechoslovakia plainly showed the Fuhrer's complete indifference to Allied fears and threats.

So much has happened in the ensuing years that episodes of world-wide importance in the nineteen thirties can hardly be recalled today. One of these was the shooting in 1938, by a young Jew named Greenspan in Paris, of a comparatively unimportant and inoffensive attaché named Von Rath at the local German Embassy. Pointless and unorganized though it was, the incident gave an eagerly-awaited flavour of justification to the steps the Nazis were waiting to apply against the luckless Jews under their control... As the barrage of speeches, proclamations and administrative edicts descended over them, the outflow of refugees attained dimensions of which no one had ever dreamt - not even the Jews themselves. Families established in the Reich longer than many of the Germans themselves, families, who until then, had regarded Nazism as another outrage which they would be able to outlive, suddenly realized that this was something different, and, what was even more serious, that time was running out. Millionaires and professional men, industrialists and social workers, children and authors, grandparents, who in the evening of their days, had never dreamt of moving away, were now on trek. In the centers of Overseas Jewry, the despairing cry went out for millions to pay for steamship fares, accommodation, re-establishment in other lands. Extraordinary projects, most of them wildly impracticable, were examined and, in certain cases, even attempted. No country was now regarded as too remote or too unsuitable a target for Jewish emigration from Central Europe. Nor was the calamity limited to Germany: Austria and Czechoslovakia were both to be engulfed. Among the obvious answers was to open the gates of Palestine but on this subject Britain, still in the position of a Mandatory Power, found her interests in placating the Arabs so important that she would permit the entry of only a minute fraction of those who applied.

Something of the feeling of those days even in Christian circles is brought out in a short but significant letter, dated October 24, 1938, and addressed by the Reverend W.J. Smith as Secretary of the Bulawayo Ministers' Fraternal, to the Reverend M.I. Cohen: "At a meeting held here recently, we had before the question of the Jews and the position in which they find themselves in so many parts of the world,. I was requested to write and assure you of our interest and prayer, as well as of our sorrow for the treatment you are receiving. We trust that some settlement will soon be arrived at in Palestine to the satisfaction of all parties. With every best wish for yourself and People...."

A few individual statesmen like General J.C. Smuts in South Africa, gave expression to their own sympathy, though they too were hamstrung through the need to placate lesser men. One emergency measure, however, had an indirect bearing on Rhodesia. This was a discovery at the Colonial Office, Downing Street that a small amount of immigration might be permitted to the High Commission Territories. Financed largely through the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg, several hundred refugees of the most diverse occupations were allowed into Swaziland and given temporary employment in the production of simple garments at a factory in the

capital, Mbane. On the other side of the country, in Bechuanaland, the late Max Sonnenberg, M.P., whose share in the early history of Rhodesia has already been touched on in these pages, attempted a settlement scheme on his ranch not far from Vryburg, until the tragic-comic unsuitability of the colonists, most of them business and professional men, put an early end to the effort.

This need for a complete re-orientation of careers remained a dominant feature of all schemes to help Hitler's victims.

Letters preserved from those days make pitiful reading, through their inherent dignity and the inability of writers to foresee their future. A typical one, dated from Hamburg on October 18, 1938, was addressed to H. B. Ellenbogen, at Bulawayo: "I herewith respectfully beg to apply to you for a position with your esteemed firm. I was Sales Manager with one of the leading German Asphalt Emulsion firms for more than 12 years and was dismissed, owing to my "non-Aryan" origin, a year ago. From the testimonial enclosed herewith you may see all particulars as to my character and abilities....I am willing to accept any position offered to me, be it even of minor importance. I was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1894, enjoyed a very good education, and served in the war as an Austrian Officer. In August 1918, I was wounded and taken prisoner by English troops in Italy.... Having left my firm last year, I passed through a course in Modern Photography.

"You will certainly know from the papers how matters stand in this country, and therefore understand that I would be happy beyond description to get out of these depressing conditions here and to be given a chance of a new start in life. I would be infinitely grateful to you if you could see a way to help me, or, if this should not be possible, if you would pass this letter on to friends who might be able to do something. I should particularly like to mention that I have a very good knowledge of the English language and it would therefore take me only a short time to get acquainted and accustomed to living and working in your country. As a matter of course, the passage to your country would be at my expense.... Hoping to hear from you soon,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Erwin Kraus".

Already there is a hint of the concentration camp in this letter from Isaak Kahn of Hamburg to Bulawayo. He writes on his brother's behalf as "unfortunately he is not to do so himself".

"By this letter", he explained, "you can see that my brother searches not so much for employment, but for a letter which promises him a post for six months, and whose signature is certified by a notary. With such a letter in hand, my brother can get the visa to enter Southern Rhodesia. From your letter I gather that perhaps you yourself

are unable furnish the letter asked, but, encouraged by the friendly tone, I venture to ask you whether it is perhaps possible for you to get such a document from one of your colleagues or from some other businessman.... I hope, dear Sir, that you will understand me, and that, if it is at all possible, you will do your best forthwith and without delay, for which I thank you urgently and from all my heart. You cannot imagine what a great favour and help the letter would be for my brother, and naturally for me too. Though I have not the slightest right to trouble you with this matter, I would hope that you will fulfill my request out of goodwill towards other human beings who are in despair".

The Reverend M.I. Cohen received a note from Cape Town, where a brother of one overseas victim had already been living for two years: "I had the luck to get permanent permit for my parents, who arrived two weeks ago from Germany. My sister and brother-in-law are still in Berlin, suffering and persecuted like thousands of other Jews. I do not need to say more, since you know all about it. Twice my sister and brother applied fruitlessly to Pretoria and each time they were rejected, as they were also in America and Australia. As my brother-in-law, a welder and electrician by profession, has about £300 at his disposal, I herewith ask you, dear Mr. Cohen to help them come to Rhodesia...."

Another letter to Cohen began: "I want to inform you that my father in Essen (Germany) has been arrested for the same reason as all the others. He is over 60 years of age and has done nothing wrong. Like all his ancestors, he was born on the Rhine at Emmerich, fought for four years in the Great War in France and was twice wounded. The only chance to get him quickly out of the Concentration Camp is for him and my mother who is 51 years of age, to secure a visa for Rhodesia. Hence I beg you very sincerely to do your utmost to persuade the authorities to wire the British Consul at Essen, at my expense, that a visa for Rhodesia is available for my parents..... I know I am not the only one, and yet...."

Young and old were involved in the catastrophe. A widow who had emigrated from Germany with her child in 1935 wrote: "This morning I received a telegram from Germany saying that my brother aged 66, had been put into a Concentration Camp and that I must do my utmost to obtain a permit for him and his family to leave, in order to save his life..... Under the present immigration laws, a permit for my brother will be unobtainable in the Union, so Mr. Friedlander, an attorney of Cape Town, has applied to the Immigration Officer at Bulawayo this morning and I have deposited 300 for him"....

Endlessly the stream of letters continued: "My little cousin, Erich Bieberfeld, of Berlin, who is 17years of age, is making great efforts to leave Germany as soon as possible..... Erich has been at High School in Berlin and since April last year has been apprenticed to a dressmaker... As his father is forbidden to practice at the Bar and has suffered considerable losses in both money and property. Since the recent critical developments in Germany, the case has become very urgent...."

Newly-landed at Cape Town, a woman had a temporary permit to spend a "holiday" there but was obliged to leave again within a matter of days. "I have a testimonial from the University of Berlin as a masseuse and a physical culture teacher. For many years I taught at the Macabbi Club in Berlin. Beside this I am a good typist and can work as a child's nurse...." After mentioning that her fiancé was also hoping to arrive soon the girl added: "I read in the newspaper that the government of Southern Rhodesia gives entry permission to farming families. We are all young, strong, practical and accustomed to work with our hands. You would help us all and you would shelter us from having to go from one country to another and from being homeless.... We would be very grateful to have the chance to go farming....."

There was also the case of an electrical engineer who reached Table Bay, but was forced to leave his wife and two grown-up children in Berlin as hostages. He had been given two months to look around Southern Africa before he plunged back into the unknown. With fifteen years experience as a successful dental surgeon in Hamburg and now banned from work. Another victim of Hitler wrote: "My greatest wish is to leave this country with my wife and my three children, aged 11, eight and six years, as rapidly as possible,,,,, I am president of the Mizrachi Organization in Hamburg and much concerned with Jewish matters".....

## CHAPTER 44.

## DR. GOEBBELS AND RHODESIA.

As though all this distress were not sufficient, Rhodesian Jewry, in its attempt to give some kind of help to the sufferers across the sea, were confronted by systematic local revival of the Anti-Semitism. With a powerful and aggressive Germany, possessed of vast resources, willing to finance any anti-Jewish movement in and Continent, there was no difficulty in stirring up such latent antipathies. Within South Africa itself was born the Grey Shirt Movement, headed by Louis T. Weichardt, which even aped the uniforms of the Nazis, distributed poisonous literature and did its best to create trouble in all directions.

Although no specific organization reared its head north of the Limpopo some effulgence in the public press showed which way the wind was blowing. Thus, when in 1938 proposals were made to admit refugees, one of the journals which took upon itself to oppose the plan was the "New Rhodesia", issued in Salisbury and enjoying a certain circulation. In December of that year an article appeared under the heading, “Keep out the Foreigner",

This drew from the Reverend M.I. Cohen a withering reply, “My attention", he wrote, "has been drawn to your leader under the above heading. When Rhodes planned Rhodesia; did he ask his supporters for their birth certificates, or the Pioneers either? The Government of this country has always most carefully regulated the portion of British and foreign immigrants, and is still doing so. Sir Percy Finn has stated that there is no ground for anxiety on this score. As you have so wildly challenged his figures, perhaps you will be good enough to quote your authority. It is because your so-called "Spirit of Co-operation and Mutual Trust itself" is so painfully one-sided, so narrowly national in its scope that the World is on the verge of common ruin. Yet i doubt not that you will give another leader shortly, under the caption "Peace on Earth and Goodwill towards all Men".

The "Bulawayo Chronicle" followed with a leader "The Infiltration Danger", which declared,

Mr. Cohen replied; "The Minister of the Interior states that the ratio of foreign to British immigration is not unduly high, and that very careful control is exercised in the admission of immigrants to this country. You challenge his figures, and deny the reality of this control. Readers are entitled to ask you to quote your authorities. By asserting the Foreign Immigration is causing Anti-Semitism, you give the impression that Foreign Immigrants and Jews are synonymous. This is very far from being the case. An informed analysis of the Jewish content of the immigration was, and is called for. Then you attack the character of the immigrants, without offering a shred of proof of your assertions. You speak of people, "whose nationality dominates their religious beliefs", who are “imbued with ideas and ideals which are absolutely antithetical to our own". I know these Refugees and deny the correctness of your picture in toto. As these damaging statements are made by you on a necessarily inarticulate and helpless minority, you will no doubt give your readers proof of your contentions....."

Cohen then went on to deny all foundation for the rumour circulating that the Britishers were being displaced in jobs by Refugees who undercut wage rates. Once again he demanded the source of such a story. "I deny", he said, "that the refugees have caused unemployment. On the contrary I assert they are a contributing factor to the present prosperity of the country, and that they are a fine type of people, who should become an asset. A real analysis of the facts would probably show that, while the admission of trading types under present conditions has about reached its limits, there is room and need for farmers, skilled artisans, domestic servants and specially qualified individuals of all kinds, and that it would also be advisable to admit dependent of those able to maintain them .... You admit that the government policy of “selection, not exclusion, is a sound one". Why not seek a basis of agreed action in application rather than indiscriminately attacking the Refugees now entering this country, for whom indeed you have often expressed sympathy?"

Emphasizing that if was surely possible to do something to help the Refugees and yet serve Rhodesia at the same time, Mr. Cohen pointed out that, for a whole generation, an almost fixed ratio between British and foreign immigrants had been successfully maintained and that there was no need to expect any alteration.

He admitted that the leading article was not entirely negative, for it had agreed with the Imperial Colonial Secretary in approving the Umguza Scheme and giving support to well organized and controlled projects.

"I have before me", he said, "a letter from a responsible citizen of Northern Rhodesia, who tells of the fine territory in that country, 450 square miles in area, without a single inhabitant, Black or White. Would you agree that restricted infiltration there might well be supplemented by well-organized and controlled schemes of immigration? You will forgive me, sir, if I venture to express the opinion that your leader hardly gave expression to the sentiments of the majority of the kind and hospitable people of Rhodesia, to whom at this season, in the name of the Jewish community, and of the Refugees are given asylum and hope after unspeakable experiences, I offer most cordial and heartfelt greetings of Peace and Goodwill".....

Very hesitantly the possibilities of an organized settlement project were investigated but as the months went on, it became clear that the best to be hoped for in Southern Rhodesia was the admission of individuals to work for their relations. The outlooks seemed slightly better, however, beyond the Zambezi, where the lack of White populations was coupled with the growing prosperity of the Copper Belt. Commissions of Enquiry were appointed in Lusaka and vigorous debates took place in the Legislative Council. As usual the Opposition was loud, and the sympathizers procrastinating. At this point a most ambitious project was submitted by Capt. R.N. Campbell in a special memorandum to the authorities.

"Hand over", he proposed, "the North-Western corner of Northern Rhodesia as a separate protectorate under the Crown, the Jewish organizations to finance it and the territory to be entirely colonized by Refugees". Campbell even suggested that it might be called the Rhobeit, in memory of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit, and function as an entirely separate state.

Rhobeit, he claimed, would form "an anti-Nazi block in Central Africa". Pointing out that in consequence of Arab raids in the previous century, a considerable area was very thinly populated, he proposed that the territory should "extend from the Barotseland border on the South, the Portuguese West Africa on the West, the Belgian Congo on the North and a line 25 miles west of Kansanshi Mine from the Congo border, to join the southern boundary 25 miles East of Kasempa, giving it an area approximately double that of Palestine.

"There is ample water for irrigation purposes", he continued. "Soil in the northern part is like sandy loam, the elevation is high and the climate healthy and suitable for European settlement. The Northern part is free from Fly, though not the Southern. As settlement advances the fly recedes and eventually disappears. Hence the Northern parts would have to be colonized first and settlements proceed southwards. A Railway would have to be constructed to connect the Protectorate with Lobito Bay route and thus give an outlet to the sea and shipping facilities to the European boundaries. Administration of the native populations would proceed on lines similar to that at present, with trust lands or reserves allotted to them. The Protectorate would be under the Colonial Office, but the whole responsibility for the scheme would rest upon the Jews themselves.

"The inhabitants would not be able to enter the adjoining territories, of Northern Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo or Angola unless they complied with their respective immigration laws! By this means any upsetting of the labour market would be avoided".

Though we may smile sadly at the optimism which prompted such a Utopian scheme, further encouragement arrived from another surprising quarter. The legendary "Chirupula" Stephenson, a pioneer who had been living in these parts since the end of the nineteenth century, wrote to Mr. Cohen on December 4, 1938:
"Dear Reverend Sir, I enclose a copy of a letter which has been sent to the Governor of Northern Rhodesia, and which after perusal, I suggest you transmit to the Chief Rabbi, London, asking him to plead with His Majesty the King (who God preserve) to instruct that the land in question shall be made into a Jewish colony, so that some of those persecuted folk, wishing to get away from the Nazi group and Arab fanatics, may have an opportunity of doing so, and maintain themselves by honest manual labour, free from threats or fears.

"I believe you have recently been castigating our senior parliamentary member, Sir Leopold Moore, who, I am ashamed to say, repudiates the settlement in this vast country of 500 Jewish families. Sir Leopold's attitude is astounding". After paying some compliments to Lady Moore and expressing violent criticism of Sir Leopold, Stephenson continued: "None of the members of our Legislative Council have ever mad a living by farming , and their recent summons to a conference on Jewish Immigration is another example of Government Jesuitry. They fear that, somehow or other, competition will arise for Native labour, with inevitable repercussions in the shape of increased costs. But under the scheme, which I have already submitted to the Right Honorable Malcolm MacDonald (and to the Chief Secretary at Lusaka), the sine qua non for all agricultural immigrants is that by their own hands they must cultivate the soil. I have seen pictures of Jewish girls hoeing and Jewish men performing manual labour. Everywhere in Europe it is done by Europeans and, from my 42 years experience in Africa, I am convinced the same can be done here - indeed it must be done if real success is to be achieved.

"I am not a Jew, but my earliest friends in Rhodesia have been Jews, which may account for my friendliness towards Jewry, And I try to practice Leviticus 19: 18.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) J.E. Stephenson".

The letter to the Chief Secretary dealt with a variety of Chirupula's grievances, notably on official incompetence. "Perhaps the most regrettable instance is that Your Excellency did not keep part of the Trume area. Without harming non-Jews, a Jewish colony could be started there, and unique information acquired for transmission to the Right Honorable Malcolm MacDonald, who already is informed of some of the possibilities of the scheme. Weeks - months - have passed away, and except for calling

Elected Members (not one of whom is an agriculturist, making his living from the soil) to vote on imperfectly-explained matters, the Government of Northern Rhodesia, of which your Excellency is the head, has done nothing tangible in the matter of rescuing persecuted innocents from brutal Nazi torture....."

With considerable tact the Reverend Cohen wrote back: "In regard to your kind offer to take in some immigrants and give them an opportunity of learning farming on your estate, I should be glad to know whether you could accept a youth of 17 from Palestine. He is, I understand, a hand and well-developed young man, who has been in the Government service as a Special Constable for some time. Owing to the unsettled state of affairs, it seems almost impossible at the present moment to get the young fellow apprenticed to any trade of calling. He has sisters in the Union of South Africa, who are prepared to pay for his keep for some months and are anxious that he should learn thoroughly either farming or a trade. Can you be of any assistance in the matter?"

Goaded, both by the Jewish community in Britain and in Rhodesia, and with the backing of a few non-Jewish well-wishers, the Northern Rhodesian government appointed a new Commission of Enquiry early in 1939 on whom Chirupula Stephenson maintained his attack. "A few days ago", he complained, on April 14, 1939, "I wrote to the Secretary of this body in Lusaka. I diverted half a case of fruit from a customer and sent it to the Provincial Commissioner at Broken Hill so that the Commissioners could see something of what Northern Rhodesia produces. As soon as I return home I hope to send a fuller selection of fruits, unaccompanied by any letter, which I ask the Commissioners to accept with my compliments and friendly wishes for success in their endeavours. Should it be desired to introduce the agriculturists, who, with their own hands, will till the soil, build towns, and make the wilderness (not the desert) blossom as the rose..... I know of an excellent portion of this countryside to which I could direct attention... and would be willing to give fullest details of what in my opinion should be attempted". He suggested tat the Commissioners should spend a few days at Kapiri Mposhi.

That however was not the way in which the British Colonial Office went to work, and such help as could be given to Jewish refugees north of the Zambezi passed through more orthodox channels. "Please accept my humblest apologies for troubling you ", wrote a refugee at Port Elizabeth, "but I am in great anxiety on behalf of my brother who is still in Germany. I am informed that a limited number of Jews will be allowed to settle in Northern Rhodesia. My reason for writing to you is to appeal to you , with all my heart to give every possible assistance or advice.....My brother's profession is that of a sign-writer, but he is also a motor mechanic and a very good driver....."

A few openings were found, as shown in a surviving telegram on December 1, 1938: "Lusaka has vacancy for Refugee polony and sausage maker. Must also have blockman's experience. If you can recommend one try direct"

Hopes, however, were almost immediately dashed by a note from the Chief Immigration Officer: "Until such time as the Government announces a policy on the question of Alien Immigration I am unable to authorize the granting of further visas to any refugees".

A preliminary confidential survey pointed out two distant problems, a minor one concerning Jews already in Northern Rhodesia and a major one about those that might yet seek a home there. Experience in the settlement of Palestine indicated that the policy should be to place as many as possible on the land or wherever their practical trade experiences would be in the most demand.

The influence of the late Sir Ernest Oppenheimer and the Rothschild Group might help to find employment for a certain number on the Copper Belt, yet even there the housing and technical positions were difficult and few could be absorbed. "All small schemes are to be deprecated. The idea suggested at Fort Jameson, that the 30 settlers should be put on farms and placed all over the district is radically wrong. New settlers must first be made to feel at home; they must come together and be able to build their own life and work out their own salvation. They must work in groups, according to a comprehensive plan written out by our Jewish organization which will be one large scheme on an autonomous basis from the start. The territory selected must be large and ultimately susceptible of big development. The proposed Rhobeit Scheme of Captain Campbell would be worthy of the most serious consideration, but if this were agreed to the Angola government could be asked to add simultaneously a further area adjoining the Lobito Bay Railway....."

Details followed about the best way of applying in Northern Rhodesia the principles of the Palestine "Kibbutz". After farming had been established there would be openings for other occupations including teachers and tradesmen. Black labour should be kept at a minimum. "From many Jewish points of view a successful Jewish settlement in Africa would be of enormous importance and value".

With these words the memorandum closed. Once again the response from the authorities' was discouraging. Few entry visas that were issued to newcomers represented a drop in the bucket compared with the staggering dimensions of the overseas emergency. The most effective help came from Lusaka where G.Glasser was Honorary Secretary of the "Refugee Assistance Committee of Northern Rhodesia". A comparatively cheerful picture was published by Louis Franklen of the Nkana Hotel, Kitwe on March 20, 1939. "Last week a meeting of the community was called, with Morry Gersch as convener. The Lusaka Community had asked the Copperbelt Community to elect delegates to discuss the immigration of Jewish refugees into Northern Rhodesia. We had a big turnout, with representatives from Luanshya, Mufulira and Nchanga. Delegates were elected and I was chosen secretary. I immediately contacted Lusaka, and we shall call a meeting of the Northern Rhodesian delegates in the near future to discuss the urgent problems of housing and employment, I was very pleased about one thing. In a list of prospective immigrants which the government sent was the name of a Minister of Religion....."

Less optimistic was the note from Mr.Gersch himself on April 17. "The immigration here", he said, "is becoming quite serious and I am afraid there may be repercussions. Up to now we have been able to absorb Refugees in our own community but saturation point has now been reached. Lately I have been getting about two persons by each mail. They all came up to the Copperbelt and it is becoming quite a problem. No accommodation is obtainable and the Mines will not employ Aliens. We have formed a local Refugee Committee, of which I am the Chairman, but I am finding this beyond our capacity". He asked for advice and possible financial help from the correct bodies in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa, from Sie Ernest Oppenheimer in Johannesburg and from the powers in London. The mines discrimination was against newcomers, not as Jews but as Aliens, and until instructions were received from higher quarters this state of affairs would continue. He urged representations, The Survey Commission was still taking evidence, "We are not going to submit anything as a Jewish community, but, since our local Chamber of Commerce has taken up the matter we have put to them any schemes we have in view, be embodied in their memorandum.

"The Commission itself has been most helpful, sympathetic and constructive and anxious to do as much as possible, as this matter had today become one for the whole country, I think it better that it should be handled on a national basis. There is room for a large a group settlement of severe thousand, provided there is the finance, but it will only succeed if they can to some extent create their own economy. To scatter such a settlement over the whole country would not, bring any material help, for only limited numbers could be absorbed in such a way."

On April 25, 1935, the Refugee Assistance Community advised the South African Jewish Board of Deputies in Johannesburg that they were about to lease a farm of some 18,000 acres at a nominal rent of 50 per year. Dwelling houses, outhouses, stables, paddocks and above all a plentiful water supply were available and no less than 200 acres under irrigation. "The farm borders on railway line and is nine miles by road from Lusaka. It is well suited for mixed farming and it is proposed to settle permanently there two selected families, one well versed in agriculture and the other in dairying and allied branches. While these families work the ground in their own interests, they will at the same time provide shelter with accommodations and cheap board for newcomers arriving destitute and awaiting employment. These unemployed people must be kept out of the public eye, as a great deal of repercussion has resulted, detrimental to the further settlement of Refugees.

Mr. Glasser, the Honorary Secretary, concluded with warning that about 20 men, women, and children were stranded and destitute in towns of Northern Rhodesia and that more were underway, some of them even without visas. One drop of comfort was a notification that a limited number of foreign dentists would be admitted to the territory.

Ever on the watch for anything further to harass Jewry, the Nazi consulates at Bulawayo and Salisbury became active centers for the distribution of Anti-

Semitic literature furnished by the department of Dr. Goebbels. Not a little of this found its way into the local press and it was significant that a letter from Lusaka signed "Goy" on January 11, 1939, published in the "Bulawayo Chronicle"; "It is remarkable how people seem to know to what extent the Jews themselves are openly proclaiming themselves a menace throughout civilization. It is highly important that this should be known. It is not only important; it is only fair to both ourselves and to such non-aggressive Jews as there may be". A long series of distorted quotations followed from various allegedly Jewish sources, with the comment: "If there is no effective repudiation, can the Jews wonder that the rest of the world assumes that there is something against which they must defend themselves....."

Checking a "quotation made by "Goy" from the Johannesburg " Zionist Record", showed it to be the complete opposite of what had been printed and gave the Jewish community so effective a chance of an answer, that the Bulawayo Chronicle on January 23, made a handsome apology: "It is not always", said a leading article, "possible to verify every statement made in a communication to a newspaper. Because this is so statements sometimes appear to be well founded, which are not. There was an example of this in a letter published in our columns on Saturday. A correspondent in Northern Rhodesia wrote to show that Jews are a self-admitted menace to civilization as we know and appreciate it. Incidentally this is the second letter on the same subject that has emanated from Northern Rhodesia in the course of a couple of weeks. To prove his point he gave a quotation from a recent issue of the "Zionist Record", to signify that in this Jewish journal there had been an admission that the Jews were attempting to penetrate into England and win for themselves a key position in the mastery, not only of Europe, but of the entire World. A study of the article quoted in the "Zionist Record" showed that the letter-writer had given to a passage (differently paragraphed) the exact opposite construction to that of the original article. The impression which the original article gives was that the Fascist and Anti-Semitic forces had conquered practically the whole of Central Eastern and South Eastern Europe, and that, should England be won by those forces (not Jewish forces, as the writer of the column suggested) the way would be open to world domination....."

Almost immediately after came an even more striking example of Nazi methods. On the night of January 18, 1939, in the words of a newspaper report, " the establishments of certain businessmen, reputable citizens in Bulawayo, were found marked in large scale chalk drawings with a Nazi brand of the Swastika and in one place, with a filthy obscene expression written underneath. Of the establishments so branded, four were in Abercorn Street and two in Selborne Avenue".

Even the non-Jewish community had a sense of shock at this introduction to a peaceful community of methods hitherto reported from distant lands, a feeling to which J.A. Bailey gave expression in a letter to the press on January 20.
"Although one realizes that depravity is a fundamental of human nature, I could not have believed that any human being to which Rhodesia was giving shelter would so outrage the hospitality of the town and its people. It is known by this time; of course that there is no barbarism to which Nazism will not speak in appreciation of the jungle law. I still had

no thought that it was here at our very door, skulking in the darkness of the night. However, here it is, and it remains to ask: what are we going to do about it?"

"Every citizen is this town is personally concerned. British ideals, British justice, British standards of toleration, British freedom and personal liberty - each alike has been up to contempt and derision before 60,000 Europeans, before well nigh 1,500,000 Natives and before our neighbours and the outside world. Where does Rhodesia Stand?"

For the whole World meanwhile the sands were running out. In the wake of Germany's occupation of Austria came that of Czechoslovakia. April 1939 brought the fateful pledge by Britain and France to help Poland should that country be attacked. Hitler was undeterred. Frenzied efforts and the sacrifice of all they possessed, made possible the departure of a relatively small number of additional Jews from the clutches of the Reich, of whom very few more made their way across the Limpopo and the Zambezi. Since 1937 an Association of Refugees had existed in Bulawayo and its membership had risen to about 250 including 100 men. As the shadows grew darker a wire was dispatched on their behalf to the Governor, Sir Herbert Stanley, “All Jewish immigrants from Germany living in Bulawayo offer their services to the Rhodesian Government in case of emergency".

The reply from the Private Secretary read: "I am desired by His Excellency to thank you for your telegram of August 27 and to say that he has communicated the offer to His Ministers....." In addition the British Empire Service League Club in the city opened a list of volunteers on which, even before hostilities began, a considerable number of German refugees put their names. A few days later the matter came before the Rhodesian Parliament, when Captain A. W. Whittington, Labour Member for Wankie, enquired from the Minister of Defense about the employment of Aliens in Government concerns. "In case of War", he said, "it might be possible that these would be retained while Britishers would have to leave. Does the Government have any power to deal with such a situation"? Mr. Tredgold replied, "the powers will enable the Government to discriminate if necessary, but I do not say that it will be necessary. This very day we have received a message from representatives of the Refugees in the country, putting the services of all of the unreservedly at our disposal", an announcement greeted with applause. Much mollified, Capt. Whittington said: "I am not thinking of Refugees in particular but also of Aliens who have been many years in this country".

## CHAPTER 45

## THE PASSING OF THE REV. M.I. COHEN

The man to whom, more than other, Rhodesia Jewry owed its progress and its status was now to join the Majority. On June 16, 1939, at the comparatively early age of 63, the Reverend Moses Isaac Cohen passed away. Not only his own people but a multitude of other citizens felt a sense of personal loss. Every newspaper in Southern Africa and many beyond its borders carried tributes of what he had done for his own flock and the mass of humanity. "His public life and family", wrote the "Bulawayo Chronicle", were interconnected. He disliked formal representation on committees and was ever anxious to be intimately acquainted with every aspect of the public work which he undertook….The doors of his home were open to every stranger, to the needy and to the destitute. In that haven of hospitality he moved about, ever cheerful, ever genial, ever soothing. His bright and happy disposition never displayed any signs of the bodily ailments from which he suffered. His piety was mingled with brood tolerance and understanding of the different and indifferent. In his younger days he was an active sportsman and old hands spoke of him as the "Sporting Parson". During the last few anxious days of his life, when his heart was wrung by the Refugee problem and the great troubles in Zion, he yet found time to enquire about the latest cricket score".

In the Synagogue, when addressing young people, he never failed to urge on them an active part in games. He was particularly proud of any Jewish boys who distinguished themselves in this field. Reference was also made to his versatility, and to his whimsical description of himself, on account of the infinite number of charities for which he worked, as "the King of Schnorrers". Attention was also drawn to his unfailing sense of humour in the gravest situations. "{Nevertheless", said the Chronicle, "his stately bearing could be described by his very name, which in Hebrew denotes the Priest…. Whether he was ascending the pulpit to deliver his passionate and brilliant sermons, or presiding at the dinner-table in his home, one was always reminded of the sentence in the Liturgy: "Such indeed was the sight of the High Priest when he entered the Sanctuary".

Every Jewish business in Bulawayo and in many other places closed on the occasion of Cohen's funeral. The Honourable H. Unwin Moffat, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, had come in especially from Tangani as a tribute to his old friend, while Mr. A.G. May represented the Members of the 1893 Column and other pioneer organizations. Endless were the numbers of outside bodies represented. As Chaplain of the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers, as a founder of the Child Welfare Society and of the Native Welfare Society, as the originator of the Clinic in the Bulawayo Location, Vice-President for many years of the Library Committee, as organizer of the Eisteddfod, member of the Bulawayo Unemployment Executive, worker for the Bulawayo Museum, the Boy Scouts, The Girl Guides, the Wolf Cubs, the Hospitals, the Prisons and the Mental Homes, his name was honoured and remembered. The Rev. A.T. Schrock of the United Hebrew Congregation in Johannesburg had come to speak at the graveside. “We in South Africa”, he said, “knew that in Moses Isaac Cohen the Jews in Southern Africa had a man of whom they might be proud. One thing that gave him satisfaction was the knowledge that the 40 years that he spent in this country had not been in vain. He lived to see the fruits of his work, and built up a community. We know him as a great Rhodesian and as a man whom the King had delighted to honour”. The Rev. M. Konviser from Salisbury declared that Cohen, having never known the dividing line between duty and devotion, carried the hallmark of true sincerity. Great in his simplicity, nothing was too humble or too lowly to command his heart and hand to do good, to relieve distress or to help suffering. On behalf of the Bulawayo Ministers’ Fraternal, the Rev. Percy Ibotson described Cohen’s work as truly wonderful: “He gave himself and he has left his mark on the social life of this town”. From the Governor of the Country, Sir Herbert Stanley downwards came the messages and it is more than a figure of speech to claim that today more than a quarter of a century later, the name of Moses Isaac Cohen is still remembered.

## CHAPTER 46 .

## RHODESIAN JEWS IN WORLD WAR II,

With memories from 1914 to 1918 vivid in the minds o fits older members, Rhodesian Jewry, like the rest of their countrymen, entered into the Second World War in a moment of sober realism. Gone were the glamorous dreams that ushered in the struggle with the Kaiser. No-one had any doubts as to the ruthlessness of Hitlerism, nor of its surpassing efficiency. Among the general increase in the populations of the country the Jewish group had trebled itself to about 3,000, brining a corresponding rise in the number of enlistments.

Before final Allied victory was achieved just under 40 per cent (39.8 to be exact) of all male Rhodesian Jews in the age group between 18 and 35 years and 10.9 per cent of all Jewish women had seen Active Service. As early as October 31, 1939, Mr. J.W. Keller asked the Minister of Justice and Defense for a statement on - the number of Aliens who had volunteered for active service in Rhodesia, the number of Aliens who had enlisted for service, and the proportion to the rest of the population and their nationality.

In reply, Mr. Tredgold said: "The numbers who have volunteered for Active Service during the Recruiting campaign between the ages of 18 and 45 is 151. The number of male Aliens who volunteered for Active Service in the period of the Voluntary Registrations is 455",

According to the most accurate figures, the total number of Jews who served in the Rhodesian Forces represented 4.8 per cent of the entire enlistments. These included 290 in the Army, 2 in the Royal Navy, 78 in the Air Force, 65 in the Internment Camp Corps. (mostly Refugees of Foreign nationality) and 20 women in special units.

Of these 26 gave their lives, while 22 were decorated for bravery, including one Distinguished Flying Cross, one Distinguished Flying Medal, four Military Crosses, and two Military Medals - a portion well comparable to that of the rest of the

inhabitants. Almost every branch of the Services not only in Africa, but in Britain itself, received its quota of Rhodesian Jews, including the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy, and the Army.

The highest rank attained was that of Lieutenant Colonel G. Barron. There were also 14 Jewish Majors, 24 Captains, and corresponding numbers of Lieutenants, N.C. O.'s and Privates.

In the Air Force the senior officer was Wing-Commander H. Barron, besides five Flight Lieutenants and six Flying Officers.

The thousands of R.A.F. men arrived in Rhodesia for training under the Commonwealth Scheme, included many young Jews from the old Country, an opportunity was afforded the local Jewish Community to show hospitality and friendship to those in a strange land.

At the outset a strange sense of anti-climax beset those who for years had been screwing up their courage to withstand the horrors of the German onslaught, of which the leaders had spoken so often.

Where were the air raids, the gas attacks and the other horrors deemed inevitable on that September 3, 1939, when war was declared against Hitler? True the Nazi armies had swept through luckless Poland in the early weeks, overwhelming that country and dividing it up with the Russians, Leaving countless Jewish families in the agonized knowledge that their dear ones were now within the power of their most implacable foe. But then the period of the "Phony War" had started - with only occasional sinking of ships, dropping of pamphlets on enemy territory from skies and cursory patrol action along the borders of France. Where would the break-through occur, and when would Italy, still nominally neutral, show her hand? By April 1940 came the answer, as the steel fist of Hitler struck home - smashing Denmark and Norway, and following the blow with a sea of tanks that burst the Western defenses of the Reich into Holland, Belgium and finally France. Unsuccessful relief expeditions, capitulations of entire armies, the encirclement of British forces, the loss of stupendous quantities of material, and then -Dunkirk. Britain, save for her Commonwealth, stood alone against a Germany, now joined by Mussolini.

As the words of Winston Churchill heartened Rhodesia as it did every other land that loved Freedom, the Jewish community there faced problems unknown in the First World War In the gloom of the catastrophic news from France the British Empire Service League held its conference at Bulawayo on May 13, 1940. Some bitter remarks were made. M.H.Gibson, representative from Umtali, said: "We have come to understand that Foreigners coming into the country lately are not liable for Military Service. You realize it is going to be detrimental to Servicemen and the men in the Forces when they return. Some Foreigners can be classed as Refugees, but there are others who are nothing but dangerous Aliens. They have come to the Country, opened up

businesses, competed with our workers and are taking an increasing part in certain classes of industry. To add insult to injury we find that, when it comes to Conscription, they are not liable. I have made enquiries and, having been told that the government can in no circumstances conscript these men, feel that the B. E.S.L. should use its full power to convince them that something must be done about the foreign question and foreign labour in the country".

Here Captain A.G. Hendrie, as president of the National Council of the B.E.S.L., interposed: "When a National Defence Company was formed, a greet number of the Refugees came forward and offered their services, which I understood were refused".

Captain A. Utterton of Shabani declared that even if international laws prevented compulsory service by Refugees, there was nothing to stop any of them being accepted for military service on a voluntary basis except the Rhodesian Defence Act itself.

As an ex-serviceman himself from World War 1, the Vice-President of the B.E.S.L., Mr. C.I. Jacobs put the case from the Jewish point of view. "The Aliens", he said "are for the most part Refugees. The majority of them - 99 per cent - are genuine. I find it difficult to understand what Mr. Gibson meant. Is the idea that they should not be allowed to do anything in civil life, but that they should be put into the Army? Mr. Jacobs went on to describe how, immediately hostilities began, almost every Jew in Rhodesia had offered his services to the authorities in any capacity. "For a reason that I myself do not follow," he said, "this had not been accepted. I can assure you that a great number of them would be only to happy to be in the Army to have something on which to live. If they can be absorbed into National Service as they are willing to be, that would be a good thing too, if they cannot be absorbed there is no reason to throw stones at them".

"I hope", he continued, "this Conference will agree to sympathize with the bulk of the Refugees and I move it asks the Government to accede to their request to do service of some description". The motion was seconded by Captain Utterton and carried.

Confronted with these complaints in Parliament, Mr. Tredgold explained that there were three kinds of Aliens - Neutral, Stateless and German. to apply compulsory service to the first-named was out of the question; others who were dangerous in their views, though they had offered to enlist in the Rhodesian Forces. "Where we are satisfied as their bona fides", he said, "we are willing to accept them".

Amendments to the Defence Act were then introduced and in the ensuing debate Colonel J.B. Brady proposed all Aliens of military age and suitable physical fitness be notified of their eligibility to volunteer, and be further informed that the names of those who came forward would be made public and that those who failed to do so would be penalized. The “Bulawayo Chronicle" observed: "It will be interesting to see what the response is to the Minister's action in reminding Aliens of their position and in a statement at the House yesterday that he would bear in mind the question of bringing

some pressure to bear on them to fulfill their obligations. Meanwhile too many people, impatient to see restrictions imposed without delay, have assumed that the authorities are not sufficiently informed as to the position.... There are no grounds for such a conclusion....."

Later in the month Tredgold revealed that of the 350 male German subjects in Rhodesia 40 had been interned or were under close restriction. "The great majority of the remainder ", he said, "are Jewish refugees, and each case has to be investigated individually. Our recent debate on Aliens has had a good effect and large numbers of applications for enlistment in the Armed Forces are coming forward from them". He added that a large group would shortly be going into camp and dispersed among the troops. Even so the invidious position of Jews who were nominal subjects of the Reich, though its victims, left them in an exposed position and very sensitive to press attacks. The "Sunday News". Bulawayo published a denial arising from the "Misgiving and Misunderstanding in the Minds of a section of the Jewish Population and the Loyal Refugee Population". Hurtful allegations in its leading article had not been intended. Rather was it aimed at "the Alien or disloyal people who constitute a potential source of danger which, if developed, would bear with equal gravity on the Jewish and Refugee loyalists as on other of the Rhodesian community. The loyalty of the established Jewish community was never questioned, for the way in which they had played their part in the Colony's War plans and in helping the general cause had been on a par with their loyalty to Rhodesia since the Occupation. Among the Refugees there is a large section which cannot hold anything but feelings of hatred and fear for the Nazi Regime. These people have already displayed their spirit and shown their intentions by the manner in which they have volunteered to serve with the armed forces or in any capacity the Government might see fit to make us of them....."

As every day brought news of fresh defeat, wild propositions were put forward, including the internment of all naturalized Germans in the Colony. This led a correspondent of the "Chronicle" to write: "The feeling lately apparent against Jewish refugees is a clear proof of Enemy propaganda. At a time when Britain needs every available source of money, man-power, and goodwill, when our Government is appealing for Refugees to sign on as recruits for military service, (the call to which hitherto the Jewish section has not responded ignobly), what is more likely to prevent their whole-hearted loyal support that the public agitation against them?"

Warning readers to remember that this was one of Hitler's favorite devices, the writer continued: "with his usual diabolical cunning, he utilizes every means of causing internal dissention. He has used this method with a certain amount of success to stir up racialism between Dutch and British, Indians, Moslems, Natives - indeed any of the many races and people finding shelter under the British flag. The more bound such a community is to Britain by bonds of gratitude, as the Jewish people must be, the more will be the efforts to stir up feelings against Britain, or, if that effort is as unsuccessful, as it has been among our Jewish populations, to stir up the British opinion against the minority in question. I am certain that if the authorities could lay hands upon that particular German agent, or set of agents, who are causing an outcry against Jewish

Aliens just as they are being called to flock to the colours, we should have reached the source of important enemy activities in our midst. Let none of us allow ourselves to become Hitler's dupes".

In a similar vein C.J. Oliver cautioned ordinary Rhodesians against "Anti-Alien" agitation through race hatred, impure and simple. "If we are to fight Fascism with brain as well as brawn (and we shall need both), let us not pus ourselves over that edge, or we should be merely saving Hitler the trouble of introducing Fascism - we should be Fascists ourselves before we knew it".

Other letters followed, and the situation was clarified. The first definite action on the part of the Military came in September 1940 when Mr. Tredgold made it known: "Many Enemy Aliens in the Colony are keen on joining up as combatant in the present conflict. Though this is not permitted, the Government has decided to examine their personal records with view to selecting suitable men. The Government does not yet know whether such a corps would be acceptable outside the Colony, as permission would have to be granted by the authorities concerned".

Almost immediately after, came the decision to approve Aliens in the existing Military Medical Services

## CHAPTER 47

## ON THE BATTLE FRONTS

Because of the manner in which the various Rhodesian Units were merged or attached to others under the South African or Middle East command, it is not easy to trace the actual theatres in which the men and women from Central; Africa played their part. Undoubtedly the most remarkable field combatant in the whole struggle was the celebrated Squadron Leader "{S.O.S." Cohen, to whom reference has already been made and whose military record had begun in the Matabele Rebellion of 1896 and in World War 1

In his account of the Battle of Wadara, Italian East Africa, in the official war history of Southern Rhodesia, J.F. McDonald specially mentions that "Lieutenant E. Zacks received the Military Cross for very gallant conduct……..."

In the Long Range Desert Group was Captain G. Rezin, who was killed in action in……..while on one of their incredibly daring ventures behind the enemy lines. From West Africa to the Far East and from Abyssinia to the North Atlantic Jewish Rhodesians carried their full share

Others to win awards included

In common with numbers of other troops, those Jews who served in the Middle East found unique opportunities to get acquainted with the Land of Israel and preference was given to those who wished to spend their lives there. Some Jewish soldiers visited for the first time the appropriately named Island of Rhodes, the ancestral home of so many important pioneers of the Sephardic Community.

As the tragic casualty lists began to come through, Jewish names appeared again and again. The first Rhodesian Jew to lay down his life for his country was Lance-Corporal Basil Thal, on August 26, 1940 followed by Rifleman Clarence Ralstein on December 23 of the same year. While serving with the Imperial Forces, Flying Officer Joe Friend was killed on March 4, 1941, Sergeant Arnold Feigenbaum on April 21, 1941, and Sergeant Norman Price on May 25, 1941. Sergeant Pilot Joshua Goldman followed on June 19, 1941, Pilot Officer Louis Koletz on July 27 and Sergeant Pilot Douglas Baldachin on January 11, 1942, Sergeant Lionel Friend gave his life, on April 6, 1942, Rifleman David Epstein, and exactly a month later Sergeant Observer Ralph Hyman Lewin. May 9 brought the news that Sergeant Pilot Maurice Gruber had been killed, on June 5, Sergeant Gunner Abe Isidore Gottlieb and Corporal Robert Israel Liptz on June 26, 1942.

Sergeant S. Guttman fell on October 19, 1942, and Sergeant Pilot Rufus Gruber, a relative already mentioned on November 9. Before the year ended on December 4, another of the gallant Air Force Flyers, Pilot Officer Elias Bernstein was shot down. The Near Year brought no slackening off – Private Fred Goldstein on January 9, 1943, Pilot Officer Henry Boyer on February 13, Flight Schragger on June 6, Trooper Albert Stein, again with the Imperial Forces, on July 19, and Flight Sergeant Basil Hyman on July 30, 1943. The year 1944 opened with the death of Sergeant Air Gunner Percy Ellenbogen on February 8, and the report "Missing, believed Killed" on January 2 and September 17, of two other gallant Jews, Sergeant Louis Jack Lowenson and Flying Officer Frank Levy. In the closing stages of the War, on February 26, 1945 Lieutenant Marko Benatar was the last to qualify for the Roll of Honour.

The Military Cross and the M.B.E. were both awarded to Captain M. Greenspan of the Nigeria Regiment, and the M.C. to Captain J. Barron of the R.A.M.C., to Captain V. Zacks of the Gold Coast Regiment, and Major J. Rosin of the Dorsetshire Regiment. Lieutenant A. Ruda, while with the South African Forces, received the Military Medal, as did Captain D. Fleishman of the King's African Rifles. Sergeant M.A. Blumberg won the Meritorious Service Medal. An M.B.E. went to Major A. Sarif of the Gold Coast Regiment. Among the airmen, Squadron Leader W. Creder was rewarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Flight Lieutenant G. Schulman with the Distinguished Flying Medal, and Flight Lieutenant H. Cowan with a "Commendation Award for Valuable Services in the Air" in His Majesty's 1945 Honours List.

For what was described as "an exceptional act of gallantry, Sergeant S. Almeleh was publicly commended …….

Those mentioned in Despatches included Lieutenant Colonel P. Barron, S.R.M.C., Major R.W.S. Moss of the Nigeria Regiment, and Captain M. Mande of the Gold Coast Regiment, Leading Aircraftsman R. Salk, and Leading Aircraftsman C.B. Kahan, Leading Aircraftsman I. Kaplan, Sergeant A. Rubenstein and Corporal A. Hirsch

No wonder those on the Home Front felt the urge to do their utmost to support the National War effort. Hundreds of older men and those in key jobs joined the Volunteer Police Reserve, while their wives and daughters enlisted in the Women's Police section. Every public cause, including the Rhodesian National War Fund, The Rhodesian Red Cross, the various Victory Thanksgiving Funds, and the appeals for Air-Raid-Distress, Bundles for Britain, Medical Aid for Russia etc etc. received generous backing. Jewish women in Salisbury took a lead in making themselves responsible for giving to the Rhodesian Government a complete ambulance, besides organizing fetes, running knitting circles, and dispatching large quantities of comforts to those in the field.

## CHAPTER 48.

## ATTACK AND DEFENCE

All this, however, did not prevent periodic revivals of disguised or open Anti-Semitism, sometimes among people whose standing in the community justified something better. The usual excuse was still the ambiguous position of the Refugees and remarks uttered showed that the Nazis influence was not dead. Fortunately the prompt answers in the press and on the platform were amply supported by the leading men of the country, headed by the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins (now Lord Malvern).

Particularly short- sighted and superficial was a series of outbursts by G.W Young, then Mayor of Bulawayo, who complained "a Bulawayo businessman will normally perhaps hand over a business to his son - now away at the war. These licenses should not be transferred to an Alien. Licenses should be restricted to Rhodesians. Central European types should not be allowed into the trading centers. Any post-war scheme should embrace the prevention of Aliens from building a brick wall against sons of Rhodesians now away fighting for their country. The introduction of an Alien into business is the introduction of a new unit, which means the exclusion of a Rhodesian. Town Council in June 1940 passed a resolution prohibiting the granting of licenses to Aliens during the war and I have just had a notice of a resolution passed by the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce supporting this".

At a meeting of the Bulawayo Ratepayers Association, however, His Worship was confronted with such awkward questions as: "Are you aware that there are scores of closed shops in town? How are the owners of these buildings going to pay their rent if you do not grant licenses to Aliens?" To this the Mayor said: "It is a sore point, but I do not want Rhodesians to come back to no business".

Asked whether Aliens admitted into the country should be allowed to starve, the Mayor changed his position and expressed sympathy for "these unfortunate people who are turned out of their country. I would be willing to support any scheme for temporary assistance. After the War they must go back to their own countries".

When the meeting had endorsed the decision of the Town Council, the Jewish community waited for an opportunity to test the motives involved. It came in 1941, when Bensil Lib Posen was refused a General Dealers License and appealed to the Governor-in-Council. On his behalf Sir Godfrey Huggins informed the Town Council that it had no legal grounds for the ban and that, under Defence Regulations, the Minister of Finance had complete discretion.

The prohibition was set aside and Mr. Posen received his permit. For months controversy raged on the alleged high-handedness of the Government till the "Sunday News" on January 19, 1941 came out with some very plain words: "Remarks regarding Aliens in Rhodesia", said a leading article, "made by the Mayor of Bulawayo at a meeting last Tuesday are causing deep concern and uneasiness amongst people who have had long residence or been born in Rhodesia, and yet feel that they can be included in the term "Alien" as employed by the Mayor. His remarks, they consider, were so sweeping towards those who cannot claim British birth or parentage that many of them are wondering if he is unaware that the sons of men who must be classified as Aliens are fighting in the Rhodesian Forces and that men of Greek, Danish or Jewish parentage or birth, to mention only a few, are in the ranks of the Rhodesian Contingent in the active theatres of War or at the training camps".....

Thus challenged, Mr. Young issued an attempt at an apology: "I cannot understand ", he complained, "how any good Rhodesian, and by the word Rhodesian I mean every good citizen of whatever nationality or creed, who has been resident in the country for many years, can possibly include himself or herself under the heading of "Alien" in the generally understood meaning of the word. I tried to make it perfectly clear during the meeting that my Council desires to keep a strict control on licenses so as to ensure, as far as possible, that those foreigners who have recently come to Rhodesia and cannot be classed as Rhodesian citizens, do not get the opportunity to set up in business to the detriment of established businesses in these difficult times, and against the interest of those men on Active Service, both now and in the post-war period, when they return to civil life. We have in Rhodesia many good Rhodesians, who were not born in the British Empire. We are proud of them and proud of their sons and relations in the fighting forces. It is in their interests, as much s it is in the interests of anyone else, that we desire to have strict control of the licenses in wartime....."

At this A.E. Abrahamson, already prominent in local politics, came out with a strong attack on February 16, 1941. "I think", he said, "that the Jewish community of this town has borne for too long their insults and slights, hurled at them indirectly.....After all, until 1890, it was the Native who possessed the country. If the Native started discriminating today, I feel sure that your policy of "Rhodesia for Rhodesians" would be their slogan and you would have to make the exit you recommend for the so-called "Aliens". Your fate would happily be worse, for the Aliens know what suffering is. It was these Aliens who were the first people in Europe to taste the Nazi tyranny and ruthlessness".

After the Mayor had declared himself a member of the "Jew and Gentile Society" the editor of the "Sunday News" closed the correspondence, on the grounds of its having taken an undesirable racial aspect.

In March 1941. Mr. Young made a different appeal, for a "Rhodesia Resources and Development Committee" to plan the opening up of the country as soon as Peace was restored. "The Whole of Central Africa", he said. "Is waiting for the spark which will set it alight in the blaze of industrial progress. No country in the world after the War offers greater prospects than the Rhodesias and bordering territories".

To this appeal came a dry Jewish retort, listing the enterprises set up by very Central Europeans t which His Worship had manifested such objections: Rhodesian Plough & Machinery Company, established by G. Baecher from Czechoslovakia, Rhodesian Woolens by L. Zlattner, another Czech, the Rhodesian Tin and Steel Manufacturers, founded by M. Treger, the Rhodesian Sweet Factory by Messrs. Brenner and Sacks and the Biscuit Factory by another Mr. Sacks. Besides this there was a Soap Factory opened by Messrs. Chitrin & Treger, a plant for the production of Glycerin set up by a Bulgarian named Schachter, the Bulawayo Paper Industry by M. Ralstein, Furniture Factories by M. Ellenbogen, Benyishai and Miller and H. Hodes, Clothing Factories by Abrahamson, Herscovitz and Rabinowitz, Sugarman's Brick Factory, Turtledove's Concrete Works and many others still being planned.

Even more stinging was a letter published in February, 1942. "In today's Chronicle (February 10), in the Roll of Honour I read the report of Pilot Officer Louis Koletz. This man arrived in Rhodesia from Russia in 1938, 18 months later; he volunteered for service and was accepted. At that stage he could not even have been domiciled in the country. The result justified our Government's acceptance of his service; he paid the full penalty with Honours in doing his duty. Government today are asking women to register for service; they are taking children (in my opinion a boy of 18 is a mere child) for training, yet there are among us these foreigners, medically fit, who have demonstrated their willingness and desire to fight for the Allies. Why are these people refused service by our Government?"

A welcome breath of goodwill and tolerance was introduced into the controversy by Sir Godfrey Huggins, when in July 1942; he attended the Conference of the Rhodesian Chamber of Industries. "After the War", he said, "we will have to open the door of the Colony much wider to would-be migrants. Racialism to foreigners will have to go if we are to do business with other civilized people. In fact I think they will ignore us unless we do.....

As the tide of war spread and the truth about the Gas Chambers became known, a fresh wave of horror smote Mankind already hardened to unspeakable actions by the Nazis. Under this stimulus an inter-communal body took the initiative at Bulawayo, with a notice reading

<u>"To Men and Women of Goodwill"</u>

"Every Race and Creed,

The Society of Jews and Gentiles

Issues the following call to all its members, and to all those opposed to Cruelty, Outrages and Injustice – That all will put aside their Pleasures and Engagements and attend the
United Protest Meeting
in the Town Hall
Tuesday, December 29th
at 8.50 p.m.,
Publicly to condemn Atrocities against Jewish people in the Occupied Territories of the Enemy.
His Worship the Mayor in the Chair,
J.H. Bailey, Honorary Secretary. ..."

Incredible as it may sound, there were yet people at this stage prepared to adopt and almost jocular tone in relation to the matter. One of these, signing himself "R.E.8", wrote on the day before the meeting " that the affair should be unanimously supported, not by any means because Jews in particular are apparently being "bumped off" wholesale, but because in general it is the right and decent thing to do, whether the victims are Jews, Armenians, Arabs, Irish, Scotch, Welsh, English or for that matter any people on this Globe who are being butchered".

"There is not the slightest intention to evince Anti-Semitism. This is not Jew phobia. As Douglas Reid says, inter alia, many people cannot believe that one cannot be pro-Christian or pro-Gentile without being anti-Jewish. They also could forget that the Christians and Gentiles have themselves been persecuted for ages....."

Fortunately the meeting in the City Hall on December 30, 1942, under the Chairmanship of a new Mayor, Councilor E.J.Davies, adopted a very different tone. On the platform were Civil Commissioner Mr. T.L.G. Wright, representing the Government, the Catholic Bishop, the Right Reverend I. Arnoz, Mr. T.A.E. Holdengarde, the well-known industrialist and President of the Society of Jews and Gentiles and other leaders of the community, A resolution was passed by a considerable crowd, expressing "unqualified condemnation of the unparalled atrocities committed by the German Government in the occupied countries, along with horror at the deliberately inhuman policy of exterminating the Jews". Requests were made to the Government of Southern Rhodesia to associate itself with the British and United Nations Government in a declaration of sympathy for the Jews in their plight and to bring to notice the urgency of using all available means of rescuing them from the threatened areas.

For the first time since the Kishinev Massacres in 1904, a Jewish Day of Mourning was held in Salisbury, the Governor being represented at the Synagogue Service by Captain Goff. The congregation also included the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. H.H. Davies, the Anglican Bishop of Southern Rhodesia, the Right Reverend E.

Paget, the Mayor, Mrs. G. Maasdorp, City Councilors and other prominent personalities. Similar celebrations were recorded in Bulawayo and in all the smaller centers of the country.

When His Excellency Sir Evelyn Baring, accompanied by his wife, took the occasion on April 18, of personally addressing the Society of Jews and Gentiles, his remarks were considerably beyond the platitudes often voiced on such occasions. Dealing with the need for preventing a repetition of the current horrors, Sir Evelyn said, "Nazism has proved, much as we dislike to make such an admission, to be an exportable commodity. The proof and truth of this is the state of growth of Fifth Column activities in many countries. It has been well said that one of Hitler's most outstanding characteristics is his clear realization of the weaknesses of others and his ability to use these for his own ends. The technique of spreading to other countries the idea of National Socialism has been based on exploration of this talent. In almost every country the Nazi propagandists have tried to raise anti-Jewish feelings by representing Germany as the chief leader in the crusade against Jewry..... Those who listen to words of this nature and to attacks on the Jews, simply because they are Jews, are playing Germany's game. The spread of Anti-Semitic ideas gives rise to a disease in the body politic, a disease that comes on gradually, almost imperceptibly, through small points of friction, with the exaggeration and publication of each little incident. For such a disease, as for the illness of the physical body, prevention is better than cure; and prevention is the task of your Society, prevention of the spread of rumours, insistence on the true revelation of the facts when accusations are made against people of any race merely because they belong to that race".

In the knowledge that the Allies, though now assured of Victory, still faced a long fight, the people of Rhodesia were glad to think of happier days ahead and welcomed anything that strengthened the assurance of their approach. Such an instance was afforded when in 1943 Max Danziger, Ministers of Finance, took the opportunity, at the opening of the new Gatooma Spinning Mills, to stress as a patriotic action the fostering of Rhodesian manufactures - "The Textile Industry I believe", he said, "will be one of the most important in the Colony and there is no reason why we should not make - in addition to cotton cloths and clothing for Europeans - all the cotton blankets and, as long- range vision, all the woolen blankets too, as well as cotton clothing required in the Colony, in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland for the African populations".

The Minister added that the Government intended to make fullest possible use of Rhodesia's raw products for the benefit of its people and that where private enterprise hesitated they would, if necessary, take the initiative. "If, however, we are satisfied with the proposals for establishing factories. We will give all the assistance possible to ensure that they become a success - whether by way of low grants, Customs duty, or the restriction of imports".....

For some time proposals for a Rhodesian University had also been circulating and these were now carried a major step forward when J.F. Kapnek offered an outright gift of 20,000, as a thanksgiving for the improvement in the Wartime prospects

and with the hope that another 80 public spirited citizens in Rhodesia would follow his example with at least 1,000 apiece.

"His generous proposal to the Government", said an official announcement "has been accepted by the Prime Minister with gratitude and thanks." Realization of the new project took longer than foreseen and not until 1953 when the Queen Mother visited the Colony, could construction begin in Salisbury. By that time the plan had assumed a different complexion, and had received substantial backing from overseas, more particularly from the University of London. The Kapnek gift was, however, put to good use in the construction of a distinctive building named after him.

Despite the continuance of the War, Rhodesian Jewry was able to celebrate a major occasion - the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Bulawayo Congregation.

On October 16, 1944 when the Rev. Dr. I.H. Levine occupied the pulpit, his congregation included many non-Jewish citizens. Besides the Mayor Councilor D. Macintyre, there was the Civil Commissioner, Mr. A. L. Reynolds, the Clerk Mr.H.J. Cook, and several Councilors, the former Speaker of the Rhodesian Parliament, Sir Allan Welsh and Lady Welsh, the General Manager of Railways, Mr. W.J. Skillicorn, representatives of the Methodist Churches and Anglicans and many others.

“Against all who have fought to destroy the Jew we have the promise of God", said Dr. Levine. "No weapon formed against you shall prosper” and he took as his theme the manner in which Anti-Semitism was stalking the land disguised under the mantle of false patriotism. Reviewing the share of Jews in the up-building of Rhodesia, he proudly added: "Jewish casualties have numbered over 12 per cent of those on service outside the Colony. Well have we in this community observed the injunction stressed by Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylonia: "Seek the peace of the city whither I have exiled you, and pray unto the Lord, for in the peace thereof shall you have peace". Dr. Levine's closing words were a prayer for a "peace wherein the Jewish people shall live in a land of their own, in Justice, Security and Dignity".

In the daily press the event did not pass unnoticed: "A community had arrived, settled and done well in and for the country. Good wishes will be extended to them (the Jews) , coupled with the hope that in the years ahead they may continue to occupy a happy, contented and honourable place in Rhodesian life, living in amity with all their neighbours and helping create a bigger and better Rhodesia".

When, in 1945, Salisbury had its anniversary the Rev. Konviser prepared a special Jubilee Monograph, to which the Prime Minister, Sir Godfrey Huggins, contributed a foreword. He endorsed the comment of Rhodes': "If Jews come, my country is all right", with the words, "Sons and daughters of Israel have played a worthy part in the history of this country, and when we consider the part the Jews are playing in the Armed forces of the Crown in the present war, we realize that the spirit of the

prophets in the Land of Moses and the fanatic courage of the defenders of Jerusalem in the first century of the Christian era is not dead".

## CHAPTER 49

## SOME JEWISH GIFTS

In the midst of all the tragedy and sorrow of the world conflict, there still were occasional heart stirring incidents. One of these occurred in May 1941 when Isaac Pieters, one of the best-known Jewish pioneers, passed away at Cape Town, aged 74. He left generous bequests to Jewish charities; £1,500 to the Bulawayo Hebrew Congregation for building purposes, £250 to the Chevra Kadisha for its Free Loan Fund, £500 to the Hebrew Aid and Benevolent Society, £250 to the Jewish Ladies Communal League, Bulawayo and £3,000 to the Ralstein Aged Men's Home. General charities benefited equally; £1,500 to the Aged Women's Home, £500 to the English Church, £500 to the Roman Catholic charities, £500 to the Lady Rodwell Maternity Home, £1,500 to the Bulawayo Memorial Hospital and £2,700 to the Matabeleland Rugby Football Board, of which Pieters was a life-member. Only a few weeks later John Ralstein of Filabusi gave £5,000 to set up "Clarence Ralstein Memorial Educational Fund" in memory of his 22 year old nephew, Clarence John Ralstein of Bulawayo, killed in action in the Western Desert on December 10, 1940 while with a famous British Regiment.

"I desire", said Mr. Ralstein, "to mark the sacrifice of my nephew in the cause of freedom and to create a memorial which will be a benefit to the young men of this Colony, to enable them to become useful citizens and to assist in the development of their country".

This was to be done by financial aid to a student in the Mining Department of the Bulawayo Technical School and to others. Trustees included Mr. Ralstein himself, Mr. Cecil I. Jacobs, along with the Honourable A.R. Hirsch, and Mr. Roland Starkey, one of the best-known Mining Engineers in the Colony.

A leader on the benefaction, headed "A Fitting Memorial" in the Bulawayo Chronicle, began: "Rhodesia has on previous occasions been indebted to Mr. John Ralstein for his generosity. In Bulawayo the Home for Aged Men bears his name,

where some of the older citizens are able to spend the evening of their lives in much greater comfort than would otherwise be possible".

One unique feature of the gift was that "Mr. Ralstein has left it open to any who may receive help from the fund to augment and give to others similar opportunities…The idea is a splendid one, and there is every reason to think that Mr. Ralstein's generosity will in the years to come prove of great value to many young Rhodesians. There is something fine in the idea of a man who owes his start to the generosity of another doing what he can to help somebody else along."

Featuring the endowment under the heading of "A Splendid Memorial Scheme" the "Sunday News" added, "Mr. Ralstein has set an example to those who wish to help play their part in creating a "Brave New World", where no one will be denied the chance to develop in born talents, yet where none, except the halt and maimed and aged, will expect to receive free and unconditional assistance. For this lead and for his further benefaction to the country of his adoption, Rhodesians owe Mr. Ralstein a deep debt of gratitude, while no finer memorial to a young man who has given his life for his country could have been devised…."

The death in 1941 of Michael Pevsner, one of the most important pioneers of the Rhodesian Tobacco Industry, likewise brought substantial benefactions. "In death and in life", wrote the "Sunday News", Mr. Pevsner remembered Rhodesia and the Rhodesians among whom he lived and worked, and in his will he left more money to be utilized for public charity in Bulawayo and Salisbury, and a fur4ther sum of £1,000 for the proposed Rhodesian Seaside Home at the Cape. In the past Mr. Pevsner had shown his willingness to help the establishment of such a home and his bequest will be of great assistance. His name deserves to be placed with those of other public spirited men".

Fresh benefactions by prominent Rhodesian Jews were in the news in 1943 when Mrs. Sarah Fox of Bulawayo died, leaving considerable sums to Jewish and other charities in that city and elsewhere, among them St. Gabriel's Home, the British Empire Service League, the Relief Fund, the Guild of Loyal Women, the Coloured Community Service League, and the Native Welfare Society. Still larger sums were forthcoming on the death of David Landau, Managing Director of the well-known firm of Landau Brothers. He too gave generously to all the Jewish charities in Rhodesia, to many others in South Africa, to various hospitals and to other leading bodies in the Colony, not forgetting the Pioneer and Early Settlers Association and the British Empire Service League.

One further result of Mr. Landau's death was that his firm gave up business in Bulawayo and transferred its activities to Salisbury. Under the heading of "To Be Regretted" the "Sunday News" wrote:- "Bulawayo is sad at the passing of the firm and the business that must be lost with its departure. It is remembered with gratitude the many gifts and benefactions made by the family to Bulawayo and Rhodesian Organizations and charities".

## CHAPTER 50

## SIR ROY WELENSKY'S STORY

During the years just dealt with a man was coming into prominence that ranks as one of the great Rhodesians of all time. Sir Roy Welensky, although his mother was a Dutch South African, has always considered himself a Jew and publicly acknowledged the fact.

Earlier in this history reference was made to his father Michael Welensky, who came from Lithuania to Rhodesia in 1895, struggles along but never achieved prosperity. Beneath the Salisbury Koppie, in the humble setting of Pioneer Street, Roy (or Raphael as he was originally known) was born on January 20, 1907, a thirteenth child and the ninth to survive. "My boyhood", he said in later years, "was a period of the direst poverty", much of it spent in Johannesburg where his parent in 1910 tried for better luck of their earlier days

Whatever hopes they entertained were dashed by the 1913 strike of the Gold Mines on the Rand, and to crown the disaster, one of Roy's brothers, Dave was fined £25 for his alleged share in smashing the windows of Anstey's Department Store. The Welensky's furniture was sold to pay the money. Another brother, Abe died of Black Water fever neat Umtali and they moved back to Rhodesia in 1914, just before World War I began. During his rough and ready schooling in one of the poorer parts of Salisbury, Roy picked up that ability to use his fists which for a while took him into the professional boxing ring.

"By the time I was 13", he said, "I was known as "King of the Kids", in that part of town round Pioneer Street, and it was accepted that I would fight any youngster from any other part of town who dared to challenge my position. I often fought kinds I had never seen before, merely because some boy has said to one of my gang that he could lick me. Fights usually took place behind the Synagogue or the Wesleyan Chapel, on rough pieces of unoccupied land that became my recognized battle ground"….

Another memory was his patronage of Mrs. Rubenstein's General Store, favourably known for its home-made ginger beer, paid for by the sale of empty bottles at ½ d each. One strange coincidence of Roy's youth was the fact that, when his mother fell ill, she was attended by none other than Dr. Godfrey Huggins, later Sir Roy's Chief and predecessor as Prim Minister of the Federation. Despite Aletta Ferreira's Afrikaans origin, she passed away on March 13, 1918, as a devoted Jewess, under the name of Leah, and as such she was not buried in the Salisbury Jewish Cemetery. To this day her son regularly visits her last resting place. In due course Roy like his brothers celebrated his Bar Mitzvah and, despite the breakup of his home through his mother's death, its Jewish associations persisted, as did his friendship with Jewish boys and girls, among them Barney Joelson, now a well-known figure in the commercial world of the Colony. It was in 1920, with an auctioneer with the unmistakable name of Ikey Cohen, that 13-year old Roy Welensky found his first job. This was followed by another with Sam Gruber, manager of the famous old firm of Charelick Solomon & Co. merchants, Rumanian born Jews and leading member of the Salisbury congregation.

Mr. Gruber described Welensky as he first me him "a husky young chap, with broad shoulders and a unusually big stomach. Without a jacket, he did not look very presentable, and in his father's footwear he looked anything but a Puss in Boots. I told him to sit down and, as it was my tea-time, to have a cup. He told me it was very different kind of reception to what he had received elsewhere. I asked him what work he wanted and he quickly said: "Anything, so long as I can earn a living". I gave him a start and he got along very well, but in those days he did not seem able to settle down anywhere long and after a time he left me."

Old Michael Welensky, though he had in his day qualified as a pioneer for a six thousand-acre farm from the Chartered Company, lost virtually everything, and was entirely dependent on his children. Among the most violent and consistent critics of the old regime before the Responsible Government was the disillusioned and pathetic veteran. Futile though these protests and arguments might appear on the surface, they helped indirectly to change the history of the country, for they awoke in young Roy that interest in Politics which ultimately dominated all his work.

In the meantime he still struggled hard to survive, and, about the time of the 1923 Referendum, which resulted in Rhodesia's decision to "paddle her own canoe", rather than to accept the offer of becoming a fifth province of the Union of South Africa, he gave up his post with C. Salomon & Co. in quest of something more profitable. This he found, largely by chance, while working on a small mine out in the Bundu. Isaac Benatar, member of the Sephardic group already mentioned was three years older and had only arrived in the country in 1922. "Roy", he said, "was about 16 at the time. Not long before I had come to Salisbury from my native island of Rhodes to work for a cousin of mine in a trading store in Glendale. I persuaded my cousin to take Roy to assist me, because there was far too much for one to do. The store was a small tin shack that could be shifted to another site if trade went sour on us, and there we sold everything from a needle to a side of sheep. Most of our customers were Africans, with whom Roy

got on very well-they admired his huge frame and his gentle, considerate way. For this reason I gave him the counter job, while I delivered goods Both of us slept in a little outhouse tacked on to the back of the store, and I could not help noticing how limited was Roy's personal wardrobe. He had two well-worn shirts, three pairs of stained and tattered shorts and no pyjamas- he never in fact, owned a pair of Pyjamas or slept between sheets until he got married! He just used to strip and pull the blanket over him- and he turned 20 before he wore a jacket".

It soon became plain that Roy was growing restless and he took on the post of a barman at the nearby Tafuna Hotel, where the main clientele were minors from the Shamva Goldfield. "Every month they used to get 36 hours leave, 30 of which they spent at the hotel blowing their pay on a binge. But Roy had no throwing-out to do: his presence was enough. They just drank and horsed about until they collapsed over a table in a drunken sleep. Roy then slung them one by one over his shoulders, carried them to a rondavel and left them to sleep it off. Most of his on £7 a month went back to his old father in Salisbury.

In his spare time Roy went into town with his brother, Isaac, finding plenty of opportunities to use his fists. Michael Welensky had meanwhile secured a humble post there as "Wacher" or Watcher over the Dead for the Jewish Congregation, who paid him enough, combined with his son's remittances, to keep going. Eventually he found a haven in the Jewish Aged Home, Johannesburg, where he died and where a friend found his only belongings, an old tin box containing "good fors" representing loans of £14,000 which he had made during the course of a long life, in his generous moods, and which he had never been paid!

Roy himself had by this time found a post at Bulawayo, as a locomotive fireman on the Rhodesia Railways, where he shed-so he says-70 lbs of surplus weight! His wages on the footplate £23 a month for a working week of 100 hours-were still supplemented by boxing purses, taken in the tougher parts of Bulawayo and Salisbury. The Labour movement had by this time come his way and he began to have political leanings.

At this moment fate brought him in touch with someone who completely changed his career-a young girl named Elisabeth Henderson, who became his wife. Roy Welensky's subsequent rise to fame is only indirectly connected with the story of Rhodesian Jewry , although with his own family and with his Jewish Friends his contacts remained as close as ever and he was always ready with his fists to deal with any attempts at Anti-Semitism. This ugly creature reappeared during the World Depression when the slump in coppers and other metals fell heavily upon Northern Rhodesia, now Welensky's home. At Broken Hill, where he had been stationed by the Railway, and where he was known as a Trade Union Leader and a politician, the British Union of Fascists, fathered by Sir Oswald Mosley, found fertile breeding ground in the local workshops. So serious had the attack become that a boycott forced one storekeeper into insolvency, while a Masonic Lodge stopped operation because of its Jewish office bearers.

Many years later Sir Roy observed: "One has to realize that the Depression period was an ideal time to sow the seeds of Fascism, and I think it fair to say that in a number of minds, it appeared to be the solution for quite a few of our problems".

Personal attacks he could- and did-deal with in a personal way not to be forgotten. On the wider issues, Isaac Benatar testified that "Fascism gave Welensky his first political consciousness and he himself confirmed the statement: "It was to some extend in order to combat the advance of Fascism in our little locality that I intensified my Trade Union activities….. and decided to give the Fascists a real go for their money. There was, first, their struggle for control of the Union, and I won that by an overwhelming majority. Opposition inside the Union from the Fascist element then began to fade away"…..

To the honor of the people of Rhodesia, both North and South, the Jewish background of Welensky never proved a handicap. Like other men he made his mistakes but there was no denying his stature and with the passing of the years, his influence became ever greater. By 1933, at the age of 26, Sir Roy was Chairman of the Rhodesia Railway Workers' Union and five years later was elected to the Legislative Council of Northern Rhodesia. Already his outspokenness had brought him into close touch with the Prime Minister at Salisbury, Sir Godfrey Huggins, but not until after the Second World War did he attain a seat in the Executive Council at Lusaka. Then came the move and the counter-moves resulting in the establishment in 1953 of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland formed amidst such seemingly happy auspices.

From a Jewish point of view it is worth noting that, although the Chairman of the Committee which discussed relations between the Northern Rhodesian authorities and the Chartered Company in 1949 was A.B. Cohen of the Colonial Office, there was no modification in the British opposition to the official standpoint expressed by Welensky. During the visit by British Royal Family to Southern and Central Africa, the former office-boy and fireman moved in circles of which neither he nor his parents had ever dreamt, but this eminence never changed his fundamental humanity, or his simple pride in his own beginnings. Inevitably he was chosen by Huggins in 1954 as a member of the first Cabinet, appropriately as Minister of the Transport, and when the Prime Minister retired he was regarded as his inevitable successor, first for Southern Rhodesia, and in 1956 for the Federation. The tragic struggle against intrigues and vested interests, both in Africa an in Britain, maintained so bravely and so long by Sir Roy Welensky is a matter of history which falls outside the scope of this book. Even in his retirement he remains one of those few Rhodesians worthy to be mentioned in the same breath as the founder of that great country.

## CHAPTER 51.

## FEDERATION AND AFTER

With Hitler an evil memory, with men and women now on their way home from Active Service, with Germany in the dust and Soviet Russia and the United States confronting each other was the two new World powers, with Roosevelt dead and Churchill out of office, Rhodesia too entered upon a new age. As an integral and important part of her population, Jewry too wrestled with problems, toward the solution of which the past offered little guidance.

Despite losses of men and treasure, the War had greatly helped the country. Its productiveness, both on the Agricultural and Industrial side, has vastly increased, to meet the demand, and the population was rising fast, under a new Government policy to encourage immigration. Here again the Jewish citizens did more than their share in the establishment of new farms and factories- particularly the latter. In Bulawayo, in Salisbury and in other towns thousands found employment in enterprises started by them since 1939.

The community itself had grown substantially, through the arrival of newcomers, both from South Africa and from the Old Country, many of the latter originally sent out during hostilities under the Commonwealth Air training Scheme, having now returned to Rhodesia. The total Jewish population of the Colony, which stood at about 3,000 in 1939, was now well over 4,000 and, although Salisbury passed Bulawayo, the latter still remained the larger Jewish centre. One major reason for the country's general advance was the spectacular growth of the Copper Belt where former mining camps were becoming cities. Thousands of weary Britons, a fair number of Jews among them, leaving the depressing post-war conditions, chose Rhodesia as their future home. When in 1948 the unexpected defeat of General Smuts in the South African Election put into power the Nationalist Government under Dr. D.F. Malan, an unjustified scare about the likelihood of renewed Anti-Semitism stimulated the Northward flow. With millions of pounds streaming into the Colony, and the White population almost

doubling itself, a building boom set in, which vainly sought to keep pace with the demand for housing.

Visible proof of the prevailing confidence was the decision of the Salisbury congregation in 1946 to construct as its War Memorial a new Synagogue and a Hebrew School and Communal Hall. The site chosen was in Second Street and before long the architect's plans could be given effective shape.

Zionism was experiencing a strong revival, by the work of the Rhodesian Zionist Council, established in 1941 at the worst period of the War, to undertake the systematic raising of funds. It also sponsored the tours of a number of leading overseas personalities, including Dr. Abba Hillel Silver, Dr. Nahum Goldman, Professor Ernst Simon, the Honourable Edwin Samuel, Dr A. Cohen, Mr. Berl Locker, and Mr. Moshe Sharett.

Still more important, from the practical point of view, was the setting up in 1943 of the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies, of which every congregation in both Colonies became a member and which was soon accepted by the Government as the official spokesman for the community. During the first few years conferences took place at 12 monthly intervals but from 1952 they were held at two-yearly intervals. From its headquarters in Bulawayo, the affairs of the Board were largely handled through a chain of Regional Committees: in Salisbury for Mashonaland and the Eastern districts of Southern Rhodesia and at Lusaka for the Southern part of Northern Rhodesia and for the Copper Belt itself. Profiting by the experience of a similar body in South Africa, the Rhodesian Board of Deputies proved a valuable organization, particularly after the appointment of Mr. Maurice Wagner, as full-time secretary in 19
Mr. Wagner came from London, had previously been an educationalist

From the beginning the Chairman of the Rhodesian Board has been Mr. Cecil Jacobs. The son of a leading Rhodesian pioneer and himself born in the country, his extensive experiences of public affairs as a leading solicitor, amply vindicated the wisdom of the community's choice.

In 1950 the Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, the Very Reverend Israel Brodie, toured Rhodesia and apart from the spiritual value of his presence, was able to take part in many fruitful public and private exchanges on the problems of his people.

On every side the ramifications of Rhodesian Jewry advances in these years- in the realm of education, with the establishment of the new religious and other schools; among Women's and other cultural organizations, and in the formation of several successful social and sports institutions, including the Weizman Country Club and Park View Sports Club at Bulawayo and the Wingate Park Club at Salisbury.

Generous gifts were made toward the rehabilitation of war victims in European Displaced Person's Camps, and in assisting immigration n to what was soon the independent State of Israel. Here the pro rata contribution of Rhodesian Jewry well bore comparison by most other overseas communities of the British Commonwealth. Incidentally, Rhodesian Jewry was responsible, on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953, for a memorial plantation of 3,000 trees in the Holy Land.

Although Jews had been active in public affairs since the earliest days of Rhodesia, the establishment of the Central African Federation in 1953 provided new opportunities. Apart from the unique role of Sir Roy Welensky, the first Federal Assembly included Benjamin Disraeli Goldberg, as Member for Border. Mr. Goldberg, born in Dublin, on May 12, 1902, had come to Rhodesia as a boy, won a Beit Scholarship at the Boys' High School, Salisbury, studied at the University of Cape Town and qualified as a Solicitor. Settling at Umtali, he became active in local Politics and was for ten years also a leader of the Rhodesian Party until it amalgamated on Federation with the United Party, was a founder of the Regional Development Movement and in 1951 its President . In 1956 Goldberg became Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, and in 1958 entered the Cabinet as Minister of Education and Minister of Public Health.

The unique distinction of being the only woman member in the Federal Parliament was that of Mrs. Muriel Ena Rosin, born in London as
Educated in England and in Switzerland, she came to Rhodesia upon her marriage to Dr. I. R. Rosin in 1932 and was soon active in public affairs, both Jewish and other. Among her appointments was membership of the University College of Southern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, of the Dairy Control Board and of the Rhodesian Children's Home. Mrs. Rosen was elected to the Rhodesian Board of Deputies and was the first Chairman of the Rhodesian Union of Jewish Women. Her work during World War II brought her an M.B. E. and in 1958 she was elected to the Federal Assembly as Member for Salisbury West.

Appropriately enough, the Member for Salisbury East was Mr. Saul Udwin, born in Swaziland on February 6, 1922, and educated at the University of Witwatersrand, where he qualified as a civil engineer. Coming to Rhodesia in 1947, he soon gained prominence and in 1958 was elected into the Federal Assembly.

Unique in certain respects was the election of Peter Staub as Member for Eastlea, as the only refugee from Hitler known to acquire a seat in Parliament anywhere

in the world! Staub was born in Germany, came to South Africa in the 1930's and spent some years in Johannesburg in the mining department of the Rand Daily Mail. Thereafter he was associated with the Stock Exchange before moving North.

Jews were also well represented in the Legislative Assembly of Southern Rhodesia where three sat in the original House set up under the Federal Constitution. Abraham Eliezer Abrahamson, born in Bulawayo on October 13, 1922, He was educated at Milton High School and at the University of Cape Town before going on war service. After his return he became increasingly prominent in public affairs, particularly in the Chamber of Industries, the Chamber of Commerce, the Native Labour Board and Coloured Development Fund. To say nothing of the Rhodesian Jewish Board of Deputies, of which he was Vice-President. Now as Member for Bulawayo East, Mr. Abrahamson put to practical effect the eloquence which as a University student had won his distinction in the "Best Speakers' Debate". Later in the Territorial Cabinet he became Minister or Labour, Social Welfare and Housing.

Another member of the Southern Rhodesian Legislative Assembly was Benjamin Barron. He too was born in Bulawayo (October 16, 1904) and educated at Milton High School and at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. As a prominent solicitor he was specially fitted for the position of Member for Bulawayo district.

Benny Goldstein, Member for Bulawayo South, came from Rumania, where he was born on March 13, 1901, but ever since he reached Rhodesia, as a child in 1907 all his interest were concentrated there. Well-known as a merchant, Mr. Goldstein had been President of the Bulawayo Chamber of Commerce and the Associated Chambers for Rhodesia, Dr. Morris Isaac Hirsch hailed from Johannesburg, where he was born on October 13, 1915, and where he had qualified in medicine at Wits University. With five-and-half years of war service behind him he settled at Que Que, where he became Mayor and where in 1958 he was elected to the Territorial Parliament. Another legislator with a medical background was Dr. Ahrn Palley, Member for Greendale, who, having emigrated from South Africa, adopted a policy of very close association with the African cause, which gained him considerable unpopularity among many Whites. Harry Pichanick, born at Liverpool on February 13, 1906, first saw Rhodesia as a baby. Another old Miltonian, he was prominent in the business world of Salisbury and a Mayor of the city. No less important in the minds of the multitude was his Secretaryship of the Rhodesia Cricket and Boxing Associations and his Vice-Presidency of the Empire and the Olympic Games Associations of Rhodesia. Few were surprised when in 19 Harry Pichanick was elected Member for Highlands.

Northern Rhodesia also had its Jewish members, including Morris Gerald Rabb, born at Johannesburg on October 31, 1910, and educated at Wits University. Having completed his War service he settled in Livingstone, where he was in the timber industry and where he was elected to the Legislative Council.

Appointments made by the Federal Government included that of L.A. Levy as a member of the Rhodesian Cold Storage Commission, and of H. Herman Aaron Krikler as a member of the Agricultural Marketing Council. Mr. Krikler incidentally a

very old settler, born in Russia on February 1 1896, had arrived in Rhodesia in 1914, served with the British South Africa Police in South West Africa and East Africa and again, with the rank of Major, in the Gold Coast Regiment during the Second World War. Both a manufacturer and a merchant, he had been elected President of the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce and of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, while the Government nominated him a member of the Federal Tourist Development Board.

Two important appointments fell to Heiman Joseph Hoffman as President, first in 1949 of the Water Court of Rhodesia, and then in the following year of the Natural Resources and Town Planning Board. Judge Hoffman was born in Johannesburg on March 4, 1904, but had grown up in Rhodesia. During World War II he had been an Active Service in the North. In 1958 he was appointed to the Appeal Court for Native Civil Cases.

From May 1961 until 1963 one of the best-known Jewish South African Queen's Counsels was also a member of the Rhodesian Bench. Israel Aaron Maisels, born at Johannesburg on November 19, 1905 studied at the University of Witwatersrand. After commencing practice in 1930 he took silk in 1948, and was for a number of years Chairman of the Johannesburg Bar Council as well as of the General Council of the Bar of South Africa, He had also been President of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies and of the Johannesburg United Hebrew Congregation. During World War II, Advocate Maisels had attained the rank of Major in the South African Air Force and had been decorated. His resignation as a member of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia was greatly regretted.

Among the staff of the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the name of Professor Michael Gelfand deserves to be specially singled out. Having studied Medicine both at the University of Cape Town and overseas, he worked many years in Northern Rhodesia, and won a distinguished name for himself as the author of several books on the medical problems of Northern Rhodesia. One work, "Tropical Victory", describes the gradual suppression of disease and epidemics in that part of the world. Professor Gelfand's sphere at the University College was that of medicine with special references to Africa.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland is a thing of the past, but not the countries which constituted that political unity, living between the Limpopo and the Frontier of the Congo are more than 5,000 Jews, part of a White community, which still, despite emigration losses, hovers the quarter million mark. Most of them remain in what was recently called Southern Rhodesia and is no plain Rhodesia, but there are also several hundreds in Zambia and a handful in Malawi.

What the future holds no man can say, yet having regard to the role which this people played there since the time of Lobengula, the patriotism and optimism, the enterprise and ingenuity which they have shown down the generations and their

unshakeable confidence in the country, there need be little doubt that, like Rhodesia itself, its Jewry will survive.