

RHODESIAN JEWRY AND ITS STORY

PART 1V

BY

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CHAPTER 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 have 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.

CHAPTER 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, than 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 least 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 in 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 an 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.

CHAPTER 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 Taugoggen 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, owing 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 prepare the ground by working for the elimination of all racial animosities and promoting 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.

British "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 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 an 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

CHAPTER 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 enthusiastic 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 could 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 hold 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 where 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 in 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 of 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 our 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 than 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 1921.

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.

CHAPTER 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 Womaras 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 our 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 £3.10s. 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 purveyors 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 an 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.

CHAPTER 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 1919 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, though 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 or 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.

CHAPTER 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 cheque 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 take 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.

CHAPTER 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 since 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.